

Experiences of Employees Who Participate in Organisational Team Sport Activities

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Abstract

More than a third of an employee's time is often spent in a stressful environment – the workplace. The stress can be alleviated when employees treat each other with trust and respect and when friendships are forged. Relationships are necessary for effective teamwork in organisations and will not develop without mutual trust and respect. The purpose of this research was to explore the employees' experiences regarding relationships, trust and respect related to participation in organisational team sport. Improved relationships, trust and respect among employees should enhance the competence in the organisation because the organisation works towards mutual goals. Once the goals of the organisation are aligned, the organisation can move forward through strong leadership. The qualitative exploration study was conducted among 26 employees of two financial organisations that engage in organisational team sport. The data were collected by means of focus group interviews. The results indicated that a strong bond was established between employees in the organisation during organisational team sport. Organisational team sport should be considered as a vehicle for improving cohesion and increasing trust and respect in a workforce, since it enhances friendships among employees. The contributions that organisational team sport makes to an organisation are all requirements for an effective workforce. The findings contribute valuable new knowledge to the literature on the influence of organisational team sport on relationships, trust and respect between employees.

Keywords: relationship; trust; respect; friendships; cohesion; know each other

INTRODUCTION

More than a third of an employee's time is spent in an often stressful environment – the workplace. The stress can be alleviated when employees treat each other with trust, respect and friendship. Personal and organisational success depends on the quality of employee relationships, trust and respect (Vajda, 2008). Therefore, healthy relationships are necessary for effective teamwork in organisations, but relationships will not develop without trust and respect. If employees find it difficult to work together harmoniously and they cannot build strong relationships, or if there is a lack of trust and respect, productivity in organisations will be hampered (Handler, 1991; Edmondson, 1999). On the other hand, when relationships, trust and respect in a workforce are improved, employees feel compelled to focus on their similarities instead of their differences. Once the relationships, trust and respect among employees have improved, the competence in the organisation should become enhanced because the organisation is unified to work towards mutual goals (Wilson, 1995). Once the goals and efforts of the organisation are in alignment, the organisation can move forward through strong leadership and supportive systems.

The question arises: what possible activities could organisations implement to give them a competitive advantage? To intervene means to become involved, so as to alter an action (Wordreference.com) or to come between two events (Hawkins, 1994). Sport is defined as a human activity capable of achieving results that require physical skill and/or exertion, and which, by its organisation and nature, is competitive and is accepted as being a sport (Chalmers, 2002). Certain organisations use formal organisational team sport activities, not knowing what effect they have on the organisation's productivity. For the purpose of this article an organisational team sport activity is defined as an involvement that includes sport as a means to minimise the negative influence of differences in a workforce and that will result in altered behaviour.

The purpose of the study reported in this article was to explore the possible influence that organisational team sport activities have on employees' relationships, and their mutual trust and respect. This will help to provide guidelines to those seeking means of improving relations in order to increase competence in the workplace. The following sections will deliberate on the experience of participants on the importance of organisational team

sport activities in organisations, and case studies will be provided to confirm the positive contribution of organisational team sport in organisations.

Experience of Participants of the Importance of Organisational Team Sport Activities in Organisations

The various contributions made by organisational team sport are discussed below.

Organisational team sport participation improves mutual trust among employees: When team members participate in a team sport, they learn more about one another. When a sport team works together towards common goals and these are achieved, the stereotyping and prejudices that participants had about their team members will change to trust, because the participants perform according to the expectations their team members have of them. A team is effective when there is trust among the team members (Kortex, 2006). Muleskinner (2003) contends that if employees participate together as a team they soon recognise the unimportance of their obsession with differences.

Organisational team sport participation improves mutual respect among employees: Organisational team sport participation improves mutual respect among employees because participants learn to work together as a team which in turn, teaches them to value one another's contribution. Team sport teaches employees that each participant has his or her own role and the participants need to respect one another to fulfil the role assigned to them (e.g. relying on the goal shooter in netball to score goals for the team) (Downs, 2009). When participants play in the same team and rely on one another and each team member plays his or her separate role successfully, the stereotyping that participants had about their team members will decrease and mutual respect will develop.

