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Teamwork as a Contributor to Work Quality and Quantity: A Case Study of Sabatia Farmers Cooperative Society, Eldama Ravine - Kenya

Razia Mbaraka

Lecturer, Department of Development Studies,
School of Human Resource Development, Moi University, Kenya

Abstract:

The purpose of the study was to assess the impact of team work on organizational performance. The objectives of the study were to; find out the effects of teamwork on quantity of work, establish the effects of teamwork on quality of work, find out the effects of teamwork on efficiency and determine the effects of teamwork on organizational image at Sabatia Cooperative Society. The research was based on a conceptual framework which showed that when organizations inculcate teamwork, there was improved quantity of work done, quality of work efficiency and the organizational image improved. The study was conducted at Sabatia Farmers Cooperative Society, Eldama Ravine. The study employed a case study research design. The study participants were management and employees who were drawn from 1 manager, 5 head of departments and 100 employees. A sample size of 36 respondents was chosen from the target population. The field data was collected between the months of March and April, 2016 using structured and open ended questionnaires that were administered to the selected respondents. Additional information was collected through field observation, scheduled dialogue and oral interviews. The researcher used stratified sampling technique to select the management. The employees who participated in the study were selected using simple random sampling. The method that was adopted included the questionnaires as the main tool for data collection. The data was organized, edited, analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistics. The researcher used the computer programme SPSS to analyze the data. The data was presented using frequency tables, percentages, charts and graphs. The findings of the study established that the respondents had various notions on the effects of teamwork on quantity of work, quality of work done, efficiency and organizational image. The study established that the effects of teamwork on quantity of work were that it enabled in developing an innovative and high-quality product and helps build a strong customer base. The effects of teamwork on quality of work were that customers who purchase the product expected a quality product that meets their needs. The effects of teamwork on efficiency was that there was a high chance of huge demand for maximum input for efficient and timely output and there was no risk of inefficiency and finally the effects of teamwork on organizational image, was that it increased the decentralization of decisions and there was clear division of labor across the organization.

Keywords: teamwork, high performance workplace, quality, quantity

1. Introduction

Without the presence of accountability as a collective responsibility, teams working within an organizational environment will not be successful in their endeavors. The importance of team working in organizations purports different objectives such as reducing costs, improving quality, increasing employee involvement, reducing absenteeism, reducing conflict, enhancing creativity and innovation and creating better adaptability and flexibility. What drives a team to function more efficiently are clear purpose, quality communication, coordination, effective protocols and procedures and efficient conflict resolution mechanisms, and the active engagement of the team members (Armstrong, 1999).

Teamwork helps overcome the challenges that organizations face in two ways – that is administratively and individually. Improved team working and collaborative care reduce staff turnover and shortages as it can increase job satisfaction and reduce workloads; therefore, cutting the recruitment costs. High morale and enhanced competence of the workers as brought about by work-life balance and better quality of life for them. In order to achieve organizational performance, interdependence should exist in various factors of an organization. According to Appelbaum *et al.*, (2000), there are major determinants of organizational performance including structure, style of management, shared values, staff, strategy, skills and systems. As such, the dynamic nature of the people within an organization dictates the organizational environment and performance at different levels. (Armstrong, 1999).

In Kenya, one characteristic of an effective team is a commitment to take time to assess how well members are functioning as a team. Thus, the prevailing individual and team performance must be assessed according to achieving the goal and meeting the objectives set by the organization. The competency of the team could be assessed through goals and objectives.

Organizations worldwide have various ways of enhancing their employee performance although the ways vary from one organization to another depending on the actual functions of each organization and the culture embraced therein. However, the performance of

Sabatia Farmers Cooperative Society has not been satisfactory and to the required standard. Opiyo (2009) attributed that those organizations performing poorly had implemented wrong management strategies to foster team performances such as the lack of proper use of teamwork among other challenges. Other organizations whose organizational performances have improved were cited as organizations which had implemented effective teamwork strategies and social factors such as team composition, social interactions, team structure, and management style group work teams among employees to facilitate organizational performances. The lack of this team work in Sabatia Farmers Cooperative Society affects the roles played by every individual to reach the desired goals.

