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and Team Performance in Pakistan**

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Relationship between Leader Communication Skills and Team Performance in Pakistan

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to assess the relationship between leader communication skills and team performance in Pakistan.

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: The study found that leaders who communicate effectively are able to articulate clear goals, provide constructive feedback, and foster an environment of open dialogue, all of which significantly enhance team performance. Effective communication by leaders helps in aligning team members with organizational objectives, improving coordination, and facilitating problem-solving. Moreover, it enhances trust and morale among team members, leading to increased engagement and commitment. Studies also indicate that leaders with strong

communication skills are better at conflict resolution and can adapt their communication style to suit different team dynamics, further contributing to higher team productivity and cohesion. Overall, the ability of leaders to convey their vision and expectations clearly and empathetically is crucial in driving the success of their teams.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: Transformational leadership theory, social identity theory and transactional leadership theory may be used to anchor future studies on assessing the relationship between leader communication skills and team performance in Pakistan. Organizations can enhance their practices by investing in communication skills training for leaders. Developing and implementing communication guidelines or policies can have a significant impact on organizational communication practices. These guidelines outline expectations, best practices, and channels for effective communication, ensuring consistency and clarity across the organization.

Keywords: *Leader, Communication Skills, Team Performance*

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between leader communication skills and team performance is a critical area of study in organizational behavior and management. In developed economies like the USA, team performance has seen significant advancements in recent years. For instance, according to a study by DeRue, Hollenbeck, Johnson and Ilgen (2017), there has been a noticeable trend towards increased collaboration and innovation within teams, leading to improved productivity and outcomes. The study highlights that teams in the USA have embraced digital technologies, which have facilitated seamless communication, task coordination, and information sharing, thereby enhancing overall team performance. Furthermore, the adoption of agile methodologies and data-driven decision-making processes has contributed to better team adaptability and problem-solving capabilities, resulting in higher performance levels.

Similarly, in Japan, team performance has been positively influenced by cultural factors and organizational practices. Research by Ogawa and Tanaka (2018) indicates that Japanese companies have a strong emphasis on teamwork, continuous improvement, and employee development, which are reflected in their team performance metrics. The study reveals a growing trend of cross-functional teams in Japan, allowing for diverse perspectives and skill sets to be integrated, leading to more innovative solutions and higher quality outputs. Moreover, initiatives such as lean management and Kaizen have been instrumental in optimizing team processes and driving performance improvements in Japanese firms.

In developing economies like India, team performance has also witnessed notable advancements in recent years. A study by Mishra and Khan (2020) highlights that Indian organizations are increasingly leveraging technology and data analytics to enhance team collaboration, decision-making, and performance evaluation. The adoption of cloud-based collaboration tools and virtual team structures has enabled geographically dispersed teams to work efficiently and achieve desired outcomes. Furthermore, initiatives focused on skill development, leadership training, and performance feedback have contributed to improving team dynamics and productivity in India.

Similarly, in Brazil, there has been a growing emphasis on team performance optimization across various sectors. Study by Silva and Oliveira (2019) reveals that Brazilian companies are investing in team-building activities, employee engagement programs, and performance management systems to enhance team effectiveness and achieve organizational goals. The study highlights the positive impact of team diversity and inclusion initiatives on innovation and problem-solving capabilities, leading to improved overall performance in Brazilian firms.

Similarly, Indonesia has seen a notable transformation in team performance strategies, driven by a focus on collaboration, knowledge sharing, and continuous learning. Sari and Pratama's study (2019) underscores the impact of adopting cross-functional teams and agile methodologies in Indonesian businesses. By fostering a culture of collaboration and innovation, these strategies have not only enhanced task ownership and autonomy within teams but also improved performance feedback mechanisms. The correlation between these factors and heightened levels of innovation underscores a positive trajectory in team performance trends in the Indonesian context. Overall, these initiatives reflect a growing awareness of the critical link between team dynamics, organizational culture, and performance outcomes in developing economies.

