



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



The effects of dynamic team-building intervention on internal communication in the hospitality industry in Sunyani Municipality, Ghana

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Abstract

The current study seeks to ascertain how dynamic team-building interventions can improve internal communication in the hospitality industry. The study surveyed 135 respondents from 15 hospitality enterprises in Sunyani Municipality, Ghana, using a communication assessment instrument. The mean organization diagnosis results suggest that the studied organizations' internal communication channels are riddled with delayed and late information delivery, vocally hostile behavior, and a culture of secrecy. As a result, with the study organizations, a dynamic team-building intervention was devised and implemented. The researchers compared the pre-team-building intervention assessment results with the post-team-building intervention assessment results to determine how they changed after the intervention. The data show that the assessment variables recorded an average mean transformation score of 1.8, which is closer to the ideal score of one (1) than the average mean assessment score of 2.4 prior to the team-building intervention. The computational results show that the dynamic team-building interventions were effective in bringing the mean value closer to the ideal score of one (1). Again, the Cohen's d test analysis result of 3.8 demonstrates that the transformation that happened as a result of the dynamic team-building intervention had a significant impact size. Based on the findings, options for dynamic team-building interventions to improve the efficacy of teams in the hotel industry are provided.

Keywords: Dynamic Team-building; Internal Communication; Hospitality Industry; Organization Development Intervention

1. Introduction

In today's corporate environment, many organizations are turning to team-based structures to increase productivity, profitability, and service quality (1). As a result, many organizational leaders believe that horizontal, team-based structures are the best way to involve all employees in attaining corporate success. As a result, managers now recognize the importance of teamwork more than ever before in an era of increased competition. Teams, it has been proposed, can boost individual outputs through collaboration, serve as a better method to use human resources, and perhaps even improve individual performance (2). Members of teams can also collaborate, enhance their own abilities, and provide constructive criticism without interfering with one another (3). According to one study, all organizations, including non-profits and enterprises, require teamwork for growth and sustainability (4).

Since the early 1980s, team-based structures in workplaces have largely replaced the previously prevalent highly structured, centralized, and departmentalized mechanical organizations. The belief that forming strong and efficient production and management teams has the ability to raise performance and increase job satisfaction has resulted in the rapid spread of the use of teams (5). When compared to organizations that have traditional departments or similar structures in their design, organizations that focus on team-building and teamwork activities can experience benefits

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such as improved interpersonal interactions, increased satisfaction with work, accelerated decision-making, delegation of duties, and increased motivation and synergy among team members (6).

Despite such claims, other academics, (4), point out that while team-building is popular, the results are typically vague, non-significant, or mixed. Furthermore, the one major criticism of team-building programs—that they focus more on playing games than on changing behavior—has a significant disadvantage. While dynamic team-building programs might be engaging and interesting, they typically fail to have the desired impact once everyone returns to work (7). Another disadvantage is the way team-building is seen. Participating in dynamic team-building exercises appears to produce a range of opinions, some positive and some unfavorable. Fapohunda (5) refers to criticism that team-building is nothing more than a pretext for paid vacation time. Furthermore, Isik et al. (6) examined additional research on enhanced performance as a result of team-building and discovered that, despite enthusiastic claims, there was still another lack of compelling evidence to support the favorable impacts of team-building on performance.

A comprehensive examination of the extant literature on team-building and organizational growth and development reveals that there is little research on team development or that just a few studies have been conducted in service delivery organizations. Previous research, for example, has focused on industries such as healthcare, where multidisciplinary teams face issues such as collegiality, hierarchy, and professionalism (2). Similarly, the World Tourism Organization, mentioned in Salanova et al. (8), states that there is little empirical research, notably on the effects of team-building on business, in the world's largest industry, the hospitality industry. It would seem reasonable to suppose that the hospitality, finance, and retail industries rely heavily on effective collaboration. Despite the fact that many studies have been conducted to better understand group dynamics, forecast group performance (9), and improve the quality of group activities, there are few papers or research studies on teamwork in service sector contexts. The purpose of this dissertation is to assess the benefits of team-building on the hospitality industry using enterprises in Sunyani Municipality, Ghana, as a case study.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Team-building

