The Effect of Team Coaching on Collaborative Value within Ashoka Fellows' Organizations in Africa

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Cite: Mahinda, W., Ouma, C., & Kamau, J. N. (2022). The Effect of Team Coaching on Collaborative Value within Ashoka Fellows' Organizations in Africa. *The University Journal, 4*(1), 95-106.

Abstract

The striking of the Covid-19 pandemic, defined by an economic slump, has created an emergency as the capacity of government and nonprofit services to support communities have been stretched close to breaking point. Team coaching enables teams to collaboratively co-create structures and processes that support the needs of organizations. Team coaching has accentuated team productivity, improved engagement levels, and helped reach commonly accepted team goals as a collective strategic practice. Explanatory sequential mixed-method research design consisting of two distinct phases, namely quantitative and qualitative approaches, was adopted. The target population constituted 154 Ashoka Fellows organizations working in 19 countries in Africa. Quantitative data was collected using structured questionnaires via an online survey, while qualitative data was collected using interview guides via Zoom. The collected data were analyzed using SmartPLS software for Structural *Equation Modeling (SEM) as well as* Statistical Package for the Social Sciences *(SPSS). The study findings indicated a significant P-value of 0.012. It was further observed that team coaching accounted for 29.2% of the variation in collaborative value. Coaching teams should be encouraged to unleash teams' potential to solve problems and form alignment between how they work, deliver, and their continued development over time as it creates new insights and awareness and translates the latest insights into meaningful actions.*

Keywords: Team Coaching, Collaborative Value, Ashoka

Introduction

It has become an emergency as the capacity of government and nonprofit services to support communities become overstretched (Catalyst2030, 2020) with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Since its occurrence, the economy has slumped, has created an. Ashoka proposes that a positive systems' change to mitigate this challenge is best achieved by teams collaborating where everyone is a change maker. Since systems' change requires patience, collaborative intent and action; teams must see the world differently through the eyes of others, as working in teams supports building new mindsets, competencies, and trusted spaces for change makers (Ashoka & McKinsey, 2020).

Team coaching enables teams to collaboratively co-create structures and processes that support the needs of organizations, although it is complicated with multiple perspectives that need integration to support the teams' development, goal attainment, and systemic understanding (O'Connor et al., 2017). As a collective strategic practice, team coaching has accentuated the

development of team productivity, improved engagement levels, and helped reach commonly accepted team goals (Bandura & Lyons, 2017; Morgeson et al., 2010). Team coaching helps the teams attain their full potential by enhancing performance, collaborations, synergies, and team members' orientation towards realizing a shared goal (Maseko et al., 2019; Clutterbuck, 2013; Peters & Carr, 2013b). Team members share responsibilities and knowledge resulting from team coaching and recognize it as more effective than individual coaching (Maseko et al., 2019). Positively framed team coaching promotes more creative and collaborative work climates by facilitating stronger peer relationships that enable teams to effectively develop and use collective knowledge (Rousseau et al., 2013; Huang & Hsieh, 2015).

This paper investigated if team coaching within Ashoka fellow organizations in Africa supports team members to strengthen their collaboration abilities and offer a platform for knowledge sharing and exchange for corporate learning (Sessa et al., 2011; Vesso & Alas, 2016), as well as define clear directions, develop enabling structures, and ensure supportive contexts (Reyes et al., 2019). In addition, the study examined if teams can use their collective resources in pursuing team targets and purposes (Slagter & Wilderom, 2018) as the ultimate goal of team coaching is collaborative value (Peters & Carr, 2013a).

In Africa, Ashoka currently supports four hundred and twenty-seven Fellows (427) fellows who are mission-driven and dedicated to serving their mission of delivering social value to the underserved (MeehanIII & Jonker, 2018). They act through a combination of characteristics that set them apart from other types of individuals (Drayton, 2013). They operate within organizations with an influential culture of innovation and openness as well as work within financially autonomous organizations that plan and execute earned-income strategies (Saifan, 2012). Ashoka's modest investments always yield extraordinary returns in every human need area, from human rights initiatives, the environment, economic development to youth empowerment. Within five years of election, 76% of Ashoka Fellows change the pattern in their field nationally, and over half have changed the national policy (Drayton, 2011).

Many Ashoka Fellow organizations have benefited from coaching they receive from team leaders both within their teams and other collaborating teams. The Ashoka Globalizer program, for example, taps into Ashoka's broad network of experts, including leading strategy consultants and high-level business leaders who coach Ashoka fellow teams to support them in reflecting on critical issues and establishing a solid strategy to spread their impact.

