



ASSESSMENT OF TEAMWORK EFFECTIVENESS AMONG COLLEGES OF EDUCATION STAFF – GHANA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined teamwork effectiveness among the staff of the Colleges of Education in Ghana. Quantitative descriptive study design was used. The participants of the study involved the Colleges of Education staff. The total of 105 staff (both the academic and the non-academic) members from selected colleges participated in the study. The study sample was selected using purposeful sampling technique. Data collected was coded and analyzed using frequencies, percentages and means. The Cronbach alpha (α) reliability analysis was carried out and the returned α values of 0.75, 0.68, 0.80, and 0.65 were obtained on the constructs team's: purpose and goals, roles, relationship and passion and commitment respectively. The average respondents' rates of the effective team practices per construct include team's: purpose and goals (70.9%), roles setting (68.4%), relationship (61.3%), and passion and commitment (70.0%). Based on the findings, it was concluded that the staff of the Colleges of Education have a constructive attitude toward teamwork. Periodic assessments on staff performances on effective teamwork practices in college bases to check the progress of teamwork effectiveness was recommended.

Keywords: colleges of education, teamwork, staff, team effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

Competitive markets' true success is determined by the results of their team on a global scale. Since the dawn of civilisation, mankind has collaborated in teams and groups. Teamwork is one of the oldest items known to man. Teamwork's traces can be seen almost everywhere. According to Dyer (2008), the notion of working in a group can be traced back to the now-classic Hawthorne studies from the late 1920s and early 1930s. Grayson (2012) by his survey indicated the first scholarly study of teamwork was conducted in the 1950s. This group looked at how work affects team relationships and how members of the team use each other's strengths and abilities to complete a mission or solve a problem at work.

A team or work group as referred to synonymously, could basically be described as a group of people who are united in their pursuit of a common purpose or objective, even at the expense of personal goals. Diverse individuals, a shared purpose, a sense of community, information sharing, and collective effort are all characteristics of teams (Sohmen, 2013). In their write-up, Koontz, Weihrich (1998), ascertain that teamwork has the potential to provide team members with a higher degree of emotional stability, self-confidence, and the ability to prepare and make good decisions with others. It also assists in the creation of a safe work atmosphere by

encouraging the production of workable agendas, innovative activities, constructive strategies, and values. A team, according to Grayson (2012), is a group of individuals who come together to work cooperatively on a mission in order to achieve a common goal, while teamwork refers to the activities of a group of individuals, which may involve efficient communication and interaction among team members to facilitate information sharing, personal understanding, and assisting others in achieving a level of success. According to Rico, Alcover, and Tabernero (2011), teams have a wide range of knowledge, personalities, abilities, and experience, which when combined makes for fast, agile, and innovative solutions to problems and challenges, increasing team satisfaction and boosting results. In effect, team productivity has a huge effect on organizational success and knowledge creation overall. This, the writers coined as “wisdom of crowds” (pp.57). Wageman (1997) is of the view that Company’s collaboration is the best way to get things done with consistency and performance, and it's one of the key reasons why economic development is under control and top management scrutinizes the company's progress to produce the desired results.

In the educational sector, teamwork plays the key role as in any other organizations. The findings of Phalane (2012), uncover that the effectiveness of an institutional environment can be fathomed through teamwork. Teamwork is a useful method for improving the quality of teaching and learning. This is illustrated, for example, in team teaching, which allows for more engagement between the teachers and can lead to improved teaching and learning quality. Teachers' strengths are integrated and shortcomings are discussed by teamwork, while underperforming teachers can be observed, critiqued, and offered guidance on how to improve by other team members in a non-threatening, welcoming setting (Mahlangu, Pitsoe & Isingoma, 2014).

Team effectiveness in organisations, educational sectors, among students and in all human endeavour cannot be underestimated. Cooke & Hilton (2015) applauded team effectiveness, as a group's ability to accomplish its goals and objectives. This ability to accomplish goals and objectives contributes to better results for team members as well as the outcomes generated or affected by the team. As indicated by Greenwood (2012), successful teamwork will compel people to broaden their talents and learn from one another in ways that might not have happened if they weren't put on the same team. It can also foster a sense of belongingness by encouraging members to learn to value and appreciate one another. Oster (2012), is of the view that teamwork has become a vital component of a company's growth and sustainability. He affirms that teams can achieve their objectives when they have motivating leaders, well-trained team members, and clearly identified targets or missions. Collaboration with other team members is a crucial soft skill. It increases the chances of landing a job and most importantly holding one (Pauli, 2018).

