

# ENSURING SUCCESSFUL TEAMWORK IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN GHANA: THE ROLE OF AN ADMINISTRATOR

KENNETH ABBAN

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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**Abstract:** It is always important for Public Universities to set up teams to push for the vision and missions of the Universities in Ghana. Teams are pervasive in today's world and no educational institution or organization can function properly without teamwork. In order for Public Universities to function effectively, members must engage themselves in teamwork. The Public Universities must encourage members to take good decisions and operate through the interdependent actions to achieve the set targets and goals of their institutions. In the olden days, the strength in terms of numbers for Staff and Students at the public universities in Ghana was very small, and that helped Administrators to plan and take concrete decisions,

This is not so today, the population of Staff and Students at the public universities in Ghana had increased such that members need to team-up as groups to share ideas, views and ideologies to achieve the vision and mission of their universities.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teams are defined as distinguishable set of two or more people who interact, dynamically, undependably and adaptively toward a common and valued goal or objective (Salas Dickinson, Converse J. and Tanenbaum C., 2014, p 12.). In order for a team to perform exiting task effectively, members must unanimously and successful perform both task work and teamwork. The task work must involve the performance of the specific task that team member need to complete in order to achieve their objectives. The management processes at the public universities in Ghana have become more complex such that individuals can no longer manage the institution. In modern times, teamwork has become the basic working unit in all organization. By ensuring effective teamwork in public universities will promote better communication among staff, perfect interaction and encourage members to be part of the institution. Members may also have the zeal or willingness to generate new ideas to support the growth and development of the institution. Teamwork will also help to manage, reduce and solve conflicts in the institution. Members in the team have the almost responsibility to build and nature the team or the team members based on the skills and competencies of the member in the team.

In teamwork, it is the duty of team members to focus more on the shared behaviors, (i.e., what team members do), their attitudes, (i.e., what team members believes or feel for), and cognitions, (i.e., what team members think or know), that are important for members to accomplish these tasks (Morgan, Salas and Glickman, 1994).

Generally, teamwork aids in ensuring that task are performed effectively. Both teamwork and task are crucial for effective and successful performance. A team can perform poorly or abysmal if members in the team fail to coordinate their activities, shared knowledge and trust one another. (Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp and Gilson, 2008). The activities of any teamwork should be dynamic. Members must adapt to each other. And the whole process should be episodic by bring together the feelings, thoughts, ideas and behaviours of all the team members to achieve a common goal. In order to succeed in executing a particular task you must consider that teamwork is necessary for effective team performance.

## 2. ATTRIBUTES OF EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK

According to Haris and Haris, 2010, teamwork is a cooperative process that allows ordinary people to achieve extraordinary results. They also explained that every team must have a common goal or must have a purpose where individual team members can develop mutual relationships and understanding to achieve their set target or goal. Teams are integral parts of institutional or organizational activities and it should be incorporated in the activities of public universities in Ghana. In teamwork, members must be flexible so that they could cooperate with each other in the working environments to achieve the set goals through collaboration and social independence. There are number of attributes required for successful teamwork and these attributes are:

**i. Commitment to Team Success and Shared Goals:**-Team members must always concentrate on the success of the team and their shared goals. Members must be assigned with responsibilities so that they could aim at achieving higher levels. By allowing members to participate in task will make them understand the purpose and the shared goals of the university. Team members must share strong common goals. Team members must show prestige and recognition. All the members in the group must be committed in achieving their purpose. The values and beliefs of the team must be the same. And it should be strongly shared among members. Members should also create a serene and formal atmosphere or platform equally for all the members. There should be team cohesion. Team members must enjoy constant interaction with individuals who share similar interest, values, beliefs and goals. And above all members must be handsomely motivated to succeed.

**ii. Interdependence:** Team members need to create an atmosphere where members can depend on each other and also come out with the best in them. Members with experience in the team should encourage the upcoming members to contribute, learn and support to achieve superior goals. Individuals in the group or team cannot succeed without the support of other members in the group. When a team is together, members can deliver more than individuals. Team members must all the time work together effectively to produce perfect results. When team members are interdependent, they will surely interact and help each other to accomplish their task ahead of time. In teamwork, time is very important and members must quickly build on the capabilities of their fellows in the team. In teamwork it is always prudent for members to take interest in both individuals and group achievement. A team must never be fully self-directed. Often team members must be empowered to accomplish assignments. Team leaders must allow members to come together and share their individual experiences. And this may help the team members to learn so that they may subsequently perform better in the group.

**iii. Interpersonal Skills:** A team must have the ability to openly discuss issues among members. Members in the team should be honest, trust worthy, supportive, committed and also show respect to others. Members must show care and also protect the interest of the group. Individuals in the group must be given the free will to express their feelings without hindrance of interference.

**iv. Open Communication and Positive Feedback-** Team leaders must always listen to the concerns and needs of team members. Suggestions and contributions of members should be valued to help create serene willingly give and be prepared to receive work environment. Members should willingly give and be prepare to receive authentic feedback and constructive criticism. Team members should value effective listening and communication that may affects the group. Members must allow open dialogue and communication.

Members must always be truthful and open so that their colleagues could express their feelings. Members should always confront conflict in the group and work through it. An ideal team should be highly diversified in the talents and knowledge each member contributes, while maintaining open, non-threatening communication (Bradly and Frederic, 2012).