Team-building, according to Aquino et al. (10), is the practice of bringing together people with various needs, histories, and expertise and transforming them into integrated and successful work units. At the same time, Aga et al. (2) noted that team-building is a learning process with an experimental approach to enhancing internal group processes such as individual communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution. The purpose of team-building is to improve communication quality, increase productivity and creativity, and support organizations in inspiring personnel to appropriately follow operational norms and procedures (2). Other advantages include enhanced workplace trust and mutual support, which leads to increased job satisfaction and dedication to the organization (5).

The two primary categories of group growth are dynamic team-building and team-training (11). Both interventions for dynamic team-building and team-training strive to promote team efficacy, but they target different types of teams and consequently have different team requirements. Team training aims to transform weak and transient 'patchwork' teams into cohesive units by consolidating group members' acquisition of cooperative skills such as communication, which necessitates the inclusion of practical training within specific contexts that are specific to the work or task (12). In contrast to team-training, dynamic team-building is described as most efficient when a team has a specific difficulty that impedes the team's work and thus exhibits maximum utility for stable groups built over time of the same members who have long experience working together. Dynamic team-building is frequently less regulated, with the purpose of teaching groups the fundamental skills required for collaborative business (1). It is based on the idea that members of a group can help themselves by diagnosing and addressing problems in order to better manage their own behavior.

One of the most common strategies for group development is dynamic team-building. Dynamic team-building interventions are therapies intended expressly to address team development concerns such as enhancing interpersonal relationships, increasing productivity, and aligning team goals with organizational goals, resulting in more successful organizational work (13). In particular, dynamic team-building interventions allow teams to reflect on how they communicate with one another, recognize defects and shortcomings in collaboration, provide an ideal picture of cooperation, and contribute to the establishment of effective organizations (1). The interventions are first intended to help groups evolve and build their social and interpersonal ties, but they eventually shift their focus to a variety of aspects of group development, such as articulating common goals, attaining results, or completing assignments (2).

According to Aga et al. (2), the effect of dynamic team-building on group performance is also influenced by the amount of time the team spends together and the amount of time the group is given to complete the task. They discovered that

dynamic team-building had no effect on teams created for short periods of time and given fictive assignments for short periods of time. The interventions, on the other hand, had an influence on pre-existing and newly created teams that collaborated on a genuine job for a longer period of time. Within-group research has typically used teams convened for brief periods of time to work on fictive tasks, which may explain uneven dynamic team-building outcomes (3). The current study looks at work groups that have been working together and are expected to continue working together in the near future.

2.2. Internal Communication

Internal communication encompasses all interactions that occur within an office or organization. This relationship can exist among employees, employees and administrators, and superiors. Internal communication is the process of sharing information, fostering commitment, and managing change as the primary drivers of employee motivation and performance within an organization (14). Internal communication can be defined as any formal or informal communication within an organization. The purpose of internal organisational communication is to increase organisational value.

Effective communication with employees is essential for fostering a sense of belonging and motivating employees to perform at their highest level (14). On the other hand, poor internal communication will result in decreased productivity, disruption of information flow, decreased competitiveness, lack of commitment, and ignorance of market objectives (15). Ignoring these issues will result in decreased motivation, inadequate feedback, disregard for employee accomplishments and opinions, difficulty executing organizational strategies, and a lack of awareness of organizational plans, thereby preventing the achievement of organizational objectives (16).

Internal communication is a variable of complexity. The two primary dimensions are the dimension of relationships and the dimension of information, and a team may be satisfied with one but not the other (13). In his research, Dennis (17) classified internal communication into the following five categories: superior-subordinate communication, information quality, superior openness/candour, upward communication opportunities, and information reliability. Finding out how employees feel about the communication they receive, the message's reliability and quality, and the openness of their workplace will provide insight into the communication climate of the organization.