Literature Review

The study is anchored on functional team leadership theory and hill's leadership model. Zaccaro et al. (2001) developed the functional team leadership theory to emphasize leadership as a frontier role linking teams to their wider environment as team problems originate from their environment. More so, leaders have the obligation of interpreting and defining environmental proceedings for their teams which offers a unique view of the role of leaders and teams. On the other hand, hill's leadership model considers the leadership decisions for affecting team performance by emphasizing task or relationship behaviors or improving the environmental interface for the team. This model emphasizes improving adaptive problem solving by focusing on goals, facilitating decision making, training team members, and upholding standards of excellence. It also recognizes that team leadership is complicated and that there is no simple recipe for team success (Northouse, 2016)

As a collaborative practice, team coaching heightens team performance and enhances engagement levels (Bandura & Lyons, 2017) resulting in team members' shared responsibilities and knowledge (Maseko et al., 2019). Positively framed team coaching promotes more creative and collaborative work climates by facilitating stronger peer relationships that enable teams to effectively develop and use collective knowledge (Rousseau et al., 2013; Huang & Hsieh, 2015). Hence, team coaching represents an ongoing and reciprocally contingent relationship in that the team members depend on their team leaders for opportunities and rewards, while at the same time, the team leader depends on the team members to accomplish tasks and meet organizational objectives (Anderson, 2013). The team leader and team members' performance and success depends on the quality of coaching relationship (Weer et al., 2016). This is because team coaching occurs when teams communicate their expectations and expand their functioning through consistent and continuous collaboration (Segers & Inceoglu, 2012; Sue-Chan et al., 2012). Informal coaching is cost-effective compared to formal training programs but provides organizations, and teams added benefits. Because coaching is tailored to the team, it takes place during the day-to-day work and is less inclined to transfer training losses with structured programs; it increases team performance, fosters motivation, receptivity to feedback, and enhances peer relationships (Weer et al., 2016).

Team coaching altered the largest of four marketing divisions of leading equipment and engine manufacturer, 'Caterpillar' when it was introduced by the newly appointed vice president, the team leader, and a hired leadership consultant. The goal was to honor the past, build upon it, and take the organization to the next level by tackling organizational culture (Anderson et al., 2008). The Team coaching program created new insights or awareness, translated the latest insights into meaningful actions, focused on unleashing potential not just solving problems, formed alignment between how people work and what they deliver, and continued development over time, with each phase of development supporting the attainment of more sophisticated and effective outcomes (Anderson et al., 2008). The team coaching activities were: individual coaching for the team leader, team background interviews; team feedback and awareness-building sessions; interactive consulting experiences; individual coaching engagements; in-the-moment coaching for the team, and evaluation. Team coaching enabled the teams, despite the leadership change, to continue working together in the new ways they had forged through their team coaching experience. Team coaching empowered the leadership team to function more effectively, lead more powerfully, and model behaviors essential for creating strategic cultural change (Anderson et al., 2008).

The team leader's coaching style plays a crucial role in ensuring that team discussion meant to foster learning new skills and strategies are unfettered by the inclination of a few members who exhibit contentious relational communications (Schaubroeck, et al. 2016b). In their study of 82 work teams, team leader coaching revealed indirect, positive relationships among teams with an average or higher level of contentious relational communication. Team coaching emphasizes the benefits of team learning and adaptation that derive from members' ability and willingness to share diverging perspectives about team tasks and priorities. However, when contentious interactions from two or more members impede collective learning, many teams may not reap these benefits (Schaubroeck et al., 2016b). Therefore, team leaders are critical as they impact the quality of team discussions, ensuring higher team functioning in team coaching by mitigating the extent of friction between team members. Without a team leader who encourages team members to meet and openly discuss issues that may impend learning, and

who ensures these discussions are focused on learning, teams in which members have contentious communication may not succeed in having open and frank discussions about the team's collaborative processes necessary for team learning (Schaubroeck et al., 2016b). The study, therefore, confirms that team leader coaching supports team interaction by encouraging team members to focus on better ways to work as teams instead of interpersonal differences and rivalries. The study further encourages team leader coaches to use 'soft' influence to accommodate experimentation, interactive feedback-seeking, and reflecting on task problems and strategies as a team and avoid blaming performance mistakes or team disagreements (Schaubroeck et al., 2016b).

