



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**A STUDY ON DIMENSIONS OF TEAM TRUST AND
EMPOWERMENT IN RELATIONS TO TEAM PERFORMANCE
IN EMERGENCY SERVICE ORGANIZATION**

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Bachelor of Science (Honours)
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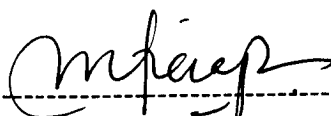
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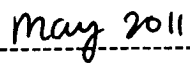
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ABSTRACT

A STUDY ON DIMENSIONS OF TEAM TRUST AND EMPOWERMENT IN RELATIONS TO TEAM PERFORMANCE IN EMERGENCY SERVICE ORGANIZATION

Yew Chee Yan

This study aims to identify the relationships between team factors and team performance. The factors involved in this study are team trust (cognitive trust and affective trust) and empowerment (autonomy, responsibility, information and creativity). Other than that, this study also identifies the most dominant factor among team trust and empowerment in affecting team performance. The data were collected by distributing survey questionnaires to the employees of the emergency services organization that provide fire emergency service. Findings suggest that team trust and empowerment are significantly related to team performance. The higher the team trust, the higher the team performance. Similarly, the higher the empowerment, the higher the team performance. It is also found that the most dominant factor in affecting team performance is information. The findings and outcomes will contribute not only to academic knowledge, but will also help the organization and human resource practitioners to create trust climate for their employees as well as provide them with empowered jobs. This study concluded that team-based organization have to consider team trust and empowerment so that the effectiveness and efficiency of the team can be enhanced.

ABSTRAK

KAJIAN TENTANG DIMENSI KEPERCAYAAN PASUKAN DAN PENGAGIHAN KUASA DALAM HUBUNGANNYA DENGAN PRESTASI PASUKAN DALAM ORGANISASI PERKHIDMATAN KECEMASAN

Yew Chee Yan

Penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti hubungan antara faktor pasukan dan prestasi pasukan. Faktor-faktor yang terlibat dalam kajian ini adalah kepercayaan pasukan (kepercayaan kognitif dan kepercayaan afektif) dan pengagihan kuasa (autonomi, tanggungjawab, maklumat dan kreativiti). Selain itu, kajian ini juga mengenal pasti faktor yang paling dominan di antara kepercayaan pasukan dan pengagihan kuasa dalam mempengaruhi prestasi pasukan. Data dikumpul melalui pengagihan borang soal selidik kepada para pekerja organisasi perkhidmatan kecemasan yang memberi perkhidmatan kecemasan kebakaran. Penemuan menunjukkan bahawa kepercayaan pasukan dan pengagihan kuasa mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan prestasi pasukan. Semakin tinggi kepercayaan pasukan, semakin tinggi prestasi pasukan. Demikian pula, semakin tinggi pengagihan kuasa, semakin tinggi prestasi pasukan. Juga didapati bahawa faktor yang paling dominan dalam mempengaruhi prestasi pasukan adalah maklumat. Penemuan dan hasil akan memberikan sumbangan tidak hanya untuk pengetahuan akademik, tetapi juga akan membantu organisasi dan pegawai sumber manusia untuk mencipta suasana kepercayaan bagi pekerja mereka serta menyediakan mereka dengan pekerjaan dikuasakan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahawa organisasi yang mempraktikkan kerja berpasukan harus mempertimbangkan kepercayaan pasukan dan pengagihan kuasa supaya keberkesanan dan kecekapan pasukan dapat ditingkatkan.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of the discussions regarding team factors and team performance. These discussions will be done through the background, problem statement, significance and limitation of this study. This chapter is essential in presenting the purpose of the study through problem statement by identifying the gaps of previous research. Besides, this chapter will also involve the development of research questions, research objectives, research hypothesis as well as conceptual framework to serve as a guideline in this study. In addition to that, terms in this study will also be defined in conceptual and operational definitions. These discussions provide a general overview and construct a clear objective that outlines the study that will be conducted.