**v. Appropriate Team Composition:**-For a team to succeed or achieve its set target, it's prudent for member to create appropriate team. Specific team roles or task must be assigned to members. Members must clearly understand what is expected of them. Team leaders must clarify the responsibilities, nature of assignment and roles to be performed by each member in the group. (Wageman 2010)

**vi. Commitment to Team Processes, Leadership and Accountability:**-Members in a team need to be accountable for their comment, suggestions and contribution. Members need to be aware of new development, ideas, best practices and

team processes. Effective leadership is essential for team success including shared decision-making and problem solving (Parker 2001). Team members should be open to change, innovation, creativity and jointly solve challenges together without waiting for direction. Team leaders must always monitor the team's progress and perform post-projected analysis to improve the set goals in the institution.

### 3. TEAM DEVELOPMENT STAGES

Teams mature as they move or graduate from one stage to another. Bringing individuals together as a group to function is the first stage of team development. The development of individuals to level of a group or a team may take some time, energy and commitments. For teams to be effective members must set common goals, the team members must focus on these goals ahead their personal interests. Below are two models of the phases of team development.

#### 1. The Tuckman Model

According to Tuckman, there are four stages through which group treasures as they mature into well-functioning team. Not every team is able to go through the last stage, i.e., performance stage. The Tuckman model describes stage of a team as, forming, storming, Norming and Performing.

##### i. Forming Stage

In this stage team members are respectful, calm and polite to each other. Members have confidence and assess each other as to how they fit into the group. The group or team members are able tolerate the behaviours, attitudes and complaints. Members are able to stretch their limits. Members are able to come together to work and achieve the set goal of the team. Ground rules are followed by members to ensure productive work.

##### ii. Storming Stage

In storming stage members begin to relax and also let down their guards. Blame game is very common here members argue a lot which affect productivity. It is the stage where you see pockets of conflicts. Members begin to form camps and clique groups which may thrive on unhealthy conflict.

It is also important that during storming stage the team should set up strategies to control conflicts and controversies. Individual opinion in the group must be respected.

Sometimes, the conflicts or the controversy can also help the members to rethink and change their ways of doing things. And these effects create improvement in the group activities or creativity.

Tuckman believes that a team should always start to learn through storming stage. And any team that does not learn through this stage is considered to be less creative.

##### iii. Norming Stage.

During norming stage, group members are able to accept and appreciate individual differences. Team members are able to learn to work productively through conflict and focus on their task to achieve a common goal. Team members quickly come together and maintain harmony so that the group could re-think to achieve their task rather than to introduce individual difference.

##### iv. Performance Stage

During performance stage, team members have to come together and trust each other to achieve their goals rather than maintaining their individual differences. The group members reap all rewards as they achieve their tasks or goals.

At this stage, team members foster on brainstorming, ideas and creativity to achieve their agreed goals rather than personal differences or individual agendas. Debates, pride, attacks, petty conflicts, complaints are abolished. Members concentrate on creativity and innovations to solve their challenges.

#### 2. The Cog Model

The Cog model also shows the various stages through which teams or groups passes as it mature into well-functioning teams.

Cog Model sees team development as a process and such it takes energy and time to develop groups or individuals into team.

Members should expect the process of team development to take time. Team members should prepare for difficult periods as it occurs. The Cog Model considers the stages of team development into five-step ladder as follows.

**i. Polite Stage**

It is a stage where individual members in the group are polite to each other and understand individual duties within the team. Members try to go out of their ways to understand each other and also not create conflict.

**ii. Why Are We Here? Stage**

Members ponder the purpose of the group. Members concentrate on their contribution to the group. There is always the question of “why am I here?”

**iii. Bid for Power Stage**

This is the stage where traditional roles of the individuals comes out or surface. This is the stage where you see traditional roles such as mediators, creative thinkers, leaders, task masters, writers, directors, time keepers and technical officers. These individuals come together and plan towards the development of the team.

At this stage, it is common to observe power struggle since the team had evolved past the polite stage.

**iv. Constructive Stage**

At this stage, the team had post performing activities that is most comfortable to the members. The contractive stage is characterized by enhanced harmony. The team members try to set up strategies that will provide the interest and goals of the group.

**v. Esprit Stage**

In this stage only few teams are able to make up. There is high interdependence within the group. Members share their group experiences and accomplishments. Members clearly identify themselves with the team. They become proud as team members and demonstrate genuine care for each other. The members show concern about their welfare and success.

#### **4. CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE TEAMS**

1. A team must have clear goals
2. Team members must be competent, knowledgeable and be prepared to serve or work to achieve the set target or goals of the team.
3. Team members must also be honest, open, and respectful and collaborate with other members.
4. Members must have equal commitment and unified focus to achieve their agenda.
5. A team should be result oriented, i.e., must have result-driven structure(s)
6. A team must have high expectation above the individual members in the group and the expectation of the group must be understood by all the members.
7. A team must always be prepared to receive support and encouragement from external sources. Team members should not only look from within but rather should be prepared to receive external assistance to achieve their goals.
8. The roles of leaders in the team are very important. Teams must always elect effective leaders who are willing and able to work for the benefit of all the team members.

#### **5. TEAM ROLES**

Specialization of members in a team leads to better team organization and productivity. As team size increases, the roles of the team members also changes. It is always important to differentiate the roles of team members as membership increases.

During early team development processes, the team productivity should be promoted through assignment and rotation of roles. The behaviors of the team members defines the character of the group and also how other groups would expect the team to contribute towards them.