This therefore goes a long way to show that team work plays an important role in the achievement of organizational performance. Poor leadership can result in the failure of any team, whether virtual or not; however, it becomes a much more prominent problem in virtual teams. Inability to effectively communicate to members of the team can all greatly affect a project. It is from this background that the researcher assessed the impact of teamwork on organizational performance at Sabatia Farmers Cooperative Society.

According to Graham (2008), teams refer to a group of people or animals linked in a common purpose. Teams are especially appropriate for conducting tasks that are high in complexity and have many interdependent subtasks. The defining characteristic of a team is that its members voluntarily coordinate their work in order to achieve group objectives. Team members are highly interdependent and each individual must to some extent interpret the nature of his or her particular role. Teams have leaders who may or may not be appointed by an outside body (higher management for example but the authority of the leader of a team as a distinct from any working group is fully accepted by all its members. According to Kotlarsky & Oshri, (2005), the role of teams internationally is for Knowledge transfer and it has become a key issue for globally distributed work, such as global soft-ware development projects.

Feeny et al., (2005) said that in these novel organizational forms, success depends on the rapid transfer of business and technological knowledge from and to offshore facilities. This transfer of knowledge may improve knowledge integration across various sites and products, and may contribute to successfully coordinating complex projects globally distributed projects, consisting of two or more teams working together from different geographical locations to accomplish project goals, face major challenges in transferring knowledge across remote sites. For example, these teams confront cultural differences that may include, but are not limited to, different languages, national traditions, values and norms of behavior. To overcome geographical distances and time-zone differences such teams mainly collaborate through information and communication technologies (ICTs), and occasionally meet face to face to discuss project matters. On the individual level, Cutler (2006) previously observed that knowledge transfer is indeed a process by which the knowledge of one actor is acquired and is reapplied by another. The diversity of local and international contexts may exacerbate the stickiness of information hampering the transfer of contextual knowledge between remote sites.

In summary, work groups are gaining importance in many organizations and they present many potential risks and opportunities, so there is a need to understand the characteristics of effective work groups. In setting and laying own operational plans team working prove to improve organizational performance through involvement, learning and increased communication that transpires through teamwork and team interaction. Teamwork enhances the speed of work process in an organization. They have the potential to quality and productivity aid where workers are motivated in working in plans that he or she participate in laying down.

1.1. Satisfaction

Job satisfaction describes how content an individual is with his or her job. The happier people are within their job, the more satisfied they are said to be. Logic would dictate that the most satisfied ("happy") workers should be the best performers and vice versa. This is called the "happy worker" hypothesis. However, this hypothesis is not well supported, as job satisfaction is not the same as motivation or aptitude, although they may be clearly linked. A primary influence on job satisfaction is the application of job design, which aims to enhance job satisfaction and performance using methods such as job rotation, job enlargement, job enrichment and job re-engineering. Other influences on satisfaction include management styles and culture, employee involvement, teamwork, empowerment, and autonomous work position. Traditionally the study of autonomy and control has been the preoccupation of sociologists and psychologists and to a lesser degree a research theme for economists, but this has been changing as it has been shown to increase job satisfaction and productivity. The more easily members communicate with each other the greater likelihood of group cohesiveness. Satisfaction regress feedback and system of reporting information which is accurate, relevant, mind timely and in the form, that enables each team member to understand communication. Also, provide the basis for decisions and harmonious working environment (Kalleberg, 1977).

1.2. Learning Environment

When a problem arises in the organization, for example salary increment or employee benefits, a team or a committee is formed to look in to the problem. Team work will always apply to solve the problem or come up with recommendations that management will implement. This will give the organization a go ahead in running its operations and learning among team members will be observed smoothly.

