

Effectiveness of Team Works in Project Management: The Case of Water Action Aid Project, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Abstract

The study assesses the effectiveness of team work in project management in case of Water action aid project. Censes was used to use all staff members of MCDP organization 30respondents comprising 1 CEO, 1 Program manager, 4 Project managers, 7 project teamcoordinators, 11 project team members and 6 key resource persons. Structured questionnaire was used to get information from CEO, Program Manager and Project Managers, whereas FGD questionnaire was used to provoke information from Project team Coordinators, Frontline Staff and key resource persons. The findings of the study reveals that the team leaders are wise and have the necessary skills that it takes to make the work end successfully. It is often significant importance that in a team working together towards a common goal, there should be open and honest communication. Finally, it is recommended that team management courses should be incorporate in the training of professional to enhance their skills to higher levels, Professionals should work in teams as opposed to functional structure as there is positive relationship between team effectiveness and project performance and the Government should come up with laws requiring maintenance of records by professional bodies, of events in the water aid project. This would facilitate, among others, continuous improvement of team management in the water aid project.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Water action aid, Team work, Project Management.

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

An evolution of teamwork and its concept started during the Industrial Revolution, where most work organizations shifted to the hierarchical approach and used scientific management to design organizations and jobs (Taylor 1911). According to Taylor (1911), scientific management methods call for optimizing the way tasks were performed by simplifying the jobs, so workers could be trained to perform their specialized sequence of motions in the "best" way. This resulted in more simplified jobs and provided benefits to skilled workers.

However, during the 1920s and 1930s, the scientific management model was questioned, since it created issues with people's relationships to work, although the model functioned well. Workers became alienated and difficult to motivate. In addition to no task flexibility, changes were difficult to implement. Effective teams work by developing and promoting open and clear communication amongst its team members. Effective teamwork does not occur automatically. It may be challenged by various issues, such as lack of organization, misunderstandings, poor communications, and inadequate participation from team members.

Therefore, it is crucial for assessing the effectiveness of team work in project management of water aid project teams to find a solution to help their team members to integrate and work together effectively.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Teamwork in project works has been widely researched by a number of researchers (Baiden, 2006; Cheng et al., 2006; Chervier, 2003; Ochieng, 2008), and the findings have clearly illustrated that best result is achieved when the whole project team is fully integrated and aligned with project objectives.

A water action aid project of Addis Ababa is developed to provide sufficient and quality water services to the society in various parts of the city. The goal is through providing safe and quality water, avoiding water related problems in team. To ensure water action aid project teams successfully complete their projects, it is necessary for water action aid project managers to promote, measure, and evaluate their teams' effectiveness. By all means, it is a challenging task to be effective, but there are underlying reasons why such projects need an effective measurement system for teams.

An area that merits attention to successful team work is established on factors leading to effective team work management of projects. This has received little attention in literature. Coordination of the different professions is imperative for the successful completion of Water aid projects. In the study area, due to lack of effective team work, there are numerous failed projects. These problems may be attributed to poor team management in addition to the alleged corruption and political interferences. The aim of this study was therefore to investigate how teamwork management leads to effective implementation of water aid projects by answering the question: how does team work management in the water aid projects affect project management in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia?

1.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

The overall objective of the study is to assess the effectiveness of team work in project management in the case of water action aid project, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The specific objectives of this research are:

- ✓ To determine the extent to which effective teamwork management has been employed in the water aid project in the study area;
- ✓ To establish the relationship between teamwork management of workers in the water aid project and project success in the study area;
- ✓ To identify the challenges facing the teamwork management of employees in the water aid project of the study area;

1.4. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

1.4.1. Concept of a team

A team is a collection of individuals who exist within a larger social system and who can be identified by themselves and others as a team. Team members are interdependent and perform tasks that affect other individuals and groups. Teams are formed because they can accomplish what an individual cannot due to their different functional skills. In addition, social needs are easily satisfied in a team (Stewart, et al 1999).

To assist in understanding how teams are managed in the projects, various literatures addressing team work in general and specifically in the industry have been reviewed. From the literature reviewed, indicators of an effective team, the team members and their responsibilities in a project, factors affecting team management, challenges encountered were identified.

