

**TEAM DYNAMICS AND VIRTUAL TEAM PERFORMANCE: SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY IN SRI
LANKA**

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INTRODUCTION

In this competitive environment, companies have identified that team performance is an essential category for the performance of the organization and as well as the employees. When considering team performance, virtual team performance has been highlighted more than the physical contribution in the current context. Although virtual teams are new to the global business landscape, they are already acknowledged as a boon to international organizations. These are categories of people collaborating on a common goal using information and communication technology rather than the traditional face-to-face mode (Gupta & Pathak, 2018). Virtual teams can connect all the talented candidates from any global or national business, as well as from other companies. This is because collaborating on a given assignment, regardless of location, enables the company to score higher (Ale Ebrahim et al., 2009).

Teams have a particular level of accountability and responsibility, which makes them ideal for knowledge transmission, creation, and sharing. Teams' ability to drive better organizational performance is determined by their dynamic ability to coordinate and collaborate (Cohen & Bailey, 1997). According to Rico et al. (2008), the function of teams' implicit operations and how this relates to team performance discovered that high-performing firms have incredible team dynamics. Modern technology is slowly but steadily transforming the nature of work, requiring employees to "do" less and "think" more, putting intellectual skills to the test (Helfgott, 1994). Therefore, with the rapid pace of change, teams must be more dynamic, adaptive, and innovative (Elmuti, 1996). As one might expect, no two teams are alike. Some teams are permanent, while others are part-time or explicitly formed for a project.

Furthermore, some work teams are people with similar skills, and others feature members with various backgrounds. Some groups are like a crew (rowing) team, with everyone pulling in the same direction. Some are similar to basketball teams in that interpersonal coordination of many responsibilities is crucial. Others operate similarly to gymnastics teams, with each member performing and being scored independently. Sri Lanka has remained committed to adopting new communication technology. According to the Annual Central Bank report of Sri Lanka (2020), industrial ICT adoption is inadequate. Although there have been substantial advancements during the outbreak, the state sector's use of Computer systems lags behind the private sector. The country was 107th for ICT adoption in the Global Competitiveness Index, with poor adoption of broadband, fibre, and internet technologies. There is a significant loss of employment from February 2020 to December 2020. Per the Department of Labour Sri Lanka (2021), there was a shortage of 557 males and 867 females in the Information and communication sector. The business operation status of the Information and communication sector was 63.3%, and no permanently closed status (0%) of the establishments had reported being in the whole operation in December 2020 (Department of Labour Sri Lanka, 2021). A

virtual team is a revolutionary organizational style that gives businesses more freedom (Guinaliu & Jordan, 2016). On the other hand, working in a virtual environment may not always be a pleasant experience due to the lack of face-to-face interactions (Gupta & Pathak, 2018). Virtual team members must be inspired and guided with or without minimum face-to-face connection. However, there is a shortage of studies undertaken to identify the factors influencing team dynamics and the significance of virtual team performance (Mcgrath, 1991). Furthermore, within the current study, the team dynamics will be evaluated by considering competencies such as team collaboration, support, and behaviour. Considering the abovementioned circumstances, the problem statement of the current study can be stated as: “What is the impact of team dynamics on virtual team performance with special reference to the IT industry?”

METHODOLOGY

The positivist philosophy and deductive research methodology were used in the study's design. Out of 250 questionnaires distributed, the current study was conducted among 200 Sri Lankan employees working in the IT sector. A pre-tested questionnaire was used, which was created by (Moorthy et al., 2022). Convenient sampling was utilized because the population's total number of observations is unknown (Saunders et al., 2011). The scale has three dimensions and was scored on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 being the most vigorous disagreement, 2 being disapproval, three being neutral, 4 being agreement, and 5 being the strongest. Microsoft Excel 365 and the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) 25 version were used. Frequency and percentage are helpful summaries of the demographic data provided by the respondents on a nominal scale. The conceptual framework is developed, and the following hypotheses are tested (figure 1).

H₁: There is a significant impact of team collaboration on virtual team performance

H₂: There is a significant impact of team support on virtual team performance

H₃: There is a significant impact of team behavior on virtual team performance

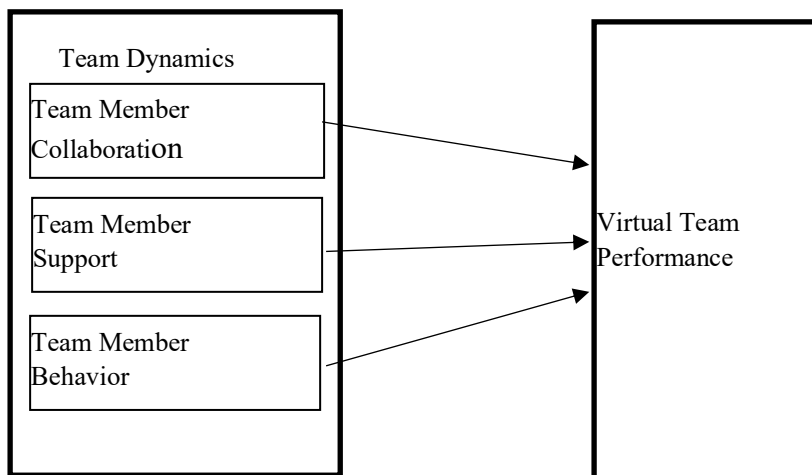


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to the survey, most of the respondents are males (52%). Further to the statistics, the majority of the respondents are between the ages of 20 and 30 (81.5), and the majority hold a

