

SOCIAL SKILL AND TEAM EFFECTIVENESS IN QUICK SERVICE RESTAURANT IN PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between social skills and team effectiveness in quick service restaurant in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study was anchored on the Human Relations Theory and Social Exchange Theory. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey. The population of this study consisted of fifteen (15) registered Quick Service Restaurants in Port Harcourt, which are functional and operational in Rivers State. Since the population of the study was relatively small, the study took a census. Hence, two (2) senior managers and two (2) junior managers were drawn from each of these firms to constitute the research elements of 60. The research data for this study was collected mainly from the primary source. The bivariate data were tested using Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient (r^0). The result showed that social skill has a strong positive relationship with measures of team effectiveness (cohesiveness, goal attainment, quality output) in quick service restaurant in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. It was concluded that social skills positively improves team effectiveness in quick service restaurants in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Based on the findings and conclusion, it was recommended that management of quick service restaurants in Port Harcourt, Rivers State should prioritize open communication by fostering mutual relationship among team members. By doing so, organizations can create a culture where employees feel valued, respected, and empowered to perform at their best.

Keywords: Social skill, team effectiveness, cohesiveness, goal attainment, quality output

INTRODUCTION

Teams play a pivotal role in bridging the relationship between individual performance and organizational performance (Edmondson, 2012). Most firms increasingly rely on designing teams in different ways in order to use their resources effectively and consequently increase their competitiveness. Team is a set of members and competitors who have a mutual role to play, and who are dynamically involved together. Team effectiveness can be an indicator of whether an organization is successful in considering both individuals' behavioral factors (e.g., employee involvement) and the organization's environmental factors (e.g., leadership Support). Prior studies have been conducted on team performance, for example; Hadi (2007) investigated on strategies for improving team performance. Hari (2018) researched on team effectiveness and perceived employees' performance in Nepalese service sector. Halar, *et al.*, (2016) investigated

determinants of team performance. This study examines how social skills affect team effectiveness in an organization.

Social skills encompass a range of competencies, including communication, empathy, teamwork, and conflict resolution (Williams *et al.*, 2021). These skills enable individuals to interact effectively with others, fostering collaboration and a positive work environment. Recent studies have emphasized that social skills are not merely interpersonal abilities but are essential for navigating the complexities of modern workplaces (Bourne *et al.*, 2022). Social skills are essential for leadership effectiveness. Leaders who possess strong social skills can inspire and motivate their teams, fostering a sense of belonging and commitment. Research by Adams *et al.* (2021) suggests that leaders with high social skills are more likely to engage their employees, resulting in higher levels of performance and organizational loyalty. Social skills are important because they allow us to interact with each other with predictability, so that we can more readily understand each other and be understood. Without an agreed upon social way of interacting, it is very hard to prevent misunderstandings. It is important for us to be able to interact with clarity (Patrick, 2008). Studies have shown that individuals with high levels of social skill tend to be more effective leaders, more likely to achieve positive work outcomes, and more likely to be promoted within their organizations (Porath & Erez, 2010).

Several academic studies have been conducted over the years in effort to improve team effectiveness. Goleman (2018) investigated the relationship between social skill and employee performance in the United States. Ferris, *et al.* (2001) conducted a study on "social skill and performance: A meta-analysis". The study used a meta-analysis approach to synthesize the findings from multiple previous studies on social skill and employee performance. Al-ahmadi (2016) carried out a study titled "social skill and employee performance: A cross-cultural study of Saudi Arabia". Despite the numerous academic studies on how to improve performance in an organization, little or no attention has been made on how social skills bring about improved team effectiveness in Quick Service Restaurant in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. This study sought to bridge this gap by examining the relationship between social skills and team effectiveness in quick service restaurant in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

1.1 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between social skills and team effectiveness in quick service restaurant in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The specific objectives includes:

- i. To examine the relationship between social skills and cohesiveness in quick service restaurant in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- ii. To determine the relationship between social skills and goal attainment in quick service restaurant in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- iii. To ascertain the relationship between social skills and quality output in quick service restaurant in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Conceptual Framework