In Bangladesh, there has been a significant emphasis on improving team performance through digital transformation and skill development initiatives. Research by Rahman and Islam (2022) highlights the impact of digital tools and platforms in enhancing collaboration, communication, and task coordination among teams. The adoption of project management software, virtual team structures, and data analytics has streamlined workflows and improved decision-making processes, leading to higher levels of team performance in Bangladeshi organizations. Moreover, investment in continuous learning programs and leadership development has further contributed to building high-performing teams capable of adapting to dynamic market demands.

In Vietnam, a similar trend towards enhancing team performance is evident, particularly in sectors such as technology and manufacturing. Nguyen and Pham study (2021) emphasizes the role of innovation-driven strategies, cross-functional teams, and performance incentives in driving productivity and efficiency within Vietnamese firms. The integration of agile methodologies and lean principles has enabled teams to respond swiftly to market changes, optimize processes, and deliver quality outcomes. Furthermore, initiatives promoting employee engagement, autonomy, and feedback mechanisms have fostered a culture of continuous improvement and excellence in team performance across various industries in Vietnam.

In South Africa, a concerted effort has been made to bolster team performance through multifaceted strategies. Research by Ramabodu and Njathi (2020) highlights the pivotal role of leadership support, not only in setting clear objectives but also in fostering a culture of employee engagement. This engagement, facilitated by open communication channels and a conducive work environment, has been instrumental in cultivating high-performing teams within South African organizations. Moreover, the study underscores the significance of empowerment initiatives, recognizing individual contributions, and inclusive decision-making processes in boosting team motivation and productivity. These factors collectively contribute to the overall performance improvements observed in South African teams.

Turning our focus to Ghana, notable strides have been made in enhancing team performance through innovative approaches. A study by Asamoah, Mensah and Owusu (2021) underscores the importance of training and development programs in equipping teams with the necessary skills and knowledge for optimal performance. This investment in human capital has translated into improved team cohesion, collaboration, and problem-solving capabilities within Ghanaian organizations. Additionally, initiatives promoting diversity and inclusion have contributed to a more inclusive and dynamic team environment, fostering creativity and innovation.

In Ethiopia, efforts to elevate team performance have been driven by a combination of structural reforms and capacity-building initiatives. Research by Wondimu and Lemma (2018) highlights the positive impact of organizational restructuring, performance feedback mechanisms, and leadership development programs on team effectiveness. The study emphasizes the role of clear performance metrics, regular feedback loops, and supportive leadership in driving continuous improvement and higher performance levels in Ethiopian teams. These strategic interventions reflect a growing commitment to enhancing team dynamics and performance outcomes in Sub-Saharan economies.

In Sub-Saharan economies like Kenya, there has been a notable shift towards enhancing team performance through technological advancements and strategic interventions. A study by Muturi and Mbeche (2021) underscores the importance of digital transformation in improving team

collaboration, knowledge sharing, and decision-making processes in Kenyan organizations. The adoption of mobile technologies, virtual communication platforms, and data analytics tools has empowered teams to work more efficiently, especially in remote or hybrid work environments.

In other Sub-Saharan economies like Nigeria, efforts to boost team performance have been driven by initiatives focused on talent development, leadership training, and performance management. Research by Ajayi and Oladipo (2018) emphasizes the role of effective team communication, goal alignment, and feedback mechanisms in driving performance improvements in Nigerian businesses. The study highlights the correlation between employee engagement, job satisfaction, and team performance outcomes, underscoring the importance of holistic approaches to team development in Sub-Saharan economies.

Effective leader communication skills play a pivotal role in shaping team performance and organizational success. One key skill is clarity in communication, where leaders articulate goals, expectations, and strategies in a concise and understandable manner (Smith, 2019). Clear communication ensures that team members are aligned with objectives, understand their roles, and can collaborate effectively towards common goals. This skill reduces ambiguity, minimizes misunderstandings, and fosters a cohesive team environment, ultimately enhancing overall team performance.

Another critical communication skill for leaders is active listening (Johnson, 2020). By attentively listening to team members' ideas, concerns, and feedback, leaders demonstrate empathy, build trust, and encourage open communication within the team. This skill promotes a culture of inclusion and psychological safety, where team members feel valued and empowered to contribute their perspectives. Active listening also helps leaders gather valuable insights, identify potential challenges, and make informed decisions, leading to improved problem-solving and decision-making within the team, thus positively impacting team performance.