All team members are expected to behave in a way to achieve the objectives of the team. Generally, team members are responsible for achieving their target. And this could be done through capitalization on the strength of all individuals in the team.

The team members are supposed to create a serene environment where new entrants could acquire skills and knowledge. Each team is expected to define the roles that will best promote the team's productivity.

Regular rotation of team roles allows members to acquire new skills and appreciate their challenges. Understanding and effective communication may rise if team members periodically reflect on their team experiences.

#### **Team Leader:**

A team leader is someone who always exerts greater influence on the team. He is in charge of the overall task schedule, project schedules and deliverables. He/she must be dynamic and affordable and be willing to change or adapt to situation.

A team leader must understand his/her roles clearly including both tasked roles and responsibilities which includes nurturing, and managing emotions of the team members.

The responsibility of team leader includes:

- I. Furthering the objectives and goals of the team.
- II. Prepare agenda for meetings
- III. Sending reminders of meetings to members.
- IV. Ensuring that the team remains focused on the proposed agenda.
- V. Encouraging members to participate in all decision making.
- VI. Establishing serene environment that could foster creativity and unity among members.
- VII. Creating environment for team members to respect each other, take risk and also have free will to express their view.

#### **Recorder/ Scribe**

He/she captures team decisions. The recorder keeps documentations of decisions made by the team and acting items assigned. The recorder communicates team decisions in a timely manner to members. A team must have a recorder and he/she must act quickly and communicate decisions to members

#### **Facilitator**

A facilitator ensures that the opinions or views expressed by team members are evaluated. The facilitators keep time during team meetings. The facilitator is in charge of moving the meeting according to the established schedule.

#### **Liaison Officer**

The liaison officer always communicates with institutions or organizations outside the group or the team.

The liaison officer takes lead role in establishing contacts and follows up with other institutions to obtain information and also push the agenda of the team.

#### **Team Contract**

A team must always plan and prepare a team contract at the beginning of each project. And the team contract should be reviewed regularly to ensure that the team is on its right path in achieving its objectives. Before a team engages in a contract, the following should be discussed and documented:

- I. What role each team member is expected to play?

- II. What role is the greatest?
- III. How to work effectively as a team.
- IV. The shortfalls or likelihood challenges that the team members will face in the course of discharging their duties.

### **Team Meetings**

To ensure effective team meetings, the following essential elements should be observed. And these elements are:

- I. Team members should communicate effectively.
- II. There should be a strong cohesive bond among the leadership.
- III. There should be open and constructive communication between all members in the team.
- IV. Members must have common understanding to achieve their set target or their objectives.
- V. The team leaders must provide opportunity for members to share their progress, challenges and complaints.
- VI. Members must be provided with the opportunity to redirect project tasks and re-assigning duties, if necessary.
- VII. Members should be allowed to brainstorm and solve challenges.
- VIII. The team members should share their visions and objectives in achieving their goals .
- IX. Members should be constantly engaged and avoid unintentional alienation of any person.

### **Elements for Effective Team Meetings at UEW**

Effective team meeting requires effective team leaders who can push for things to happen correctly. Team leaders should always act swiftly and circulate the agenda for meeting on time.

The following elements are important for effective team meeting. It includes:

- I. Ensuring effective team roles are followed appropriately. Individual team roles must be rotated and members should be given the opportunity to practice their skills
- II. Meeting agenda should be solicited in advance. Members must prepare specific agenda for each meeting.
- III. Time for the agenda should be estimated. Members must not waste so much time on the items in the agenda.
- IV. Members must decide on a better place for meetings. The environment should be serene such that members may be comfortable to share their views.
- V. The time for meetings should be convenient to all members.
- VI. All the members must agree to rules and regulations governing their meetings.
- VII. All members should be committed and come together and take a good decision to achieve the goals of the team.

### **Things Team Members Must Do To Succeed**

For any team to be successful, members must have command and control over the following:

- i. Ensures that there is a high collaboration among members in the team.
- ii. Friendly team meetings should be organized so that members may have the free will to express themselves.
- iii. Members must always focus on the project or the task ahead. It is always important for members to follow up on each set target.
- iv. Ensures that they facilitate and nurture positive cooperate working relationship among members.
- v. Members must share their strong common goal(s).
- vi. Team members must be motivated to out-perform other teams.

- vii. Members must have the free desire to almost or groom others. This means members must have responsibility towards each other.
- viii. Team members must show consideration and support members in the team.
- ix. Members must be open and share each other's challenges or difficulties. Members must also offer constructive help or criticism in trying to resolve issues.
- x. There should be strong open dialogue so that members could express their concerns in a non-defensive manner.
- xi. The team should be proactive and carefully consider the skills needed for each team member, and also the type of personality for each team member.
- xii. The roles of the team members should be clearly spelt out and all the members should be aware of the roles of each team member.
- xiii. The team leaders should always consult the team member before taking major decisions.