Research Methodology

Explanatory sequential mixed-method research design consisting of two distinct phases, namely quantitative and qualitative, was used. Quantitative data analysis involved assessing data by testing reliability, multicollinearity, normality, and validity, followed by factor analysis. Reliability assessed the degree of consistency between multiple measurements and was measured by the Cronbach alpha coefficient (Hair et al., 2010). The study used SmartPLS software for SEM modeling. SmartPLS has the advantage of simultaneously creating and validating SEM models. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was also used mainly in diagnostic testing. Content analysis was used in the case of qualitative data analysis. Whereas quantitative analysis informed the influence of team coaching on collaborative value, the qualitative analysis explained how the preceding might have occurred.

The population of this study constituted 154 teams from Ashoka fellows organizations in Africa. These organizations were drawn from 19 countries in Africa including; Zimbabwe, South Africa, Zambia, and Mozambique in South Africa; Ghana, The Gambia, Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Togo, Senegal, Cameron, Cote d'Ivoire, and Benin in Western Africa as well as Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Rwanda in Eastern Africa. Key informants from whom qualitative data were collected comprised six African region team leaders. A census survey of all the population, as mentioned earlier, was carried out. The choice of the census was informed by the fact that the results emanating from census data are highly generalized to the study and target populations, enhancing the credibility and reliability of the study results. The quantitative data were collected on a 5-point Likert scale where the measures ranged from (1), strongly disagree to (5), strongly agree. On the other hand, qualitative data were collected using in-depth interviews.

Study Findings

Descriptive Statistics for Team Coaching

The study's specific elements addressing team coaching were unleashing potential and peer relationships of team members. The results showed that majority of the respondents agreed that at the workplace, there was interchangeability of roles and high dependency on each other with a mean responses rate of 3.23 and a standard deviation of 1.171, with the highest agreement with the statement being from Southern Africa region (Mean = 3.76). Most respondents agreed that team members understand each other's personal and work priorities (Mean = 3.93, SD = 0.807), with the highest agreement being from the Southern Africa region with a mean of 4.16. It was agreed upon by most respondents that team members have discussed each team members learning needs and how they contribute to the organizational objectives (Mean = 3.64, SD = 0.905), with the highest agreement being noted from the West Africa English speaking region. On the opinion that the team members prefer internal team facilitators to external facilitators

(consultants) when it comes to equipping ourselves to solve problems, the majority were in agreement with an overall mean response of 3.13 and standard deviation of 0.939, with the highest agreement being noted from West Africa French-speaking region. Most respondents agreed that team members discuss team dynamics, team psychology, or collective decision making (Mean = 3.98, SD = 0.829), with the highest agreement noted in Southern Africa region.

Table 1: Team Coaching Descriptive Results

Region		**At the workplace, there is little interchangeability of roles and high dependency on each other**	**In our team, we understand each other's personal as well as work priorities**	**Our team has discussed each team members learning needs and how they contribute to the organizational objectives**	**Our team prefers internal team facilitators to external facilitators (consultants) when it comes to equipping ourselves to solve problems**	**Our team discuss team dynamics, team psychology, or collective decision making**
West Africa English	Mean	3.28	3.9	**3.97**	3.17	4.14
	N	29	29	29	29	29
	SD	1.192	0.86	0.566	1.002	0.639
West Africa French	Mean	2.96	4.12	3.92	**3.52**	3.88
	N	25	25	25	25	25
	SD	1.136	0.781	0.702	0.872	0.927
East Africa	Mean	3.11	3.68	3.04	2.79	3.79
	N	28	28	28	28	28
	SD	1.166	0.863	1.071	0.876	0.787
Southern Africa	Mean	**3.76**	**4.18**	3.65	3.12	**4.24**
	N	17	17	17	17	17
	SD	1.147	0.529	0.931	0.857	0.97
Pan Africa	Mean	3	3	4	2	3
	N	1	1	1	1	1
	SD	.	.	.	.	.
Total	**Mean**	**3.23**	**3.93**	**3.64**	**3.13**	**3.98**
	N	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**
	SD	**1.171**	**0.807**	**0.905**	**0.939**	**0.829**

The measurement model assessment involved assessing the constructs' internal consistency reliability, multicollinearity test, and normality test as presented in Table 2.Team coaching's reliability of 0.541 was below the acceptable threshold and therefore the data was considered not reliable; VIF of 1.905 confirms that the data is devoid of multicollinearity. A normality test with a significance of below 0.5 indicated that the data is suffering from non-normality. However, the normal Q-Q plot Figure 1 shows that the observed values do not deviate from the expected values.