Organisational team sport participation enhances relationships and friendships: According to Muleskinner (2003), sport participation can strengthen friendships and bring harmony between employees, because that is what sport is all about. Participation in organisational team sport might take up some of the employees' time but it enables them to share interpersonal knowledge and connect with one another. When managers are willing to give their employees time to participate in organisational team sport and share knowledge about one another, it will aid the company in attaining success (Business-Building Information, n.d.). Since organisational team sport creates the opportunity for different employees to learn about one another (gain knowledge), it is also a unique opportunity for personal

development. It is a relatively low-cost means for employees becoming friends on the basis of shared rules and mutual respect (Prescott & Phelan, 2008).

Case studies to confirm the positive contribution of organisational team sport in organisations: A number of studies have been conducted to confirm the influence that organisational team sport participation has on the relationship and on creating trust and respect among employees. Two relevant case studies are discussed below.

The Impact of Sport on the Workplace in the United Kingdom

A study by Hudson, commissioned by the Social Issues Research Center (SIRC) (Chandler, 2006) assessed the impact of success and failure in sport in the workplace. The findings were gathered from data obtained from one-on-one interviews and focus groups out of a national sample of 2 000 people. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 70 years. Both quantitative and qualitative research was applied in Hudson's study.

The findings showed that a total of 52% of the women and 63% of the men reported that success in sport (to be part of a winning team) had a positive influence on their approach to work. A total of 40% of the men and 47% of the women stated that success in sport helped them to be more productive at work. Only 12% of the women and 20% of the men indicated that sport helped them to be more motivated at work. A minority of 30% of the total sample reported that their success in sport had a negative influence and made them less productive (Chandler, 2006).

The results further indicated that the perception existed among the participants that the 2010 Soccer World Cup would have a positive influence on the world of work. A total of 62% of English women and 70% of English men said that if England won it would boost the nation's morale and productivity.

It could therefore be deduced that winning the 2010 Soccer World Cup should change the work environment into a more socially inclusive environment and enhance team spirit in the population. Moreover, when people discuss sport, social barriers are broken down and relationships between co-workers from different cultures tend to improve (Chandler, 2006).

The Influence of Sport Participation on Work Success
In a study conducted by Standard Chartered Bank (Sawer, 2007), it was found that employees who participate in a team sport such as soccer or netball are

more successful in their work than non-participants. In this study it was found that more employees who participate in organisational team sport, work in fast-growing organisations and this may indicate that they have a positive influence on the rapid growth of the organisation. It is also possible that employees who participate in sport are generally more motivated to improve the organisation's productivity and performance. Sawer's (2007) research has indicated that there is a significant positive correlation between team sport participation and benefits for the organisation. Additional findings of the study were that a total of 48% of the participants who were questioned in this agreed that the relationship between the workforce and management had improved. Of the participants, 80% also reported that they had become acquainted with employees from different departments.

The purpose of this research was to:

- (a) explore the employees' experiences regarding relationships to participation in organisational team sport; and to
- (b) explore the employees' experience regarding trust and respect related to participation in organisational team sport.

It was decided that a qualitative approach would be adopted. This approach is discussed in the following section.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Approach

A qualitative approach was applied in this exploratory study. Qualitative methods are used to give a meaning to and interpret people's experiences, which is almost impossible to do if the researcher uses other methods (Rice & Ezzy, 2002). This design entails the discovery of new insights and ideas and necessitates a flexible approach. The approach followed in the research and presented in this article is summated in the interpretive paradigm because the researcher has to understand the way in which the participants interpret their experiences of their participation in organisational team sport activities and the effect it has on their relationships with one another. The researcher has been playing netball for more than eight years and the game is familiar to her. She became aware of the importance of healthy relationships, trust and respect in such an environment and the influence that organisational team sport activities could have on employees' relationships and mutual trust and respect.

Research Strategy

Two financial organisations were selected for the research, and three focus groups were conducted. The

researcher was known to some of the participants who were working in the financial organisation in question and she was thus conversant with the situation and was accessible to the participants. Follow-up interviews were conducted with participants who had been present at the focus groups, but had not actively participated during the focus group interviews. This was done to ensure that they agreed with the responses gained from the groups. Thereafter it was felt that data saturation had occurred.

A convenience sample was used because the participants were selected by the researcher. Selection criteria included that they had to participate in action netball and be working in a financial institution. The financial institutions in which the focus group interviews were held had approximately 1 300 employees, while the financial institution in which the individual interviews were held has approximately 2 000 employees. The research population for this study comprised employees who were members of organisational action netball teams at financial institutions.