1.3. Link between Teamwork and Organizational Performance

Team is not a non-existent entity as it comprises of individual factors. To succinctly phrase up, team is an aggregation of contributing members committed to achieve a common objective. It facilitates in streamlining the process, and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of any organization. Team building skills are critical to the effectiveness of a manager or an entrepreneur, for running a firm. Some of the key areas in team building can be identified as: **Efficient Leadership**: It is time we abandon the notion that the credit for any significant achievement is solely attributable to the person at the top of the hierarchy. It is pertinent for

good leadership to set the pace for the overall enhancement in productivity, by treating his/her subordinates as co-workers (Youndt, 1996).

1.3.1. Diversity of Skills and Personalities

A team comprises of different individuals with complementary skills and who work together towards a common goal. For a thought to come out of different boxes, people need different heads to do it. Multitudes of ideas prove effective for a task. It's through these ideas that one can blend attributes to work that are desirable (Youndt, 1996).

1.3.2. Good Communication

It is quite understood that human beings want to be listened to and they want to have a voice in matters that affect them. The same is true with team building. A good communication paves the path for proper transactions of ideas. Ideas propel work, a healthy way to reckon the buoyancy of an effective communication bridge (Cosby, 1998).

1.3.3. Shared Goals and Objectives

To work as one, it is wiser to share goals rather than distribute it. This instills involvement of the whole team in the decision-making process. This would also serve as a better platform for a plethora of ideas to surge up. On top of it, a sense of accountability is developed in each of the team members. What better way than to motivate through this (Curral and Chambel 1999).

1.4. Effects of Teamwork on Quantity of Work Done

There were three main aspects which were considered while evaluating any employee and those are quality and quantity of work done, the most important and foremost criteria was analyzing the quality and the quantity of work. The accuracy and correctness of work, the ability to perform equally well during pressure and maintaining standards are very important. Other things like optimum allocation of time and resources and matching expected outcome regardless of volume was also considered. When the organization focus was to develop an innovative and high-quality product, then teamwork plays an integral role in achieving business goals. The design, engineering, quality assurance and marketing of the company's product are essential components--employee performance in these areas is critical to the business success. Customers who purchase the product expect a quality product that meets their needs. Once customers find a company that provides the product they need, repeat business helps build a strong customer base. When loyal customers swap stories about the best products and services for their needs, and if the customers are extremely satisfied with the product, the organization can increase as a result of word of mouth (Kotlarsky and Oshri (2005).

Quality of work used these days by organizations as a strategic tool to attract and retain the talent. QW policies are increasingly becoming part of the business strategies and focus is on the potential of these policies to influence employees' quantity of working life and more importantly to help them maintain work-life balance with equal attention on performance and commitment at work. One of the most important determinants of Quantity of Work (QW) is the career growth opportunities as supported by various researches done in past Studies also predict that employee performance is also correlated with QW. When choosing to decentralize decision-making, an organization must trade-off between the costs of transferring relevant information and the agency costs that occur when decision-making agents have different objectives than the principal. Employee involvement, employing work practices, like the use of teams, quality circles, or joint consultative committees can operationalize the decentralization of decisions (Mullins, 2000).

1.5. Effects of Teamwork on Quality of Work

In Kenya Employment Act (2007), Compensation Act (2007) and Public Procurement and Disposal act (2005) were made as an attempt for improving quality of work life in Kenya. During the 1980s and most of the 1990s, the main policy objective in the European Union was to create jobs and to reduce unemployment, and had less focus on the quality of jobs. Increasing the employment rate per se was seen as the key to social inclusion. However, at the meeting of the European Commission in Lisbon in the spring of 2000 improving job quality became an explicit objective as part of the aim to become the most advanced economy in the world by 2010. The idea was that what was needed was not only more jobs, but better jobs (O'Leary-Kelly, 1994).