Despite the ever growing studies on teamwork in sectors like business firms and health sectors, there are only few studies on teamwork in the Ghanaian Educational sectors i.e. Universities, Colleges and Schools. This study specifically is purposed to examine the effectiveness of teamwork among staff of the Colleges of Education in Ghana. The Colleges of Education being tertiary institutions have the work force comprising the academic and non-academic staff. These major divisions of the staff of the Colleges have various sub-departments and units that operate to ensure the smooth running of the institutions. As indicated by Oster (2012), teamwork and school leadership are mutually beneficial. In order to move schools forward, leaders must inspire, steer, and push teachers and administrative staff. Strong team leadership that motivates, develops, and guides teachers and administrative staff will help the organization save money

Study Objectives

Specifically the study seeks to examine team effectiveness among the Colleges of Education staff from the perspective of team's:

1. Purpose and goals setting
2. Roles
3. Relationships
4. Passion and commitments

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used descriptive survey design. According to Obasi (1999), surveys are often used because they provide a valuable means of collecting information, particularly when the required data is not available in statistical records or is not secondary data.

Population and Sample

The study covered the staff (both the academic and non-academic staff) of the selected Colleges of Educations in Ghana. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to select the sample of the study. The calculated sample size was 96, on the confidence level of 95% and the confidence interval of 10 with unknown population value. The sample size of the study involved 105 staff members.

Instrument and Data Collection

The primary data was collected using structured survey questionnaire extricating information about team effectiveness among the staff in the Colleges of Education. Questions were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scales of: Strongly Agree (SA) = 1, Agree (A) = 2, Neutral (N) = 3, Disagree (D) = 4 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 5. The questionnaire was partitioned into five sections (Constructs) involving: gender information, assessment on purpose and goals setting for team effectiveness, roles, relationships, and passion and commitments of team members. The questionnaire started with an informed consent disclosure, which required the respondent's consent to proceed. Provisions of name or any identity of participants or the name of the Colleges were not given, this was to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants and their institutions. The questionnaire was piloted on 25 staff members who were not involved in the main survey. This was done prior its distributions to the participants. The purpose was to check the items' reliability and consistency. In all, 150 copies of the questionnaire were distributed. The duration assigned to retrieve the completed questionnaire was five (5) working days. Within the five (5) days and with an extra five (5) days added, 105 (70.0%) of the completed questionnaire were retrieved.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The raw data collected was critically analyzed to extract information used to draw inferences and conclusions about the study. Statistical analysis was done on all the items tested using the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet and the Jamovi Statistical data analysis package. The data analysis was carried out on the 105 retrieved completed questionnaires. The data was presented using: frequency counts, basic percentages, mean values and as well as tables and chart presentations.

Cronbach alpha reliability analysis was tested on the items of construct separately, the returned alpha values include: 0.75, 0.68, 0.80, and 0.65 on the constructs team's: purpose and goals, roles, relationship and passion and commitment respectively. The results produced by the alpha reliability test showed reliable internal consistency of items overtime. Miller (2006) in his study projected that when reliable test is used, it provides consistent results.

FINDINGS

The findings revealed out of the 105 participants that 33 were females and 72 were males. This was presented on the figure 1 below. The remaining findings are partitioned based on the four major constructs derived from the study objectives. These include: the purpose and goals on teamwork effectiveness, roles executions leading to teamwork effectiveness, team and intra-team relationships, and team members' passion and commitment to yield teamwork effectiveness.

