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The Influence of Goal Focusing on Team Performance Among Courier Companies in Kenya

Dan Wakaba Gicho[1]*, George K'aol[2] and Peter Kiriri[3]
United States International University – Africa
E-mail: gichodanphd@gmail.com

***Corresponding author**

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Abstract

In an organization, a goal represents the desired state or measurable outcome. Organizational success depends on defining goals that guide operations. Goal focusing comprises of goal setting, clarity and capacity. In modern day organizations, teams are the primary channels through which leaders deliver services. Within the Kenyan courier sector, operational inefficiencies abound as their operations continue to grow beyond their current capacities. Part of the courier sector growth is being driven by globalization which is in turn fuelling e-commerce growth, increasing demand for courier logistics services in final transaction fulfilment. This study examined how team leadership elements centered on goal focusing influence team performance. It adopted a post-positivist worldview, targeting 244 departmental team leaders in international courier companies, with a stratified random sample of 166. Data were collected through an electronic structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency distributions, means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (correlations, chi-square, One-Way ANOVA, ordinal logistic regression). Findings established that goal focusing is a critical leadership practice influencing team performance in Kenyan courier companies. Correlation analysis showed a strong positive relation of goal focusing with team performance ($r = .772$, $p \leq .05$). A Nagelkerke Pseudo R^2 of 0.612 indicated that goal focusing could explain 61.2% of team. Parameter estimate result ($\beta = -1.419$, $p \leq .05$) indicated a decrease in goal focusing corresponded with decreased level of team performance. Courier firms should prioritize goal setting, clarity and capacity to align individual and the team as a whole.

Keywords: Courier Industry, Goal-Focusing, Goal-Setting, Goal Capitality, Team Leadership, Team Performance.

Introduction

In the extant research, Gkizani and Galanakis (2022) noted that in goal setting, difficulty and clarity are positively related to work performance. Notably, stretch goals that are articulated with precision yield the most successful performance, such that the goals are relatable to result in feedback and, hence, widely acceptable. While the influence of goal setting on organizational performance cannot be gainsaid, the increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) operating environment that has resulted from an explosion of technology and innovation, as described by Benishek and Lazzara (2019), heralded a new norm for teams and teamwork. Increasingly, jobs and task descriptions no longer have clear and defined goals as they are unknown in the initial stages. Be that as it may, teams lose the advantage of achieving adequate preparation based on known short-term goals. However, the overarching theme is that all outcomes can be pointed to precisely the desired outcomes; hence, it is critical to comprehensively determine the desired outcomes beforehand.

According to Mbogani et al. (2023), although courier companies in Kenya outsource services to improve reliability and flexibility, this has not translated into improved operational outcomes. A number of courier companies are still grappling with inadequate capacity and unable to meet client expectations. A Communication Authority (2022) base line industry survey in Kenya highlights the following as managerial and operational challenges; poor services, limited client feedback systems, low technology adoption. The survey noted that critical gaps, such as unstructured team coordination and inadequate digital infrastructure, continue to affect courier companies' performance. Hence, it is necessary to examine how team leadership in this sector can lead to better team performance. Within Kenya's courier industry, Mbogani et al. (2023) found that international courier operators fulfilled their customer needs through structured team collaboration. One of the persistent challenges in the sector is the lack of a clear performance direction and uncoordinated team efforts, an issue that the leadership behavior of goal focusing directly addresses.

Cheng (2023) observed that goal orientation is an indicator of the level of importance an individual attaches to successfully achieving a performance standard. In addition, setting a goal is an interface between motivation and the resultant behavior it drives, as goals add purpose and direction to activities. Zhu et al. (2023) posited that goals set with defined milestones improve individuals' ability to understand their skill levels at each stage and their cognizance of what is required in the next stages. Additionally, such goals present opportunities to engage teams by inculcating the perspective that goals are achievable. Ultimately, attaining goals heightens employees'sense of fulfilment and achievement, which in turn strengthens their engagement in their work.

As key actors in the daily operations of organizations, team leaders hold a significant position and wield the ability to build team resilience through capacity-building. Capacity building focuses on employee weaknesses and is designed to develop skills that assist employees in completing tasks efficiently. Fagerdal et al. (2022) posited that leaders can enhance team capacity by implementing relational leadership; building adequate competence within teams; and raising situational awareness, understanding, and balancing work, team needs, and inherent risks that come with team assignments. The overarching objective of applying knowledge elements to teamwork is to provide a better understanding of goals and, hence, to act more appropriately in achieving them.

Graesser et al. (2018) noted that, despite growing reliance on teams for complex problem-solving situations, there is still limited formal guidance for team operations. Zajac et al. (2021) observed that within multidisciplinary teams, there is a lack of empirical frameworks that can enhance performance. Prabhu et al. (2019) and Dimas, Torres, Rebelo, et al. (2023) concurred with this, further, emphasizing the need for a holist, "inside-out" approach that could explore internal team capabilities such as skill and competence, motivation, and team relationships, rather than relying solely on external "outside-in" conditions that affect teamwork.