1.4.2. Teamwork

To hand devours been a elongated predictable intensification in squad edifice motion in diligence plus business (Thamhain and Wilemon, 1983) and “plenty of management practitioners and researchers take into account team building to be one amongst the foremost crucial leadership qualities that verify the performance and success of multi-disciplinary efforts, and therefore the organization’s ability to be told from its experiences and position itself for future growth. The aim of this literature survey is to spot the factors presumably to influence impassive groups and therefore the effect of cooperation on project success.” To do this, however, its 1st necessary to explain what's painted and characterized by the term ‘team’ and in what sense it are often aforesaid to be effective. “With An increasing scale of multi-national comes and international business operations, team building takes on further dimensions and challenges in organizing and unifying the task cluster across industrial, technological and geographic boundaries.” Jointly of the project leader’s prime responsibilities, team building involves a full spectrum of management skills to spot, commit and integrate the assorted personnel from totally different purposeful organization into one task cluster.

1.4.3. Project teams

The professionals engaged; work in teams, despite, sometimes, not having known each other before. The team formed can be considered effect if it is able to deliver a project successive without losing its members and satisfying the needs of each individual member. The success of the project is measured by the satisfaction of the client while that of the members by expression of their happiness and want to continue working together. (Stewart et al, 1999).

For the teams to be effective they must be able to establish their task by setting objectives, deciding plans and defining roles and responsibilities. But to help the team to work together productively there is need to create open and honest communication channels, establish team values and develop ground rules. Failure to address these issues leads to infighting and no task to accomplish (Nash, 2001).

1.4.4. Theories of teams

1. Tuckman’s model

Tuckman's model explains that as the team develops maturity and ability, relationships establish, and the leader changes leadership style. Beginning with a directing style, moving through coaching, then participating, finishing delegating and almost detached.

At this point the team may produce a successor leader and the previous leader can move on to develop a new team. This progression of team behavior and leadership style can be seen clearly in the Tannenbaum and Schmidt Continuum - the authority and freedom extended by the leader to the team increases while the control of the leader reduces (Tuckman, 1977).

2. Belbin’s Team Roles Theory

Belbin (2004), made some experiments that consisted of the fundamentals of her theory. The results of her experiments, which constituted a model of management teams, based on the roles required for the success of the team. Belbin described team roles as a servant member’s, who facilitated the progress of the team as a whole with his performance, structure of team as a whole with his performance, structure of others. She believes that team members have two types of roles. The first one, as described in role theory, typical functional role. The second type is the team role(s). Team role describes how suitable the member is for the team, not the functions.

In this model the role is described with six factors, namely, personality, mental abilities, motivation, values, field restrictions and experience and role learning. However, Belbin didn't demonstrate how most of the changes could be explained by each factor. Instead, she defended the opinion that high performance teams required a balanced distribution of all the roles within the team.

1.5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design employed in this project was a descriptive type which describing the effectiveness of team work on a particular project at one point in time. The study was a survey one that combines secondary data sources with primary data. The primary data was collected from the field using structured and semi-structured questionnaire as well as focus group discussion and key resource persons discussion. Thus a mixed approach will be employed. To ensure support or otherwise of facts and issues that are gathered. So, the research approach for this study was mixed approach.

The target population of this study were all of the employees and management body of the organization. According to the information gathered from the Administration and Finance head department of the Project, there are 30 employees who are responsible to planning, implementing, coordinating, managing and supporting the overall projects implementation of the organization. Therefore the target population of the study is 30 respondents in number from which the data was collected. Thus, the Census inquiry will be employed. In all over the organization, project managers are interviewed using structured questionnaire and semi-structured guide for focus group and key resource personnel discussion sessions with some frontline project staff and one CEO, one Heads of Program and seven Project Coordinators of the sampled projects. Total of 30 respondents are interviewed in different grounds. This comprised 1 CEO, 1 Program manager, 4 Project managers, 7 project team coordinators, 11 project team members and 6 key resource persons. In addition it enables the highest accuracy on the finding of the study.

1.6. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In conducting the study, 30 questionnaires were distributed out of which 30 were returned and answered. Therefore, the response rate was 100%.

