

Relating Occupational Self Efficacy to Team Effectiveness

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Abstract

Organisations have embraced teams and teamwork as an effective way of doing business. The last 20 years has seen the replacement of 'supervisors' by 'team leaders'. Employee motivation and morale improves dramatically when people feel valued and when their contributions make a difference. What works in an organization in reaching its goals is not an individual, but properly integrated teamwork. A strong sense of efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being in many ways. People with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided. Such an efficacious outlook fosters intrinsic interest and deep engrossment in activities. They set themselves challenging goals and maintain strong commitment to them. They heighten and sustain their efforts in the face of failure. They quickly recover their sense of efficacy after failures or setbacks. They attribute failure to insufficient effort or deficient knowledge and skills which are acquirable. They approach threatening situations with assurance that they can exercise control over them. Such an efficacious outlook produces personal accomplishments, reduces stress and lowers vulnerability to depression. Efficacy has long been considered to be an influential mechanism through which differences in experience influence performance (Bandura, 1982, 1997) and positive relationships have been shown between efficacy and performance at both the individual and team levels. Bandura (1986), Wood and Bandura (1989), and Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) all argue that individual efficacy affects performance, which in turn affects the individual's future perception of efficacy; additionally, Bandura (2000) later commented that people's increasing interdependency makes the need to understand collective efficacy increasingly important. It was found out that there is a significant statistical difference in team effectiveness of the employees with respect to gender ($F = 8.276$, $p < 0.01$). Team effectiveness was positively correlated with occupational self-efficacy ($r = 0.617$, $p < 0.01$). Occupational self-efficacy and work experience show significant impact on perceived team effectiveness ($\beta = 0.552$, $p < 0.001$) and ($\beta = -1.761$, $p < 0.005$). There is a significant difference in the relationship between self esteem and team effectiveness of the employees in terms of gender. For men the correlation between self esteem and team effectiveness was quite high ($r_{xy} = 0.551$, $p < 0.01$). But for females, there was no correlation between self esteem and team effectiveness ($r_{xy} = 0.454$, $p > 0.01$).

Keywords: Team Effectiveness, Occupational Self-Efficacy, Motivation, Commitment

1. Introduction

Organisations have embraced teams and teamwork as an effective way of doing business. The last 20 years has seen the replacement of 'supervisors' by 'team leaders'. Companies have embraced these concepts because they work. Employee motivation and morale improves dramatically when people feel valued and when their contributions make a difference. What works in an organization in reaching its goals is not an individual, but properly integrated teamwork. The main reason is that considering the vastness and the very nature of the work that an organization engages in, it is not possible for any one individual to even think of taking the entire load upon his own shoulders.

Three decades of research have provided evidence that self-efficacy, a person's belief in his or her capability to perform, is related to an individual's task performance (Barling and Beattie, 1983; Campbell and Hackett, 1986;

Cervone and Peake, 1986; Eden and Kinnar, 1991; Eden and Zuk, 1995; Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Hill, Smith and Mann, 1987; Saks, 1994, 1995; Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998; Wood and Locke, 1987). The combined effects of personal goal-setting and self-efficacy provide an inclination and a target, often motivating the individual to become better focused on what will be required in order to perform effectively, such that they eventually reach their goals (Bandura, 1997; Bandura and Jourden, 1991; Latham and Lee, 1986; Locke, 1982; Locke and Latham, 1990; Locke, Mento and Katcher, 1978; Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998). However, increasingly teams, rather than individuals, are becoming a more dominant mode of organizing, motivating, and managing (Mohrman, Cohen and Mohrman, 1995; Osterman, 1994). Recent years have seen an increasing number of organizations restructuring work through the use of teams (Cannon-Bowers and Salas, 1998; Fowlkes, Lane, Salas, Franz and Oser, 1994; Lepine, Hollenbeck, Ilgen and Hedlund, 1997; Sundstrom, 1999). The ultimate success of such teams is not only a result of the members talents and resources, but also of the nature of team member interactions. Key determinants of these interactions are the characteristics of the individual team members. Team members' individual differences play a vital role in the success of any given team. Some of these differences are readily visible to others (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity), while others are not (e.g. attitudes, values, personality). Modern technology and new ways of doing business are changing the ways we use teams, but the underlying principles and benefits remain the same. An organization is a collection of groups. The success of an organization depends on the ability of the groups within it to work together to attain commonly held objectives. Because organizations are becoming increasingly more complex, their leaders must be concerned with developing more cohesive and cooperative relationships between individuals and groups. Similarly, the development of effective groups or teams within the organization will determine, to a large extent, the ability of the organization to attain its goals.