### Signs to Watch from Unsuccessful Team

If a team is not observing the condition above then, there is the likelihood that the activities of the team may not be successful. Unsuccessful team is likely to experience the following challenges:

- i. Members would split in all team activities.
- ii. Team member would refuse to contribute in decision making in the institution or in the organization.
- iii. Serious decrement at team meetings
- iv. Members will decide not to work together.
- v. Very difficult for members to reconcile.
- vi. Mismatch of expectation which may result in several challenges and frustration.
- vii. Low competition among members. Members may not also focus on the assigned task. Individual team members may also refuse to assist one another which will eventually create or cause lack of team cohesion.
- viii. Poor cooperation among members. And this may create disempowerment which will eventually result in the formation of camps.
- ix. Members may decide to be inconsiderate in all situations. Some members may also not be inclined to discuss challenges faced in the institution. And this may eventually result in criticism and negative feedback.
- x. Team members may decide to be late at team meeting or contribute effectively at team meetings.
- xi. Members may also decide to be absent from all decisions, communications and activities that will promote growth and development in the group.

## 6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE TEAMWORK AT UEW

“Team work is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishment towards organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results” – Andrew Carnegie.

To ensure successful teamwork, the following strategies should be employed:

### I. Focus on the Big Picture

Team leaders always lose sight of the big picture. Members should always have long term plan and the plan should be re-enforced regularly. Members should direct all their focus towards what they intend to achieve rather than having divergent views and directions which will eventually affect their target and create challenges for the team.

## II. Define Roles

The duties and roles of individual members in the team should be clearly defined. Responsibilities of every member in the group should be clearly defined and also properly defined. By defining roles of each member in the team will help members to understand their duties and deadline.

By defining roles will promote team work and collaboration. When roles are properly defined it helps to offer untapped talents, responsibility and control.

## III. Set Goals

A team must always set group goals. The set goals must be SMART, i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound. With team-driven goals, a team may develop code of ethics and help to curb absenteeism, laziness and poor performance.

## IV. Share Information

Teams must always share information. By sharing information may promote morale and productivity. Communication among team members is very important. It helps team members to be abreast with current decision and also assist members to act swiftly.

## V. Establish Trust

Team members should be trustworthy and dependable. Team members must honor their words. Members must make decisions of teams as their priority. Members must consistently treat each other with fairness.

## VI. Listen

Members should be open to team ideas and present formal suggestions for programmes. Teams must carefully consider all suggestions and respond to individuals or the entire team. By listening to members will enhance improvements in productivity and promote new product lines.

## VII. Be Patient

A team should be patient in dealing with team members. Individual members in the team should be given time to get along. Differences in members should be resolved. Team members should be patient in resolving or dealing with other team members

## VIII. Provide Encouragement

Team leaders must always challenge members to participate and contribute in decisions effectively. Team leaders must provide opportunity for members to undergo training and development. Members must take the necessary steps outside their comfort zones to develop their own unique talents. Leaders must acknowledge individual strengths and offer positive reinforcement.

## IX. Praise the Team

Team must celebrate their achievements. Teams must reward their members. Stars should be given the opportunity to excel in everything that they do. Their performance team members must be recognized through performance review and teamwork. Team leaders must always speak positively about their teams. Team leaders must showcase their talents of the group and recognize their dedication, efforts and success publically.

## X. Be Enthusiastic

The team leaders should be enthusiastic about all that they do or say to members. The level of enthusiasm of team leaders should have influence on other members since enthusiasm is contagious. Leaders should be positive, hopeful and upbeat on all the things that they perform. Team leaders must always expect good results and great things from the team members. Team members should not do things that will jeopardize the image of the team. A team must always focus on what is ahead of them and get things done rightly.



**XI. Have Recreational Activities**

A team must set up time for fun. Members must have fun after achieving targets. This because “*all work and no play makes jack a dull boy*”. Team must occasionally come together and have fun such as breakfast, lunch or supper. It will promote communication and effective interaction. Junior members should be encouraged to feel part of the team. This encourage members to cooperate and be prepared to work extra harder to achieve the goals of the institution.

**XII. Delegate Responsibility**

Team leaders should delegate responsibility. Team leaders must provide vivid explanation as what has to be done to members. A team must all the time develop action plan for the team to execute the plan accordingly. Leaders must trust team members to complete their assignments correctly and on time. Leaders must trust their members to meet the deadlines as specified by the team.

**XIII. Ease Up**

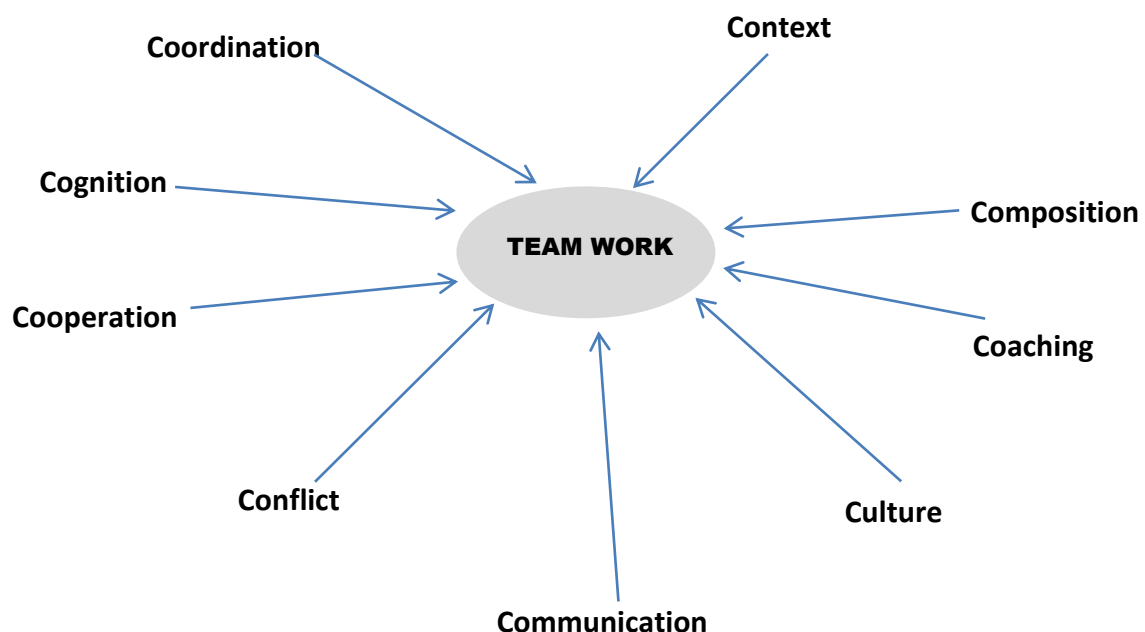
Team leaders most sometimes adjust the rules and regulations for members when they determine that the role or the rules are too tight for members to achieve. A team should be dynamic, responsive and swiftly to change in environmental conditions. Members should not stick to one direction or traditional methods of doing things. Flexibility with all the existing rules and regulations must all the time be employed to achieve increment in productivity.

