Effect of Project Team Training Programmes on Performance of Agricultural Projects in Rwanda, A Case Study of Post-Harvest and Agribusiness Support Project

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Abstract: *The main objective of this study was to assess the effect of team training programmes on performance of agricultural projects in Rwanda. The study used descriptive survey design. The target population of this study was the staff working for Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project. For this study the target population is equal to 32 employees of the project and due to the fact the total population is not large, the researcher decided to consider the total population as the sample. Primary data will be collected using questionnaires. The data collected were well examined and checked for completeness and comprehensibility. The data were then summarized, coded and tabulated. Descriptive statistics like means, standard deviation and frequency distribution were used to analyze data. Data presentation was done by the use of frequency tables for ease of understanding and interpretations. Inferential statistics such as regression and correlation analysis were used. The study provided a guide for further studies on project team training programmes and project performance. The researcher concluded a significant positive relationship between identification of training needs and performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project. The researcher recommended the project managers and superiors to strengthen the identification of training needs so as to increase the competencies of their managing project teams.*

Keywords: Project team, team training, project performance, Agri-business Project

1. Introduction

Nowadays; the use of team training in organizations has become extremely popular. Business leaders and team researchers alike agree on the value that trainings bring to organizations, and expect the use of training will continue to increase as organizations strive for even higher levels of performance (Katzenbach& Smith, 2003). Survey results consistently indicate organizations in a variety of industries, ranging in size from small businesses to Fortune 500 companies, are using trained teams, and that the movement to teams is "one of the most dramatic changes in American business in recent history" (Reilly, 2008). With the development of the technologies and the whole business environment, employees are requested to be more skilled and qualified, even if you are a good employee today, you could be out of the line some other day if you do not keep studying. A Project needs organized team training if it wants to be competitive among others (Wang 2008). Team training is the key task to help everyone in the project to be more united. A project could hire experienced employees or train employees to be skilled. When the project trains their own staff, by providing and forming a harmonious atmosphere, accurate work specification and the passion of work, team spirit will be built between employees and management team within the process (Train, 2009.) Training could be enormously demanding and should be in-depth; lack of training or poor training brings out high employee turnover and the delivery of substandard products and services (Sommerville 2007).

2. Statement of the Problem

All- over the World, any organizational performance depends on skills and competence of its employees programmes. Therefore project managers are responsible for conducting researches about the performance of their employees to determine which trainings are needed to enhance their performance. According to Berson and Avolio (2004), project attributes their performance to their team skills and they do whatever they can to ensure that employees have the required skills to steer the project performance. The study of Paice and Heard (2009), demonstrated that effective team training has been considered as one of the study through which project team can acquire necessary skills, through this study, it was found out that project success is linked to effective successful trainings. As projects strive to deliver successful projects at a faster pace in increasingly complex environments and noted the need for effective training so as to improve the team skills in the projects. The study of Dearden and Van Reenen (2010), also found that there are connections between effective training and higher labor productivity in United Kingdom sectors. Although various studies prove that effective team training has positive impact to project and team performance, agricultural projects are still failing, where the agricultural projects failure was 50% in Africa until 2012 (Denis, 2012).

In Rwanda, projects are designed in ways through which they can enhance competences and skills of their teams in order to reduce the failure rate that is high and leading to collapse of many projects. In Rwanda, especially agricultural projects face many challenges like inadequacy of skills, lack of professionalism, poor motivation and lack of commitment. Therefore there is a need to show exactly

the impact of effective team training on project performance. Therefore this study intended to assess impact of effective training programmes on project performance in agricultural projects in Rwanda.

3. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to assess the effect of team training on performance of agricultural projects in Rwanda.
The specific objective was to assess the effect of identifying training needs on performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Projects.

4. Conceptual Framework
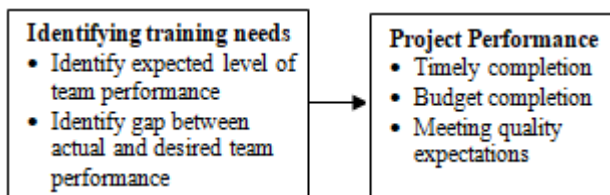
Source: (Researcher compilation, 2018)

5. Research Methodology

- **Research Design**: The research adopted descriptive research design
- **Target Population**: The target populations of this study were the staff working for Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project. For this study the target population equaled to 43 employees of the project and due to the fact the total population was not large, the researcher decided to consider the total population as the sample.
- **Data Collection Instruments:** For this study, the primary data were collected using questionnaires and were made of both open ended and close ended questions. This allowed for intensity and richness of individual perception in responding the asked questions (Babbie, 2008).

