Team Building in Organizations: Benefit and Challenge - A Review

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Abstract

Team building has today become a key business strategy been utilized by organizations to develop employees competencies, workplace experience, and a cohesive productive workforce that has the capacity to help organizations provide solutions to their numerous challenges. This paper examines the concept of teambuilding, and explored literature to discover whether teambuilding contributes to organizations positive outcomes that promotes productivity, enhanced performance, and competitive advantage. The paper observed that organizations are embracing teambuilding to achieve high levels of both task performance and human resources maintenance, as well as to stimulate and promote better organizational productivity and innovativeness. The paper identifies encouragement of creativity and innovation, open communication, and increased collaborations as some benefits of teambuilding. It also identified lack of trust, lack of self-awareness, poor communication and working toward opposing goals as some major challenges confronting teambuilding activities. The paper concluded that teambuilding promotes increased collaborations, improve employees morale, encourage creativity and innovation in organizations, and also as an effective way of developing employee competencies to meet customers growing needs and changing expectations. It is recommended that organizations should provide teambuilding activities that fit them, and that help to bring team members together. Organizations should also provide right climate and essential resources needed by teams to carry out assigned tasks if the teams are to succeed. Organizations should set up a well define process that help them identify right people with requisite competencies who fit in to a team. Additionally, management should communicate the core values expected from the teams to them so that they will be rightfully guides on how they are to accomplish given tasks.

Keywords: Teambuilding, employees collaboration, productivity, improved performance, competitive advantage

INTRODUCTION

In today's highly competitive and dynamic business arena, several organizations are utilizing teamwork and team building activities as a critical organizational strategy to develop employee collaboration and trust, improve motivation and nurturing individual team members strength in order to improve both overall organizations productivity and performance, and employees productivity (Baharom, Stoverink and Kalogiannidis, 2002; Obiekwe, Mobolade and Akinade, 2021).

The need to develop efficient and new operational methods/procedures and to compete more favorably and effectively in the market arena has made several organizations to begin to adopt and develop team-base structures as a strategy to effectively tap and fully utilize individual employees talents and creativities. Additionally, organizations are now realizing that teams are more flexible and responsive in changing societal events previously considered as traditional departments or other forms of permanent grouping in seeking for effective impleme4ntation of set or emergent organizational objectives. Moreover, teams posses the capabilities to quickly assemble, deploy, refocus, and utilize materials in such a manner that could lead to efficient achievement of desired organizations goal (Robbins, Judge and Sanghi, 2009) within limited time space that would not be the case with several individual workers who work independently from others in workplace.

Today, organizations are instituting and developing teams in the workplace in attempts to enhance their overall corporate performance and productivity. However the methods utilized by organizations to do this vary from one organization to organization depending on the nature and structure of the organization, and the actual corporate goals that they desire to achieve. Developing effective team therefore requires that an organization have a great stock of capable and competent employees from which it can draw employees with certain skills or dispositions to work together as a team toward accomplishing what they are been brought together for. The emphasis placed here on the employees as critical success factor for any team is based on the understanding that employees are the vehicle that drives organizations from where there is at moment, to where they want to be in the future. Hence, whenever an organization brings in an employees to work for her, the organization is saying that such an employee has the requisite skills, or has the potentials, and other positive qualities that when managed properly, would help the organization achieve workplace goals (Nwaeke and Obiekwe, 2017; Obiekwe, 2018a).

Employees therefore, are special assets and effective building blocks of every organization, as the success of every organization is directly proportional to the effort of every employees and team/groups within the organization. In this sense, the collective effort of all employees pulled in one direction results to a more enhanced organizational performance and productivity, than the efforts of individual smart employees who pull the chords individually to achieve the same purpose.

The importance of an effective team building process therefore, is so vital as performance of well-built teams easily translate to overall organizational performance (Obiekwe, Mobalade and Akinade, 2021). Hence, several organizations are now shifting emphases from individual work tasks in organizations to team-based operations to cope with changes in our fast-changing and hyper competitive business arena. Researchers have also shown that the dynamic nature of corporate organizations have become a growing concern and challenges with high grave implications for managements, as a result, businesses have focused increasingly on the proactive formation and utilization of work teams as a means of improving individual and organizations productivity (Baridam and Nwibere, 2009).