The importance of work teams appears to be gaining in strength as jobs get bigger, organizational structures get more complex, and more and more companies become multinational in scope (Naquin & Tynan, 2003). In today's corporate environment, it appears the team – not the individual – holds the key to business success. As companies restructure, downsize, and reinvent themselves, the new roles being created tend to be team-oriented. Organizations are becoming flatter, leaner, and more agile. Many jobs and projects are becoming increasingly complex, less time-bound, and global in scope. All these factors collectively are making it increasingly difficult for one person to perform a single job. The contemporary workplace uses teams as the basic work unit (e.g., surgical units, airplane crews, research and development teams, production crews).

One problem in understanding the domain of team effectiveness is that there are many definitions of team effectiveness. Early definitions shaped future discussions by focusing on internal and external criteria. For example, Schein (1970) argued that the function of a team is to meet organizational responsibilities (e.g., getting work out, generating ideas, or serving as liaisons) while simultaneously meeting personal responsibilities (e.g., developing group identity, backing up team members, or providing social support). Nieva, Fleishman, and Rieck (1978) used a motivational approach by defining team effectiveness as “the goal directed behaviours/activities/functions accomplished by the team in performing the task”. Hackman and Oldham (1980) expanded on this by defining team effectiveness in terms of the team's success in meeting (or exceeding) organizational standards of quality and quantity, members' needs are satisfied, and members want to continue to work together on future tasks.

Several researchers subsequently took a part of these definitions (e.g., Gladstein, 1984, suggested that team effectiveness consisted of performance and satisfaction and Sundstrom, DeMeuse, & Futrell (1990) defined team effectiveness as performance and viability), whereas other researchers changed components of the definitions. For example, Cohen and Bailey (1997) defined team effectiveness as performance outcomes, attitudinal outcomes, and behavioural outcomes; Beal, Cohen, Burke, and McLendon (2003) suggested that team effectiveness as performance behaviours and performance outcomes; and Kozlowski and Bell (2003) argued that team effectiveness was a combination of internal (e.g., satisfaction and viability) and external (e.g., quantity and quality) criteria.

Although teams are ubiquitous in organizations, most employee related functions are individualized (e.g., selecting, training, evaluating, rewarding). Such a disconnect between an organization's need to foster effective teams and its natural tendency to focus on the individual employee can create many problems. In addition, some research suggests a key reason why some teams fail is that employees are ill-prepared to make the transition from individual contributor to team member. A team can be defined as two or more people who interact with each other regularly and who mutually influence each other to achieve common goals. In high performing organizations, the most successful groups function as teams. A team can be defined as two or more people who come together to achieve a common purpose. Effective teams get their job done and take care of

their members' needs at the same time. Achieving team effectiveness poses many challenges for managers, team leaders and members alike.

Characteristics of an Effective Team

Effective teams:

- share a common goal
- communicate openly and honestly
- consider conflict part of learning
- cultivate a sense of belonging
- gather and share information
- encourage creativity and risk taking
- practice continuous improvement
- have supportive leadership

As team members begin to work together, they must learn to cope with various emotional and group pressures. The team can expect to proceed through several fairly predictable stages as it evolves into an effective work unit. Team members must get to know each other, understand their respective roles, identify and work out appropriate group behaviour and, finally, learn how to coordinate their work and social activities. The right environment for a team to flourish is one of trust, respect, support, commitment, shared vision, openness and honesty, empowerment and involvement of all members, and a learning environment.