6. Summary of Research Findings

6.1 Profile of respondents

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Male	37	86.00%	86.00%
Female	6	14.00%	100.00%
Total	43	100	

Source: Field Data (2018)

The findings in Table 1 revealed that 86% of respondents were male while 14% were female. From the above findings, the majority of respondents involved in this study were male.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by Education level

Education level	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Bachelor	29	67.40%	67.40%
Diploma	8	18.60%	86.00%
Master	3	7.00%	93.00%
Others	3	7.00%	100.00%
Total	**43**	**100.0**	

Source: Field Data (2018)

The findings in Table 2 demonstrated that 67.4% of respondents acquired bachelor degree, 8% of respondents acquired diploma while 3% of respondents acquired masters' degree. This demonstrates that respondents have the capacity or strengths to carry out the activities of the project.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by years of services

Working Experience	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
One to five years	10	23.30%	23.30%
Five to ten years	28	65.10%	88.40%
Above ten years	5	11.60%	100.00%
Total	43	100	

Source: Field Data (2018)

The findings in Table3 showed that 65.1% of respondents have served the Post-Harvest and Agribusiness Support Project for a period of five to ten years while 23.3% of all respondents have served the project for a period of not less than one year while 11.6% of all respondents have served the project for a period of above ten years. This shows that respondents selected for this study have information about how trainings are offered to project team in Post-Harvest and Agribusiness Support Project.

6.2 Assessment of the effect of identifying training needs on performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project

Table 4: Identification of level of team performance from team training programs

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Agree	13	30.20%	31.00%
Agree	20	46.50%	78.60%
Neutral	9	20.90%	97.70%
Disagree	1	2.30%	100.00%
Total	43	100.00%	

Source: Field Data (2018)

According to the information from table 4; 30.2% of all respondents strongly agreed that in Post-Harvest and Agribusiness Support Project there is identification of level of team performance from team training program, 46.5% of all respondents agreed that in Post-Harvest and Agribusiness Support Project there is identification of level of team performance from team training program, 20.9% of all respondents were neutral that in Post-Harvest and Agribusiness Support Project there is identification of level of team performance from team training program while only 2.3% of all respondents disagreed that in Post-Harvest and

Agribusiness Support Project there is identification of level of team performance from team training program.

Table 5: Identification of the gap between actual and desired team performance during training programs

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Agree	28	65.10%	65.10%
Agree	13	30.20%	95.30%
Neutral	2	4.70%	100.00%
Total	43	100.00%	

Source: Field Data (2018)

The findings in Table 5 revealed that 65.1% of all respondents strongly agreed that in Post-Harvest and Agribusiness support project the gap between actual and desired team performance during training programs is identified, 30.2% of all respondents agreed that in Post-Harvest and Agribusiness support project the gap between actual and desired team performance during training programs is identified while only 4.7% of all respondents were neutral to the statement stating that in Post-Harvest and Agribusiness support project the gap between actual and desired team performance during training programs is identified. The findings revealed that the majority of the respondents which equals to 95.3% confirmed that in Post-Harvest and Agribusiness support project the gap between actual and desired team performance during training programs is identified.

Table 6: Supervising the work to identify challenges faced by the project team

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Agree	13	30.2%	30.2%
Agree	20	46.5%	76.7%
Disagree	8	18.6%	95.3%
Strongly Disagree	2	4.7%	100.0%
Total	**43**	**100.0**%	

Source: Field Data (2018)

According to the research findings in Table 6; 30.2% of all respondents strongly agreed that in Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project, the project managers regularly supervise the work so as to identify the challenges that the project team face and make them part of the training program, 46.5% of all respondents agreed that in Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project, the project managers regularly supervise the work so as to identify the challenges that the project team face and make them part of the training program, 18.6% of all respondents disagreed that in Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project, the project managers regularly supervise the work so as to identify the challenges that the project team face and make them part of the training program while only 4.7% all respondents strongly disagreed that in Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project, the project managers regularly supervise the work so as to identify the challenges that the project team face and make them part of the training program.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics on Assessment of the effect of identifying training needs on performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project

Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Identification of level of team performance	42	1.90	.726
Identification of gap between actual and desired performance	43	1.40	.583
Supervising the work by project managers	43	1.98	.831
Valid N (list wise)	43		

Source: Field Data (2018)

The findings in Table7 revealed that in Post-Harvest and Agribusiness Support Project there is identification of level of team performance from team training program is at the mean of 1.90, Identification of the gap between actual and desired team performance during training programs is at the mean of 1.40 and supervising the work by project managers to identify challenges faced by the project team is at the level of 1.98. Looking at results in the above table the standard deviations are close to the mean.

Table 8: Correlation between identifying training needs and performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project

		Identifying training needs	Project_Performance
Identifying training needs	Pearson Correlation	1	.874
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	43	43
Project_Performance	Pearson Correlation	.874	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	**43**	**43**

Source: Field Data (2018)

Table 8, reveals that the correlation between identifying training needs and project performance was at the rate of 0.874 meaning that identification of training needs affect the performance of Post-Harvest and Agribusiness Support Project was at the level of 87.4%. This proves the high correlation between identification of training needs and project performance. Furthermore, by considering the level of significance which is 0.05, there is a significant relationship between identification of training needs and project performance where their p-value (0.004) is statistically significant at 5% level of significance. Therefore identifying training needs has an effect on performance of Post-Harvest and Agribusiness Support Project.

7. Conclusions

The researcher concluded a significant positive relationship between identification of training needs and performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project;

8. Recommendations

The researcher recommended the project managers and superiors to strengthen the identification of training needs so as to increase the competencies of their managing project

teams and the researcher recommended the project manager and funders to effectively design training programmes.

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