

# Impact of team spirit on employee performance in Saint Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT), Mwanza, Tanzania

Njou, James Clement ✉

Catholic University of Mbeya (CUoM), Tanzania ([njouwanjou@gmail.com](mailto:njouwanjou@gmail.com))

Kihaka, Jerome Wilfred

Catholic University of Mbeya (CUoM), Tanzania ([kihakajerome@gmail.com](mailto:kihakajerome@gmail.com))



ISSN: 2243-7703  
Online ISSN: 2243-7711

OPEN ACCESS

Received: 7 June 2026  
Available Online: 27 June 2026

Revised: 20 June 2026  
DOI: 10.5861/ijrse.2026.26268

Accepted: 26 June 2026

## Abstract

This study examined the impact of team spirit on employee performance, using Saint Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT), Mwanza, as a case study. Team spirit, measured through unity and morale among employees, is considered a key driver of collaboration and organizational effectiveness. A quantitative research approach was employed, whereby data were collected from academic staff using structured questionnaires. Statistical analyses, including correlation and regression techniques, were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between team spirit and employee performance at SAUT. The study concludes that fostering team spirit within higher learning institutions is essential for improving employee performance and achieving institutional objectives.

**Keywords:** team spirit, employee performance, teamwork

## **Impact of team spirit on employee performance in Saint Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT), Mwanza, Tanzania**

### **1. Introduction**

Employee performance is widely acknowledged as a critical factor in determining the sustainability and efficacy of institutions in the current organizational context. Organizations are working in more complex and dynamic environments that call for collaboration, shared accountability, and group problem-solving. As a result, team spirit has become crucial to improving worker performance and accomplishing corporate objectives. Employee performance is a critical determinant of organizational success, particularly in higher learning institutions where academic staff play a vital role in teaching, research, and community service (Phulpoto, et al. 2023). In recent years, organizations have increasingly emphasized teamwork as a strategic approach to improving efficiency and effectiveness. Team spirit, also referred to as *esprit de corps*, reflects the level of unity, morale, and shared commitment among employees working toward common goals.

The term “team spirit” describes a feeling of solidarity, trust, dedication, and readiness to cooperate to achieve shared goals. Academic staff, administrators, and support staff must effectively collaborate to operate within interdependent structures in higher education institutions like universities. Strong team spirit encourages enthusiasm, creativity, and better performance, while weak team spirit can lead to disputes, low morale, and decreased productivity (Daud, 2025). Team spirit, also known as *esprit de corps*, has been shown to improve employee motivation, work satisfaction, commitment, and overall performance in organizational behavior and human resource management studies conducted globally. Strong teamwork fosters better communication, trust, support, and shared accountability, all of which boost productivity and creativity (Almeida, 2021). Because teaching, research, and administrative tasks necessitate ongoing collaboration among varied specialists, teamwork is especially crucial in knowledge-based companies like universities.

The significance of teamwork in organizational effectiveness is further supported by data from Asian nations. Research from China shows that cooperative work cultures, group harmony, and collective orientation greatly increase worker productivity and organizational success (Li, 2019). Empirical study shows that strong team cohesion and mutual commitment have a favorable impact on employee performance and institutional success in Japan, where collaboration and collective responsibility are profoundly ingrained in corporate culture. The performance of academic staff, research output, and job happiness are all enhanced by collaborative leadership and team-based work settings, according to studies conducted in South Korean universities (Kim, 2017).

Teamwork has also been found to be a crucial factor in determining employee performance in South and Southeast Asia. Participatory management and teamwork have a good impact on organizational commitment, teaching quality, and staff engagement, according to studies conducted at Indian higher education institutions (Gupta, 2021). Empirical research in Malaysia shows that teamwork improves academic staff morale and productivity, especially in private universities under pressure from competition (Ismail, 2021). Similarly, studies carried out in Indonesian colleges show that collaboration promotes creativity, lessens role conflict, and enhances overall institutional performance (Suryanto & Widodo, 2021). Sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia are examples of growing countries where organizations face additional obstacles such rising service delivery demands, greater workloads, and limited resources. In this regard, encouraging teamwork has been found to be an economical way to raise employee performance without needing a big financial outlay. Participatory leadership, solid interpersonal ties, and group commitment greatly improve employee performance and organizational effectiveness, according to empirical research from both Asian and African firms.