Team building has therefore, emerged as the most important group phenomenon in today's organizations as managers are utilizing it to harness the energies of all employees, determine employees strengths, and maximize both groups and individual productivity (Omuya, Kungu, Mulongo and Ong'anya, 2011; Obiekwe, Mobolade and Akinade, 2021). The high importance and positive contributions of effective teams in organizations has made the adoption of team building an important organizational strategy to gain synergies, cohesive collaborations among work groups, trust and support for team members, and deep respect for individual differences in the workplace.

Fapohunda (2013) highlighted the significance team building by stating that mangers now utilizes team approach to link and align available resources to improve business results, growth and profitability, as well as facilitate group harmony as people must work closely together across the organization to get task accomplished quickly enough to remain competitive. Newell (1996) noted that traditional organizations with individual work orientation that do not utilize the power of a team approach can no longer remain competitive in today's intricate and highly globalized and dynamic business world. Team building activities are therefore vital to enable teams become effective in the completion f its tasks and desired goals.

The need for effective team building, according to Applebaaum and Batt (1994) is that teams helps to bring out the best in every team member by providing rooms for continuous individual growth, learning from better experienced team members which help individuals to effectively adapt to operating business environment, and open communication which promotes members cohesiveness. Thus, in today's business scenario where market shifts, product proliferate, and top technologies are developed with the 'speed of lightening' the need to embrace team building as a strategy to improve employee morale and positive work attitude, as well as fostering organizational commitment that enhance work performance and productivity have been upheld (Ominya et al., 2011). Despite these positive outcomes linked to team building, research findings on the effectiveness of team building has failed to provide a unified outcome, as there is complex mix of results that make drawing conclusions difficult (McIntine, 1996).

This paper thus takes a theoretical incursion into the examination of the impact of team building on organizational positive outcomes. The paper looked at the concept, benefits and challenges facing team building in organizations. It also considered the factors influencing effective team building in
organizations, among others.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Concept of team and team building
A team refers to a group of people consciously brought together to work together in order to achieve certain objectives. A team does not exist by accident as its existence is intended, and its goals are usually put in place by those that form the team. Although some teams can develop some other goals as they members design to work together, and understand team members properly. In this sense team can also be seen as a group of people working together toward achievement of a common goal (Obiekwe, Mobolade and Akinade, 2021; Fapohunda, 2013). According to Katzenbach and Smith (1994), a team is defined as, "a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, productive goals and common approach for which they hold themselves accountable".

Team members therefore, complement each other with their skills, competencies, and abilities so that with combined efforts, they can achieve purposeful goals. The statement above agrees with the position of Burn (2014) which notes that "the effectiveness of a team or an effective team is a work team whose members collaborate to achieve common goals and have an attitude of mutual support". Achieving success as a team therefore results from good teamwork of team members, who are committed to reach team goals, and who must be willing to work together, and be jointly accountable for their actions and the outcomes of these actions.

The use of teams today has grown very considerable because of the belief and workplace experience that the development of strong and effective production and managerial teams help to provide the capacity and greater potential for higher organizational performance and increased job satisfaction among employees (Shanks 2015; Eshun & Duah, 2016). Wageman (2015) pointed out, "that teams embedded in harmonization enhance organizational learning because employees are able to experiment and create strategies that are best suited to their work", thereby leading to increase organizational learning which improves resilience and creativity.

Baridam and Nwibene (2009) pointed out an important benefit of teams when they states that teams make better decision than would the average individual, because of the tendency to make more risky and calculated decisions than individuals. Additionally, teams are more creative and innovative in task accomplishment as they maintain standard of conduct and facilitate contribution to work accomplishment (Obiekwe et al, 2021).