Several models have been developed to describe these stages of team growth, but one of the most useful is that outlined by Bruce W. Tuckman (1965). The four stages, as Tuckman expressed them, are:

1. **Forming:** The first stage of team development is a period of exploration, testing and orientation. Individuals have to get to know each other and assess the benefits and costs of being part of the group.
2. **Storming:** This stage presents a lot of problems for teams. Members begin to realize that the task is different and often tougher than they initially thought. Conflicts will likely erupt as members may compete for leadership and other positions on the team. Coalitions or cliques may form to try to influence the group's efforts to reach agreement on important issues like its purpose or goals.
3. **Norming:** By this stage, members have established expectations and developed team ground rules or norms to help them interact more effectively. The team begins to develop a real sense of cohesiveness as members accept the team, their roles and the diversity/individuality of the other members.
4. **Performing:** In this stage, the team achieves a higher level of task focus because there is a shift from establishing and maintaining harmonious member relations to accomplishing the team's objectives. Team members have learned to coordinate their activities and work out their conflicts.

Self-efficacy reflects an individual's beliefs in his or her own capabilities to pursue a course of action to meet given situational demands (Bandura, 1997). Numerous studies have examined the antecedents and behavioural consequences of self-efficacy in work organizations, particularly with regard to individual tasks (Bandura, 1997; Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Locke & Latham, 2002; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). However, the meaning of self-efficacy may be questioned in highly interactive tasks. Here all team members jointly work toward a collective outcome, and individual actions often cannot be distinguished from each other. In this case, group performance is affected by not only the individuals' capabilities and efforts but also by the nature of the relationships among the group members, and by group processes, as for example, the needed levels of coordination and collaboration.

Hackman (as cited by Weil, 1995) cites three useful measures for team effectiveness. The measuring standards are 1) productive output that meets or exceeds standards, 2) social processes that maintain or enhance the capability of members to work together on team tasks, and 3) group experience that satisfies personal needs of group members (Weil, 1995). According to Cohen, Ledford, and Spreitzer (1996), work team effectiveness is defined as both high performance and employee quality of work life. The idea draws from sociotechnical theory, which states that both social and technical systems must be maximized for an optimally effective team.

Schwarz (1994) modified Hackman's work to specify three criteria necessary for effective groups. First, an effective group delivers output that meets or exceeds the standards of the group's stake holders. Second, the

processes used to carry out the work allows members to work together effectively on current projects and on subsequent efforts. Finally, as a whole, the group experience must satisfy the needs of its members.

Team effectiveness refers to the system of getting people in a company or institution to work together effectively. The idea behind team effectiveness is that a group of people working together can achieve much more than if the individuals of the team were working on their own.

Team effectiveness is determined by a number of factors, such as:

- **The right mix of skills.** Team effectiveness depends in part on bringing together people who have different skills that somehow complement each other. This can mean different technical abilities or communication skills. In fact, teaming up people who share the exact same characteristics is often a recipe for disaster. Team effectiveness depends on people taking on different roles in a group setting. If there is no agreement on who does what in the group, it is unlikely that the team will prosper.
- **The right motivation.** Team effectiveness is directly linked to the interest that the group has on the project. If the job is too easy or too difficult, or if the rewards for achieving the end result do not seem worth the effort, the team may end up working half-heartedly in the project. The task should also have a clear outcome. Working towards a specific goal enhances team effectiveness significantly.
- **The ability to solve conflicts without compromising the quality of the project.** Team work has one major downfall. Sometimes groups end up making decisions they know are not in the best interest of the project, just so they can keep the process moving. Conflict is innate to any work done in groups, and should be taken as part of the challenge rather than as something to be avoided by compromising. Team effectiveness should be increased, not compromised, through conflict. One way to enhance team effectiveness is to agree beforehand on a code of conduct. As conflicts arise, it is important to know how to deal with them. What is allowed and what is not? How will the team deal with disagreements? Is open discussion favoured or will the group vote on major decisions? Knowing what to expect and having the plan will make the process of working in group much easier.

