Team Culture and Team Performance: The Role of Knowledge Sharing

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Abstract

This paper examines the effect of team culture on team performance. Furthermore, the study assesses the effect of knowledge sharing on team performance. The moderating role of knowledge sharing in the nexus amidst team culture and team performance is also assessed. The cross sectional design and survey approach were adopted. Structured questionnaire was used in the collection of data. Employees of a private university in the Ashanti Region of Ghana formed the population and sample of the study. Ordinary Least Square in PROCESS MACRO and SPSS (v.25) was used to analyse the data. The study revealed significant positive effect of team culture on team performance. Also, the effect of knowledge sharing on team performance was found to be significantly positive. Lastly, the nexus amidst team culture and team performance was found not to be moderated by knowledge sharing. It is recommended that private universities should promote team culture and knowledge sharing among employees. The Ghana Education Service and Ministry of Education should encourage team culture and knowledge sharing across all educational institutions in Ghana.

1. Introduction

The proverbial statement "two heads are better than one" has found its way into business. As team members collaborate and share ideas, the team's performance typically improves. Team culture is an important determinant of employee performance and organizational effectiveness (Isensee *et al.*, 2020; Paais and Pattiruhu, 2020). Team culture encompasses different forms of culture that differentiates various categories of employees in a firm (Rieger and Klarmann, 2022). The contributions of team culture in encouraging firm innovation and firm performance are critical for firm survival (Rieger and Klarmann, 2022; Segal, 2019).

On account of the above, the effectiveness of employees to come together as a team is dependent on some conditions including culture, and knowledge sharing attitude which predominantly improve the performance of a team (Gillespie *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, team performance is affected by knowledge and supportive behaviors of team members (Tan *et al.*, 2019; Bui *et al.*, 2019). However, a lot of organizations face the challenge of improving the performance of a team by sharing knowledge amongst the team individuals (Distanont and Khongmalai, 2020; Hossain *et al.*, 2021).

Knowledge is seen as important to organizations worldwide, resulting in the ability of an entity to perform better than its competitors (Arsawan *et al.*, 2020). However, the presence of mere knowledge resources is not sufficient to achieve organisational success (Ahmed *et al.*, 2019). This is because for knowledge resources to contribute to organisational success, employees are expected to exchange and put the knowledge into practice (Nonaka *et al.*, 1994). Extant studies have documented the benefits of knowledge exchange in reducing cost, increasing the satisfaction of customers, and enhancing innovation and performance capabilities (Wang and Noe, 2010).

Knowledge management helps in aligning firm's goals with knowledge which leads to organisational growth and competitive advantage (Hosen *et al.*, 2021). Whilst knowledge management has been discussed widely with respect to profit-making organisations, its application is limited to non-for-profit making organisations such as private universities despite the important role knowledge plays in Higher Educational Institutions (Fikri *et al.*, 2021). The primary aim of universities is to generate and disseminate knowledge and skills (Obrenovic *et al.*, 2020). Hence, knowledge management which takes into consideration knowledge sharing is very crucial to attain organisational aims in such institutions (Abbasi *et al.*, 2021; Tamsah *et al.*, 2020). On this note, developing an environment in such institutions which supports free knowledge sharing among employees is pivotal to achieving organisational goals (Muhammed and Zaim, 2020).

Extant studies have found the presence of various team cultures in organisational settings (McDougall *et al.*, 2020) and have reported that team culture shapes employee behaviour (Byrge, 2021). However, inadequate studies have been conducted to examine the nexus amidst team culture and team performance despite knowledge sharing

which is a quality of team culture encourages behavioral consistency among team members. The consistency helps unit team members to collectively put in effort to achieve the goals of the unit (Mitchell, 2021). Team culture encourages team members to understand and analyse organizational activities in a same manner, which contributes to collective problem solving (Royal College of Physicians, 2018). However, despite growing recognition of culture in improving organisational performance, very few studies have considered knowledge sharing in influencing the nexus (Matsudaira, 2019). Moreover, the mediating factors that may influence the nexus amidst team cultures and team performance are still not clear (Jamshed and Majeed, 2019). Meanwhile, for team culture to influence the performance of a team, there should be free flow of knowledge sharing among team members (Arsawan *et al.*, 2020).