Superior-subordinate communication is an example of positive communication between a subordinate and their superior because it includes exchanges of support, understanding, and fairness. In terms of communication quality, this indicated that employees were satisfied with management's methods of communication, the platforms they used, the awards they received, and their comprehension of organizational objectives and job requirements. Consideration is given to employee contentment with management's knowledge and explanations, openness throughout the organization, and message integrity.

Management or higher-level performance is typically associated with increased transparency. This element reveals how the subordinate perceives their superiors' ability to provide information and their honesty and candor in doing so. Possibilities for upward communication reveal how employees feel about having their ideas and opinions incorporated into their daily work. Communication reliability is the degree to which employees believe management and coworkers' communications are dependable.

2.3. Team-building & Internal Communication

Noe (17) defines team-building as a training technique designed to increase the efficacy of a team or group. He continued by stating that the objective of dynamic team-building training was to enhance the participants' abilities to enhance team effectiveness. Participants in dynamic team-building exercises share their thoughts and experiences, forge a sense of unity within the group, comprehend the dynamics of interpersonal interactions, and are aware of one another's strengths and limitations. This strategy emphasizes on enhancing the effectiveness of team collaboration. Team development can enhance the characteristics of team members and interpersonal relationships within the team, thereby facilitating internal communication within the organization. According to the Homans (18) paradigm, internal communication is linked to team formation. This model emphasizes on the interpersonal relationships among team members, which include tasks, interactions, and attitudes. Changes in any of these factors will affect the performance of the team.

2.4. Intervention

An "intervention" is a series of sequentially planned actions and events intended to improve the efficacy of an organization. Principles, objectives, and operational activities will establish the essential interventions; interventions

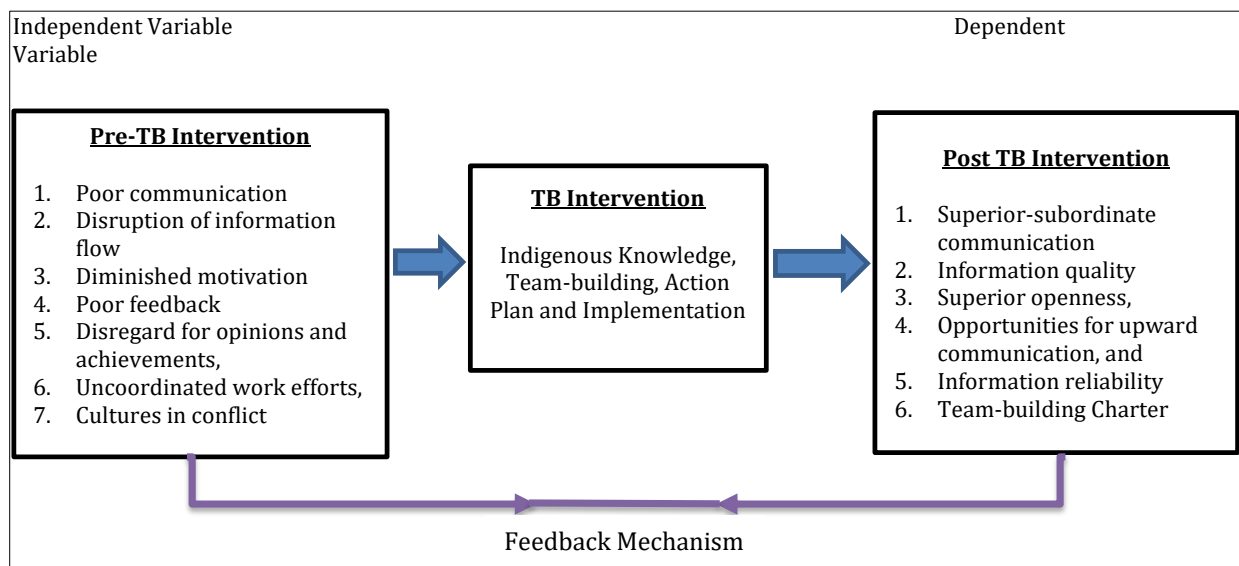
are intended to push the organization outside of its comfort zone (19). This study employs the human process intervention, which includes leadership, problem-solving, communication, and group decision-making. Coaching, training and development, process consultation, and third-party intervention are examples of interventions. Frequently, these interventions focus on interpersonal interactions, group dynamics, and dynamic team-building activities.