Organizations in developing regions including Sub-Saharan Africa face additional difficulties such scarce resources, growing workloads, and the need to raise service delivery standards. In this regard, encouraging

teamwork has been found to be an economical method of raising employee performance without requiring a significant financial outlay. According to empirical research done in African organizations, participative leadership, strong interpersonal ties, and group commitment greatly improve worker performance and organizational efficacy.

Higher education institutions in Tanzania are under growing pressure to enhance service delivery, research output, and teaching quality in the face of limited resources and intensifying competition. As one of the top private colleges in Tanzania, Saint Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT) mostly relies on staff performance to meet its academic goals. For managers to make evidence-based decisions, it is crucial to comprehend how team spirit affects employee performance at SAUT. Through an empirical investigation of the effect of team spirit on employee performance at SAUT, Mwanza, this study aims to add to the body of knowledge already in existence. At Saint Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT), Mwanza, employees operate within diverse departments that require high levels of coordination and collaboration. However, variations in cooperation, morale, and interpersonal relationships may influence performance outcomes. This study therefore focuses on determining the impact of team spirit on employee performance at SAUT, Mwanza, Tanzania.

**Statement of the Problem** - Despite the strategic importance of teamwork in higher learning institutions, employee performance in some private universities in Tanzania has remained unsatisfactory. At SAUT, challenges such as weak collaboration, reduced morale, and limited cooperation among staff have been observed, potentially affecting teaching quality, research productivity, and administrative efficiency. Although previous studies acknowledge the role of teamwork in enhancing performance, limited empirical evidence specifically addresses the influence of team spirit on employee performance within Tanzanian private universities. This gap necessitates an empirical investigation into how team spirit affects employee performance at SAUT, Mwanza, Tanzania.

**Research Objective** - To determine the impact of team spirit on employee performance.

## 2. Team Spirit on Employee Performance

Empirical studies across different organizational settings indicate that team spirit significantly enhances employee performance. Scholars argue that unity among team members strengthens cooperation and reduces conflict, while high morale increases motivation and job satisfaction. In the context of educational institutions, teamwork has been linked to improved instructional quality and institutional effectiveness. Local studies conducted in Tanzania similarly demonstrate that teamwork practices contribute positively to employee commitment and performance. However, few studies have concentrated specifically on team spirit within private universities, thereby justifying the focus of this study on SAUT, Mwanza. This association is supported by several scientific researches. For example, Katzenbach and Smith (1993) discovered that because of synergy and shared accountability, teams with a strong commitment and a common goal perform better than individuals working alone. Similarly, Cohen and Bailey (1997) showed that good teamwork enhances employee coordination and information sharing, which in turn increases performance outcomes. Their study made clear how important team cohesion is to increasing productivity and quality of work.

According to research by Albisri et al. (2024), supportive leadership and teamwork greatly improved employee performance in the Asian environment by encouraging collaboration and accountability. Their results highlight the importance of team spirit as a means by which businesses can boost productivity without making large financial commitments. Team spirit and employee performance are positively correlated, according to empirical data from developing nations. According to a study conducted in Nigerian companies by Onyekwelu et al. (2018), esprit de corps had a major impact on worker dedication and output. Similarly, cooperation has a favorable impact on employee productivity, job satisfaction, and institutional performance, according to research conducted in Kenyan universities by Wanyeki et al. (2019). These results imply that the advantages of teamwork are not exclusive to rich nations but are equally applicable in emerging nations.