In light of the above, this study is motivated to achieve three objectives. First, the study examines the effect of team culture on team performance. Second, the study assesses the effect of knowledge sharing on team performance. Finally, the study examines the moderating role of knowledge sharing in the nexus amidst team culture and team performance.

The rest of the paper is arranged in the following manner. The theoretical background and hypothesis development are presented in Section 2. Sections 3 and 4 feature the methodology and findings respectively. Thereafter, discussion and contributions are featured in Ssection 5. Section 6 covers the conclusion and recommendations. Finally, limitations and future research suggestions are featured in section 7. Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study.

2. Hypothesis Development
2.1 Team Culture and Team Performance
The corporate culture theory forms the theoretical basis of this study. This theory proposes that corporate culture contributes to organisational performance. Drawing on this theory, this study contends that team culture is a beneficial factor that improves the performance of a team. Different team cultures enhance work environment and increase the performance of a team (Barteneva, 2019). For instance, team culture which focuses on internal processes promotes sound work atmosphere by providing a clearer sense of role demands to team members, which in turn promotes team performance (Cameron and Quinn, 2006). In the same way, team culture which places emphasis on human relations recognises coming together as a group to achieve an aim, cohesion, common agreement, and promotes oneness (Quinn and Rohrbaugh, 1983). Human relations culture tends to encourage collaboration among team members to attain organisational goals, thereby improving organisational performance (Quinn and Rohrbaugh, 1983). Rational goal team culture tends to improve the performance of a team by concentrating on earnings, value creation, and gaining higher market share (Cameron and Quinn, 2006). It has a tendency of directing the focus of team members toward achieving competitive advantage (Denison and Mishra, 1995). In addition, considering that the work environment of rational goal culture is geared toward achieving results, team members put in their best to achieve organisational results (Shalley and Gilson, 2004). Although documented at the firm stage, previous studies have revealed that the nexus amidst team culture and creative performance is positively correlated (Büschgens *et al.*, 2013; McLean, 2005). In light of the above, it was hypothesized that;
H1: Team Culture has a direct positive effect on Team Performance.

2.2 Knowledge Sharing and Team Performance
When view from the lens of corporate culture theory, successful knowledge sharing is influenced by cultural values which ultimately improves the performance of a team. Despite the increasing support for culture as a factor that influences knowledge exchange which then improves team performance, there is limited literature on the effect of knowledge sharing on team performance (Chen and Lin, 2013; Wiewiora *et al.*, 2013; Ardichvili *et al.*, 2006). Members of a team do not hesitate to exchange knowledge and encourage innovation when knowledge sharing is embedded in team culture (Titi Amayah, 2013; Mueller, 2012). In team cultures where innovation is encouraged, staff share knowledge, belief each other and cooperate with one another (Intezari *et al.*, 2017; Jacobs *et al.*, 2013; Casimir *et al.*, 2012). These qualities of team culture enhance knowledge exchange among members of a team which ultimately improve the performance of a team.

Team members are motivated to exchange knowledge, trust, cooperate, and create friendly environment when they socialize with each other (Mueller, 2012). This means that organisations that incorporate knowledge sharing in their culture tend to improve team performance. Therefore, it's difficult to develop an atmosphere where knowledge exchange is encouraged to achieve team goals if there are no opportunities for knowledge exchange (Prasad *et al.*, 2014). It was therefore hypothesized that:
H2: Knowledge Sharing has a direct positive effect on Team Performance.

2.3 Moderating Role of Knowledge Sharing
Literature has established that team culture and knowledge sharing improve the performance of a team (Jiang *et*

al., 2016; He *et al.*, 2014; Mueller, 2014). Exchanging knowledge among team members increases team performance by enhancing the efficiency of a team (Plowman and McDonough, 2010; Mesmer-Magnus and Dechurch, 2009). By reason that team members may possess variety of competencies and capabilities, knowledge sharing will improve the performance of a team (Jehn and Chatman, 2000; De Dreu and Weingart, 2003). Knowledge sharing is crucial within organisations since team members might have different backgrounds and opinions which significantly and positively affect their ability to solve problems (Kim *et al.*, 2012; Panahi *et al.*, 2016).