Thus, improved employment rates and quality of work may promote financial self-sufficiency, reduce poverty and social exclusion, and diminish the pressure on the welfare state and improve social cohesion. High quality of employment is also thought to boost competitiveness and economic growth to the extent that it promotes motivation, productivity and commitment. The quality of jobs has declined along some dimensions, although positive changes can also be found (Nevo & Wand 2005). Work itself is changing as there are tendencies towards polarization between high- and low-skilled jobs, the importance of knowledge work increases while the value of routine work declines and the personal service sector expands. At the same time people, have become more diverse in the needs and wants that they expect to fulfill through their work, and the workers have changed – higher female labor force participation, more dual earner families, more formal education among the workforce, more immigration, aging workforce and low birth rates (O'Leary-Kelly, 1994). The current understanding of both objective and subjective quality of employment is far from clear and broadly shared.

According to Fröbel, P. and Marchington. M. (2005), team working in an organization has been fashionable in recent years. He continued to say that team working occurs when a number of people have a common goal and recognize that their personal success depends on others success but did not consider anything to do with the level of clarity of the role of the team members and their dependency on the organizational success. Robin (2001) stated that just because the team was performing well at a given point, time was no assurance that it will continue to do so. Effective teams also become stagnant at their initial stages, because enthusiasm had

given way to empathy's. Delarue (2003) stated that one of the most popular methods of increasing employee responsibility and control is through team work, involving employees with different skills who interact to create a product or a service.

Belbin (1970s) developed a theory on team building which suggested that certain types of individual do not perform well when working in the same team. Belbin also argued that teams have different psychological characteristics which cause them to adopt particular roles at work and that an appropriate combination of persons assuming various roles is essential for the creation of a well-balanced team. According to Robbins and Judge (2006) indicated that not all group follow the five-stage model of group development though it is a useful framework to understand group development process. Many interpreters of the five stages model have assumed that a group becomes effective as it progresses through the first four stage although this assumption may be generally true what makes a group effective is more complex than this model acknowledges Another problem with the five-stage model, in terms of understanding work related behavior, is that it ignores organizational context.

2. Methodology

The study employed a case study research design. In this study, the researcher conducted a case study in terms of carrying out an in-depth study on the effects of team work on the performance of an organization.

The study participants were the 106-staff consisting of management and employees Sabatia Farmers Association. The purpose of choosing the employees as the respondent was that they are usually the employees who have information regarding team work and organizational performance. The respondents were also chosen because they had the right information the researcher was interested in.

The employees who participated in the study were selected using simple random sampling since it avoids biasness and every respondent had an equal chance to participate in the study. The research used a sample size of 30% from the selected employees from the target population as recommended by Mugenda (2003).

The questionnaire was used as the main tool for data collection. Selection of this tool was guided by the nature of data to be collected, time available and objectives of the study. Questionnaires were the major instruments used to gather and collect detailed and comprehensive data.

3. Results

3.1. Use of Teams in Company's Operations

It was important for the researcher to know if the Organization emphasize on the use of teams in its operations. Majority 83% of the respondents accepted that the organization emphasize on the use of teams in its operations while the remaining 17% of the respondents disagreed with the opinion. From the results, it was clearly revealed that indeed team work is emphasized in its operations as majority of the respondents agreed. Cohen (2004) stated that teamwork exists in most organizations and has emerged as the most important group phenomenon in organizations that enables managers to harness the energies of all employees to determine their strength and maximize both group and individual productivity.

3.2. Reasons why Teams are Emphasized in the Organization

The respondent's views on reasons why teams are emphasized in the organization varied. Majority (55%) of the respondents agreed that they have been found to be more productive in this organization whereas 25% said they have been documented to be effective in terms of productivity. The results also show that 14% of the respondents accepted that organizations similar that have employed teamwork have been successful. The remaining 6% of the respondents said for no apparent reasons. The results show that teamwork have been found to be more productive in the organization where a majority of the respondents accepted. Cole (2000) stated that team work seeks to maximize both individual and group productivity through the attainment of organizational goals and also it is meant to integrate the lower level staff and the top management in organizations so that they can work more effectively and produce more profit. It is an inspiration to boost productivity of employees and it involves a series of activities designed to create cohesion and a feeling of social support.