The extant literature draws a pattern in which the gap between the rapid growth of the courier industry and the existing infrastructure continues to widen. Teamwork and collaborative approaches have been proposed as potential solutions. There is scant empirical literature focusing on specific team leadership practices and their influence on team performance. Northouse (2019) proposed team implementation to bridge workforce gaps in terms of expertise and leveraging interdependence in teamwork.

This study stresses on how goal focusing and team leadership behavior influences team performance in courier companies in Kenya. The specific objective of this study is to determine how goal-focusing influences team performance among courier companies in Kenya.

Research Question

Does goal focusing influence team performance among courier companies in Kenya?

Hypothesis

H_0: Goal Focusing has no influence on team performance among courier companies in Kenya

Methodology

This study was underpinned by the Hill Model for team leadership theory and adopted a post-positivist research paradigm. The research method was quantitative, using a descriptive correlational research design. It was implemented to examine the relationship between goal focusing and team performance. The study population comprised four key departmental team leader positions typically present within international courier firms operating in Kenya and registered by the Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK). The population yielded 244 departmental team leaders, and a sample of 166 team leaders was selected for the final study. It constitutes approximately 68% of the total population.

During the data collection, the researcher used questionnaires and deployed them electronically. Ethical considerations were rigorously upheld, with participants being fully briefed on the study's objectives in comprehensible terms, and providing informed consent as a prerequisite to participation. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study period. The collected data were systematically cleaned, coded, and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 29. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used to interpret the results.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

From the 166 target participants, 156 responses were received, representing a 94 % response rate, as shown below.

Table 1: Response Rates

Departmental Team	Responses	Percentage of Responses
Customer Support Team Leaders	56	35.9
Local Parcel Shipping	43	27.6
Operations Team Leaders	29	18.6
Cross Border Freight Team Leaders	28	17.9
	156	

Goal Focusing and Team Performance

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics and frequency distributions for the independent variable goal focusing. The results indicated that 33% of the respondents agreed and 32% strongly agreed that their team leader prioritized the action of setting clear and specific goals. Additionally, 38% of the respondents agreed that their team leader encouraged open discussions to enhance goal clarity, whereas 15% disagreed with this statement. These findings suggest that, while goal setting and clarity are strong leadership practices, goal capacity still needs improvement.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Goal Focusing

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Our team leader often sets clear and measurable goals for the team.	f	5	15	34	52	50
	%	3.2%	9.6%	21.8%	33.3%	32.1%
Our team leader encourages team discussion on goals and communicates with detailed instructions to ensure everyone understands.	f	4	24	19	59	50
	%	2.6%	15.4%	12.2%	37.8%	32.1%
Our team has enough resources and is well prepared to handle challenges encountered when achieving the goals.	f	7	19	53	43	34
	%	4.5%	12.2%	34%	27.6%	21.8%

Inferential Statistics

Factor Analysis for Goal Focusing

Table 3 presents the results of two tests used to verify the suitability of the data for factor analysis: the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for goal focusing. The results revealed that KMO had a value of 0.710, while Bartlett's test of sphericity showed χ^2 (3, N=156) = 231.654, $p \leq .05$. The KMO value was very close to the standard required 1 and above the recommended value of 0.6, while Bartlett's test value was significant at $p \leq .05$. These results confirm that the data are well-suited for further dimensionality reduction and analysis.

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test for Goal Focusing

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.710
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	231.654
	df	3
	Sig.	<.001

Total Variance Explained for Goal Focusing

Goal focusing is influenced by three variables: goal setting, goal clarity, and goal capacity. Following the extraction of variances into a common score, each factor had an associated

quality score referred to as an eigenvalue. All components were reported on a 5-point Likert scale, where goal setting had an eigenvalue of 2.363, accounting for 79% of the total variance. Goal clarity and goal capacity had significantly lower eigenvalues of 0.409 and 0.228, contributing to 14% and 8%, respectively. These two factors explain the remaining 21% of the variance.

Table 4: Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.363	78.774	78.774	2.363	78.774	78.774
2	.409	13.617	92.391			
3	.228	7.609	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix for Goal Focusing

Table 5 presents the results of the component matrix from the principal component analysis (PCA) for goal focusing. The shown factor loadings are referred to as principal components, and they indicate correlations among the extracted item and other components where a 0.7 or higher on the correlation coefficient indicates that the factor extracts sufficient variance. Notably, all statements showed factor loadings greater than 0.7. These results support the use of the variables in further analysis because all factors are similar to the factor scores.

Table 5: Component Matrix for Goal Focusing

Component Matrix[a]	
	Component
	1
Our team leader prioritizes setting clear and specific goals for the team	.888
Our team leader proactively communicates and involves team members to align team activities to the set goals.	.920
Our team leader regularly reviews the set goals in comparison to the achievements to ensure realistic targets are met and build the team's capacity to work.	.853

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Correlation between Goal Focusing and Team Performance

Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between goal focusing and team performance. The results are shown in Table 6 indicated a strong positive relationship between goal focusing and team performance, $r(156)=0.772$, $p \leq .05$, suggesting that higher levels of goal focusing are associated with higher levels of team performance.