1.6.1. The extent to which various skills and traits were exhibited by team leaders

Findings on the extent to which various skills and traits were exhibited by team leaders showed that to a great extent, the team leaders 20 (66.67%) were resilient with a standard deviation of 1.1. In addition to that, the team leaders applied their technical knowledge, looked to it that the team members were motivated and at the same time, the team leaders were dynamic. While they practiced all the above skills, they did not undermine negotiation which they applied to a great extent too.

Table 1: The extent to which various skills and traits were exhibited by team leaders

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Negotiation	1	3.33
Resilient	20	66.67
Dynamism	1	3.33
Motivation	2	6.67
Technical knowledge	1	3.33
Understanding of Client's requirements and culture	2	6.67
Management Skills	2	6.67
Balance mix of the above	1	3.33
Total	30	100

Source: computed from own survey data, 2018

1.6.2. The extent to which various behavior were exhibited by team members

Regarding the extent to which various behavior were exhibited by team members, majority of the team members upheld discipline and reliability with a standard deviation of 1.2. They also displayed the trait of being creative, imaginative and unorthodox to a large extent with a standard deviation of 1.1. To a moderate extent, they were enthusiastic, communicative and also mature, confident, dynamic and thrived under pressure. It is also imperative to note that the team members were to a moderate extent sober, strategic and discerning in their work. In addition to that, they cooperated to a great extent while upholding to a moderate extent. Single-mindedness and dedication was the least prevalent behavior with a standard deviation of 0.9. This implies that many of the team members have various behavioral characteristics which contribute to the successful ending of various water aid projects. Some however needs to be pressurized in order to thrive in their work; a trait which should be eliminated at all costs.

Table 2:The extent to which various behavior were exhibited by team members

Characteristics	Mean	Standard deviation
Creative, imaginative, unorthodox	3.4	1.1
Extrovert, enthusiastic, communicative	3.4	1.0
Mature, confident, dynamic, thrives under pressure	3.8	1.0
Sober, strategic and discerning	3.6	0.8
Co-operative, mild, perspective and diplomatic	3.6	1.0
Disciplined, reliable, and efficient	3.6	1.2
Painstaking, conscientious, anxious	3.0	1.1
Single minded, self-starting, dedicated	3.5	0.9
Balance mix of the above	3.3	0.8

Source: computed from own survey data, 2018

The researcher was also concerned with the extent to which indicators of environment conducive to effective project team performance was exhibited. The respondents indicated that to a great extent, the project consultants were confident with the design and water aid construction methods. They also added that to a large extent, the team members were satisfied with their terms of work. Delegation of decision making authority by team leaders and communication in the team were practiced to a great extent. The virtue of respect and mutual trust among team members was also not undermined. It was applied to a great extent with a standard deviation of 1.0. Team leader's confidences with water aid project management, delegation of decision making authority by team leaders and communication in the team were practiced to some extent. On the contrary, the satisfaction of team members with their terms of work was less prevalent with a standard deviation of 0.8.

Concerning the extent to which various strategies were utilized to promote effective team works in the water aid project, majority of the respondents gave the opinion that variation control procedures were observed to a great extent with a standard deviation of 1.2 while undertaking the various projects. They also said that communication among stakeholders was implemented to a great extent with a standard deviation of 1.1. The framework of the program was also rigid for many projects to a great extent. Regarding conflict resolution procedures, the respondents said that they were observed to some extent with a standard deviation of 0.9.

Table 3: The extent to which various strategies were utilized in the project to promote Effective teamwork's

Characteristics	Mean	Standard deviation
communication among stakeholders	3.6	1.0
Conflict resolution procedures	3.6	0.9
Variation control procedures	3.4	1.2
Rigid framework of program	3.2	1.0
Work quality control procedures	3.8	1.0

Source: computed from own survey data, 2018

1.6.3. Respondent's response on the relationship between teamwork management of workers in the water aid project and successful completion of the project.

Table 4:Team identity in achieving the common missions and tasks.