3.3. Teamwork Use According to Department

Most respondents (56%) indicated that all departments employ the use of teamwork while 22% felt it is the technical departments, for example, operations and 14% said functional departments, such as, finance which fully employ the use of teamwork. This shows that teams have been formed for all cadres of employees in the organizations for the purpose of improving performance at the work place. However, lack of unanimity implies lack of high level institutional commitment to team building. While bank employees (respondents) are aware that team building is important, they only reported who is involved in form of perception more than observation. Delarue (2003) observed that employee involvement and participation is crucial to their success and team building helps individuals learn to participate and adapt to changing situations. This means that anybody who does not get involved would be left behind and would drag the organization behind when pursuing its objectives. This in short implies that everybody in the organization should be involved in team building, from top (CEO) to the lowest (cleaner).

3.4. Challenges Associated with Teamwork

The study sought to establish the challenges associated with teamwork in the organization. This was necessary because teams face a number of challenges starting from leadership to the employees.

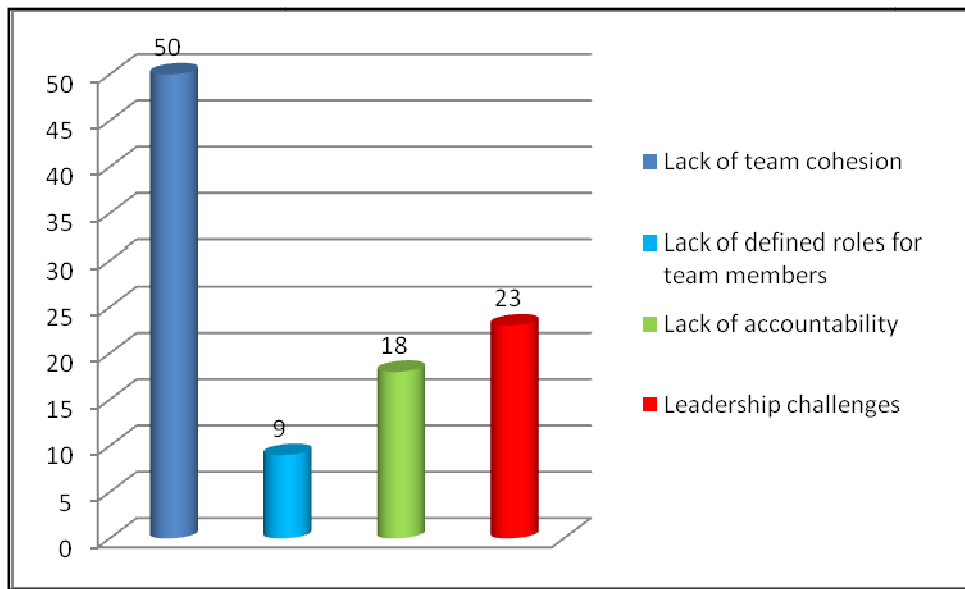


Figure 1: Challenges Associated with Teamwork
(Source: Field Data, 2016)

As shown on Figure 1 above, a majority (50%) of the respondents said that one of the challenges faced in team work was lack of team cohesion. The respondents who said lack of defined roles for team members accounted for 9% and 18% of the respondents said lack of accountability. The remaining 23% of the respondents said leadership challenges. According to Fayol (2001) challenges faced in team work vary from one organization to another. Team work faces a number of challenges which include delay in completion of tasks; personality clashes; laziness among members; low motivation; selfishness; problems with regular supplies; competition for recognition and lack of promotions in their work places were also identified as challenges facing team building. However, these problems can be overcome through training, empowerment of employees and performance appraisal.

3.5. Strategies Employed to Enhance Team Performance

The research found it necessary to find out the strategies that the organization employed to enhance team performance. The results are as presented on Figure 2 below.