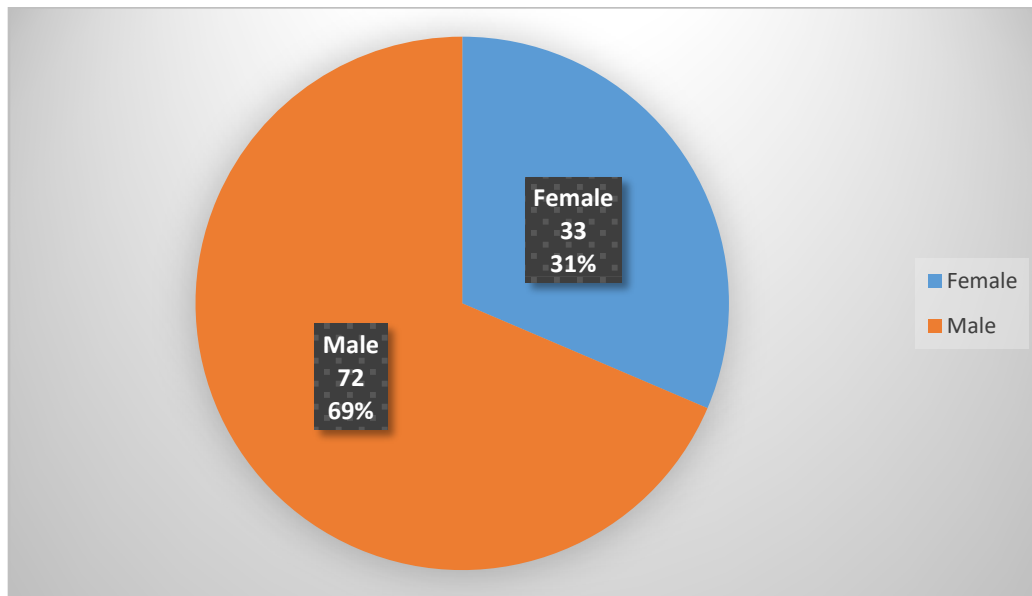


Figure 1: Gender

Objective 1: Examine Team's Purpose and Goals on Teamwork Effectiveness

Table 1: Frequencies of Respondents on Purpose and Goals

Variables	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
The Departments/Units have a meaningful and shared purpose.	34	32.4	51	48.6	13	12.4	6	5.7	1	1.0
Departments/Units are strongly committed to a shared mission	21	20.0	45	42.9	28	26.7	9	8.6	2	1.9
The College has mechanisms in place to monitor Departmental/Unit results.	12	11.4	66	62.9	11	10.5	10	9.5	6	5.7
As a team, the	9	8.6	63	60.0	20	19.0	11	10.5	2	1.9

Departments/units work to attract and retain members.										
Departments/Units make sure their work helps the institution to achieve its set goals.	18	17.1	57	54.3	15	14.3	11	10.5	4	3.8
Departments/Units consistently produce strong and measurable results timely.	13	12.4	57	54.3	25	23.8	8	7.6	2	1.9
The Departments/Units set and meet challenging goals.	10	9.5	65	61.9	18	17.1	10	9.5	2	1.9

Criteria SA = 1, A = 2, N = 3, D = 4 and SD = 5

Table 2: Mean Responses on Purpose and Goals

Variables	Mean
The Departments/Units have a meaningful and shared purpose.	1.94
Departments/Units are strongly committed to a shared mission	2.30
The College has mechanisms in place to monitor Departmental/Unit results.	2.35
As a team, the Departments/units work to attract and retain members.	2.37
Departments/Units make sure their work helps the institution to achieve its set goals.	2.30
Departments/Units consistently produce strong and measurable results timely.	2.32
The Departments/Units set and meet challenging goals.	2.32
Overall Mean	2.27

The tables 1 and 2 present the frequencies of the respondents and the mean responses on the purpose and goals. From the table 1, the total frequencies of: 81.0%, 62.9%, 74.3%, 68.6%, 71.4%, 66.7%, and 71.4% respectively showed agreements on all the seven variables tested. These include: the departments/units have a meaningful and shared purpose, departments/units are strongly committed to a shared mission, the College has mechanisms in place to monitor departmental/unit results, as a team, the departments/units work to attract and retain members, departments/units make sure their work helps the institution to achieve its set goals, departments/units consistently produce strong and measurable results timely, and the departments/units set and meet challenging goals. The table 2, showed the overall mean value for all items to be 2.27, this confirmed the frequencies shown in the table 1 as most of the respondents agreed on the statements.

Objective 2: Examine Team’s Roles on Teamwork Effectiveness

Table 3: Team’s Roles Effectiveness

Variables	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Team members clearly understand their roles.	15	14.3	60	57.1	26	24.8	4	3.8	0	0.0
Members take personal responsibility for the effectiveness of their Department/Unit	11	10.5	63	60.0	23	21.9	8	7.6	0	0.0
We have the requisite skills we need to effectively execute assigned tasks.	23	21.9	56	53.3	16	15.2	8	7.6	2	1.9
Team members understand one another's roles.	17	16.2	52	49.5	25	23.8	8	7.6	3	2.9
The Departments/Units view everything, even mistakes, as opportunities for learning and growth.	8	7.6	54	51.4	32	30.5	11	10.5	0	0.0
Team members work to ensure they are using best practice methods.	24	22.9	48	45.7	19	18.1	9	8.6	5	4.8