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
1. The team takes ownership of the problem and accepts joint responsibility for its achievement	17	56.7
2. The team recognizes that its members have individual and team goals and tasks are framed accordingly	8	26.66
3. The focus of the team is on the tasks that individual members need to solve	5	16.7
4. Team members take limited interest in issues that lie Outside their own immediate area of responsibility	-	-
5. Team members concern themselves only with their own responsibilities	-	-
Total	30	100

Source: computed from own survey data, 2018

How a team behaves and what it achieves is a result of the collective behavior of its members. As depicted in table 4.7 above, respondents clearly responded on team identity in achieving the common missions and tasks. Majority 17 (56.7%) of respondents responded that the team takes ownership of the problem and accepts joint responsibility for its achievement, 8 (26.66%) of respondents replied that the team recognizes that its members have individual and team goals and tasks are framed accordingly and the remaining 5 (16.7%) of respondents replied that the focus of the team is on the tasks that individual members need to solve. Therefore, from the above figure it's possible to conclude that there is a good condition for achieving the project success in the study area. The qualitative discussion held with the focus groups also supports the above facts and figures in the study

area.

Table 5: Due to teamwork how do you see the relationship and accomplishment in Shared Vision in the project?

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
1. The team has a shared vision and set of objectives, Developed collaboratively and regularly reviewed	18	60
2. The team has developed for itself both a shared Vision and clear objectives	6	20
3. The whole team is working to a set of common objectives	3	10
4. Team members, both individually and collectively, lack a common vision and clear objectives	3	10
Total	30	100

Source: computed from own survey data, 2018

Most people perform better when they have a clearly defined ‘future state’ to work towards a vision of the future as the focus for their efforts. Similarly, a team will perform better if it takes time to develop a shared vision. The vision should motivate and inspire team members, commit them to the task and convince them that it will be achieved more successfully if they work together rather than as individuals. As depicted in table 4.8 above, majority 18 (60%) of respondents replied that the team has a shared vision and set of objectives, developed collaboratively and regularly reviewed, 3 (10%) of respondents replied that The team has developed for itself both a shared Vision and clear objectives and the remaining 3 (10%) of the respondents replied that the whole team is working to a set of common objectives in the project area. Therefore, from the above figure we can conclude that the teams in the study area are more motivated to deliver a vision they themselves have developed because the vision has its roots in their own values, skills and beliefs, rather than coming from outside.

Table 6: The relationship between Collaboration and participation of team members and the project success

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
1. Familiarity, honesty, mutual trust and full participation harness the collective expertise of the team	20	66.67
2. All members are given opportunities to contribute and Build on suggestions from others	7	23.33
3. Team members prefer to work alone and give more priority to their own concerns than to those of the team	1	3.33
4. Insularity, lack of trust or power struggles reduce Participation and collaboration	2	6.67
Total	30	100

Source: computed from own survey data, 2018

Collaboration works best when team members share values and vision, develop a team spirit, absorb the information they need to perform their task and learn to work well with each other. Trust, honesty, mutual respect and full participation are vital. Team members need to know that when they pass the ball their team mates will not drop it. In effective teams, members do whatever is needed to get the job done. They keep their ultimate goals and objectives in mind. If they fall behind, everyone pitches in to help the group get back on schedule. On less effective teams, members work independently and do not concern themselves with tasks outside their area. As depicted in table 4.9 above, majorities 20 (66.67%) of respondents replied that Familiarity, honesty, mutual trust and full participation harness the collective expertise of the team, 7 (23.33%) of respondents replied that All members are given opportunities to contribute and build on suggestions from others, 1 (3.33%) of respondents replied that team members prefer to work alone and give more priority to their own concerns than to those of the team and the remaining 2 (6.67%) of respondents of respondents replied that Insularity, lack of trust or power struggles reduce participation and collaboration in the project work. Thus, greater trust and familiarity between team members allowed more forceful group behavior, more willingness to question in the search for better solutions and, ultimately, better outcomes. Team members are most open to information from those they feel are their equals. Ultimately, the above situation positively promoted the project success in the study area.