Table 2: Diagnostic Tests for Team Coaching

Reliability Test	**Cronbach Alpha**	**No. of Items**	**Decision**
	0.541	5	Not Reliable
Multicollinearity Test	**Tolerance**	**VIF**	
	0.525	1.905	
Normality Test	**Statistic**	**Df**	**Significance**
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	.134	104	.000
Shapiro-Wilk	.968	104	.013

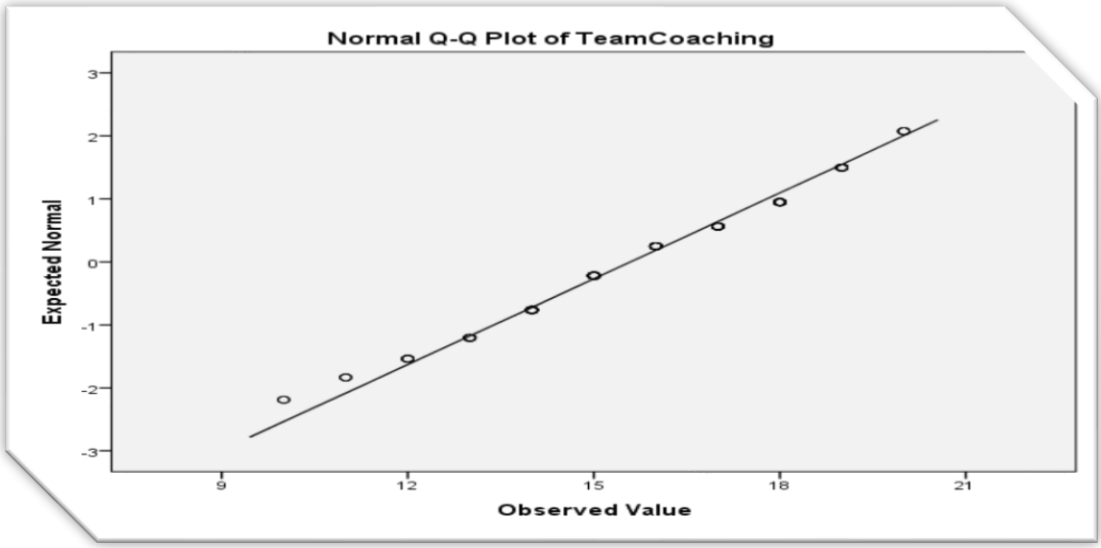

Figure 1: Normal Q-Q Plot for Team Coaching

Analysis conducted to assess convergent validity on team coaching statements presented in Table 3 found that all but one statement had values greater than 0.5. The convergent validity for Team Coaching is above the threshold of 0.5 on average and therefore acceptable. This implied that team coaching constructs explain more than 50% of their variance.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin of sampling adequacy was 0. 669, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant at $X^2(10, N=100) = 40.665$, $p<.05$. This output shows the team coaching factors were adequate for extraction since Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure was greater than 0.5 and Bartlett's test was significant ($p<.05$).

Table 3: Convergent Validity –Team Coaching

	Initial	Extraction
At the workplace, there is little interchangeability of roles and low dependency on each other	1.000	0.392
In our team, we understand each other's personal as well as work priorities	1.000	0.62
Our team has discussed each team members learning needs and how they contribute to the organizational objectives	1.000	0.532
Our team prefers internal team facilitators to external facilitators (consultants) when it comes to equipping ourselves to solve problems	1.000	0.554
Our team does not discuss team dynamics, team psychology, or collective decision making	1.000	0.564

Table 4: KMO and Bartletts Test for Team Coaching

KMO Value		0.669
Bartlett's Test	Approx. Chi-Square	40.665
	df	10
	Sig.	0.000

The chi-square value for the model relationship between team coaching and collaborative value was 60.984, significant with a p-value below 0.012. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) was 0.754, which shows that the index was above 0.5, which usually represents an acceptable fit. SRMR value was 0.095, which was below 0.2 for the models. rms_theta value was 0.221 and thus below 0.4, which implies that the model was a good fit. The study used a fixed number of respondents for the analysis with a probability value of 5%. The model's statistical power value was 0.998, which reveals that the model had adequate statistical power with a value above 0.8. There is no probability of correctly rejecting a null hypothesis when that hypothesis is not true in the population. The R^2 value was obtained from the model for the overall model team coaching and collaborative value (TCH & CV), as shown in Figure 2. The R^2 value obtained on this model was 0.292, which indicated that the team coaching model accounts for 29.2% of the variation in collaborative value. The variation of 70.8% is accounted for by other variables not included in this model.