Table 4: Mean Responses on Team's Roles Effectiveness

Variables	Mean
Team members clearly understand their roles.	2.18
Members take personal responsibility for the effectiveness of their Department/Unit	2.27
We have the requisite skills we need to effectively execute assigned tasks.	2.14
Team members understand one another's roles.	2.31
The Departments/Units view everything, even mistakes, as opportunities for learning and growth.	2.44
Team members work to ensure they are using best practice methods.	2.27
Overall Mean	2.27

The tables 3 and 4 present the frequencies of respondents and the means of the responses on the construct: team's roles on teamwork effectiveness. The total frequencies with the least 59.0% to 75.2% the highest, responded in agreement with the variables: team members clearly understand their roles, members take personal responsibility for the effectiveness of their department/unit, we have the requisite skills we need to effectively execute assigned tasks, team members understand one another's roles, the departments/units view everything, even mistakes, as opportunities for learning and growth, and team members work to ensure they are using best practice methods. Respectively, the mean responses of these variables as shown in the table 4 include: 2.18, 2.27, 2.14, 2.31, 2.44, and 2.27.

Objective 3: Examine Team's Relationships on Teamwork Effectiveness

Table 5: Team's Relationships

Variables	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Team members appreciate one another's unique capabilities.	18	17.1	62	59.0	19	18.1	6	5.7	0	0.0
Team members are effective listeners.	16	15.2	50	47.6	31	29.5	5	4.8	3	2.9
Communication flows effectively in the Departments/Units.	21	20.0	43	41.0	21	20.0	14	13.3	6	5.7
Communication in the Departments/Units is open and honest.	11	10.5	44	41.9	24	22.9	17	16.2	9	8.6
The College has established trusting and supportive relationships with the Departments/Units.	7	6.7	54	51.4	27	25.7	17	16.2	0	0.0
Members are proud to be part of the Departments/Units they belong.	23	21.9	46	43.8	19	18.1	15	14.3	2	1.9
Every member values others contributions in the Department/Unit.	19	18.1	39	37.1	32	30.5	11	10.5	4	3.8
Collaborations with Departments/Units are productive, worthwhile, and yield good results.	23	21.9	47	44.8	21	20.0	9	8.6	5	4.8
The Departments/Units of the College trust each other.	12	11.4	44	41.9	25	23.8	18	17.1	6	5.7

Table 6: Mean Responses on Team’s Relationships

Variables	Mean
Team members appreciate one another's unique capabilities.	2.12
Team members are effective listeners.	2.32
Communication flows effectively in the Departments/Units.	2.44
Communication in the Departments/Units is open and honest.	2.70
The College has established trusting and supportive relationships with the Departments/Units.	2.51
Members are proud to be part of the Departments/Units they belong.	2.30
Every member values others contributions in the Department/Unit.	2.45
Collaborations with Departments/Units are productive, worthwhile, and yield good results.	2.30
The Departments/Units of the College trust each other.	2.64
Overall mean	2.42

The frequencies of respondents on team’s relationship presented in the table 5 showed majority of the respondents with the average total calculated to be 61.3% agreed or strongly agreed on the nine variables tested. This was confirmed in the table 6, where the overall mean value for the variables showed 2.42. The item frequencies totaled for strongly agree and agree include: team members appreciate one another's unique capabilities (76.1%), Team members are effective listeners (62.8%), communication flows effectively in the Departments/Units (61.0%), communication in the Departments/Units is open and honest (52.4%), the College has established trusting and supportive relationships with the departments/units (58.1%), members are proud to be part of the departments/units they belong (65.7%), every member values others contributions in the department/unit (55.2%), collaborations with departments/units are productive, worthwhile, and yield good results (66.7%), and the departments/units of the College trust each other (53.3%).

Objective 4: Examine Team’s Passion and Commitment on Teamwork effectiveness

Table 7: Team’s Passion and Commitment

Variables	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Working as a team inspires others to do their best.	27	25.7	53	50.5	14	13.3	7	6.7	4	3.8
Departments/Units address and resolve related issues quickly.	15	14.3	52	49.5	27	25.7	7	6.7	4	3.8

Team members seek and give each other constructive feedback.	15	14.3	60	57.1	17	16.2	11	10.5	2	1.9
Team members display high levels of cooperation and mutual support.	16	15.2	56	53.3	20	19.0	10	9.5	3	2.9
Team members embrace continuous improvement.	27	25.7	49	46.7	17	16.2	8	7.6	4	3.8
Problem solving in the Department/Unit results in effective solutions.	18	17.1	53	50.5	28	26.7	6	5.7	0	0.0