Problem Statement

The relationship between leader communication skills and team performance is a critical area of inquiry in contemporary organizational research. Effective communication is widely recognized as a fundamental aspect of leadership, yet the specific mechanisms through which leader communication skills influence team performance remain an area of ongoing investigation. Recent studies have highlighted the significance of clarity in communication (Smith, 2019) and active listening (Johnson, 2020) as key dimensions of leader communication that can impact team dynamics and productivity. However, there is a need for further empirical research to explore the nuanced effects of different communication skills on various aspects of team performance, such as collaboration, decision-making, and innovation. Additionally, contextual factors such as organizational culture, team composition, and industry dynamics may moderate the relationship between leader communication skills and team performance, necessitating a more comprehensive understanding of this relationship in diverse organizational settings.

Theoretical Framework

Transformational Leadership Theory

Originated by Bernard M. Bass and further developed by James MacGregor Burns, Transformational Leadership Theory focuses on how leaders can inspire and motivate their teams to achieve exceptional performance (Northouse, 2018). This theory emphasizes the importance of

effective communication skills, such as articulating a compelling vision, providing clear goals, and offering constructive feedback, in driving team performance. Transformational leaders who excel in communication can foster a shared sense of purpose, build trust, and empower team members to innovate and collaborate effectively, ultimately leading to higher levels of team performance (Bass & Riggio, 2020).

Social Identity Theory

Developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, Social Identity Theory explores how individuals' self-concept is influenced by their membership in social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 2019). In the context of leadership communication, this theory highlights the role of leader communication skills in shaping team identity and cohesion. Leaders who effectively communicate and reinforce a positive team identity can enhance team members' sense of belonging, commitment, and motivation, which in turn positively impacts team performance (van Dick, Steffens & Schuh, 2018).

Transactional Leadership Theory

Originating from the work of Max Weber and further refined by Bernard M. Bass, Transactional Leadership Theory focuses on the exchange relationship between leaders and followers based on rewards, punishments, and performance expectations (Bass & Bass, 2018). In terms of communication skills, transactional leaders utilize clear and structured communication channels to set performance goals, provide feedback, and offer rewards based on team performance. Effective communication within the transactional leadership framework can clarify expectations, reinforce accountability, and incentivize team members to achieve specific performance targets, contributing to overall team performance (Northouse, 2018).

Empirical Review

Brown (2020) examined the impact of leader communication frequency on team performance over time within a manufacturing company. Utilizing quarterly performance evaluations and communication logs maintained by team leaders, the study focused on the frequency and quality of communication interactions. The findings of the study revealed that consistent and regular communication from leaders positively correlated with sustained improvements in team performance metrics, such as production efficiency and quality standards. Leaders who maintained open lines of communication, provided timely feedback, and ensured clarity in directives saw enhanced team engagement and productivity. The study highlighted the importance of proactive communication in addressing challenges, aligning team efforts, and fostering a culture of accountability and collaboration. Recommendations from the study included encouraging leaders to leverage various communication channels, such as team meetings, one-on-one discussions, and digital platforms, to maintain a constant flow of information and ensure transparency. Moreover, the study emphasized the role of communication training for leaders to enhance their skills in delivering clear messages, active listening, and fostering open dialogue within their teams.

Chen (2021) investigated the influence of leader communication styles on team creativity and innovation within the technology startup sector. The study employed surveys and creativity assessments to gather data on leader communication approaches and team innovation outcomes. Results from the study indicated that leaders who encouraged open communication, idea sharing, and constructive feedback fostered a culture of innovation within their teams, leading to higher levels of creativity and novel solutions. Effective communication strategies included creating a

safe space for brainstorming, providing autonomy and support for experimentation, and recognizing and valuing diverse perspectives within the team. The study emphasized the importance of leaders as facilitators of communication processes that stimulate creativity, problem-solving, and idea generation among team members. Recommendations included incorporating communication skills training in leadership development programs, promoting a culture of psychological safety, and establishing platforms for continuous feedback and idea exchange within the organization.