The competence of the consultants is only one factor that determines the success of the intervention; organisational commitment factors also influence the changes that will result from the intervention. There are three distinct categories of client dedication to the transformation process (17). This first form of commitment, known as affective commitment, is a result of the organization's drive to advance. The second form of commitment is normative commitment, which entails a pledge to aid in the change process. Thirdly, the continuation commitment, also known as the commitment based on cost calculation, aids in preventing failure-related losses. To acquire the trust of clients, consultants must frequently interact with them. The ability to commit will aid consultants in planning and selecting the most effective interventions and communicating the significance of the change to the organization.

Multiple human factors, including change beneficiaries, organizations, and change agents or facilitators, influence how changes occur. To be effective, a facilitator must be optimistic, gifted, and knowledgeable. The facilitator must have a comprehensive comprehension of the group he is attempting to influence, establish plans, and then lead the changes, but he cannot assume that he possesses all the necessary skills. Before attempting to change others, the facilitator must first comprehend himself. The success or failure of an intervention is contingent upon the organisation's capacity for change and the facilitator's capacity for generating commitment.

2.5. Conceptual framework

Figure 1 presents a conceptual framework designed to guide the study.



Source: Authors' construct, 2022

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

3. Material and methods

3.1. Research Design

In this study, the action research design was chosen and implemented. It was chosen due to its potential to provide insight during the interventional procedure, which could assist the study in reaching its intended conclusion. In this study, the action research design method was divided into three phases: pre-intervention, dynamic intervention, and post-intervention.

The pre-team-building intervention phase achieved two essential objectives. Initially, it was necessary to evaluate the current condition of internal communication in the organizations in order to identify the internal communication-

related issues that require action. The second step involved devising and implementing team-building intervention strategies.

The objective of the team-building intervention was to devise an action plan to address the challenges identified in the pre-intervention assessment. Each set of objectives and regulations was developed in response to the identified obstacles prior to implementation. The action plan details the primary topics, significant internal communication issues, tasks, and responsible parties.

The post-team-building intervention phase was designed to evaluate the organization's current state in relation to the five main thematic areas of superior-subordinate communication, information reliability, information quality, superior openness, and upward communication prospects. The primary objective was to determine whether the team-building intervention resulted in a change.

3.2. Data Collection

The researchers used both qualitative and quantitative research approaches to gather and analyze data throughout the pre and post team-building intervention stages of the study. To gather qualitative data, interviews and observation methods were used. Quantitative data were gathered using closed-ended Likert-scale questionnaires. The Likert-scale questions have a 1-5 range of scores with 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Disagree. The data were examined and presented using tables and graphs.

3.3. Research population and sample

The research population is made up of employees from upper and lower-level positions in firms in the service sector of the hospitality industry in Sunyani municipality. Specifically, hotels and guest houses fall within this category. The researchers used cluster sampling to select twenty-five firms in the hospitality industry in Sunyani municipality. Simple random sampling was used to select respondents from the fifteen sampled firms in the hospitality industry as the units of analysis. In all, one hundred and thirty-five (135) people participated in this study as respondents.

4. Results

4.1. Pre-Organisation Development Assessment

The researchers evaluated the organisation's internal communication using the Organisation Internal communication Self-Assessment Instrument (questionnaire) developed for the study. The mean scores of the assessment have been graphically presented in Figure 2.