Research carried out in educational environments emphasizes the value of teamwork even more. Bush and Middlewood (2013) noted, for instance, that collaborative cultures in higher education institutions improve

academic performance and the efficacy of instruction. In a similar vein, Salas et al. (2015) discovered that cooperation skills including communication, trust, and common objectives greatly enhance performance in knowledge-based institutions, such as colleges. In their 1993 study on team success in service companies, Campion, Medsker, and Higgs found that teams with strong interpersonal ties and mutual support performed better. They contended that a sense of teamwork drives workers to help one another, which lessens workload pressure and enhances service performance. According to a related study by West and Lyubovnikova (2013), collaboration fosters creativity and flexibility, allowing businesses to successfully adapt to changing work environments.

Teamwork approaches have been shown to positively impact employee dedication and performance in Tanzanian local research. For example, Tago and Mwita (2022) found that in Tanzanian manufacturing companies, employee performance is greatly impacted by efficient teamwork and communication. According to their research, collaboration is a key factor in production and efficiency. In a study of Tanzanian commercial banks, Shabani et al. (2020) discovered that collaboration techniques improve service quality, decrease conflict, and increase employee cooperation. According to a different Essaba (2019) study, cooperation creates a favorable workplace environment that encourages workers to perform better and stay dedicated to the organization's objectives.

### 3. Research Methods

The study adopted a quantitative case study design, focusing on Saint Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT), Mwanza. The target population comprised academic staff members of the university. The study's target population consisted of the university's 303 academic staff members (Payroll data, SAUT 2022). The sample size of 169 for this study was calculated utilizing the statistical table technique of the 303 respondents in the population based on institution payroll. The investigator chose faculty members based on their Principal duties as lecturers include teaching in the classroom, advising and counseling students academically, serving on departmental committees, and continuously improving the curriculum through assessment. A structured questionnaire was the primary tool used to collect the data needed for this study, which could increase the precision of the research data that was compiled. The analyst produced use of a Likert scale with five points. Furthermore, at the time of data collection, this instrument was considered appropriate for the investigation. The Likert scale has five scales: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and neutral. Strongly disagreeing at one extreme of the spectrum, strongly agreeing at the other, and neither agreeing nor disagreeing/neutral in the middle. Team spirit was measured using two key indicators: unity and morale, while employee performance was assessed through efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of work. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), employing descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis to determine the impact of team spirit on employee performance.

**Validity and Reliability** – For validity, Saunders et al. (2009) define validity as the question of whether the results pertain to the topic. that they ought to. Research supervisors or subject matter experts at Saint Augustine University were given questionnaires to complete to assess the validity of this study and identify any misunderstandings. While for reliability, which is the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure, according to Kothari (2009). Making use of the consistency of this study's questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, a reliability test (Likert scale). According to the fundamental guidelines stated below, alpha values between 0.70 and 0.90 imply high reliability, 0.50 or below indicates severely low reliability, and 0.90 or higher indicates very high reliability. A questionnaire is considered very reliable if its Cronbach's alpha is more than 0.60. The scale is unreliable if it is 0.600 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

**Theoretical Review** - The study is anchored in Administrative Theory, particularly Henry Fayol's principle of esprit de corps. The theory emphasizes unity, harmony, and teamwork as essential elements for organizational success. Fayol argued that managers should encourage cooperation and team cohesion to improve organizational performance. Henry Fayol (1864–1920) introduced this hypothesis. He developed fourteen management principles. Work division, authority, discipline, unity of command, unity of direction, compensation, centralization, scalar chain, order, equity, initiative, stability of tenure people, individual subordination, and esprit de corps is all

included. This study focuses on esprit de corps, a management theory that says, “An organization must make every effort to maintain group cohesion in organization capacity of group member to maintain belief.” Just mention the unity of employees inside a certain unit and their dedication to their personal objectives. It emphasized strengthening employee commitment to the organization's objectives (unity is strength). Additionally, Social Exchange Theory supports the notion that employees engage in cooperative behavior when positive social relationships exist. At SAUT, strong team spirit fosters trust and mutual support among staff, which in turn enhances employee performance.