**XIV. Inspire Your Team**

Most often, team leaders fail to inspire members in the team. They turn to shift blames and create unnecessary tension within the group. As a team leader you always have to “*move*” your team. You must have in mind that the buck stops with you. When things go wrong, you should kindly take charge or control and calm things down. Always discuss issues calmly with other team members. A leader must have confidence in his team, motivate members and encourage greatness. Leaders must ensure that there is cooperation, mutual understanding, enthusiasm and team work.

**XV. Use the Team Size to your Advantage**

Both big and small teams have their own merits. Smaller teams have personal investment and involvement while big teams have more manpower skills. Always, leaders must take charge for getting things done.

**7. FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE THE ACTIVITIES OF TEAMWORK**

**i. Cooperation:** the cooperation of members in a team may influence the activities of the team. The feelings, beliefs, and attitudes of the group may positively or diversely affect their performance or output as a group. Cooperation of members in the team helps the group to capture their motivational drivers to over-reach their expected output or target set by the group. Teams whose members cooperate effectively in an institution are more likely to succeed and achieve their goals than teams whose members do not cooperate effectively. The level of cooperation among members in a team may also depend upon trust. If members in a group trust themselves very well, they are likely to succeed than term members who do not rust themselves. Members who do not trust themselves turn to fail in activities that they perform. Trust helps team members to influence the amount of monitoring within the group. Whenever there is trust, there is an organizational commitment, job satisfaction, positive attitudes, high performance level, and high team behavioural.

**ii. Conflict:**

Conflict can be perceived incompatibility in interest, beliefs and views by one or more team members. It is always good to have some level of conflict among members in a team since it brings about introduction of new things or initiatives. The level of conflict among members in a group may determine their level of performance in an organization or in the institution.

In teamwork development, conflict is inevitable. This is because member in the group have different ideologies, ideas, thinking, behaviours, attitudes and they perceive things differently. Anytime there is conflict in a team, members should work out their differences and cooperate with one another to achieve their self-target. Conflict may be simple as disagreement on some issues such as “who is supposed to perform particular duties”, or it may be headed to the level at which members may decide to fight each other. Task conflict can be positively affect team performance, while as relationship conflict is always detrimental to the team performance. Task conflict serves as a means for the team members to express their multiple potentials in solving a challenge or task. Task conflict brings about innovation and creativity. Both task conflict and relationship conflict have negative correlation with team performance as well as job satisfaction. It is always important that leaders in a group or team must always take the necessary steps to resolve conflict among members in the group.

**iii. Coordination:** Coordination in teamwork is very important. Effective coordination always produces positive outcomes. Coordination is a behavioural mechanism that is undoubtedly vital for effective team processes and outcomes. For a team to succeed all the members have to adopt a strategy to align knowledge and action to achieve the common goals of the group.

Coordination must include planning and communication. Coordination among groups or teams serves as a strong pivot for the team or the group performance. And every team must always ensure that coordination is well done to achieve the set target or goals of the team or the group. Generally, teams that utilize routines and distribute responsibilities are more effective than teams that do not.

**iv. Communication:** In teamwork, communication is very essential. A breakdown in communication may seriously affect the team’s performance. Team members in the university must always be prepared to transfer information form one source to another (i.e., from sender to the receiver). Team leaders must always ensure that there is effective communication among the group. Communication significantly affects members’ performance and members are always well informed about what to do and the right time to do certain assignments or activities. It also assists team members to have well informed behavioural attitudes toward the group’s common goals. The other factors that include team work. A team communication can influence other critical teamwork aspects, such as conflict and coordination. The structure of communication can influence critical team processes. Vital information must always flow among team members so that it can influence their abilities to work together to accomplish their goals.

**v. Coaching:** A team without a coach is a weak team. Every team must have a coach to provide direction and support to help the team overcome its challenges. When coaches are engaged in teamwork it helps individual members to improve their skills, knowledge and abilities.

Team leaders or coaches in teams should always be one step ahead of the members and they should be able to recognize quickly and plan ahead of time.