However, the effectiveness of knowledge sharing depends on team culture (Mueller, 2012). Considering team members within health-care services, knowledge sharing is very crucial due to the complex nature of tasks which demand the teams to exchange knowledge. As such, team culture helps members to exchange knowledge to enhancing the safety of patients (Kim *et al.*, 2012). Integrating this in universities where knowledge is traded, encouraging team culture that places much emphasis on knowledge sharing is essential. This present paper therefore argues that although team culture affects team performance positively, organisations that consider knowledge sharing as integral part of team culture will experience higher team performance than those that place less emphasis on knowledge sharing. It was therefore hypothesized that:

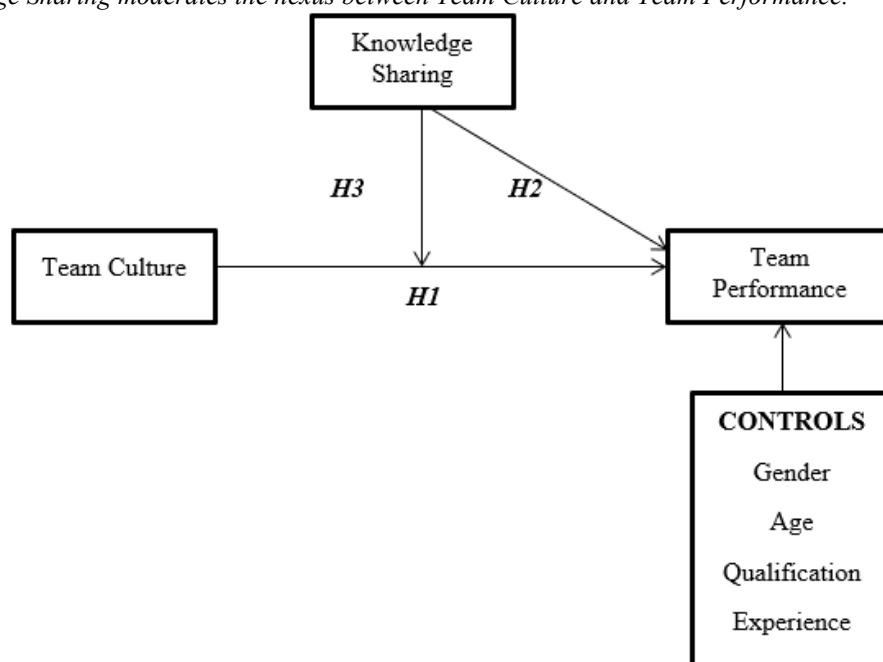**H3:** *Knowledge Sharing moderates the nexus between Team Culture and Team Performance.*

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Approach and Design

The study applied the quantitative research approach as it uses statistical techniques to analyse the data. Exploratory research design was adopted as the study focused on predicting team performance using team culture and knowledge sharing.

3.2 Population, sample and sampling technique

Employees of a private university in the Ashanti Region of Ghana formed the population of this study. At the time of conducting this study, there were 161 staff members in the university. This study engaged all the 161 staff members to enhance generalization.

3.3 Measurement instrument and Data Collection Procedure

This study adopted structured questionnaire as the data collection tool. The questionnaire featured four (4) sections. Respondents' demographics were presented in Section A. Sections B presented measurement items under team culture. There were 8 measurement items under this construct which were adapted from (Cameron and Quinn, 2006). Section C presented measurement items under knowledge sharing. There were 8 measurement items under this construct which were adapted from (Yi, 2009). Finally, section D presented measurement items under team performance. There were 4 measurement items under this construct which were adapted from (Anderson and West, 1998). The Likert scale of *1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree* was adopted for the study.

One Hundred and Sixty-One (161) questionnaires were printed out and distributed to the respondents. Each

respondent was expected to respond to a questionnaire. The questionnaires were given to them during break time to give room for enough time to complete them.