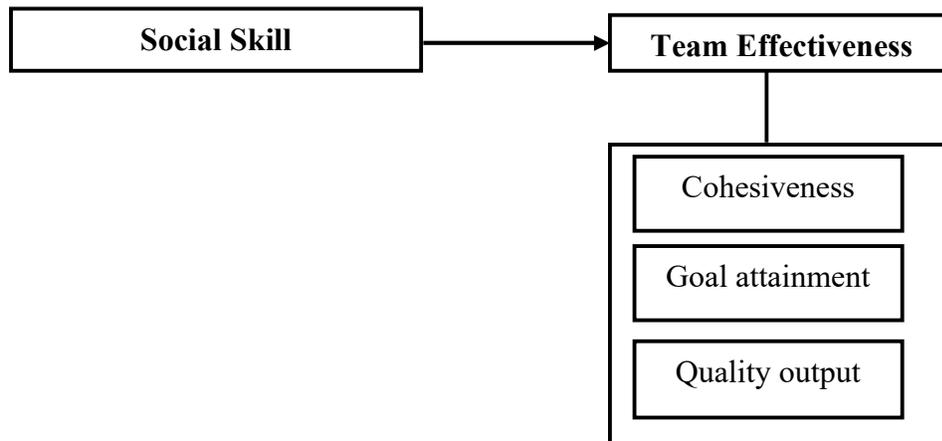


Fig 1: Conceptual Framework for Social Skill and Team Effectiveness

Source: Desk Research (2025)

Research Questions

Based on the research objectives, the following research questions guided the researcher:

- i. What is the relationship between social skills and cohesiveness in quick service restaurant in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
- ii. What is the relationship between social skills and goal attainment in quick service restaurant in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
- iii. What is the relationship between social skills and quality output in quick service restaurant in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypothesis have been formulated for this study:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between social skills and cohesiveness in Quick Service Restaurant in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between social skills and goal attainment in Quick Service Restaurant in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between social skills and quality output in Quick Service Restaurant in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Various theories have been formulated to give explanation on Self-Awareness and Team Performance. This study is anchored on the Human Relations Theory and Social Exchange Theory.

Human Relations Theory

The Human Relations Theory was propounded by Elton Mayo (1932). The theory explains that developing and maintaining harmonious relations between employed and supervisors, teachers and students is quite fundamental to all organization. Follet, May, Owen (2003) in Akpakum (2008) were the early advocates of this theory and in their work, they emphasized the human side of the theory, which is that a satisfied employee is an important part of an organization. The theory therefore emphasized that an increase of employee morals through communication and trust will increase their productivity or achievement. The human relations theory basically holds that financial remunerations through a significant motivator is not the driving force behind workers productivity or satisfaction (Focho, 2001). Other non-economic factors such as the physical and psychological atmosphere can be powerful motivators (Usman, 2005).

The relevance of this theory to the study is that it highlights the role of workers and social factors in the effectiveness of internal communication and the issues such as social intelligence. In summary, the human relation approach deals with the interaction between management and employees, their motivation and influence on organizational events. This throws more light on what management and employees ought to do to ensure effective internal communication. The human relations approach lacks adequate focus on work. It puts all the emphasis on interpersonal relations and on the informal group. It tends to overemphasize the psychological aspects at the cost of the structural and technical aspects. The human relations approach is criticized for its failure to take into account the impact of larger economic, social and technological factors on the productivity of workers in organization.

Social Exchange Theory

The Social Exchange Theory was put forward by Homan (1958). The social exchange theory explains interpersonal relationships by positing the economic cost benefit analysis as precondition for social engagement and exchange. The exchange perspective views the employment relationship as consisting of social or economic exchanges (Yu, *et al.*, 2018). Economic exchange relationships involve the exchange of economic benefits in return for employees' effort and are often dependent on formal contracts which are legally enforceable. On the other hand, social exchanges are 'voluntary actions' which may be initiated by an organization's treatment of its employees, with the expectation that the employees were obligated to reciprocate the good deeds of the organization (Sungu, Weng & Kitule, 2019).

Perceptions of favorable exchange/rewards from the employees' viewpoint are expected to result in increased commitment to the organization. Another perspective of the social exchange theory is the norm of reciprocity which is based on two assumptions: (a) people should help those who have helped them, and (b) people should not injure those who have helped them (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018). Therefore, employees who perceive that the organization values and treats them fairly will feel obligated to pay back or reciprocate these good deeds with positive work attitudes and behaviors (Bos-Nehles & Veenendaal, 2019). The above theory is applicable to the study as it highlights the need for the organization to enable its resources meet two of the outlined characteristics. For an organization to remain competitive and thus improve its performance, its employees must be well managed so as to become valuable and costly to imitate. There is a need therefore for an organization to enable its employees which is the most important resource that they have, to meet the criteria. This can only be achieved through

employing of effective employee development in other to make them different and unique from the employees of other organizations.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Social Skill