Coaches must all the time provide support and directions to help team members overcome their potentials. Coaches must have multiple individual share leadership behaviours in order to facilitate teamwork effectively. Coaches must also have leadership qualities or skills so that they could ensure effective team design, team development and team performance. The work of a coach in the team will help the group to recognize the performance and process gaps that occurs within the team so that the team members could improve upon their performance or activities. A good coach dynamically guide the group and foster team development and performance throughout the team's life cycle. A coach is always necessary in a team to recognize and assist the members to correct team errors or challenges that the group will encounter in discharging their duties. A coach should be a role model, someone who could provide directions, and above all ready to frame the group to perform a specific goals or target set by the team.

**vi. Cognition:** A team's recognition is referred to the shared understanding among team members. This may developed as a result of team member's interactions with each other including knowledge of roles mission, objectives, norms, skills, abilities and responsibilities. The team recognition may also include the situation within which the team members operates and familiarity with teammates.

In institutional or organizational settings like the University of Education, Winneba, failing to ensure recognition among members may result in misunderstanding, impaired teamwork and negative outcomes. Ensuring effective understanding among members help the group to understand their roles better and the operating situation that allows the team to preemptively avoid potential missteps or failures.

Recognition or cognition in team serves as a strong foundation or basis for teamwork. Cognition is also strongly related to team process and performance. And team training and interventions can be effective in developing team cognition and reducing team errors.

**vii. Composition:** The composition of a team can affect the performance of the group. In composing a team, the individual factor is very relevant to the team performance. The team leaders must always have in mind what constitute a good team. Team leaders must all the time dwell on the roles, skills, knowledge and attitude of members to decide on the composition of a team.

In composing a team there should be a role of diversity, i.e., there should be differences among team members including, functions or roles, discipline, occupation, ethnicity or race, culture and gender to ensure the team's effectiveness. Sims and Schmidt (2012) noted that, "teams with strong orientation or propensity of working with others, as a group is more likely to succeed or achieve their success."

Numbers are very important when you want to consider forming a composing a group. The nature of the task or activities setup may also determine the number of people to consider in a team. If a team has many members without shared roles or responsibilities, lots of work or activities may be left unattended.

**viii. Context:** In teamwork there is always an event that influences the occurrence and meaning of behaviour as well as the manner and degree to which various factors impact team outcomes. Different teams accomplish work differently, and this depends upon the skills, abilities, attitude of the individuals in the team or in the group. The coordination, social processes, trust and the manner of communication of the leadership could positively or negatively affect the group.

However, groups or teams operate within a wide variety of contexts that further influence the activities of the team. Context can be situational characteristics that influence the occurrence and meaning of the behaviour of team members.

According to Johns (2012), "institutional or organizational context can be thought of in-terms of the whole picture (i.e. occupation, location, time and rationale) or as a discrete phenomenon, including task and physical context."

The team's task context may include factors that affect the individuals in the team as well as the entire team. And it may include autonomy, uncertainty, accountability and resources available. The physical contexts that may affect the team's performance include; temperature, environment, etc. Context is very important to teamwork because it has, the ability to shape the very nature in which team members interact with each other.

In modern, times, the technological advancement in institutions or organizations have allowed teams or groups to collaborate across space and time and as a result, new teams are operating as virtual, distributed teams and multi team systems. Organizational or institutional climate is perhaps one of the most relevant contextual variables for workplace

teams. The perception regarding the formal and informal policies, practices and procedures of the team could inversely or adversely affect the performance of the group. Organizational context can determine or shape how teams should function. Institutions that communicate well with their employees also have the tendency to engage its teams through their policies, practices and procedures to promote teamwork thereby increasing the level of productivity.

Another contextual factor that affects teamwork is stress and other external factors such as threat. Teams are able to function extremely well in serene environments. If team members are threatened in their work environment, it will definitely affect their performance. Individual members in the group may not have the willingness or the ability to contribute their best toward productivity. In the same way if the stress level of the team members are not properly managed it will also affect the group's performance or activities.

**ix. Culture:** Generally, the way of life of the teams may influence their performance. The assumption about the relationship of individual team members or groups and their immediate environment is likely to affect their performance. The norms, beliefs, values, totems, artifacts and social behaviour may affect the groups or the team's performance.

Nowadays culture has gradually become an important or an integral aspect of institutional activities. Culture brings the group or the team members together to share values, beliefs, and norms.

The cultural values within the groups or the teams have a broad range of implications for teamwork. The cultural values in teams shape the way individuals view or value themselves in relation to the team and, thus play a vital role in shaping teamwork attitude. Culture brings about trust, collective efficacy and cognition for effective performance. The level or the degree at which a team view itself or the individual members in the team view themselves may also have influence on the activities or performance of the team. If team members rank themselves high and are proud of their job or working environment, they are likely to perform better than institutions where members rank themselves very low.

The degree to which team members value hierarchy and status may have implications for interpersonal interaction within the team. When team members or individuals place high value on status and hierarchy, they are less likely to voice potential errors being made by superiors because it is considered culturally unacceptable for subordinate to voice out errors incurred by the superior.

## 8. GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK

### A. Choose the Team Leader

- I. A team leader should be someone who could champion the interest and activities of the group or the team.
- II. The leader should primarily care for the team members and respect the opinions of members in the team.
- III. The leader should also be expert in the areas that the team wants to champion so that he/she could assist effectively in the implementation process.
- IV. The leader must be someone who is willing to receive progress report from colleagues and encourage them to solve their challenges.
- V. The leader must have overall responsibility in the implementation process.
- VI. The team leader must chair all team meetings and provide technical assistance to the team during the development and execution of work.
- VII. A good team leader must manage, coordinate and facilitate team's operational activities.