Garcia (2022) explored the relationship between leader communication clarity and team decision-making effectiveness within a financial services organization. By utilizing surveys and decision-making simulations, the study assessed the impact of leader communication clarity on team decision quality and timeliness. The findings revealed that leaders who communicated with clarity and provided relevant information enabled teams to make more informed and timely decisions, contributing to improved performance outcomes. Clear communication strategies involved setting clear objectives, providing context and background information, and outlining decision criteria and consequences. The study highlighted the role of effective communication in reducing ambiguity, enhancing team understanding of goals and expectations, and facilitating consensus-building in decision-making processes. Recommendations included enhancing communication skills training for leaders, implementing decision-making frameworks that emphasize clarity and transparency, and promoting a culture of shared decision ownership and accountability within teams.

Johnson (2018) investigated the impact of leader communication styles on team performance in a multinational corporation setting. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach combining surveys with qualitative interviews, the study gathered data from both leaders and team members. The findings revealed that leaders who exhibited transformational communication styles, characterized by clear vision articulation and supportive feedback, had teams with higher levels of motivation, collaboration, and performance outcomes. Transformational communication strategies included inspiring vision communication, active listening, empathy, and providing constructive feedback and recognition. The study highlighted the importance of leaders as communicators who inspire and motivate their teams, foster a sense of purpose and belonging, and promote continuous learning and improvement. Recommendations included incorporating communication effectiveness assessments in leadership development programs, promoting a culture of open communication and feedback, and encouraging leaders to model effective communication behaviors within their teams.

Nguyen (2018) explored the impact of leader communication styles on team performance in Western and Asian organizational contexts. Using surveys administered to teams in both Western and Asian companies, the study focused on leader communication behaviors and team performance perceptions. The study found that while transformational communication styles were effective in both contexts, there were nuanced cultural differences in communication preferences and the interpretation of leadership behaviors that influenced team performance outcomes. Transformational communication strategies, such as vision articulation, inspiration, and empowerment, resonated across cultures but required adaptation to contextual norms and values. The study emphasized the need for leaders to demonstrate cultural intelligence, understanding, and flexibility in their communication approaches to effectively lead diverse teams. Recommendations

included cross-cultural communication training for leaders, promoting cultural sensitivity and awareness, and leveraging diversity as a strength in team dynamics and decision-making processes.

Patel (2023) investigated the influence of leader communication authenticity on team trust and cohesion within the retail industry. Data was collected through surveys measuring leader authenticity, team trust levels, and perceived cohesion among team members. The study found a strong positive correlation between leader communication authenticity, as perceived by team members, and trust levels within the team, leading to enhanced collaboration, shared goals, and improved performance. Authentic communication behaviors included transparency, honesty, vulnerability, and consistency in words and actions. The study highlighted the role of leaders as role models who build trust through genuine interactions, active listening, and empathy towards team members' concerns and perspectives. Recommendations included fostering a culture of authenticity and transparency within the organization, promoting leadership authenticity in recruitment and development processes, and providing support and resources for leaders to develop and sustain authentic communication practices.

Smith (2019) explored the role of leader communication effectiveness in team performance within a healthcare setting. This quantitative study collected data through surveys administered to healthcare teams, assessing leader communication behaviors and team performance metrics. The study found a significant positive correlation between leader communication effectiveness, as perceived by team members, and team performance indicators such as patient satisfaction, task completion rates, and error reduction. Effective communication behaviors included clarity in directives, active listening, responsiveness to feedback, and empathy towards patients and colleagues. The study emphasized the importance of leaders as communicators who inspire trust, facilitate teamwork, and promote a patient-centered approach in healthcare delivery. Recommendations included incorporating communication skills training in healthcare leadership development programs, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration and communication, and establishing feedback mechanisms to continuously assess and improve communication effectiveness within healthcare teams.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

RESULTS

Conceptual Gap: While the studies collectively emphasize the importance of leader communication skills in enhancing team performance, there is a conceptual gap in understanding the specific communication strategies and techniques that are most effective in different organizational contexts. For example, Brown (2020) study focused on communication frequency, while Chen (2021) explored communication styles and creativity. However, there is a lack of comprehensive research that integrates various dimensions of leader communication, such as clarity, authenticity, empathy, and adaptability, to develop a holistic framework for effective

communication practices that drive team performance across diverse industries and organizational settings.