Sundstrom and Associates (1999) state that effectiveness of teams start with meeting the performance expectations, of those who receive, use, or review the team's output. Other expectations which affect team's efficiency are related to employee behaviour and quality of work life. On the other hand, task variety, task identity, task significance, task autonomy, and task feedback can contribute team effectiveness. Team composition like as heterogeneity, team stability and team size are also contributing factors to team's efficiency.

Team effectiveness includes three dimensions (Hackman, 1987): (1) the degree to which a team's decisions enhance organizational performance (e.g. Hambrick, 1994), (2) members' commitment to implementing team decisions and willingness to work together in the future (Amason, 1996; Nadler, 1996; Schweiger, Sandberg, & Ragan, 1986), and (3) the extent to which team process meets members' growth and satisfaction needs (Hackman, 1987; Hambrick, 1994). Situation-specific distributions refer to the distinctive information or interests held by different team members in a specific situation. Unless group decision-making processes are managed accordingly, asymmetrical distributions of situation-specific information or interests may reduce team effectiveness.

Team effectiveness starts at the top, with successful leadership. Helping a group to achieve success is a true test of leadership ability. Building team self-efficacy plays a key role in overall team success. Teams are able to come together when a leader has created a climate where mental, emotional, and social needs are met. Team climate is described by James, Hartman, Stebbins, & Jones (1977) as a psychosocial construct, an internal representation of how a person perceives the conditions and interrelationships among group members. The main point of this definition, in regards to self-efficacy, is that the perceptions are made from the team members' point of view. This means that team members perceive the overall climate of the group and make a conscious decision as to whether they are individually satisfied as a participating member of the team. Self Awareness is the first step towards any change or development. Empirical studies have shown that there is a strong correlation between high self awareness and self efficacy. Self efficacy is the ability to mobilize motivation, cognitive resources and courses of action to meet situational demands (Wood and Bandura, 1989). In a broader and yet simpler perspective, Personal Effectiveness incorporates the essence of the two concepts. It is not only about having awareness of personal strengths but also about effectively using them and at the same time minimizing weaknesses. When we relate Self Awareness to Personal Effectiveness, the concept of Johari Window stands out prominently. It talks about understanding self and managing interpersonal relationship better by sharing information to people and at the same time soliciting feedback from people to know what is unknown to self but known to others. Self Awareness is about conscious connection to your

source of being. Working team has the above outlook with sustained openness and regular reviews, yielding a learning culture and at the same time making the team effectively productive. Efficacy has long been considered to be an influential mechanism through which differences in experience influence performance (Bandura, 1982, 1997) and positive relationships have been shown between efficacy and performance at both the individual and team levels. Bandura (1986), Wood and Bandura (1989), and Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) all argue that individual efficacy affects performance, which in turn affects the individual's future perception of efficacy; additionally, Bandura (2000) later commented that people's increasing interdependency makes the need to understand collective efficacy increasingly important.

Self-efficacy is defined as an individual's —belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to achieve the goals (Bandura, 1997). Bandura (1997) proposed that perceptions of self-efficacy determine whether coping behaviour will be initiated, how much task-related effort will be expended, and how persistently this behaviour will be performed. He further suggested that individuals who perceive themselves as highly efficacious put forth enough effort to, if well executed, produce successful outcomes. However, those individuals who perceive themselves as not highly efficacious are likely to cease their efforts prematurely and fail on the task (Bandura, 1986). These ideas have a large body of empirical support. For example, Wood and Bandura (1989) demonstrated a positive relationship between self-perceptions of managerial efficacy and managerial performance, Eden and Zuk (1995) found a positive relationship between naval officers' perceptions of self-efficacy and performance at sea, and Stajkovic and Luthans' (1998) meta-analysis reported a correlation of .38 between self-efficacy and work performance.