"Social Skills" refer to the ability to effectively manage one's own emotions and the emotions of others in social interactions, allowing for positive connections, collaboration, and conflict resolution, essentially encompassing skills like empathy, active listening, and non-verbal communication to navigate social situations successfully. Social skills are the emotional intelligence skills to properly manage one's and others' emotions, to connect, interact and work with the others. Social skills are the tools that enable people to communicate, interact, and build relationships with others effectively. These abilities are not innate; they are learned behaviours that develop through experiences and interactions with others. Social skills cover a wide range of behaviours, including verbal and nonverbal communication, listening skills, the ability to negotiate and resolve conflicts, and the capacity to perceive and understand social cues. Team members need to be able to stimulate cooperation, collaboration and teamwork through well-developed social skills (Goleman, 1998).

Social skills involve patterns of behavior that support successful social relationships and enable individuals to work efficiently with others (Triyanti, 2023). Low social skills can harm personal learning achievement. Therefore, the ability to develop social skills is one of the assets owned by students, which allows them to interact with others during the learning process (Daraee *et al.*, 2016; Green *et al.*, 2021). At the basic education level, students' social skills are based on understanding diversity. In this context, it refers to the capacity to accept social contexts and behave following the norms and guidelines governing communication interactions, both verbal and non-verbal, with other individuals (Mahabbati *et al.*, 2017). Social skills are essential for leadership effectiveness. Leaders who possess strong social skills can inspire and motivate their teams, fostering a sense of belonging and commitment. Research by Adams *et al.* (2021) suggests that leaders with high social skills are more likely to engage their employees, resulting in higher levels of performance and organizational loyalty. Social skills are important because they allow us to interact with each other with predictability, so that we can more readily understand each other and be understood.

Team Effectiveness

Team effectiveness is the capacity of a group of people, usually with complementary skills, to work together to accomplish goals set out by an authority, team members, or team leaders. Ayoko and Callan (2009) defined teams as groups composed of autonomous individuals who are wholly identified as teams, having a shared liability and are together accountable for accomplishment of tasks identified by the organization. Teams are said to be necessary for organizational effectiveness. Team effectiveness refers to the system of getting people in an organization or institution to work together effectively. The idea behind team effectiveness is that a group of people together can achieve more than if the persons of the team working on their own. The study provides an appraisal of the team effectiveness and problems of the organisations. The study will prove extreme usefulness to the selected organisations. Through the findings, organisations will further be enlightened about the current motivation level of their workers working in a team (Jordan, Ashkanasy, Hartel & Hooper, 2002). Highly effective teams

are able to motivate each other and collaborate to solve problems, which leads to greater results. Team effectiveness models help us understand the best management techniques to get optimal performance from our teams.

Cohesiveness

Cohesiveness means the quality of being structured or organized in a unified way, with close or strong internal connections between people, ideas, or other. Team cohesiveness refers to a team's ability to effectively work as a whole towards a common goal. It also means that the team's members want to contribute to the team's ability to work well together. Cohesiveness is the degree to which members are attracted to a group and motivated to remain part of it (Schermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn, 2022); it therefore refers to both "forces that attract members to the group", as well as to "the incentives to remain within the group" (Man & Lam, 2023). Employees in cohesive groups value their membership and strive to maintain positive relationships with other group members (Schermerhorn et al., 2022). Team cohesion has been defined in two general ways. The first refers to the degree to which members of a group desire to remain in the group (Carwright, 2018). This aspect of cohesion refers to the attractiveness of the group for the individual members. It reflects the degree to which group membership is linked to personal rewards (Thibaut & Kelly, 2019). Team cohesion is important for several reasons, including Better communication among team. Members A heightened ability to achieve company objectives and goals. A decreased need to micromanage a team, freeing up time for managers. A positive work environment. A decreased use of resources due to a team's effectiveness and efficiency. Increased job satisfaction among employees who are part of a cohesive team.