Contextual Gap: The studies predominantly focus on leader communication within specific industries, such as manufacturing, technology startups, healthcare, financial services, and retail. While these studies provide valuable insights into how communication impacts team performance within these sectors, there is a contextual gap in understanding how communication effectiveness varies across different organizational structures, sizes, and cultural contexts. For instance, Nguyen (2018) cross-cultural comparison highlighted cultural differences in communication preferences, but more research is needed to explore how organizational culture, leadership styles, and team dynamics influence the effectiveness of communication strategies in achieving optimal team performance outcomes.

Geographical Gap: The geographical scope of the studies is limited to multinational corporations, Western and Asian organizational contexts, and specific industries within developed economies. There is a geographical gap in research examining leader communication skills and team performance in emerging markets, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), non-profit organizations, and public sector institutions (Patel, 2023). Understanding how communication dynamics differ in these contexts, including resource constraints, regulatory environments, and stakeholder diversity, is crucial for developing tailored communication strategies that address the unique challenges and opportunities faced by organizations operating in these geographical regions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The relationship between leader communication skills and team performance is a critical aspect of organizational success. Through an extensive review of empirical studies, it becomes evident that effective communication by leaders plays a pivotal role in shaping team dynamics, productivity, and overall performance. Leaders who exhibit clear, transparent, and authentic communication styles have been consistently associated with higher levels of team engagement, motivation, collaboration, and innovation. Moreover, communication clarity, frequency, authenticity, and adaptability emerge as key dimensions that significantly influence team decision-making processes, trust levels, and cohesion.

However, despite the substantial body of research highlighting the positive impact of leader communication skills on team performance, several research gaps remain. These include the need for a more comprehensive conceptual framework that integrates various communication strategies, exploration of communication effectiveness across diverse organizational contexts and geographical regions, and a deeper understanding of the interplay between communication dynamics, organizational culture, leadership styles, and team outcomes.

In conclusion, the findings underscore the importance of continuous development and enhancement of leader communication skills as a strategic imperative for organizations seeking to optimize team performance, foster a culture of collaboration, and achieve sustainable success in today's dynamic and competitive business environment. Closing the identified research gaps through interdisciplinary collaborations, longitudinal studies, and contextually relevant research initiatives will contribute to advancing our understanding of the complex relationship between

leader communication skills and team performance, thereby guiding evidence-based practices and interventions for organizational effectiveness and growth.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations based on theory, practice and policy:

Theory

Conducting longitudinal studies would significantly contribute to the theoretical understanding of the relationship between leader communication skills and team performance. By tracking changes and identifying causal relationships over time, researchers can uncover deeper insights into how communication strategies evolve and impact team dynamics. Moreover, integrating diverse communication dimensions such as clarity, authenticity, empathy, adaptability, and cultural intelligence into theoretical frameworks would provide a more holistic perspective on effective communication practices. This approach would contribute to advancing communication theory by offering a comprehensive model that guides future research and practical applications.

Practice

Organizations can enhance their practices by investing in communication skills training for leaders. Such training programs would equip leaders with the necessary tools to communicate effectively, inspire trust, foster collaboration, and drive team performance. Additionally, fostering a culture of open communication within organizations is crucial. Leaders should create environments where team members feel comfortable sharing ideas, providing feedback, and engaging in constructive dialogue. Utilizing technology for communication purposes, such as digital platforms and tools, can further enhance communication efficiency and transparency, especially in distributed teams. These practices contribute directly to improving organizational communication strategies and fostering a more engaged and productive workforce.

Policy

Developing and implementing communication guidelines or policies can have a significant impact on organizational communication practices. These guidelines outline expectations, best practices, and channels for effective communication, ensuring consistency and clarity across the organization. Moreover, policies promoting diversity and inclusion in communication practices are essential. They encourage leaders to adopt inclusive communication strategies that value diversity, respect cultural differences, and promote equitable participation within teams. Additionally, policies that incorporate regular assessments and feedback mechanisms to evaluate communication effectiveness contribute to informed decision-making and continuous improvement efforts. These policy interventions ensure that communication practices align with organizational goals, values, and strategic priorities, ultimately enhancing team performance and organizational outcomes.

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