A strong sense of efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being in many ways. People with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided. Such an efficacious outlook fosters intrinsic interest and deep engrossment in activities. They set themselves challenging goals and maintain strong commitment to them. They heighten and sustain their efforts in the face of failure. They quickly recover their sense of efficacy after failures or setbacks. They attribute failure to insufficient effort or deficient knowledge and skills which are acquirable. They approach threatening situations with assurance that they can exercise control over them. Such an efficacious outlook produces personal accomplishments, reduces stress and lowers vulnerability to depression.

Effectiveness differs from performance in that judgments are made as to whether the individual or group's behaviour is adequate to meet set goals. Self-efficacy of groups parallels self-efficacy of individuals. Self-efficacy is situation specific when concerned with an individual, separate individuals, or a group of individuals functioning as one entity. Perceived self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. Such beliefs produce these diverse effects through four major processes. They include cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes.

Human behaviour is extensively motivated and regulated anticipatorily by cognitive self influence. Among the mechanisms of self-influence, none is more focal or pervading than belief of personal efficacy. Unless people believe that they can produce desired effects and forestall undesired ones by their actions, they have little incentive to act. Whatever other factors may operate as motivators, they are rooted in the core belief that one has to power to produce desired results. That self-efficacy belief is a vital personal resource is amply documented by meta-analyses of findings from diverse spheres of functioning under laboratory and naturalistic conditions (Holden, 1991; Holden, Moncher, Schinke, & Barker, 1990; Multon, Brown, & Lent, 1991; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998).

1.1 Hypothesis

1. There will be statistically significant difference in the team effectiveness of the employees with respect to gender.
2. There will be statistically significant relationship between team effectiveness and occupational self-efficacy.
3. There will be statistically significant relationship between team effectiveness and work experience.
4. There will be statistically significant relationship between team effectiveness and age.
5. There will be a significant impact of occupational self-efficacy on team effectiveness.
6. There will be a significant impact of work-experience on team effectiveness.
7. There will be a significant impact of age on team effectiveness.

8. There will be a significant difference in the relationship of occupational self-efficacy and team effectiveness of the employees with respect to gender.

2. Method

2.1 Design: An ex-post facto research design is adopted for this study. The criterion variable is team effectiveness and the predictor variables are gender, age, work experience and occupational self-efficacy.

2.2 Sample: The population of interest for this study consists of 34 adults working for a multinational company. The population that is accessible to this study consists of employee both male and female from Bangalore city in India.

Sample characteristics: In terms of gender 82.4% (n = 28) of the respondents were men and 17.6% (n = 6) of the respondents were women. Age was measured in terms of years ranging from 18 to 33 (mean = 26.4, standard deviation = 4.45, median = 28). Experience was also measured in terms of years ranging from 1 to 7 years (mean = 4.5, standard deviation = 1.4, median = 5).

2.3 Variables:

Predictor variable: Gender, Age, Experience and Occupational Self- Efficacy.

Criterion variable: Team effectiveness.

2.4 Measures:

Team Effectiveness Scale: The scale was developed by Upinder Dhar and Santosh Dhar. It contains 20 items on five point response alternatives and it can be successfully used for screening out individuals who have low team orientation and are likely to have inhibiting influence on the performance of a team. The reliability of the scale was determined by the split-half reliability coefficient, corrected for full length, on a sample of 350 subjects. The reliability coefficient was found to be 0.91(p<0.001) measuring internal consistency. Three factors — dependability, cooperation and sharing were identified on the basis of factor analysis. Each item which is checked as always, often, sometimes, seldom or never should be awarded the score 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Occupational Self Efficacy Scale: The scale was developed by Sanjyot Pethe, Sushama Chaudhari and Upinder Dhar. This is a brief and comprehensive scale, contains 19 items and measures occupational self efficacy through six factors — confidence, command, adaptability, personal effectiveness, positive attitude and individuality. It is self administering scale and respondents took about 15 minutes to complete. This is a very good scale for use in occupational area. The odd-even reliability of the scale was determined by calculating reliability coefficient, corrected for full length for a sample of 220 subjects. The reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.98. Each item or statement should be scored 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for neutral, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly agree.

