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; furthermore; the researcher concluded a strong relationship between training program design and performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project and finally; the researcher concluded a significant and positive relationship setting up training objectives 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. The researcher recommended the project manager and funders to effectively design training programmes the researcher recommended to the project owners to clearly set up training objectives in order to bridge the knowledge of their project team members.**

Keywords: **Project team, team training, project performance.**

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). Team training enhances the capabilities of employees and strengthens their competitive advantage. Effective training will improve the personal characters and professional abilities. Not only employees, management and organization would benefit from team training, and other project beneficiaries benefit as well, because of the received quality products and services. (During the training, project teams will be introduced what is the work is about, how to do, what kind of role does the job play in the project, it helps them to understand their work better and also love what they do by understanding the work. After systemized training, project teams will understand what important role their jobs play, and with the information, knowledge and experiences obtained during the training, they will be more confident with their work, so that better services will be provided (Sommerville, 2007).

1.1 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.
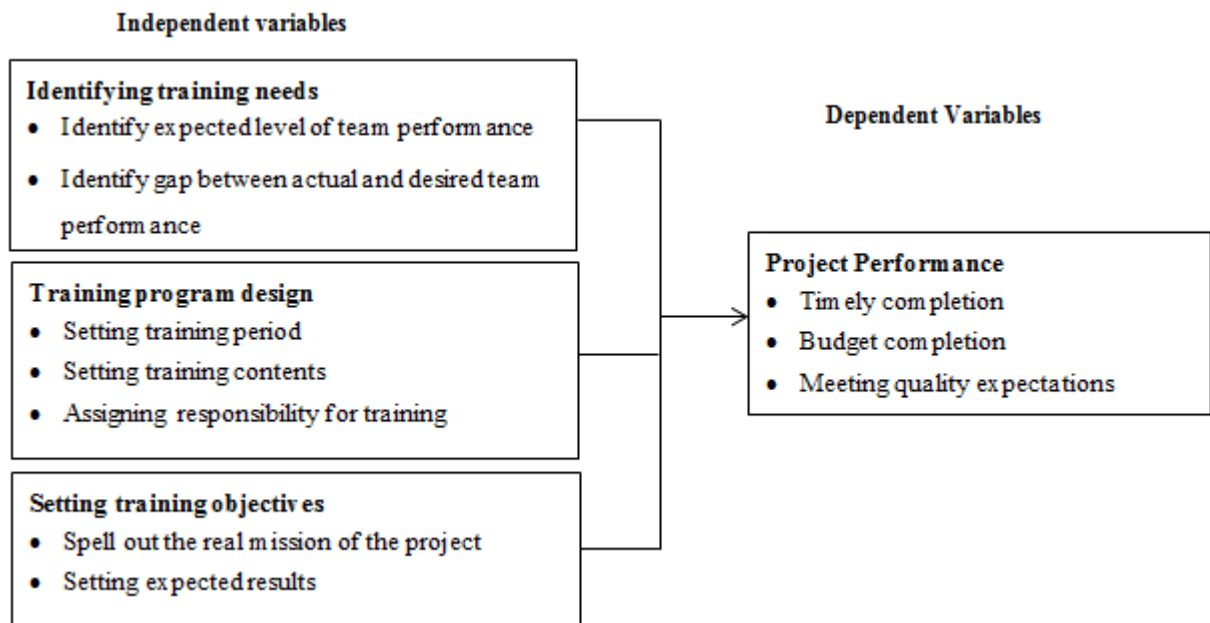
1.2 Objectives of the study:

1.2.1 General objective:

The main objective of this study was to assess the effect of team training on performance of agricultural projects in Rwanda

1.2.2 Specific objectives:

1. To assess the effect of identifying training needs on performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Projects

2. To determine the effect of training programme design on performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Projects

3. To establish the effect of setting up training objectives on performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Projects

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Independent variables

Identifying training needs
- Identify expected level of team performance
- Identify gap between actual and desired team performance

Training program design
- Setting training period
- Setting training contents
- Assigning responsibility for training

Setting training objectives
- Spell out the real mission of the project
- Setting expected results

Dependent Variables

Project Performance
- Timely completion
- Budget completion
- Meeting quality expectations

Source: (Researcher compilation, 2018)

3. 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).

- **Data Analysis Technique:** The data collected were first examined and checked for completeness and comprehensibility. They were then summarized, coded and tabulated. Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviation and frequency distribution were used to analyze data. Data presentation was done using of frequency tables for ease of understanding and interpretations. Inferential statistics including regression and correlation analysis were used to describe the relationship project team training and performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project.

4. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Profile of respondents:

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Male	37	86.0%	86.00%
Female	6	14.00%	100.00%
Total	**43**	**100.0**	

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**	**100.0**	

Source: Field Data (2018)

The findings in Table 3 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.

4.2 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**	**100.0**0%	

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**	**100.0**0%	

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)

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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.

4.3 Determination of the effect of training programme design on performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project:

Table 9: Setting exact training period when designing training programmes

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Agree	27	62.8%	62.8%
Agree	5	11.6%	74.4%
Disagree	11	25.6%	100.0%
Total	43	100.0%	

 Source: Field Data (2018)

The findings in Table 9 revealed that the majority of respondents which is equal to 62.8% of all respondents strongly agreed that the exact training period is set when designing the training programmes in Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project, 11% of all respondents agreed that the exact training period is set when designing the training programmes in Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project while 25.6% of all respondents disagreed that the exact training period is set when designing the training programmes in Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project.