#### 4. Findings and Discussion

##### 4.1 Linking Esprit de corps and Employees' Performance

**Correlation Analysis** - Two sub variables (Unity and Morale) were used to test the relationship between team spirit and employees' performance at St. Augustine University of Tanzania. The findings of this current study indicated that team spirit is positively and significantly related to employees' performance at St. Augustine University of Tanzania. Data analysis showed that unity in team spirit positively relates to employees' performance with a coefficient value of .994\*\*  $p < .000$ , while morale in team spirit relates to employee's performance at a coefficient value of .849\*\*  $p < .000$ . These findings are empirical evidence that team spirit is positively related to employee's performance at St. Augustine University of Tanzania.

**Table 1**

*Team spirit de corps and Employee performance correlation Matrix results*

		Unity	Morale	E Performance
Unity	Pearson Correlation			
	Sig. (2 tailed)			
	N	157		
Morale	Pearson Correlation	.765**		
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000		
	N	157		
E Performance	Pearson Correlation	.994**	.849**	
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	157	157	157

\*\* Correlation is significant at .01 level (2 – Tailed)

**Regression Analysis** - The empirical evidence through regression analysis shows that an increase of unity team spirit at SAUT increases employees' performance at 23% sig .000 t test = 6.636 and morale in team increases employees' performance at SAUT by 41.7%. sig .000, t test = 8.061. The results are the empirical evidence that team communication has a positive and significant influence employees' performance at St. Augustine University of Tanzania.

**Table 2**

*Regression Analysis Coefficient Results*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
		B	Std error	t	Sig
1	(Constant)	.0211	.0273	.772	.175
	Unity	.2304	.0347	6.636	.000
	Morale	.4172	.0517	8.061	.000

Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

#### 5. Conclusion

The impact of team spirit on employee performance at Saint Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT), Mwanza, was investigated in this study, with a focus on unity and morale as important aspects of team spirit. The empirical results unequivocally show that employee performance is strongly, favorably, and statistically

significantly impacted by team spirit. Regression and correlation studies showed that academic staff morale and unity greatly improve productivity, effectiveness, and work performance quality. The findings show that staff unity plays a significant role in coordinated efforts, mutual support, and shared responsibility, all of which enhance overall performance outcomes. In a similar vein, it was discovered that strong morale is essential for inspiring workers, promoting job satisfaction, and boosting dedication to organizational objectives. The robust regression coefficients further support the idea that morale boosts have a greater marginal impact on worker performance than unity, underscoring the importance of morale as a key element of team spirit.

The study's conclusions are in line with administrative theory, especially Fayol's esprit de corps principle, which highlights unity, harmony, and collaboration as the cornerstones of successful organizations. Social Exchange Theory, which contends that strong interpersonal ties promote mutual commitment and improved worker performance, also lends credence to them. Overall, the study concludes that encouraging teamwork is not only desirable but also necessary for improving employee performance and accomplishing SAUT's institutional goals. Increasing staff cohesion and morale can be an affordable and long-lasting way to boost performance in higher education institutions, particularly in places with limited resources like Tanzania.

**Recommendations** - Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Strengthen Team-Building Initiatives to improve cooperation, trust, and unity among employees from different departments, organized team-building exercises, workshops, and retreats should be held on a regular basis. These programs will foster a common institutional identity and aid in the dismantling of silos.
- Encourage employees to actively participate in academic and administrative decision-making processes in order to foster participatory leadership and decision-making. Employee engagement to organizational objectives is strengthened, morale is raised, and a sense of belonging is increased through inclusive leadership methods.
- Boost employee morale and motivation with initiatives including professional development opportunities, fair promotion systems, clear appraisal procedures, and recognition prizes. These actions can greatly raise employee satisfaction and productivity.
- To promote information sharing and departmental cooperation, enhance communication and interdepartmental collaboration. Goal alignment and teamwork reinforcement can be achieved through regular departmental and cross-departmental meetings.
- Establish conducive working conditions by quickly resolving interpersonal problems, resource availability, and workload balance, management can guarantee a positive work environment. A happy workplace fosters camaraderie and morale, which boosts output.