The path analysis confirmed that the constructs used to test team coaching (TCH1-TCH5) were adequate with weights of between 0.328 and 0.759. The results reveal that the Ashoka teams have strong peer-to-peer relations and work in teams that support them to unleash their potential. The path analysis also shows a strong positive relationship between team coaching and collaborative value weighted at 0.540, accounting for 29.2% of the variation.

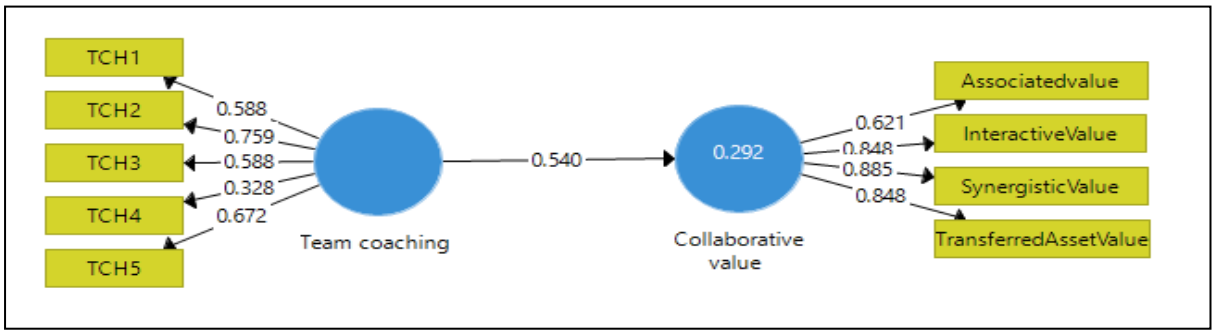

Figure 2: Path Model -Team Coaching and Collaborative Value

Hypothesis Testing – Team Coaching and Collaborative Value

H_0: Team Coaching does not significantly influence collaborative value within Ashoka Fellow Organizations in Africa.

The hypothesis was tested using the chi-square test. The acceptance/rejection criteria were that if the p-value is greater than 0.05, the H_0 is not rejected, but if it is less than 0.05, the H_0 is rejected. The p-value was 0.012<0.05, and the chi-square value was 60.984; thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the study concluded that team coaching influences collaborative value within Ashoka Fellow organizations in Africa.

Interviews with the Ashoka senior staff informed the study on team coaching and collaborative value. Many Ashoka fellow organizations have benefited from coaching from their team leaders within their teams and also from team leaders from collaborating teams. The interviewee gave an example of Ashoka programs like the Globalizer program, which taps into Ashoka's broad network of change makers across the business, government, and citizen sectors. It begins with a three-month advisory phase where a support team of volunteer advisors, leading strategy consultants, and high-level business leaders coach Ashoka fellow teams to support them in reflecting on critical issues and establishing a solid strategy to spread their impact. The interviewee explained that the Globalizer program identifies Ashoka fellow teams with the most significant potential for catalyzing global systems change. The teams refine their leading social innovations to adapt their strategies for the accelerated global spread. They are supported by experts from the Globalizer team throughout this intense process, working alongside experienced advisors from partner consulting teams, namely Mckinsey & Company, AT Kearney, Alpha Sights, PWC, and the Ashoka support network teams of business leaders committed to social change. Throughout the coaching period, the Ashoka fellow organizations are encouraged to shift their strategies to focus on collaboration and social change. The coaching program validates our results that team coaching affects collaborative value within Ashoka fellow teams in Africa.