Table 10: Setting training content based on t gaps identified from the project team

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Agree	29	67.4%	67.4%
Agree	9	20.9%	88.4%
Undecided	5	11.6%	100.0%
Total	**43**	**100.0%**	

Source: Field Data (2018)

The findings in Table 10 demonstrated that 67.4% of all respondents strongly agreed that in Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project when setting training contents they base on gaps identified from the project team, 20.9% of all respondents agreed that in Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project when setting training contents they base on gaps identified from the project team while only 11.6% of all respondents were neutral to the statement.

Table 11: Assigning responsibilities for training to the right trainers

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Agree	32	74.4%	74.4%
Agree	10	23.3%	97.7%
Disagree	1	2.3%	100.0%
Total	**43**	**100.0**	

Source: Field Data (2018)

The findings in Table 11 revealed that 74.4% of all respondents strongly agreed that in Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project, when designing training programmes responsibilities for training are assigned to the right trainers, 23.3% of all respondents agreed that in Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project, when designing training programmes responsibilities for training are assigned to the right trainers while only 2.3 % of all respondents agreed that in Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project, when designing training programmes responsibilities for training are assigned to the right trainers. As proved by the majority of the respondents which is equal to 97.7% of all respondents it is clear that the respondents are satisfied with what they are given by the trainers.

Table 12: Use the On-the-job as the training methods

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Agree	28	65.1%	65.1%
Agree	13	30.2%	95.3%
Neutral	2	4.7%	100.0%
Total	**43**	**100.0**	

Source: Field Data (2018)

The findings in Table 12 revealed that 65.1% of all respondents strongly agreed that they use the On-the-job as the training methods in order to develop their practical skills in Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project, 30.2% of all respondents strongly agreed that they use the On-the-job as the training methods in order to develop their practical skills while only 4.7% of all respondents were neutral to this statement.

Table 13: Correlation between Training program design and performance of PASP

		Training program design	Project performance
Training program design	Pearson Correlation	1	.903
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.006
	N	43	43
Project performance	Pearson Correlation	.903	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	
	N	43	43

Source: Field Data (2018)

The above table findings revealed that the results of correlation between training program design and performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project was at the rate of 0.903 meaning that training program design influences performance of project at the level of 90.3% hence a significant relationship between Training program design and performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project. If the null hypothesis states that there is no relationship between Training program design and performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project; by taking into account the information provided in table 4.23, the H_1 will be accepted and the H_o will be rejected. Furthermore, by considering the level of significance which is 0.05, there is a significant relationship between Training program design and performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project because their p-value (0.006) is statistically significant at 5% level of significance.

4.4 Establishment of the effect of setting up training objectives on performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project:

Table 14: Spelling out the real mission of the training when setting training objectives

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Agree	31	72.10%	72.10%
Agree	11	25.60%	97.70%
Disagree	1	2.30%	100.00%
Total	**43**	**100%**	

Source: Field Data (2018)

The research findings in Table 14 that revealed that according to 72.1% of all respondents strongly agreed that in Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project, when setting training objectives, the real mission of the training is well spelt out, 25.6% of all respondents agreed that in Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project, when setting training objectives, the real mission of the training is well spelt out while only 2.3% of all research respondents disagreed that in Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project, when setting training objectives, the real mission of the training is well spelt out.

Table 15: Setting the expected results from training programmes when setting training objectives

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Agree	20	46.5%	46.5%
Agree	18	41.9%	88.4%
Disagree	5	11.6%	100.0%
Total	**43**	**100.0%**	

Source: Field Data (2018)

According to the information from Table 15, 46.5 % of all respondents strongly agreed that in Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project, when setting training objectives the expected results from training programmes are well set, 41.9% of all respondents agreed that in Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project while only 11.6% of all respondents disagreed that in Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project, when setting training objectives the expected results from training programmes are well set.

Table 16: Correlation between setting up training objectives and performance of PASP

		Setting up training objectives	Project performance
Setting up training objectives	Pearson Correlation	1	.917
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	43	43
Project performance	Pearson Correlation	.917	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	003	
	N	43	43

Source: Field Data (2018)

The result of Correlation of between setting up training objectives and performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project was at the rate of 0.917 meaning that setting up training objectives is influencing the performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project at the level of 91.7%. Therefore there is a significant relationship setting up training objectives and performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project. If the null hypothesis is formulated stating that there is no relationship between setting up training objectives and performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project; in such case according to the above results the null hypothesis would be rejected and accept the alternative hypothesis. on the other hand, by considering the level of significance which is 0.05, hence setting up training objectives has an effect on performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project projects because their p-value (0.003) is statistically significant at 5% level of significance hence a high correlation between setting up training objectives and performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project

Table 17: Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project performance

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Meeting set time	43	100%	14.0%
Meeting set budget	31	72.0%	46.5%
Meeting quality	39	90.7%	88.4%

Source: Field Data (20178)

The study findings in Table 17; revealed that 100% of all respondents agreed that Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project has met the expected time, 72.0% of all respondents confirmed that Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project met the set budget while 90.7% of all respondents reported that Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project met the expected quality.

5. CONCLUSIONS

From the results detailed in chapter four, it reflects that team trainings contribute to the performance of agricultural projects in Rwanda. Thereafter; the researcher comes up with the following conclusions:

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

ii. Furthermore; the researcher concluded a strong relationship between training program design and performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project

iii. Finally; the researcher concluded a significant and positive relationship setting up training objectives and performance of Post-Harvest and Agri-business Support Project.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher made the following recommendations:

i. 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

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

iii. The researcher recommended to the project owners to clearly set up training objectives in order to bridge the knowledge of their project team members.

Areas for further research:

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher suggests that future studies should be carried out in the areas of:

i. Factors affecting effective project team training in donor funded projects in Rwanda

ii. Effect of active beneficiary involvement on success of project tem training in Rwanda and

iii. Analysis of on-the job training on performance of donor project in Rwanda

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