**Area for further Studies** - Future studies should extend this research by examining team spirit among non-academic staff or by employing qualitative or mixed-method approaches to gain deeper insights into teamwork dynamics in higher learning institutions across Tanzania.

## 6. Reference

- Albisri, M. A., Widhianingrum, W., & Purwaningrum, T. (2024). The influence of communication, teamwork, and leadership on employee performance at PT Syncore Indonesia. *Proceeding of International Conference on Social Science and Humanity (ICOSH)*, 1(1), 15–26.
- Almeida, F., & Soares, J. (2021). Employee motivation and engagement in organizations: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Business Innovation and Research*, 24(3), 348–366.
- Bush, T., & Middlewood, D. (2013). *Leading and managing people in education* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

- Campion, M. A., Medsker, G. J., & Higgs, A. C. (1993). Relations between work group characteristics and effectiveness: Implications for designing effective work groups. *Personnel Psychology*, 46(4), 823–850.
- Cohen, S. G., & Bailey, D. E. (1997). What makes teams work: Group effectiveness research from the shop floor to the executive suite. *Journal of Management*, 23(3), 239–290.
- Daud, N. M., et al. (2025). Is trust built on spirit? Examining spiritual leadership as a predictor of organizational trust in Malaysian public universities. *Frontiers in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/>
- Gupta, A., & Sharma, R. (2021). Participatory management, teamwork, and organizational commitment in Indian higher education institutions. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 35(6), 1181–1196.
- Ismail, A., Abdullah, A. G. K., & Yusof, N. (2021). Teamwork practices and academic staff performance in Malaysian private universities. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 35(7), 1412–1427.
- Katzenbach, J. R., & Smith, D. K. (1993). *The wisdom of teams: Creating the high-performance organization*. Harvard Business School Press.
- Kim, J., & Lee, Y. (2021). Collaborative leadership and academic staff performance in South Korean higher education institutions. *Studies in Higher Education*, 46(11), 2321–2336.
- Kurtz, S., Silverman, J. and Draper, J., (2016). *Teaching and learning communication skills in medicine*. CRC press.
- Li, X., Sun, J., & Cheng, K. (2021). Collective orientation, teamwork quality, and employee performance in Chinese organizations. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 32(15), 3228–3250.
- Phulpoto, N., Wu, X., Memon, S., & Phulpoto, S. (2023). Teamwork and its impact on employee performance mediated by job satisfaction: A comprehensive study in the services sector of Pakistan. *Journal on Innovation and Sustainability RISUS*, 14(3), 21–31.
- Saunders M., Lewis P and Thornhill A., (2009), *Research Methods for Business Students* 5th Edition.
- Semvua, Y. S., Naikuru, S., & Maina, R. (2023). Team communication and employee performance in commercial banks in Tanzania. *Human Resource and Leadership*, 4(1), 1–15.
- Suryanto, & Windijarto. (2021). Transforming the digital leadership to improve public service performance in the COVID-19 outbreak. *Economic Annals-XXI*, 188(3–4), 31–38. <https://doi.org/10.21003/ea.V188-04>
- Tago, G., & Mwita, B. (2025). The influence of teamwork dynamics on manufacturing firms' employee performance. *Journal of Policy and Development Studies (JPDS)*, 4(1), 60–76. <https://doi.org/10.51317/jpds.v4i1.777>
- Wanyeki, M. N., Maina, C. W., Sanyanda, J. N., & Kiiru, D. (2019). Impact of teamwork on employee performance: Study of faculty members in Kenyatta University. *Journal of Human Resource and Leadership*, 4(1), 1–8.
- West, M. A., & Lyubovnikova, J. (2013). Illusions of team working in health care. *Journal of Health Organization and Management*, 27(1), 134–142. <https://doi.org/10.1108/14777261311311843>