3. Results

With the support of various statistical measures results were found out. In support of Hypothesis no. 1, it was found out that there is a significant statistical difference in team effectiveness of the employees with respect to gender ($F = 8.276$, $p < 0.01$). The correlations provided some support for hypothesis no.2 and 3. In support of hypotheses no.2 team effectiveness was positively correlated with occupational self-efficacy ($r = 0.617$, $p < 0.01$). Similar was the case with hypothesis no. 3 as work experience was negatively correlated with team effectiveness ($r = -0.529$, $p < 0.01$). But hypothesis no.4 was rejected as there was no significant relationship between team effectiveness and age.

Coming to hypothesis no. 5, 6 and 7, step-wise regression analysis was used to find out the impact of self-efficacy, work experience and age on team effectiveness. At the first step, all the predictor variables (occupational self-efficacy, work experience) were computed. Occupational self efficacy accounted for 38.1% of variability (R square) where as occupational self efficacy and work experience accounted for 52.7% of variability. Multiple correlation coefficient (i.e. R) came out to be .726, which proves that the predictor variables (ose and work experience) are highly correlated with perceived team effectiveness. Overall, the model is a useful regression model as the p value in is .000. Thus we can state that at least one of the predictor variables has a relationship with the dependent variable.

Occupational self-efficacy and work experience show significant impact on perceived team effectiveness ($\beta = 0.552$, $p < 0.001$) and ($\beta = -1.761$, $p < 0.005$). Thus, hypothesis no. 5 and 6 are accepted where as hypothesis no.7 is rejected as there is no significant impact of age on team effectiveness. There is a significant difference in the relationship between self esteem and team effectiveness of the employees in terms of gender. For men the

correlation between self esteem and team effectiveness was quiet high ($r_{xy}=0.551$, $p<0.01$). But for females, there was no correlation between self esteem and team effectiveness ($r_{xy}=0.454$, $p>0.01$).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present paper examined the relative importance of occupational self-efficacy in teams and their effectiveness. The paper aims at examining the influence of self-efficacy and other demographic variables like gender, age and work experience on team effectiveness. Use of work teams, groups of employees with interdependent interaction and mutually shared responsibility (Sundstrom, DeMeuse, & Futrell, 1990), has increased dramatically during the past decade. Research conducted in the early 1990s (Wellins, Byham, & Wilson, 1991) suggested that only about one quarter of the organisations surveyed were using teams, involving only a small portion of the workforce. Later, Osterman (1994) found that over 50% of the 700 organisational units he studied were using teams and that over 40% had more than half of their employees working in teams. Additional evidence suggests that this trend continues to gain momentum. Since there is a growing percentage of need of teams in an organisation, this paper focuses on the importance of an individual and individuals' demographic factor in a team and its effectiveness.

The results suggest gender differences in team effectiveness. With it there was support for the hypothesized relationship between team effectiveness and occupational self efficacy. The combined effects of personal goal-setting and self-efficacy provide an inclination and a target, often motivating the employee to become better focused on what will be required in order to perform effectively, such that they eventually reach their goals (Bandura, 1997; Bandura and Jour-den, 1991; Latham and Lee, 1986; Locke, 1982; Locke and Latham, 1990; Locke et al., 1978; Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998) and then after reach the collective goals of the team and the organisation.

With it there was also support for the hypothesized impact of occupational self-efficacy and work experience on team effectiveness. Self-efficacious employees take greater initiative in their occupational self-development and generate ideas that help to improve work processes (Speier & Frese, 1997). The nature of work in organizations has undergone important changes in recent years. Most work organizations are now relying on team-based structures to help face increasing levels of market competition and technological innovations (Sundstrom, 1999). Teams, more so than groups in general, include highly interdependent members holding specialized roles. In addition, to maintain competitive levels of knowledge and skills, employees, particularly those in the information technology (IT) industry, transition across work projects and organizations much more frequently than ever before (Hall, 1996; Katz, 1997). The increasing level of employee mobility requires better understanding of newcomer effectiveness, to minimize the potential "process losses" that can be associated with newcomer socialization (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992).

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