3.4 Reliability and Validity

Prior to distribution of the questionnaire, the questionnaire was validated by conducting pilot test. On this note, the questionnaire was given to 3 managers who double as academicians to improve the measurement items. Their suggestions helped in finetuning the measurement items and provide the same interpretation to the observed variables. This contributed to content validity. Moreover, definite numbers were assigned to each point in the Likert scale as a systematic approach to address common method bias as suggested by (Podsakoff *et al.,* 2012). To determine convergent validity, Cronbach Alpha was computed for each of the 3 main constructs of the study using SPSS (v25). It was realised that the Cronbach Alpha for each construct was higher than the minimum requirement of 0.7. Table 1 provides results on the reliability test. Moreover, multicollinearity was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor. It was realised that all the VIF was less than 5 as expected and was thus concluded that there was no multicollinearity in the dataset.

Table 1: Reliability Results

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Team Culture	8	0.890
Knowledge Sharing	8	0.830
Team Performance	4	0.860

4. Findings

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis for all the constructs studied was presented in Tables 2, 3 and 4. The Likert scale of *1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree* was adopted for the study. Mean score of greater than 3 was recognised as agree whiles mean score of less than 3 was recognised as disagree.

The total mean score for team culture was 3.819 (above 3) which means that it was agreed that team culture was present within the organisation. It was further revealed that the 8 observed variables under the construct had mean scores of greater than 3. This indicates that the respondents agreed to all the measurement items under team culture.

Table 2: Team Culture

S/N	Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	Stability, efficiency, and control are important to my team	3.95	.988
2.	Continuous Professional Development, trust, and involvement are important to my team	3.893	.977
3.	My team's management style is defined by hard working, competitiveness, and attainment of goals	3.860	1.030
4.	Working together as a group, agreement, and involvement among team members describe my team management's approach	3.85	.918
5.	My group places a strong emphasis on collecting new resources and posing new difficulties	3.83	1.039
6.	My team considers success as doing better than competitors and achieving high market share	3.78	1.022
7.	Taking risk, contributing something new, independence, and individuality characterize my team's management approach	3.77	1.159
8.	My team is a very structured and regulated environment	3.62	1.060
	Total	**3.819**	**.706**

Moreover, knowledge sharing had an overall mean of 3.889 which is greater than 3. This implies that the respondents agreed that they share knowledge with colleagues within the organisation. It was further found that the 8 observed variables under the construct had mean scores of greater than 3. This indicates that the respondents agreed to all the statements under knowledge sharing.

Table 3: Knowledge Sharing

S/N	Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	Participate in online discussions with others to assist them with work-related issues	3.97	2.643
2.	Through personal interaction, share experiences that may assist others avoid risks and difficulty	3.95	1.045
3.	Share your enthusiasm and enthusiasm for certain topics with others through personal dialogue	3.93	1.001
4.	Using personal communication, keep others informed about essential organizational facts	3.89	1.069
5.	Spend time with others in personal chat (e.g., in the hallway, over lunch, on the phone) to assist them with work-related issues	3.89	1.027
6.	Spend time communicating with others via e-mail to assist them with work-related issues	3.88	1.181
7.	In organizational meetings discuss prior personal work-related failures or mistakes to help others avoid making the same mistakes and share your ideas and thoughts	3.83	1.032
8.	In team meetings ask smart questions that will encourage others' thoughts and discussion, respond to others' questions and make problem-solving suggestions	3.77	1.064
	Total	**3.889**	**.812**

Lastly, team performance had an overall mean score of 3.902 which is higher than 3. This indicates that the teams perform within the organisation. It was found that all the 4 measurement items had mean scores greater than 3 (agree). This indicates that the respondents agreed to all the statements under team performance.

Table 4: Team Performance

S/N	Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	My coworkers come up with innovative ideas	4.03	1.016
2.	My coworkers come up with new knowledge, approaches, or items that are unique and beneficial to the company	3.98	1.026
3.	My team members complete the tasks that have been assigned to them	3.83	1.008
4.	My team members do a good job on their allocated tasks	3.77	1.082
	Total	**3.902**	**.807**

4.2 Regression Analysis

The regression coefficients were estimated using Ordinary Least Square in PROCESS MACRO and SPSS (v.25). The results of the analysis are featured in Table 5. The study controlled for gender, age, qualification, and experience due to their potential effects on team performance. From the results presented, age had a negative but statistically insignificant effect on team performance ($p>0.05$). Like age, gender, qualification, and experience also had insignificant negative effects on team performance ($p>0.05$).