Concept of Team Building
Team building has no one universal definition. Several authors have defined team building based on their individual perspectives. Generally, team building has remain one important development activities that is used by organizations to improve employees and organizations performance. Tracy (2016) asserts that team building is a way of building an activity that is managed and carried out by a group of people who are members of the organization. It is the creation and managing of work group within an organization for the purpose of enabling the group to effectively and efficiently achieve certain goals. Obiekwe, Mobolade and Akinade (2021) defined team building as the various types of activities used to enhance social relations and define roles within teams, often involving collaborative tasks or assignment. In this sense, Jade (2012) assert that team building represent a philosophy of job design in which employees are seen as members of interdependent teams instead of as individual workers. As a result, team building helps management and employees to learn how to bring people together, and how to work together as a team to achieve set goals. This position is supported by Brady (2018).
Harris and Harris (2012) define team building as the creation of work group with a common purpose for the achievement of goals/tasks. According to Arney (2014), team building refers to the process of helping a work group become more effective in accomplishing the task and in satisfying the needs of the group member. Managements that sees team building in this light usually develop and utilizes a variety of team building methods to facilitate improved interpersonal relationships, improved creativity, increase motivation, and aligning with change programmes. Fapohunda (2013) sees team building as "a process of enabling a group of people to reach their goals. On this position of Fapohunda (2013), Obiekwe and Zeb-Opibi (2018) contend that employees are in organizations to help them achieve set goals and objective and will only assert serious and committed efforts to ensure that organizations achieve its goals when they are fully sure that their organizations are willing to assist them

achieve their individual goals and aspirations. This view is supported by Obiekwe, Zeb-Opibi and Ejo-Orusa (2019).

Fajana (2012) refers to team building as a process of creating an integration of resources and inputs, working in harmony to achieve organizational goals, where roles are prescribed for every organization member, challenges are equally faced and incremental improvements are sought continually. This entails that in team building, the top management and employees must collaborate and maintain o-pen communication in order to work successfully. Team building thus refers to the various activities, interactions and exercise used to strengthen the social connections within teams and organize employees into cohesive and cooperative groups.

According to Talent Lyft (2003), team building refers to a "process of establishing and developing sense of cooperation between employees and building mutual trust", with the goal to make people see, understand and believe that thinking, planning and decision making are better done cooperatively. Management study guide (2002) defined team building as the various activities undertaking to motivate team members and increase the overall performance of the team.

In organizational team building, the efforts of the team are directed toward problem solving, effectiveness, and maximization of all members resources to achieve the teams purpose. Team building therefore implies that individuals work in a cooperative manner to achieve organizations interest by sharing knowledge, skills, and ideas with other members of the team to improve overall organization ability and achieve set goals.

Objective of team building

Team building is vital to promote several positive organizational outcomes. Team building seeks to achieve several objectives in the organizations. Some of the major objectives of team building are to change the behaviour and attitudes prevalent in the organization, which are almost independent of people working there, and to instill a sense of interdependence and cohesion that generate commitment to the organization. Fapohunda (2013) identified five objectives of team building in organizations as enforcement of good communication among team members and individual, increased productivity and creativity, achievement of better operation policies and procedures, clear work objectives and a climate of cooperation and collaboration, and enhancement of higher levels of trust and support. On their part, Baharom, Stoverink and Kalogiannidis (2022) note that some aim of team building include to bring employees together to willingly and corporately find solutions to problems facing an organization or to find new solution to market or societal challenge, or develop new approach to problem solving.
Additionally, team building seeks to maximize both individual, groups and organizational productivity through the attainment of organizational goals, as well as breaking down communication barriers existing among top management and lower level staff who will be assigned to work together in teams/groups.

Benefits of Team Building to Employees and Organizations

Team building has become one of the most widely used group development activities that provide several benefits to organizations. It is essential in organizations to make her a good place where both employees and the organization grows and become more productive. Omuya et al (2011) assert that team building helps motivating employees to improve their performance in their work, as well as help them to freely socialize with other team members, thereby promoting better communication and help them be psychologically prepared to work.

Ivancerich et al (1997) posits that team building help to improve productivity by yup to 30 percent.