The research assessed the model summary and statistical power of Team Coaching and Associational Value (TCH&AV), Team Coaching and Transferred Asset Value (TCH&TAV), Team Coaching, and Interactive Value (TCH&IV), Team Coaching and Synergistic Value. The R^2 value was obtained from the analysis and presented in Table 5. With a probability value of 5%, the sub-models statistical power values were between 0.715 and 0.999, which reveals that four of the models had a high statistical power of values above 0.8.and one has 0.715. The model relationship between Team Coaching (TCH) and Associational Value (AV), Transferred Asset Value (TAV), Interactive Value (IV), Synergistic Value (SV), and Collaborative Value (CV) as shown in Table 5. For TCH & AV, the R square value of 0.093 indicated that the model of team coaching accounted for 9.3% of the variation in associational value; for TCH & TAV, the R square value of 0.203 indicated that the model of team coaching accounted for 20.3% of the variation in transferred asset value, for TCH & IV the R square value was 0.219 indicated that the model of team coaching accounted for 21.9% of the variation in interactive value and for TCH & SV the R square value of 0.289 indicated that the model of team coaching accounted for 28.9% of the variation in synergistic value. The results indicate that all the variations in the relationship between team coaching and collaborative value are considered satisfactory with three models above 0.2 (Hair et al., 2019). However, the variations of team coaching are higher in synergistic value, interactive value, and transferred asset value.

Table 5: Model Summary and Statistical Power of Latent Variables

	TCH&AV	TCH&TAV	TCH&IV	TCH&SV	TCH&CV
Sample size	100	100	100	100	100
Probability	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
R^2	0.093	0.203	0.219	0.289	0.192
Statistical power	0.715	0.987	0.993	0.999	0.998

Discussions of Results

The study on team coaching's influence on collaborative value showed that team coaching significantly influences collaborative value within Ashoka fellow organizations in Africa. The study has confirmed that Ashoka fellow teams are unleashing their potential and relating efficiently as peers to affect collaborative value. The study is consistent with Anderson et al.'s (2008) study which demonstrated that a team coaching program creates new insights and awareness translating the latest insights into meaningful actions. Coaching helps teams unleash their potential that solves problems and forms alignment between how teams work, what they deliver, and continued development over time, with each phase of development supporting the attainment of more sophisticated and effective outcomes.

The Ashoka fellow organizations have benefited from team-to-team coaching as well as external consultant coaching. The Ashoka Globalizer program is designed to tap into Ashoka's broad network of experts, including leading strategy consultants and high-level business leaders who coach Ashoka fellow teams to support them in reflecting on critical issues and establishing a solid strategy to spread their impact. As a result, the teams refine their leading social innovations to adapt their strategies for the accelerated global spread. The teams have improved their peer-to-peer relations through team coaching and unleashed their potential to affect collaborative value. This is consistent with Schaubroeck et al.(2016a) study, where team coaching processes have emphasized the benefits to team learning and adaptation that derive from members' ability and willingness to share diverging perspectives about team tasks and priorities. The study also observed that many teams might not reap these benefits when contentious interaction patterns between two or more members impede collective learning. Therefore, team leaders are critical in team coaching as they can mitigate the extent to which existing frictions between particular team members impact the quality of team discussions, ensuring higher team functioning. Without a team leader who insists that teams meet and openly discuss issues that may promote learning and who facilitates these discussions in ways that keep the team focused on learning, teams in which members have a propensity for contentious communication may fail to have the open and frank discussions about the team's interaction processes they require to learn from their experiences (Schaubroeck et al., 2016b).

The study results showed that team coaching significantly influences collaborative value within Ashoka fellow organizations in Africa. The SEM analysis showed a unit rise in team coaching positively and significantly changed collaborative value within Ashoka fellow African organizations by 29.2%. The team coaching practices include interchangeability of roles among members, discussion of members' learning needs, internal team facilitators' preference to external facilitators, and peer-to-peer relations that influence collaborative value. Consequently, the study rejected the null hypothesis that team coaching does not influence collaborative value within Ashoka fellow organizations in Africa. The study concluded that

team coaching significantly influences collaborative value within Ashoka fellow organizations in Africa.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study's findings established that team coaching significantly influences collaborative value within Ashoka fellow organizations in Africa. Team coaching positively influences collaborative value when there is the interchangeability of roles and team members' dependency on each other and an understanding of each other's learning needs and contributions to their success. Team coaching programs should be encouraged to unleash 'teams' potential to solve problems and form alignment between how they work, deliver, and their continued development as the teams create new insights and awareness and translate the latest insights into meaningful actions. Each phase of development supports the attainment of collaborative value. Team leaders are critical in the team coaching process as they can mitigate any friction between teams, thus impacting team discussions' quality and higher team functioning. Without a team leader, team coaching with contentious communication fails to have the open and frank discussions required to learn from their experiences.

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