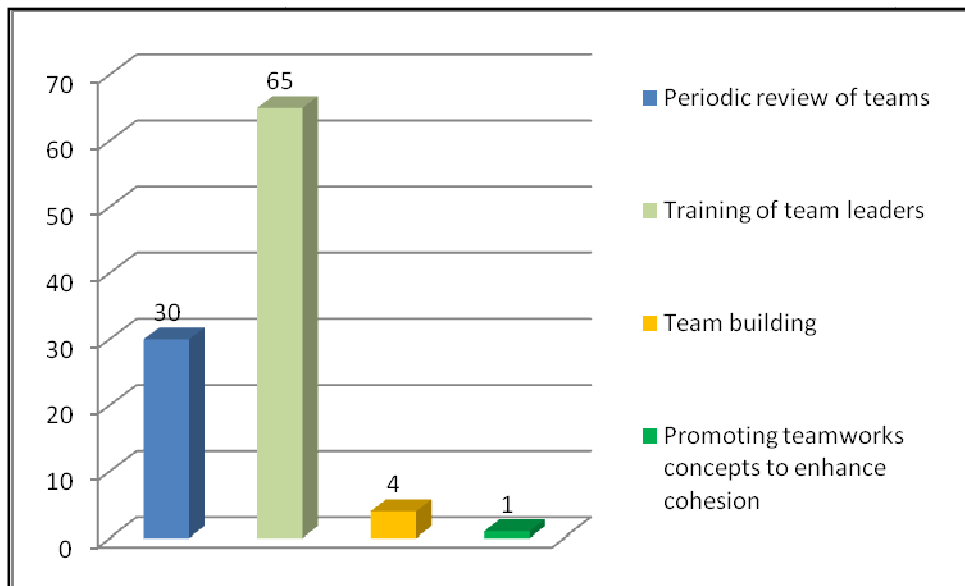


Figure 2: Strategies Employed to Enhance Team Performance
(Source: Field Data, 2016)

The results on Figure 2 above indicated that 30% of the respondents agreed that one of the strategies to be employed by organization is periodic review of teams while a majority (65%) indicated that training of team leaders should be conducted in the organization. The results also revealed that 4% said team building and the least (1%) said promoting teamworks concepts to enhance cohesion. Smith (2002) states that the most commonly mentioned activity used to solve performance problems is training reported by 65% of the

respondents. According to Appelbaum (2000) teams are built so as to set team goals and priorities, analyze group work methods and examine interpersonal relationships within groups. In solving performance related problems, teams would be expected to do exactly that and in addition, analyze the problem to identify the role of each member who is -recognized to include contributors.

3.5.1. Effects of Teamwork on Quantity of Work

The study sought to establish the effects associated with teamwork on quantity of work in the organization. This was necessary because teamwork affects the quantity of work done by the employees in one way or another. The results are as shown below.

3.5.2. Effects of Teamwork on Quantity of Work

The study sought to establish the effects associated with teamwork on quantity of work in the organization. This was necessary because teamwork affects the quantity of work done by the employees in one way or another.

3.5.3. Develop an Innovative and High-Quality Product

78% of the respondents agreed that through teamwork it enables in developing an innovative and high-quality product whereas 18% were not sure with the opinion. The remaining 4% of the respondents disagreed to the opinion towards through teamwork it enables in developing an innovative and high-quality product.

3.5.4. Build a Strong Customer Base

89% of the respondents agreed that teamwork helps build a strong customer base, whereas 4% were not sure with the opinion. The remaining 11% of the respondents disagreed to the opinion.

3.5.5. Customer Satisfaction with Product Quantity

According to the results, 71% of the respondents agreed that customer will be satisfied with the product quantity, while 14% of the respondents were not sure. The results also showed that 11% disagreed to the opinion and the remaining 4% strongly disagreed.