Table 6: Correlation Analysis

		Assessment of Goal Focusing	Influence of Goal Focusing on Team Performance
Assessment of Goal Focusing	Pearson Correlation	1	.772**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	156	156
Influence of Goal Focusing on Team Performance	Pearson Correlation	.772**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	156	156

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

Chi-Square Test for Facilitating Decision Making and Team Performance

A chi-squared test was conducted to assess the association between goal focusing and team performance. As illustrated in Table 7 the results were statistically significant, χ^2 (253, N=156)=465.26), p≤.05. This implies that goal focusing is significantly related to team performance, thereby providing additional support for rejecting the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between the two variables.

Table 7: Chi-Square Test of Association

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	465.368[a]	253	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	276.400	253	.149
Linear-by-Linear Association	92.445	1	<.001
N of Valid Cases	156		

Ordinal Logistic Regression

Parameter estimates from the ordinal logistic regression analysis were used to understand how changes in the independent variable (goal focusing) influence the log-odds of the dependent variable (team performance) falling within or below a given performance category. Regression coefficients (β), standard errors, Wald statistics, and p-values were assessed to evaluate the direction, strength, and significance of the predictor's influence. In this respect, a reference category for the independent variable was established to serve as the baseline against which other levels of goal-focusing were compared.
The regression model follows a cumulative logit function thus:

$$\text{Logit } [P(Y \leq j)] = \alpha j - \beta_1 X_1,$$

where αj represents the threshold (intercept) for the *j*th category of the dependent variable (team performance) and β is the regression coefficient for the independent variable (goal focusing). The β estimate indicates an increased likelihood of higher performance as the predictor variable improves.

In this analysis, the reference point was set at respondents who strongly agreed (totalScoreGF_Rec=5.00) that goal focusing was evident. This category served as the baseline for interpreting changes in the likelihood of a team achieving high performance. Parameter estimates showed that goal focusing significantly influenced team performance among courier companies in Kenya. The Wald Chi-square for the parameter estimate was significant (Wald = 6.743, p = .009), confirming that goal focusing made a meaningful contribution to the model. The location parameter estimate indicated that perceptions of goal focusing significantly predicted team performance ($\beta = -1.419$, $p \leq .05$). Specifically, for each one-unit decrease from the strongly agreed reference category, the odds of achieving higher team performance decreased by a factor of 1.87. The threshold value at the cumulative performance level of 4.00, $\alpha = -0.471$, indicates the log-odds cutoff for achieving this performance level in the model.

These findings suggest that goal-focusing plays a significant role in enhancing team performance among courier companies in Kenya. Based on these results, the null hypothesis (H_0), stating that goal focusing has no influence on team performance among courier companies in Kenya, was rejected.

Table 8: Parameter Estimates for Goal Focusing

							95% Confidence Interval	
		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[DV_GF_TP_Rec = 1.00]	-5.889	.761	59.849	1	<.001	-7.381	-4.397
	[DV_GF_TP_Rec = 2.00]	-4.588	.587	61.119	1	<.001	-5.738	-3.438
	[DV_GF_TP_Rec = 4.00]	-.471	.272	3.004	1	.083	-1.003	.062
Location	[totalScoreGF_Rec=1.00]	-7.647	1.079	50.199	1	<.001	-9.763	-5.532
	[totalScoreGF_Rec=2.00]	-3.951	.694	32.391	1	<.001	-5.312	-2.591
	[totalScoreGF_Rec=3.00]	-2.183	.538	16.439	1	<.001	-3.238	-1.128
	[totalScoreGF_Rec=4.00]	-1.419	.546	6.743	1	.009	-2.490	-.348
	[totalScoreGF_Rec=5.00]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant

Discussion

The results of the study show that low-goal focusing decreases the chances for higher team performance and affirms that the inverse is true. In addition, effective goal-focusing is reflected in increased team performance. The correlation results also confirm that goal focusing, through goal setting, clarity, and capacity, has a substantial positive influence on team performance within courier companies in Kenya. Inferential statistics consistently gave significant results that pointed to the premise that goal focusing influences team performance, as well as evidence of an association between the two. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that goal focusing has no influence on team performance among courier companies in Kenya was rejected and the alternative hypothesis adopted showing team performance in courier services in influenced by goal setting.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results revealed that structuring for results significantly influenced team performance among courier companies in Kenya. At the basic level, team leaders ought to align an

organization's structures with overarching company goals while remaining flexible to operational changes. Given the significant influence of structuring for results on team performance, courier companies are encouraged to design team models that are delivery-oriented, paying attention to the clarity of role definition among team members so that each team player has a clear understanding of their duties and can make positive contributions. It is imperative that teams have a self-improving mechanism that can be achieved through a feedback loop. A formal monitoring and feedback system enhances accountability among team members and enables real-time monitoring and performance adjustment.

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