The researcher also sought to know the extent to which various factors were applied in the team. Findings revealed that setting of objectives together, established team values and ownership of the project were the most prevalent factors applied in the team with standard deviations of 1.1 each. In addition to that, open and honest communication, established team ground rules and preparation of plans, roles and responsibilities together formed part of the prevalent factors with standard deviations of 1.0, 1.0 and 1.0 respectively. On the other hand however, individual satisfaction was a less prevalent factor in the team with a standard deviation of 0.8. This implies that many of the team members undertaking in the water aid projects embrace the idea of setting

objectives together, establishing team values and ownership of the project.

Table 7: The extent to which various targets were met due to team work

Characteristics	Mean	Standard deviation
Cost within budget	3.2	1.1
Works quality to specification	3.5	1.2
Completion within expected time	3.1	1.3
Minimum change of scope	3.0	1.1
Satisfaction of stakeholder	3.9	1.1

Source: computed from own survey data, 2018

1.6.4. Challenges in building effective team work in the project work

The qualitative data gathered through focus group discussion and interview confirmed that Good communication, High involvement, Conflict resolving capacity, Mutual trust, High team spirit, and High level of commitment, Team self-development, Ability of interface, Need for achievement and Collaborative spirit as the major challenges for building effective teams from people's side in the project work. Moreover, Organizational ability, Direction and leadership, Facilitating group decision-making, Motivation, Conflict resolution, Team unification, Visibility and accessibility and Top management linkage are the major leadership factors that may increase or decrease the project success. The interview schedule held with the management of the water aid project also pointed out that Collaborative Culture, Common goals and objectives, Risk sharing, Involved management, Long-range strategy, Stimulating work environment, Technical success, Quality results, On time, On budget, Innovation and creativity and Adaptability to change are the major challenges in building team work in the project area.

Table 8: The major Challenges in building effective team work in the project work

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
1. Lack of clear Communication	2	6.67
2. Lack of shared vision	2	6.67
3. Problems of Collaboration and participation	4	13.33
4. Problems in leadership style	2	6.67
5. Stimulating work environment	2	6.67
6. Innovation and creativity	3	10
7. Adaptability to change	1	3.33
8. Mix of the above	14	46.67
Total	30	100

Source: computed from own survey data, 2018

As depicted in table 4.12 above majority of respondents 14 (46.67%) of respondents responded that Lack of clear Communication, Lack of shared vision, Problems of Collaboration and participation, Problems in leadership style, Stimulating work environment, Innovation and creativity and Adaptability to change are the major factors that affects team work in building teams in the project area. The result was clearly coincides with the qualitative data.

1.7. CONCLUSION

The success of any activity done as a group relies on the leaders of the group. A slight mistake by the leader affects the entire team. It is therefore of significant importance that the team leaders be wise and have the necessary skills that it takes to make the work end successfully. It is also of significant noting that people involved in any task should open their minds to new horizons of ideas through innovation. This enhances increase in knowledge not just for that particular task but also to be applied in future projects. The greatest challenge that can hinder success in any project done by a team is conflict among members. It is therefore crucial that the team leaders come up with strategies to control the differences among various team members and to resolve conflicts whenever they occur. They will ensure that there is harmony among the team members which will in turn result in effective team working for quality output.

It is of significant importance that in a team working together towards a common goal, there should be open and honest communication. This will ensure that when one member gets to know something, he/she will share with the rest of the members which in turn prevents the issue of some members feeling like they know better than others. It will also provide room for members to correct each other where one thinks they know when they really don't. This will increase chances of success as opposed to moving away from the set objectives. Whenever one decides to embark on a task say academic, business or even building, he/she must be well set and should have extra finance because of emerging extra spending as the project progresses. It is also crucial that the stakeholders ensure that the specified work quality is achieved with minimal or no diversions from the set quality target.

1.8. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the attempt to establish the effectiveness of team work in project management in the water aid project of the study area, the researcher recommends that;

- ✦ Though teamwork management is employed to a great extent among the water aid project professionals in the study area, team management courses should be incorporated in the training of professional to enhance their skills to higher levels.
- ✦ Professionals should work in teams as opposed to functional structure as there is positive relationship between team effectiveness and project performance.
- ✦ To capture challenges experienced in projects, the Government should come up with laws requiring maintenance of records by professional bodies, of events in the water aid project. This would facilitate, among others, continuous improvement of team management in the water aid project.

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