Goal attainment

Goal attainment refers to the process of setting measurable goals in therapy to monitor progress and achieve desired outcomes. Goal attainment is the process of achieving goals that have been set. Goal attainment primarily focuses on the concept of "Goal Setting Theory," which posits that individuals are more likely to achieve a desired outcome when they set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals, leading to increased motivation and focused action towards achieving them. According to Mathis & Jackson (2009) goal attainment is the successful completion of tasks by a selected individual or individuals, as set and measured by a supervisor or organization, to pre-defined acceptable standards while efficiently and effectively utilizing available resource within a changing environment. Consequently, team goal attainment was operationally perceived as: Executing defined duties, meeting deadlines team input and achieving departmental goals. The above should, as pointed by Armstrong (2005), lead to efficiency, specialization, effective feedback and good organizational relation. Employees perform at higher levels when asked to meet a specific goal target. Requesting employees to improve, to work harder, or to do their best is not helpful, because that kind of goal does not give them a focused target.

Quality Output

Quality output is the consistent production of work that meets or exceeds established standards. It involves pursuing excellence in a project from start to finish (Haper, 2018). It goes beyond simply meeting requirements, aiming for superior results. It emphasizes attention to detail and accuracy in all aspects of the work. It encourages creative and effective solutions and focuses on maintaining high standards across all projects and tasks. High-quality output leads to satisfied

customers and positive reputations. By focusing on quality from the start, organizations can reduce rework and errors, leading to greater efficiency. Organizations that consistently deliver high-quality output gain a competitive edge in the market. Quality output is a measure for the quality of collaboration in teams and consists of six facets: communication, coordination, balance of member contributions, mutual support, effort, and cohesion. It is widely agreed upon in the literature that the flow of communication within teams influences the success of innovative projects (Griffin & Hauser 2022).

Empirical Review

Goleman (2018) investigated the relationship between social skill and employee performance in the United States. The study used a qualitative research design that involved interviews and case studies with employees and managers from various organizations across the United States. The study focused on employees from various industries, including finance, healthcare, and education. The sample size was not specified in the study, but Goleman interviewed a diverse group of employees and managers from different organizations. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with employees and managers, as well as case studies of specific organizations. The study found that social skill is a critical component of emotional intelligence and plays a significant role in employee performance and organizational outcomes. Employees who possess strong social skills, such as empathy, communication, and conflict management, were found to have higher levels of job satisfaction, engagement, and productivity, while organizations that prioritized social skill development had higher levels of employee retention and innovation. Goleman's research on social skill and employee performance highlighted the importance of interpersonal skills in the workplace, suggesting that organizations should prioritize training and development in these areas to improve overall performance and organizational outcomes.

Ferris *et al.* (2001) conducted a study on "social skill and performance: A meta-analysis". The study used a meta-analysis approach to synthesize the findings from multiple previous studies on social skill and employee performance. The study focused on employees from various organizations across the United States. The meta-analysis included data from 40 previous studies, with a total sample size of 11,759 employees. Data was collected from previous studies that had measured social skill and employee performance. The study found a significant positive relationship between social skill and employee performance, with a correlation of 0.38 between the two variables. The study also found that social skill had a stronger relationship with performance in service industries than in manufacturing industries, suggesting that social skill may be a more critical factor in occupations that involve frequent interaction with customers or clients. Overall, the study provided strong evidence that social skill is an important predictor of employee performance and should be considered in selection, training, and development processes.

Al-ahmadi (2016) carried out a study titled "social skill and employee performance: A cross-cultural study of Saudi Arabia". The study used a cross-sectional research design, which involved collecting data at a single point in time. The study population consisted of employees from various organizations in Saudi Arabia. The sample size of the study was 300 employees, selected using a convenience sampling technique. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire that measured social skill and employee performance, as well as organizational culture and leadership. The study found a significant positive relationship between social skill and employee performance in Saudi Arabia, with employees who reported higher levels of social skill also reporting higher levels of job satisfaction, engagement, and productivity. The study

also identified organizational culture and leadership as important mediating factors, with a supportive and collaborative organizational culture and transformational leadership style being associated with higher levels of employee social skill and performance.

Sangperm, Sangperm and Aramrueang (2021) examined the role of self-motivation and social skills to enhance the performance. A survey was carried out for data collection from Thailand. Thai court judges were the respondents of the study. By using a questionnaire survey, 200 questionnaires were used for data collection. Finally, data was used for analysis through statistical tool, namely, Partial Least Square (PLS). Results of the study found that self-motivation has positive effect on performance and social skills. Moreover, social skills have positive effect on performance. Finally, it is found that social skills mediate the relationship between self-motivation and performance.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the cross-sectional survey. The population of this study consisted of fifteen (15) registered Quick Service Restaurants in Port Harcourt, which are functional and operational in Rivers State. Since the population of the study was relatively small, the study took a census. Hence, two (2) senior managers and two (2) junior managers were drawn from each of these firms to constitute the research elements of 60. The research data for this study was collected mainly from the primary source. The instrument was subjected to a critical assessment by experts in the field of Management. At the inferential level of analyses, the hypotheses were tested with Spearman’s Rank Correlation Coefficient (r^0). All analyses were done through the application of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 23.0).