1.1 Background of the Study

Group consists of a set of two or more people interacting among each other to attain a commonly desired objectives or goal. In the organizations of this modern era, the organizational structure increasingly practices the interdependence of individuals, groups and work units (Erdem & Ozen, 2003). During the process of working in a group, there are a lot of interactions among the team members so that the synergy between individuals can be maximize and lead to building a great team that performs well within an organization. However, due to each member in a group comes from different background of knowledge, skills, abilities and experiences, development of negative organizational behavior tends to deteriorate the team performance. Therefore, a strong and healthy social interaction between members create environment that facilitate the performance of team members.

According to Erdem and Ozen (2003), they suggested that the existence of a climate of trust is the most important factor that creates synergy of interactions among members. They also claimed that the team spirit is developed and being protected when there are trust among the team members by the provisions of the co-operations and solidarity among team members. When there is trust among the team members, there will be greater output from the team where the team performance is enhanced and it affects the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization both directly and indirectly.

Apart from building trust within a group, empowerment is also a factor that should be taken into consider to build a high cohesiveness team that perform well. Based on the adopted philosophy cited by Wilson (1996),

“Empowerment is a management initiated process which captures the imagination and desires of all people in the organization thereby enabling them to develop and utilize all their talents and abilities in

the achievement of the organization's goals and their own job and career goals." Pp. 10.

Organizations in this century are often experiencing rapid changes and these organizations have to change in accordance to adapt to the changing environment in order to be competitive in the complex environment. Dimensions in empowerment as in the study done by Seung and Sang (2009) involve autonomy, responsibility, information as well as creativity. These dimensions are the team-based empowerment dimensions that might affect the performance of the team. Through empowerment, it helps to instill pride and confidence in the members of team thus the members feel secured and highly motivated to work as a team. When the people in the team enjoy being part of the team, it enhances their team performance and the team may be seen as operating successfully in the organization.

Both the factors above are also being categorized as the psychological factors that serve as the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors in the relationships. As the employees are motivated through these psychological factors, the satisfaction within the employees will be increased. Especially in team, there will be lower in conflicts between individuals when the satisfaction increases (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003) and subsequently lead to an effective and efficient organization.

1.2 Background of the Emergency Service Organization

Emergency service organization is the non-profit organization that provides services of the relief operations after a disaster that creates catastrophic losses to human lives and property. According to Catts and Chamings (2005), these relief operations involve extreme risks and the nature of all these tasks requires teamwork to perform. In teams, each member has their own roles and these members are required to continuously acquire and maintain their competencies of their role in the team. So, Catts and Chamings (2005) also suggested that trust and flexibility are crucial in teams to minimize the pressure within the team as well as recognizing the skills of each member within the team.

Other than that, the nature of emergency service organization can be categorized as non routine problem solving organization. According to Schaafstal, Johnston and Oser (2001), the nature of the emergencies is highly affecting the people working in the emergency service organization. Due to the nature of emergency, the teams often work under different situations that require them to make quick and precise decision under stressful situations, ambiguity information and a significant level of uncertainty. Since these employees in the emergency service organization has great responsibilities on the well-beings of the public, these employees should have the ability and allowance to make decisions on how the problems can be solved in order to minimize the seriousness of injury caused by the human caused disasters as well as the natural disasters.

Types of emergency service organization include fire, police, ambulance and organizations that respond to natural disasters (Catts and Chamings, 2005). These emergency service organizations have different practice in managing the human resources. Due to the nature of the job perform by the employees requires adaptability and flexibility, managers play a vital role in maximizing the use of the resources and meet the requirements and needs of the population they need (Doyle, 1996).

1.3 Statement of Problem

Over the past decade, many organizations are transforming their traditional hierarchical pyramid structure into a flatter organization (Clifford & Sohal, 1998). A flatter structure is a structure of an organization that are more responsive and a lean structure. Team work and employee participation had become the key task for most of the organizational performance of large or small organization (Erdem & Ozen, 2003). In order for a team to perform, a team has to undergo a period of development to gain synergy and leverage in team. This research is mean to minimize the empirical gap based on the past researches.