Frobel and Marchington (2015) asserts that team work is an important factor for smooth functioning of an organization, as the team building activities enhances members skills, abilities, and knowledge especially, when working in harmonized teams. Obiekwe, Mobolade and Akinade (2021) pointed out that team building enhances better organizational growth, effective adaptation to environment, and improved open communication among member, as well as build happy engaged and productive workforce; Jade (2012) identifies several benefits of team building in organizations to include; improved morale and leadership, skills of employees, better analyses of goals and objectives, enhanced organizational productivity, improved ability to solve problems, and easy identification of team strengths and weaknesses. Fapuhunda (2013) note that team building enhances higher level of support and trust among team members.

An critical analyses of literature on benefits of team building identified some major benefits of team building as increase collaboration, open communication, and encouragement of creativity among employees. Other benefits includes discovery of leadership, boost motivation, and creation of accountability.

Increased Collaboration
A major benefit derived from team building in organizations is increased and enhance collaboration of team members. This is so because, as employees work in group to solve work challenges or reach an end goal within a specified time frame, the team members consciously or unconsciously develop social bonding and solid relationship but on trust when people collaborate more they easily and effectively accomplish given tasks, them when genuine collaboration is lacking. Genuine collaboration is a fruit of effective team building activities.

Encourage Creativity among Employees
One of the key positive outcome that easily and clearly manifest whenever employees work together in teams is the application of their creative abilities. With effective team building, employees are provided the opportunities of using and applying the imaginations to 'create and think outside the box' and come out with innovative creative solutions and ideas capable of positively turning around situations in an organization, and help them gain competitive advantage over their rivals. Obiekwe, Mobolade and Akinade (2021) note that when employees work in teams and communicate with one another, they develop conflict management skills that provide room for workplace harmony, trust and genuine collaboration that breed innovation and creativity.

Moreover, when employees working in teams are allowed to generate workable ideas, they felt more confident in their works, and this results to more improve ideas creation that innovations, creativity and new work processes in the organization.

Discovery of leadership qualities
Management of organizations utilizes team-building activities to discover employees with different leadership styles. Working in teams avail management of greater opportunities to notice those who exhibit leadership tendencies/abilities. This si often notice on how team members initiate, and analyze ideas, or step up to take charge of certain activities or responsibilities in their team.

Better Communication

Team building activities help organization develop clear and open communication among members. When people work and talk together as team members, they find out more about each other, and this help to create a better understanding between them, therefore, encouraging open cooperation which breakdown walls of mistrust among team members (Baharom, Stoverink & kalogiannidis, 2022). In such situations, more the experience and technically competent members become more willing and open to freely share their idea and work experiences to the less initiated team members to tap from. This encourages better talent moulding and quality brainstorming activities which promotes better decision making, and improve productivity and quality of work of members.

A team with good communication can discuss and strategize tasks and goals more efficiently, leading to improve clarity on expectations and assignment. This also help to provide constructive feedback among team members, and learn about each others skills and ideas understand why people might act differently from others.

Create Accountability

Team building activities creates work place accountability for employees. This is because team building activities provide the employees the opportunities for meetings and other activities that enable employees understand workplace and individual expectations, goals and policies. This help employs to learn how to positively hold each other accountable for works/tasks assigned to them. Employees also learn how to act and relate to issues in areas of communication requirement, deadline, schedules, and response constructive to criticism, failures, mistakes, and other people's opposing viewpoints.

In addition to the above listed benefits, Zaltman and Duncan (2017) pointed out that effective implementation of team building in organization help organizations in the achievement of firm objectives and help to improve their competitiveness, innovative abilities, good reputation and mission success.

Despite the many benefits, accrued from team building, there are several challenges that inhibit effective team building in organizations.

Challenges to team building in Organization

Despite the several benefits and advantages of team building in organizations, team building still faces some serious challenges in organizations. Some of the challenges facing team building include lack of trust between team members, lack of open and adequate communication, lack of member's self-awareness, working toward opposing goals and working in isolation, among others.