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The following results were obtained from the study:

Relationship between Social Skills and the Measures of Team Effectiveness

Table 1: Correlations Matrix for Social Skills and the Measures of Team Effectiveness

			Social skills	Cohesiveness	Goal attainment	Quality output
Spearman’s rho	Social skills	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.557**	.647**	.652**
		Sig. (2-tailed)				
		N	.	.000	.000	.000
			55	55	55	55
	Cohesiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.557**	1.000	.680**	.669**
		Sig. (2-tailed)				
		N	.000	.	.000	.000
			55	55	55	55
	Goal attainment	Correlation Coefficient	.647**	.680**	1.000	.750**
		Sig. (2-tailed)				
		N	.000	.000	.	.000
			55	55	55	55
	Quality output	Correlation Coefficient	.652**	.669**	.750**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)				
		N	.000	.000	.000	.
			55	55	55	55

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data 2025 and SPSS Output version 25.0

Table 1 illustrates the test for the last three previously postulated bivariate hypothetical statements. The results are stated below:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between social skills and cohesiveness in quick service restaurants in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The result as depicted in table 1 revealed that there is a moderate and positive relationship between social skills and cohesiveness in quick service restaurants in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The data indicates that social skills is significantly associated with cohesiveness (where $\rho = .557$ and $P < 0.05$). The finding suggests that social skills enhances team effectiveness which is measured in terms of cohesiveness. Hence on the basis of the result, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected and the alternate accepted.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between social skills and goal attainment in quick service restaurants in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The result as depicted in table 1 revealed that there is a strong and positive relationship between social skills and goal attainment in quick service restaurants in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The data indicates that social skills is significantly associated with goal attainment (where $\rho = .647$ and $P < 0.05$). The finding suggests that social skills enhances team effectiveness which is measured in terms of goal attainment. Hence on the basis of the result, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected and alternate accepted.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between social skills and quality output in quick service restaurants in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The result as depicted in table 1 revealed that there is a strong and positive relationship between social skills and quality output in quick service restaurants in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The data indicates that social skills is significantly associated with quality output (where $\rho = .652$ and $P < 0.05$). The finding suggests that social skills enhances team effectiveness which is measured in terms of quality output. Hence on the basis of the result, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) is rejected and the alternate accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The result as depicted in table 1 revealed that there is a strong and positive relationship between social skills and the measures of team effectiveness (cohesiveness, goal attainment, quality output) in quick service restaurants in Port Harcourt, Rivers State with ρ value of .757, .647, .671 at $P < 0.05$ respectively. This result is in line with the study of Goleman (2018) who investigated the relationship between social skill and employee performance in the United States. The study found that social skill is a critical component of emotional intelligence and plays a significant role in employee performance and organizational outcomes. Employees who possess strong social skills, such as empathy, communication, and conflict management, were found to have higher levels of job satisfaction, engagement, and productivity, while organizations that prioritized social skill development had higher levels of employee retention and innovation.

Goleman's research on social skill and employee performance highlighted the importance of interpersonal skills in the workplace, suggesting that organizations should prioritize training and development in these areas to improve overall performance and organizational outcomes. Ferris *et al.* (2001) also conducted a study on "social skill and performance: A meta-analysis". The study found a significant positive relationship between social skill and employee performance, with a correlation of 0.38 between the two variables. The study also found that social skill had a

stronger relationship with performance in service industries than in manufacturing industries, suggesting that social skill may be a more critical factor in occupations that involve frequent interaction with customers or clients. Overall, the study provided strong evidence that social skill is an important predictor of employee performance and should be considered in selection, training, and development processes.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings, the study concludes that social skills positively improves team effectiveness in quick service restaurants in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. This denotes that social skills, like communication, collaboration, and the ability to build relationships, are crucial for team success. These skills help team members effectively interact, share information, and support each other, ultimately leading to better performance.

It is therefore recommended that Management of quick service restaurants in Port Harcourt, Rivers State should prioritize open communication by fostering mutual relationship among team members. By doing so, organizations can create a culture where employees feel valued, respected, and empowered to perform at their best.

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