bachelor's degree (62.5%). Moreover, they are employed (52.5%) and earn less than Rs.20,000/=. It also demonstrates that a considerable number of respondents use virtual platforms. Most responders use the Microsoft Teams app (43.5%) as their online platform, and the majority have 1-5 years of experience (80%). Based on the data, it was discovered that team dynamics have a considerable positive impact on virtual team performance in the Sri Lankan IT business. It was discovered that team dynamics competencies such as team member collaboration, team member support, and team member behaviour are favourable and significant.

Furthermore, these findings are consistent with prior findings from a typical team performance study. The data underwent tests for validity, reliability, and linearity to ensure that the responses were accurate. The items with lower reliability levels, however, were eliminated. Cronbach's alpha is used to gauge reliability. Given that the Cronbach alpha for the current study is more than 0.7, it may be said that the variables are reliable. The KMO value is used to determine the validity measure. The sample adequately represents the population when the KMO value is more significant than 0.5, and the variables are valid (Shrestha, 2021).

Table 1 Reliability and Validity Measures

Variable	Number of Items	Reliability Value	Validity Value
Virtual Team Performance	07	0.737	0.781
Team Dynamics	18	0.875	0.957
Team Member Collaboration	08	0.873	0.911
Team Member Support	05	0.878	0.856
Team Member Behavior	05	0.866	0.855

Table 2 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Beta Value	Sig Value	Decision
H1	0.570	0.00	Accepted
H2	0.546	0.00	Accepted
H3	0.628	0.00	Accepted

According to the analysis, the reliability and validation statistics were both acceptable and could be utilized to test more complex hypotheses. The first and foremost objective is to examine the impact of team member collaboration on virtual team performance in the IT industry. Based on the statistics of the dimensions, it can be stated that there is a significant impact of team dynamics on virtual team performance.

Second, to examine the impact of team support on virtual team performance in the IT industry. The overall value of the team member support on virtual team performance was somewhat high because the overall mean value of the team member support was 3.98, which can be considered a high level and close to a value of 4. When considering regression analysis, it could be stated that team support has a significant positive impact on virtual team performance. Last, to examine the impact of team behaviour on virtual team performance in the IT industry. The overall value of the team member behaviour on virtual team performance was almost high because the overall mean value of the team member support is 4. Thus, based on the above findings in table 2, it could be concluded that team member support has a

significant moderate impact on virtual team performance in the IT industry of Sri Lanka. These findings are consistent with past studies.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The current study aims to investigate team dynamics' effect on virtual team performance within the IT sector in Sri Lanka. Statistical analysis revealed that team dynamics in Sri Lanka's IT sector had a favourable impact on the performance of virtual teams. It also showed that team member behaviours like cooperation and support are critical and positive. In conclusion, it can be said that team dynamics will have a positive and significant impact on how well a virtual team performs in the IT industry virtually.

Additionally, it was discovered that these effects do alter depending on the level of team dynamics capabilities. The current study emphasizes the significance of team dynamics to enhance teams' performance in a virtual setting instead of improving IT professionals' physical working environments. The current study highlights the importance of team dynamics to Sri Lankan IT professionals to enhance the performance of virtual teams in digital environments. Therefore, measures to improve IT employees' team dynamics skills should be taken. Giving employees the right equipment could be reached as offering the staff the most recent, lightning-fast, and secure software. It would help consider additional software, hardware, and platform requirements specific to the line of work. Business objectives should be carefully analyzed, and choose the appropriate deliverables and objectives for each virtual team member. When delegating tasks appropriately, two techniques could be used. Give the staff little work sections from more significant projects divided into smaller tasks. The second could be making a work schedule that is just right, not too rigid, and not too accessible. The management must intervene and recognize the commercial accomplishments of the staff. Last could be determining as ensuring that each virtual team member has enough downtime to recover from everyday responsibilities is the obligation. The study was constrained by the fact that the research was done in a controlled setting. To extend the study's findings, a study on various team dynamics competencies could be done as future findings. Additionally, the investigation was carried out as a cross-sectional study. This will make it impossible to track changes continuously over time. Therefore, a future researcher could conduct a longitudinal study to comprehend how virtual team performance will change via the team dynamics of IT staff.

Keywords: Team dynamics, team member behaviour, team member collaboration, team member support, virtual team performance.

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