Researchers are getting more and more interested to study the factors that will affect the performance of the team in the organization. More and more researches are conducted to test the effects of trust (Erdem, Ozen & Atsan, 2003; McAllister, 1995; Costa, 2003; Linda, 2005) and empowerment (Seung & Sang, 2009; Ozaralli, 2003) on team and work performance. The studies on these two factors were done independently by different researchers. According to Erdem and Ozen (2003), the major requirement for a team to perform well is to have strong social interactions between its members. They also claimed the strong social interactions can be developed through the existence of the climate of trust. In order to enhance the synergy of a team, a climate of trust should be there are sharing of good and bad news within the members of the group (Linda, 2005). However, there is also a study showing that too much of trust may negatively affect the performance of a team (Erdem, 2003). This was explained by Erdem (2003) that too much of trust might demonstrate undesirable behavior and also will inhibit the diversity of view from members in the team. Therefore, other than trust, there should be other factors that contribute to team performance (Erdem, Ozen & Atsan, 2003).

Erdem and Ozen (2003) suggested in their study other factors such as leaders characteristics should be included in maintaining and auditing an environment with the trust climate for future studies. According to Dionne, Yammarino, Atwater and

Spangler (2004), empowerment is one of the transformational leaders' characteristics that will have effects on performance. Therefore, another leader characteristic that is included in this study is empowerment. Empowerment is very important to develop a lean structure organization. Empowerment will lead to intrinsic motivation and employee will be more committed in performing job and thus the effectiveness of team will be enhanced. An empowered team are team that are given autonomy in making decision (Kuvaas, 2009), having shared responsibility (Kent & Hasbrouck, 2003), have adequate information (Ozaralli, 2003) for decision making and are free to be innovative to perform their work (Seung & Sang, 2009).

The empowerment section in this study is replicated based on the study done by Seung and Sang (2009), "Employee empowerment and team performance: autonomy, responsibility, information and creativity." One of the limitations of the paper by Seung and Sang (2009) is the questions and scales used in their research questionnaire. It is suggested by them that measurement scales and questions should be further elaborate and extend in future research. In order to improve the validity of result obtain, the questionnaire for this study is through the compilation of more than four researchers for the empowerment session itself.

From Erdem and Ozen's (2003) suggestion on including other leader characteristics in future research, the dominant factor affecting the team performance will be determined between group trust and empowerment. Furthermore, apart from determining the dominant factor affecting the team performance, the most dominant dimensions within the factors will also be determine. This is aim to investigate which dimensions and factors create the greatest impact on the individual to perform in a team.

In addition to that, Dionne et al. (2004) also suggested that types of team and team characteristics should be involved by considering for all the levels within the organization. Thus, in this study, it will be conducted from top management to the operational teams of an organization.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the level of team performance based on demographic characteristics?
2. What is the relationship between team trust and team performance?
3. What is the relationship between team empowerment and team performance?
4. What is the dominant factor among team trust and empowerment in affecting the team performance?

1.5 Research Objectives

General Objective

This study is aimed to identify the relationships between team factors and team performance. The factors include the team trust and empowerment. This study also identifies the most dominant factor in affecting the team performance.

Specific Objectives

1. To identify the level of team performance based on demographic characteristics.
2. To identify the relationship between team trust and team performance.
3. To identify the relationship between team empowerment and team performance.
4. To identify the dominant factor among team trust and empowerment in affecting the team performance.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in this study is developed and diagrammed in Figure 1. The independent variables of this study are the psychological factors consisting of group trust and empowerment. The dimensions in group trust involve the cognitive trust and the affective trust (Erdem & Ozen, 2003). Cognitive trust is focusing on the trust of an individual on another party based on the cognitive rationalizing. Affective trust is when there is intensive interaction between both parties as the trust relationship gets deeper. While the dimensions of empowerment as being used in Seung & Sang’s (2009) study, include autonomy, responsibility, information and creativity based on Petter *et al*’s. (2002) seven dimension model. Autonomy in this study focuses on the team members’ autonomy in decision making. Responsibility refers to the shared responsibility among team members within the team. Information in this study is the information necessary to perform teamwork. Finally, creativity of empowerment in this study will be the team members’ creativity in performing their job. These dimensions of independent variables are being tested on how it affects its relationships with team performance, the dependent variable.