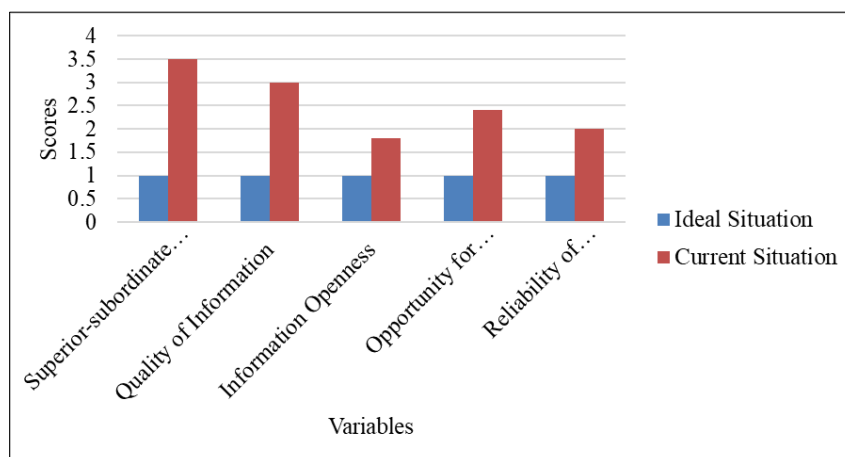


Figure 2 Pre-Internal Communication Assessment score of firms in the hospitality industry in Sunyani Municipality. Source: Field Survey, 2021

In reference to Figure 2, the firms current internal communication condition has projected higher than the ideal mean score of one (1). The outcome is a clear indication that the firms have challenges with internal communication across all five key assessment variables. In order to determine the variables causing the projection of the mean score of the

variables over the ideal mean score of one (1), the researchers and study participants conducted internal diagnoses of the study firms.

4.2. Diagnosis of firms

4.2.1. Superior-subordinate communication

The firms scored an average mean of 2.5, which is higher than the desired mean value of 1.0. The responders point out that both supervisors (superiors) and employees (subordinates) collaborate to realize the firms' objective and vision. However, there are many situations in which supervisors verbally engage in aggressive behaviour towards employees in the workplace. Internal creativity has decreased as a result of this behaviour, which has also occasionally resulted in subordinate disengagement and workplace deviation.

4.2.2. Information quality,

The firms received an overall average score of 3.0 in the category of information quality. The findings revealed that information delivery is often slow and untimely. The methodology used to gather and process information as well as the channel of distribution, according to the respondents, is not always dependable.

4.2.3. Superior openness/candor,

The assessed firms scored an average mean of 1.8 in superior openness. The respondents state that there is a strong emphasis on confidentiality within the firms. Lack of consensus building, poor creativity, and ineffective problem solving are all effects of the secretive culture.

4.2.4. Opportunities for upward communication,

The firms received an average score of 2.4 in the category of opportunities for upward communication. The study revealed that the firms discourages giving feedback, especially to superiors. Again, employees of the firms are not free to speak out and voice their opinions on issues that trouble them. Additionally, this has made it difficult to propose fresh perspectives, and offer constructive criticism.

4.2.5. Information reliability.

For information reliability, the firms received an average score of 2.0. According to the results, there are several discrepancies and mistakes in the management and flow of information. As a result, employees in the study firms turn to information scrutiny in order to identify prospective issues and stop undesirable events.

4.3. Action Planning and Implementation

The researchers conducted an activity plan on key issues identified as internal communication challenges bedeviling the study firms. The plan was implemented between February 2021 and March 2022. Table 1 shows the action plan.

Table 1 Team-building Action Plan

Variable	Key internal Communication Challenge	Team-building tool(s) used	Responsibility
Superior-subordinate communication	Superiors verbally exhibit aggressive, behaviours on subordinates	360 degree feedback Spider Web Exercise	Internal Change Agent Researchers
Information quality	Inaccurate, slow and untimely delivery of pertinent information	Self-Introduction and Name Tag	Internal Change Agent Researchers
Superior openness / candor	Culture of secretary Lack of trust Lack of respect	Socio-Gram 1 & 2 Spider Web Exercise Age Continuum	Internal Change Agent Researchers
Opportunities for upward communication	Subordinates are not encouraged to provide feedback to superiors	Use 360 degree feedback Presentation Facilitation	Internal Change Agent Researchers

Information reliability	inconsistencies and inaccuracies	Facilitation Presentation	Internal Change Agent Researchers
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Source: Field Survey, 2021

4.4. Pre and Post Team-building Intervention Transformation

In this section, the researchers compare the pre-team-building intervention assessment mean to the post-assessment results to get a clearer picture of the magnitude of changes that occur after the intervention process.