Table 8: Mean Responses on Team’s Passion and Commitment

Variables	Mean
Working as a team inspires others to do their best.	2.12
Departments/Units address and resolve related issues quickly.	2.36
Team members seek and give each other constructive feedback.	2.29
Team members display high levels of cooperation and mutual support.	2.31
Team members embrace continuous improvement.	2.17
Problem solving in the Department/Unit results in effective solutions.	2.21
Overall mean	2.24

The frequencies of the respondents on team’s passion and commitment as shown in the table 7, revealed the total percentage frequencies of 76.2, 63.8, 71.4, 68.5, 72.4, and 67.6 either agreed or strongly agreed on the tested variables: working as a team inspires others to do their best, departments/units address and resolve related issues quickly, team members seek and give each other constructive feedback, team members display high levels of cooperation and mutual support, team members embrace continuous improvement, and problem solving in the department/unit results in effective solutions. The overall mean on the responses of the items in the table 8, is 2.24.

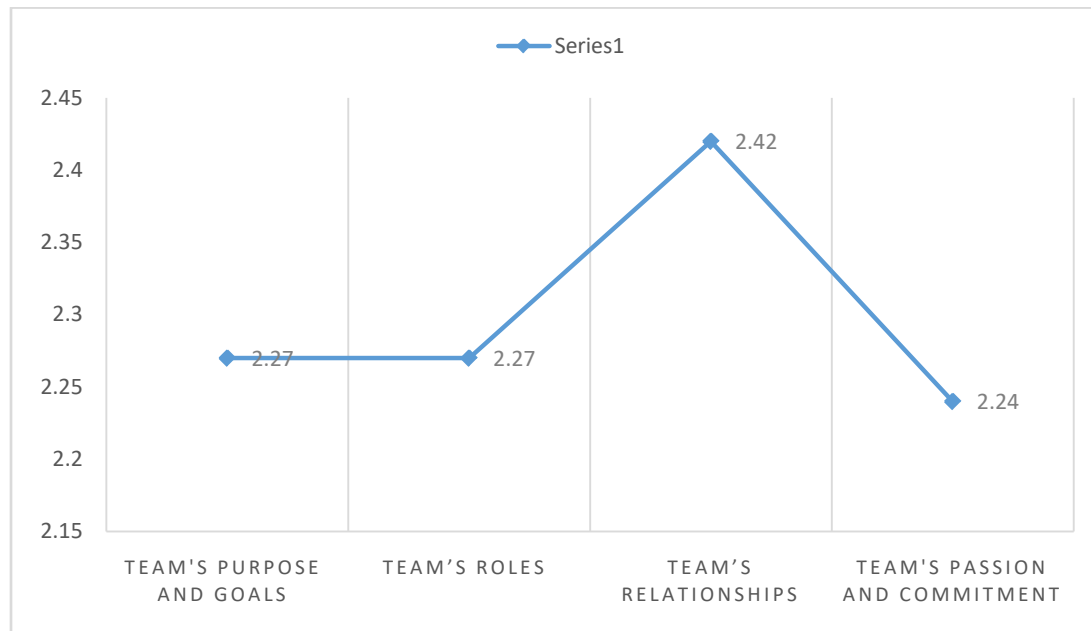


Figure 2: Overall Mean Responses for Constructs

The figure 2 presents the illustration of the overall means of the four constructs studied. Thus, team's purpose and goal, and team's roles have an overall mean of 2.27 each. Then, team's relationships produced an overall mean of 2.45, and finally team's passion and commitment has the overall mean of 2.24.

DISCUSSIONS

This study examined team effectiveness practices among the staff of the Colleges of Education in Ghana. The survey was carried out based on four constructs including: team's purpose and goals setting, team's roles, team's relationships, and team's passion and commitments.

The findings of the study revealed that there is a high rate of team effectiveness practices among the staff of the Colleges. The overall means of the four constructs studied, thus, team's purpose and goal, team's roles, team's relationships and team's passion and commitment, obtained the responses mean values of 2.27, 2.27, 2.45, and 2.24 respectively. This illustrated the participants' agreement on the effective teamwork practices. The study of Mickan and Rodger, (2000) scored the highest percentage on 'clear purpose' for team effectiveness and this revealed that all teams work together to achieve the organization's objectives. The key benefits of teamwork are coordination, which is described as the development of a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts (Palmiano, 2019).