### B. Choose the Right Team Members

- I. Team members must provide cooperation and support to the team leader and the members in the group.
- II. A team must have representation from different fields so that variety of ideas could be put together in solving challenges easily.
- III. Team members must always consider the person or who will have the most important roles in making needed changes for implementation.

- IV. The team must consider members who could have influence or effects in achieving success.
- V. Members with special skills should be considered to add their knowledge.
- VI. An optimal team should consider 8 to 10 members so that members could provide diversity of opinions.
- VII. Must consider choosing leaders who can provide results.

### **9. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIPS AT WORKPLACE**

There are so many factors that promote good working relationships at our workplaces. Some of these factors are:

- i. By recognizing talents of others that work with you at the workplace.
- ii. By understanding and supporting others or staff on all that they do including programmes.
- iii. By cooperating with staff to take major decision to achieve the vision and mission of your institution.
- iv. Genuinely caring for staff members or team members with respect to their privacy.
- v. Respect for professionalism regardless of person's sex, age and race.
- vi. The team leader must openly and willingly communicate or listen to the contribution made by members and must be ready to initiate actions.
- vii. The team leader must respect others regardless of professional differences.
- viii. All the member should be courteous, an loyal to each other.
- ix. The leader must trust the team members and the members must also provide the same trust for their leader.
- x. All team members must have common criteria for personal evaluation.
- xi. The team members must periodically review their performance and their job description should be clearly stated.
- xii. Member must have time to organize stuff meeting. Enough time should be allotted for the meeting and the agenda for the meeting must be exhausted.
- xiv. Team leaders must give credit to members who perform creditable in the team.
- xv. Team members who perform well must be motivated. Leaders must always recognize jobs well done.
- xvi. Team members must always agree upon their priorities.
- xvii. Messages, information and communication should be handles properly and must be well circulated.
- xviii. Team members must always be willing to share the challenges, problems and grievance, unwillingness to talk over problems may affect the level of productivity in the team.
- ixx. Team members must constructively criticize each other. Constructive criticism can lead to efficiency and productivity. It improves labour output.
- xx. Team leaders must always provide the need resources or materials for members to perform well.

### **10. FACTORS THAT HINDERS GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIPS AT WORKPLACE**

There are equally factors that affect or hinder good working relationships among team members at the workplace. And these factors included the following:

- i. Gossip among some team members and these can occur as a result of rumors.
- ii. Poor job attitudes especially if the team leader or team leaders are not able to define the job description of the teams. Inability for team leaders to trust, coordinate and direct can also lead to poor job attitudes.
- iii. So many grudge among team members may also hinder their progress and relationships at work place.
- iv. If the team members lack trust and confidence in the leaders, it may trickle down to other members in the team which eventually affect their level of productivity.

- v. The issue of racism, sexism and prejudizism may also hinder good working relationships if it not handled well.
- vi. A situation where team leader does not give member opportunity to air their grievances may affect good working relationships among members. If team leaders decided not give team members opportunity for staff meetings it will eventually hinder the progress of activities ant the workplace.
- vii. In a situation where team leaders disregard the talents of team members it will affect working relationship. This is because team members may not be able to develop their potentials to the fullest to contribute to production. Disregarding talents of team mates or colleagues at workplace also hinders output and satisfaction.
- viii. Individual team members must be allowed to enjoy their privacy. If individual team members are prevented from enjoying their privacy, they would also find it difficult to unleash their potentials.
- ix. Team leaders must not be over-sensitive. Over-sensitivity may hinder progress of work and relationship among team members in a group.
- x. The role of a team leader is very important. A group without a leader lacks focus and direction which will eventually transcend down to affect working relationships among other members in the team.
- xi. Negative sarcastic remarks and destructive criticism kills team spirit and affect relationship. Team members tend to coil inn and contribute very little towards decision making and planning.
- xii. Lack of involvement of team members in administrative decision making and planning also hinders good working relationships. If other brains are denied from contributing in decision making they turn to sabotage the administrative environment by creating confusion and chaos.
- xiii. When leaders allow team members or staff to compete for individual prestige and recognition it hinders good working relationships.
- xiv. Lack of concern about total efforts and disregard for feelings of others also hinders relationships among team members at the work place.
- xv. If information flow and communication is not well disseminated or done properly among members, it will hinder good working relationships. Poor communication may also hinders relationships.
- xvi. If team members are unwilling to compromise due to lack of trust and internal wrangling's it will definitely affect the working environment and good relationship among the members in the team.
- xvii. Lack of decision making among team leaders and issues concerning inequities in facilities and suppliers may also hinder good working relationships among team members in a group.
- xviii. Disloyalty, lack of common goal and philosophy usually disintegrate the group or team which hinders their progress of work and relationships.
- xix. Understanding of total programme or job task, how to evaluate progress of work and feedback among group members or teams could equally hinder good working relationships. The should not be limited understanding to total programme or assigned task.
- xx. If team members lack understanding of other jobs and responsibilities, their contribution towards output will also be very low which will affect the god rapport among the team members.