For the hypothesized paths, it was identified that team culture had a significant positive effect on team performance ($\beta = .562; p < 0.01$). This suggests that, effective team culture enhanced team performance by about 56.2%, and vice versa. *H1* was therefore accepted by the study.

Also, the effect of knowledge sharing on team performance was found to be significant positive ($\beta = 0.285; p < 0.01$). This suggests that in team meetings where team members ask smart questions that will encourage others' thoughts and discussion, discuss prior individual work-related flaws to prevent other staff from making the same mistakes and share their ideas and thoughts, spend time with others in individual chat (e.g., in the hallway, over lunch, on the phone) to assist them with work-related issues, use personal communication, keep others informed about essential organizational facts, share their enthusiasm for certain topics with others through personal dialogue, through personal interaction, share experiences that may assist others avoid risks and difficulty, participate in online discussions with others to assist them with work-related issues, and spend time communicating with others via e-mail to assist them with work-related issues, team performance among employees is bound to improve. *H2* was therefore accepted by the study.

Finally, the paper assessed the moderating effect of knowledge sharing in the relationship between team culture and team performance. From the results presented (Table 5), the interaction between team culture and knowledge sharing (TC_KS) had an insignificant negative effect on team performance ($\beta = -.017; p$-value > 0.05). This indicates that the presence of both team culture and knowledge sharing has no effect on team performance.

As such, knowledge sharing does not moderate the nexus amidst team culture and team performance. *H3* was therefore rejected by the study.

Table 5: Inferential Statistics

Predictors	Unstandardized Beta	Standard Error	T-value
Age	-.008	.054	-0.148
Gender	-.120	.084	-1.429
Qualification	-.006	.047	-0.128
Experience	-.042	.048	-0.875
Team Culture	.562	.101	5.564**
Knowledge Sharing	.285	.079	3.608**
TC_KC	-.017	.038	-0.447

Dependent variable: Team Performance; *Significant at 5%; **Significant at 1%

5. Discussions and Contributions

A contribution of the study is premised on the findings that team culture positively and significantly affect team performance. Moreover, the effect of knowledge sharing on team performance was found to be significant positive. As workers work more intimately with their team members, weaknesses of some team members are solved by other team members who have strengths in those areas (Funk and Tyson, 2020). This improves team members' performance and contributes to organisational success. Through knowledge sharing, employees acquire knowledge from other team members to undertake activities. This enhances employees' knowledge and skills which contribute to team performance. Knowledge sharing opportunities facilitate environment which supports knowledge sharing and encourages employees to exchange knowledge for achieving organisational goals (Prasad *et al.*, 2014).

Taking into consideration cultural differences among universities in Ghana and outside Ghana, team performance is bound to improve if employees of universities develop a culture of working in teams. Moreover, by sharing knowledge, team performance will improve. As a policy implication, central governments should encourage university staff to work in teams and share knowledge.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study had three main objectives. First, it examined the effect of team culture on team performance. Second, it assessed the effect of knowledge sharing on team performance. Finally, the study examined the moderating role of knowledge sharing in the nexus amidst team culture and team performance. This study employed quantitative research and adopted a survey design. The population of the study was defined as the employees in a private university in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The total number of staff strength analysis for the private university was 161. The sample size included the entire population to increase generalisation. A structured and close-ended questionnaire was used for the study.

The study revealed a positive and significant effect of team culture on team performance. Also, it was found that the effect of knowledge sharing on team performance was significant and positive. Lastly, the nexus amidst team culture and team performance was not moderated by knowledge sharing.

It is recommended that private universities should promote team culture and knowledge sharing among employees. The Ghana Education Service and Ministry of Education should encourage team culture and knowledge sharing across all educational institutions in Ghana.

7. Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

The study considered team culture, and knowledge sharing as factors that could influence team performance. Future studies may consider team leaders' qualification and employees' commitment as these factors may contribute to team performance. Moreover, this study concentrated on employees in a private university. It is suggested that future studies may include other universities to improve generalization. The study also adopted questionnaire as the data collection instrument. Future studies may combine this with interview to account for the opinions of employees.

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