With about 70.9% averagely, the staff agreed that the institutions: have meaningful and shared purpose, are strongly committed to a shared mission, have mechanisms in place to monitor progress of results, work to attract and retain members, make sure their work helps the institution to achieve its set goals, consistently produce strong and measurable results timely, and set and meet challenging goals. These findings are in positive directions as institutional goal setting is considered paramount to successful growth. According to Mickan and Rodger (2000), Organizations become permeated by specific assumptions or actions, either specifically stated in mission statements or implicitly. The authors explicitly specified that mission statement can be used to create clear and measurable team objectives. Kirkman and Rosen (1999) cited that team members gained a greater understanding of the mission criteria and became more inspired to

complete them after participating in the goal setting and prioritization. Loxley (1997) in contention resolved that team members are motivated to highlight their similarities without diluting their individual professional contributions as they have a super ordinate target beyond professional objectives.

As with regards to team's roles effectiveness, 68.4% average of the respondents concord that: team members clearly understand their roles, members take personal responsibilities for the effectiveness of their departments/units, they have the requisite skills needed to effectively execute assigned tasks, departments/units view everything, even mistakes, as opportunities for learning and growth, and team members work to ensure they are using best practice methods. The findings portrayed good team characteristics as per Mickan and Rodger's (2000) declaration that individuals in an organisation should be able to negotiate their positions in order to perform specific and significant activities, and team roles should be interchangeable in the ideal scenario. They further explained that personal expectations, as well as organizational and interpersonal factors, may influence role construction as a result, tasks must be adaptable to individual differences, personal growth needs, and membership changes (Mickan & Rodger, 2000).

The items tested on the team's relationships averagely scored 61.3% frequency agreement indicating: team members appreciate one another's unique capabilities, team members are effective listeners, effective flows of communication, trusting and supportive relationships with departments/units, respect for others' contributions, and trust for one another. Individually, empathic and compassionate team members provide practical assistance, exchange knowledge, and work together to solve problems. As indicated by Mickan and Rodger (2000), successful teams are built on strong social bonds. Kirkman and Rosen (1999), argue that individuals' access to strategic knowledge is improved by social networks inside and outside teams, as well as a clearer perception of team tasks and a greater confidence in the team's effectiveness. Assessment on the practices of the passion and commitment for team effectiveness revealed that 70.0% of the respondents agreed on the items: working as a team inspires others to do their best, departments/units address and resolve related issues quickly, team members seek and give each other constructive feedback, team members display high levels of cooperation and mutual support, team members embrace continuous improvement, and problem solving in the department/unit results in effective solutions. Studies have shown the impact of team commitment and cohesion on effectiveness of teamwork. Pearce and Ravlin (1987), cited by Mickan and Rodger (2000) showed feelings of responsibility for and involvement in team's work increase engagement. Mickan and Rodger again cited Goleman (1998) by saying committed individuals were able to make short-term personal sacrifices in the hopes of achieving a greater good (2020). Furthermore, high levels of dedication helped individuals to succeed in the face of challenges and pressures that would otherwise be stressful. To accomplish team goals, participants work interdependently around the team's mission. Members socially feel like they belong to and want to stick with the team for future tasks Mickan and Rodger (2000). Effective teamwork is clearly dependent on the presence of collaboration among all team members who are all willing to participate and engage in order to cultivate and nurture a safe, efficient team atmosphere.

CONCLUSION

This study examined teamwork effectiveness among the staff of the Colleges of Education in Ghana. Specifically four areas considered among the effective characteristics of team including purpose and goals, team's roles setting, team's relationship, and passion and commitment were examined. The average respondents' rates of the effective team practices per construct include:

purpose and goals (70.9%), team's roles setting (68.4%), team's relationship (61.3%), and passion and commitment (70.0%). Based on the findings, it is concluded that the staff of the Colleges of Education have a constructive attitude toward teamwork.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In spite of the positive results on the staff's attitudes towards teamwork effectiveness, we recommend that Colleges of Education Quality Assurance divisions take up the responsibilities to conduct periodic assessments on staff performances on effective teamwork practices on College bases. This will go a long way to inform the College managements and the leaders of the various teams in developing effective team management plans for the efficient running of the Colleges.

LIMITATION

This study was generally conducted on all staff including the academic and the non-academic staff, hence limiting the survey to dive into more specific areas of a defined team. Also the purposive sampling technique used has limited the study to be generalized to all Colleges in the country.

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