## 11. TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK

It is always fun to be part of a great team. Team members work in harmonious manner and support each other to achieve great results. The following are tips to assist members in a team to achieve their great goals:

### **Clear Communication:**

In every team it is always important for members to ensure that communication is effectively. Interaction or communication among members in a team should flow:

- Freely

- Honestly
- Respectful

Members in the team should feel free and comfortable to contribute in decision, thoughts, ideals and opinions of the group.

#### **Effective Delegation:**

In order to achieve required results, team members must always delegate their responsibilities. It is always prudent that leaders in the team assign responsibilities to members who have the capabilities to efficiently perform the necessary tasks.

#### **Trust:**

A team without trusted members is not a good team. When a team has trusted members it will enable members to have free minds in performing their duties. Members will also feel that they have shared their thoughts well within the group. A trusted team will also allow members to rely on colleagues and feel scored to perform their assigned duties or tasks.

#### **Respect:**

It is the fundamental right for every team to ensure that there is mutual respect and understanding among members. A team without respect for members will collapse in not time. The capabilities, opinions, abilities and actions of members in a team should always be respected.

#### **Setting Very Good Examples:**

As a team leader or a team member you should always lead exemplary life for others to follow. You should display good behaviour that will align to the objectives and the goals of the group. Both team leaders and team members must always suggest new ideas, for policies and procedures. Members must have the time to participate in workplace activities and uphold the principles and values of the workplace.

#### **Conflict Management:**

It is very common to observe conflict among members in a team. As a leader or a member of a team you must ensure that all conflicts within the team are resolved. Critical issues should be dealt with in a more matured manner. Differences in ideas, suggestions and opinion must not be allowed to affect the team's performance.

#### **Provide Training, Coaching, Mentoring and Support Opportunities to Team Members:**

Leaders must always ensure that members in the team undergo training and coaching. And this will enhance both individual and team skills. It will help member to be sharp in their performance of duties, it will also encourage, the team to expand their capabilities.

Mentoring team members will let both the mentor and mentee feels part of decision making and they will eventually contribute freely towards the success of the team's agenda.

#### **Steps to Promote Communication Among Team Members in the Public Universities:**

Communication is the process of understanding and transmitting of views, ideas and information from one sector of the institution to another so that the team could develop shared understanding. A team must always communicate effectively by pulling knowledge together.

The following steps should also be ensured by the administrator to promote effective communication among team members in the public universities in Ghana:

- Always highlight the importance of communication among members in a team or group and the mutual benefits for the individual members in the group.
- Always set your objectives right. Never allow individual members in the team to talk around the assigned task.
- Remind members about the importance of arriving at meetings. Communicate decisions, ideas, designs/ diagrams to members where necessary.

- iv. Bear in mind that not all the members in the team are good communicators. Team members must help others to articulate their views.
- v. Give every member in the group the opportunity to air his/her views. Put all contributions together and select the best ones that may be of interest to the group.
- vi. Ensures that in team meetings every member of the group listen to the discussion on the floor.
- vii. Moderate the discussion. Find the best way for members to communicate e.g. by face to face, e-mail, telephone, web etc.
- viii. Encourage direct line approach to communication: encourage communication between parties involved in a decision.
- ix. Send information to all the members who need to be kept informed.
- x. Eliminate surprises and put measures in place for members to work together.
- xi. Engender trust and familiarity among members in the group.

## 12. TEAMWORK SKILLS SELF INVENTORY

As a team, it is always important for all the members in the group to acquire some level of skills or specialization. In career development skills of members are very vital, since there are various type of skills that each member is supposed to acquire. Regular inventory of team skills will allow members to know the strength of the members in the team and areas upon which the members have to improve.

The table below shows teamwork skills self-inventory chat to rate ones performance:

| Skills   | Strong | Average | Needs Improvement |
|--|--------|---------|-------------------|
| <b>Ability to listen:</b> how often do you listen to others and respect their views.   |        |         |                   |
| <b>Motivation:</b> do you motivate yourself? Do you take responsibility of your assigned task? Are you dedicated to your work?   |        |         |                   |
| <b>Honesty:</b> how honest are you? Are you fair and willing to share your view with others?   |        |         |                   |
| <b>Reliable and Trustworthy:</b> are you trustworthy? Can your team members rely on you?   |        |         |                   |
| <b>Effective Communicator:</b> can you communicate effectively? How clearly do you express your views and thoughts?  |        |         |                   |
| <b>Organization:</b> how often do you contribute or participate in teamwork activities?  |        |         |                   |
| <b>Cooperation:</b> do you enjoy engaging yourself in the activities of your team towards a common goal?   |        |         |                   |
| <b>Flexibility:</b> How flexible are you? Do you embrace change and willing to accept new things in your team?   |        |         |                   |
| <b>Ability to Provide Solution to Challenges:</b> Are you a problem solver. Are you able to identify issues or challenges? Are also able to find solution to the challenges in the team? |        |         |                   |

What are the methods you can use to improve skills in the “needs improvement” column?

## 13. CONCLUSION

Generally, collaboration and teamwork produce high quality output at the workplace. In administrative sector, evidence gathered from professional administrative bodies such as Association of University Administrators (AUA), Ghana Association of University Administrators (GAUA), America Association of University Administrators (AAUA), etc. attest to the fact that teamwork is a continuous process and all parties must work together for the team to grow. Administrators must always consider teamwork as a tool or asset to development. And they should always work together with one accord to achieve their set objectives and targets.



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