Lack of Communication

Teams where open communication is restricted, and where information is withheld from some team members create room for suspicious, low morale and poor collaboration. This breed environment where team members will not be willing to share their ideas, knowledge and experiences, and this will hinder genuine collaboration that derives creativity and innovation. In contrary, a team with open communication among members enjoys trust and harmony that is key in raising overall reliability, confidence, and encourages high productivity and performance.

Lack of self-awareness: This factor act as a serious challenge to team building. A team member who has poor self-awareness may cause problem within a team and this may result to several conflicts leading to inter-personal problems and other work treated challenges. Management can overcome this challenge by engaging such individual I private

conversations to address the concern in a gentle, but direct way, while providing the necessary encouragement and support to boost the individual confidence and morale.

Lack of Trust: This constitutes a great danger to the survival and success of any team. A lack of trust can destroy a team and this threatens productivity, create disharmony and shut down communication, lack of trust among team members also lead to suspicions and questioning of members intentions, making it difficult for the team to decisions fast. This creates de-motivation of members and result to low team and organizational productivity. In contrast to these negative outcomes, high trust among team members help members connect with others and have better work experience as the feel safe and connected to others.

Working in Isolation: This challenge arise when a team handling a project that require or allow team members to work with minimal direct interaction with other team members, or from different working locations where other hardly observe what others are doing. This can result to the possibility that the individual team members work may not integrate easily with the work of others once the team complete their work. This can also result to heavy loss if some aspect of the entire works does not conform to expected standard, design or packaging. This will cause those particular aspects of the work to be re-worked, and this may result to loss of quality, or profit level, as well as down play other successes recorded by the team.

One way this challenge can be successfully handled is to appoint a supervisor over the team to help identify when team embers shows sign of misalignment. These supervisors can also ensure that regular or periodic meeting of team member be held to discuss entire team operations, and individual tasks in relation to the team operation. This will help the team discover problem areas, and challenges faced by team members, and make necessary adjustment, and quickly provide directions to members where the need arises.

Working toward opposing goals: A team where members pursue goals that are different from that of the entire team can lead to contradictory work, disharmony and incompatibility. Where these arise, it becomes very difficult for a team to be productive, or achieve certain objectives for which it is set up. In contrast, teams that work toward unified goals maintain harmony, high morale and consistency which drive high productivity in organizations.

Other challenges associated with team building include person's conflicts, lack of clarity, time consuming and very expensive. Despite these challenges visible in several in different team building activities, the several benefits derived from team building has made it an essential organizational strategy to promote employees inclusiveness, collaborations, and a way of instituting an effective organizational family culture, that makes employees see their organization and fellow workers the way they sees their biological family and commit effort to see it succeed (Obiekwe and Zeb-Opibi, 2018; Obiekwe, 2018).

Conclusion
Today's business environment and the increasing competitions are making organization into accepting team building as an effective way of developing employees competencies in order to meet customers increasing needs and changing expectation. Team building activities are essential for manger, as they help to improve team morale and communication. Team building activities therefore, are a great way of improving employees and organizational positive outcomes. A well implemented team building promotes increased collaboration, encourage innovation and creativity in organizations. It also improves better communication, and help in discovery of leadership qualities in employees. However, a poorly designed and

executed team building activities create rooms for poor productivity and stress, as well as possibility of in-house quarrels.

Recommendation

Considering the benefits and other positive outcomes that are associated with good team building, organizations should provide team building activities that fit them, and that help to bring team members together. Organizations should provide the right climates are essential resources to teams if they are to succeed in the achievement of the objectives for which they are instituted by the organization. To ensure effectiveness, management must ensure that only employees with the required competencies and abilities are selected for tasks where such skills and competencies are needed.

In addition, individual employees characteristics should be considered before drafting them into any particular team, as employees who are 'loners', that want to work alone may create problem of poor collaboration and openness when working with others in a team. Moreover, organization should set up a well define process that help them identify the right people who fit into a team. This is because, team members who have different viewpoints and goals from other team members can act as destabilizers that creates imbalance and unhealthy work environment for the entire team.

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