3.5.6. Attraction and Retention of Customers

From the results, 60% of the respondents were of the opinion of through teamwork there was attraction and retention of customers and 4% were undecided. The remaining 36% disagreed to the opinion.

3.5.7. Effects of Teamwork on Quality

It was important for the researcher to determine the effects associated with teamwork on quality of work in the organization.

3.5.8. Meets Customer Needs

The respondent's views on the effects of teamwork on quality varied. The results revealed that 67% of the respondents agreed that the effects of teamwork on quality of work are that customers who purchase the product expect a quality product that meets their needs, whereas 6% were not certain with the opinion. The remaining 6% disagreed to the opinion.

4. Discussion

The research was conducted to find out team work and its impact on the performance of organizations. This study was based in Sabatia Farmers Cooperative Society. To facilitate the study; a questionnaire was formulated to gather information needed.

From the results, on the effects of teamwork on quantity of work, it was clear that indeed team work impacts the quantity of work from the employees. The results showed that through teamwork it enables in developing an innovative and high-quality product and it also helps build a strong customer base where a majority of the respondents agreed. Besides the mentioned effects, team work enables customers to be satisfied with the product quantity and there will be an attraction and retention of customers. Moreover, team work increases the productivity of the organization. The findings are in line with a study conducted by Lorenz (2006) who argues that in order for team work to exist in the work place there must be financial resources committed to the training of employees on team building, the organization must have the right equipment for quality work to be done and good communication from the top management. When team work is well practiced, the result is improved performance, improved productivity improved morale and positive attitude towards work. The employees change positively when organizations give good remunerations. Employees are motivated and cooperative to work towards the set goals. Organizations can only arrive at objective human resource decisions and improved processes and procedures through good performance standards of employees.

From the results, on the effects of teamwork on quality, majority of the respondents agreed that one of the effects of team work on quality was that the customers who purchase the product expect a quality product that meets their needs, the quality of work will be improved and more quality products will be produced in the organization. The findings also revealed that customers will be satisfied with the quality of work and also leads to optimized output and quality delivery of project. The findings concords with the study conducted by Lorenz (2006) who state that in order for team work to exist in the work place there must be financial resources committed to the training of employees on team work; the organization must have the right equipment for quality work to be done and good communication from the top management.

5. Conclusions

Team work has emerged as the most important group phenomenon in organizations that enables managers to harness the energies of all employees to determine their strength and maximize both group and individual productivity. Team work seeks to maximize both individual and group productivity through the attainment of organizational goals and also it is meant to integrate the lower level staff and the top management in organizations so that they can work more effectively and produce more profit.

In general, it can be concluded that team work exists in Sabatia Farmers' Cooperative Society, Eldama Ravine and they are being given the attention they deserve. Respondents seem to understand what team work is and indicated that the effects of teamwork on quantity of work enables in developing an innovative and high-quality product, helps build a strong customer base, customer will be satisfied with the product quantity, there will attraction and retention of customers and increases the productivity of the organization. However, there is a wide disparity of team work on quantity of work that exists in the organization and other effects are incurred in order to create and build strong teams. The study also established that the effects of teamwork on quality of work are that customers who purchase the product expect a quality product that meets their needs, the quality of work will be improved, more quality products will be produced in the organization, customers will be satisfied with the quality of work and leads to optimized output and quality delivery of project.

6. Recommendations

Following the study findings it is clear that the teams approach is the best system to adopt in order to enhance performance in organizations. To achieve maximum benefits from team work, the researcher recommends the following recommendations;

- i. All employees should belong to a team and trained to ensure they understand and concur on benefits of team work on quality and efficiency.
- ii. Team members are individuals with different emotional needs, this must be known and individual differences understood so as to create teams that are able to utilize them as strengths and not weaknesses.
- iii. Sabatia Farmers Cooperative Society should be challenged to develop more effective team work to enhance organizational performances. Most importantly, they should have confidence in the leadership, based on consistent fairness and support backed with recognition when it is due.

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