Table 2 Mean Transformation Table

Variable	Ideal score	Pre-ODI Assessment			Post-ODI Assessment		
		X_i	$X_i - \mu$	$(X_i - \mu)^2$	X_{ii}	$X_{ii} - \mu$	$(X_{ii} - \mu)^2$
Superior-subordinate communication	1	2.5	0.1	0.01	1.9	0.1	0.01
Information quality	1	3.0	0.6	0.36	2.2	0.4	0.16
Superior openness	1	1.8	0.3	0.09	1.6	-0.2	-0.04
Opportunities for upward communication	1	2.2	-0.6	-0.36	1.6	-0.2	-0.04
Information reliability	1	2.4	0	0	1.9	0.1	0.01
Total		$\Sigma X_i = 11.9$		$(X_i - \mu)^2 = 0.1$	$\Sigma X_{ii} = 9.2$		$(X_{ii} - \mu)^2 = -0.19$
		Mean = 2.4		$\sigma^2 = 0.02$	Mean = 1.8		$\sigma^2 = 0.03$

Source: Field Survey, 2022

4.5. Effects size of Transformation

Table 3 Cohen's D Analysis

	Pre-ODI Assessment	Post-ODI Assessment
Mean	2.4	1.8
Variance	0.02	0.03
Standard Deviation	0.14	0.17
Cohen's d	3.85	

Source: Field Work, 2022

5. Discussions

The intervention produced a significant difference between the pre-intervention means and the post-intervention assessment means. Referring to table 2, the post-intervention team-building assessment revealed a mean transformation score of 1.8, which is closer to the optimal score of one (1) than the pre-assessment mean score of 2.4. The computational results indicate that the dynamic team-building interventions were effective in bringing the post-intervention mean value closer to the ideal score of one (1). The post-intervention mean score (1.8) is also significantly closer to the ideal value of one (1) than the pre-intervention mean score (2.4). Again, the Cohen's d test analysis score of 3.8 indicates that the effect size of the transformation that resulted from the intervention in dynamic team-building is significant. The aforementioned arguments demonstrate the efficacy of dynamic team-building interventions in addressing internal communication issues in the hospitality sector. Interventions for team development are effective at

identifying problems, devising and designing solutions, implementing and evaluating them. Dynamic team-building is similar to organizational retreat therapy in that change agents and/or trainers use comparable team-building materials and tools to transform participants.

6. Conclusion

This study emphasizes the significance of dynamic team-building interventions for improving internal communication in the hospitality industry. The assessment results demonstrate that the dynamic team-building interventions implemented in the study organizations resulted in substantial improvements in internal communication.

Effective internal communication is essential for the success of hospitality industry organizations. It improves coordination, fosters cooperation, and fosters a positive work environment. By addressing the identified communication challenges, organisations can improve their overall performance and achieve their objectives more efficiently.

This study's findings contribute to the existing literature on dynamic team-building and internal communication in the hospitality industry. It provides managers and practitioners in the industry with valuable insights for understanding the benefits of dynamic team-building interventions and implementing strategies to improve internal communication.

Nonetheless, it is essential to recognize the limitations of this investigation. The investigation was conducted in a particular geographic area and on a limited number of organizations. Future research could expand the scope by examining the long-term effects of dynamic team-building interventions on organizational performance with a larger sample size.

In conclusion, dynamic team-building interventions may be an effective method for enhancing internal communication in the hospitality industry. By addressing communication obstacles and nurturing a positive communication climate, organizations can improve teamwork, enhance collaboration, and ultimately achieve better results. Implementing dynamic team-building interventions should be considered as part of the hospitality industry's overall organizational development strategy.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of Conflict of interest

The authors agree that there is no conflict of interest.

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