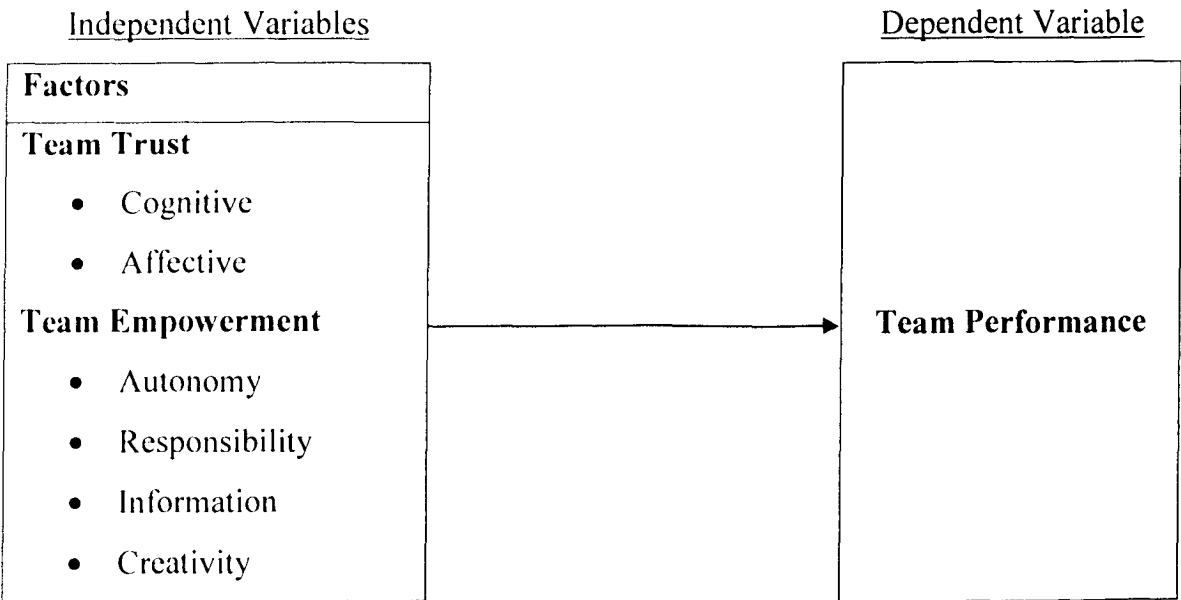


Figure 1.1 The Conceptual Framework of the Dimensions of Team Trust and Empowerment in Relations to Team Performance

1.7 Research Hypothesis

- H_A1: There is a significant relationship between the cognitive trust among team members and team performance.
- H_A2: There is a significant relationship between the affective trust among team members and team performance.
- H_A3: There is a significant relationship between team members' autonomy in decision making and team performance.
- H_A4: There is a significant relationship between team members' shared responsibility and team performance.
- H_A5: There is a significant relationship between information necessary to do teamwork and team performance.
- H_A6: There is a significant relationship between team members' creativity on the job and team performance.
- H_A7: There is a dominant factor among team trust and empowerment in affecting the team performance.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Terms	Conceptual Definition	Operational Definition
Team Trust	A function of other group members' perceived ability, integrity and benevolence and as of members' own propensity to trust. (Jarvenpaa, <i>et al.</i> , 1998)	The psychological safety atmosphere of the team members in depending on each other through the cognitive and affective dimensions of trust.
Cognitive Trust	Trust based on competence, responsibility, reliability and dependability. (McAllister, 1995)	The consistency between member's behavior and words used.
Affective Trust	Trust based on emotional bonds and relationships. (McAllister, 1995)	A mutual, emotional investment in the relationship among members.
Empowerment	Processes in which people achieve the capacity to control decisions affecting their lives, enables people to define themselves and construct their own identities. (Hamelink, 1994)	The process of creating feelings of responsible for their jobs and sense of ownership through a greater control over decisions about work. It involves autonomy, responsibility, information and creativity.
Autonomy	Work independency relationship with superior and the opportunity for independent thoughts or actions. (Lim, 2007)	The power and authority given to the team in making decisions.