Research method

The following aspects of the research method followed in this study are discussed below: research setting, entrée and establishing researcher roles, sampling, data collection methods, recording of data, data analyses, and strategies employed to ensure quality data and reporting.

Research Setting

The research reported in this article was concluded at two financial institutions in the North Gauteng area, South Africa. Three focus group interviews, two individual interviews, and follow-up interviews were conducted.

Entrée and Establishing Research Roles

The reason why the researcher only conducted interviews with participants employed at financial institutions is that she is an action netball player who had access to the team members. It was therefore easier to include participants who were known to the researcher. The specified criteria for selecting participants in this research study were that they had to be working at a financial institution in the North Gauteng area, had been participating in action netball for more than one month and were willing to be interviewed individually and/or in a focus group.

The researcher was actively involved in the data collection, analysis and interpretation (Streubert & Carpenter, 1995). Guiding and probing questions were asked in the study for exploration purposes. It was also a prerequisite to ensure that the participants' rights to fair treatment are protected by means of informed consent. Informed consent ensures that the participants participate voluntarily (Silverman, 2002).

Sampling

A non-probability purposive sample technique was used to identify 26 participants for the focus groups and the individual interviews. There are normally seven players in an action netball team: a goal shooter, goal attack, wing attack, centre, wing defence, goal defence and goal-keeper. The first focus group interview that was held consisted of eight players (whole netball team and one reserve). The second focus group consisted of seven players and the third focus group consisted of nine players (whole netball team and two reserves). The researcher made an attempt to involve different gender groups in her study. Traditionally, netball has been seen as a game for only girls and women, but teams in which men and women participate, better known as mixed teams, are becoming more popular, especially when netball is played indoors (action netball) (Drummond, 2009). The second and third focus groups were mixed (male and female) teams. The focus group interviews, individual interviews and follow-up interviews were conducted to elicit the required information in order to achieve the research objectives.

Data Collection Methods

Tesch (1990) suggests that qualitative research can be concluded exclusively through words because words are used in language and language is used for

communication. Words are used to explore the information or interpretations. In this study, verbatim focus group interviews, individual interviews and follow-up interviews were used for the data-gathering process and the subsequent analysis of the data. According to Rice and Ezzy (2002), a focus group is useful when a researcher wishes to explore and describe participants' experience and knowledge. A prearranged time and place was set for conducting interviews, namely lunchtime in the boardroom which was an undisturbed area at the participants' workplace. Each interview took approximately one hour.

Guided interviews were used in this study. The balanced type of interview was used to allow the researcher to achieve certain goals by using some sort of a structure (the use of guiding, open-ended questions) and to afford the participants the opportunity to express themselves freely (Hein, 1980). Participants sometimes find videotaping distracting, while tape recordings appear to be acceptable (Grbich, 1999). The researcher used a reliable tape recorder in a quiet environment (Kvale, 1996). The researcher compiled field notes that contained facts about the interviews, the interview setting and her personal feelings and impressions. The questions asked to enable the researcher to collect the data for the study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Interview Questions

Interview questions
You are all playing in a sport team. What have you experienced from this team? What are the disadvantages when playing together in a sport team?
Do these disadvantages prevent you from playing together in one team?
What are the advantages of participating in a sport team with co-workers?
Do you know the other teams' (of that specific organisation - author) netball players? Do you watch the other teams and support them when they are playing on the court?
Did you learn more about the other players in your team?
Do you think that organisations need to use sport in the organisation?
Do you think that sport is time-consuming and that the company will lose productivity because of the time spent on sport events?

researcher to listen attentively to the participants and ask the necessary probing questions where applicable, while the industrial psychologist took down notes, since this study was conducted in two financial organisations, the findings cannot be generalised. When considering transferability of the findings, the context in which the study was conducted should be taken into account.

Recording of Data

Both focus group interviews and individual interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. The audio-taped interviews were typed. The interviews were typed in one-and-a-half spacing with wide margins to enable the researcher to make written comments and notes. Recurring ideas and themes and important concepts were gained from the transcript. The data-gathering process proposed by Tesch (1990) was used. Consideration was given to themes and ideas that could be categorised into a number of broader groups. After the completion of the transcript, it was reviewed to identify any concepts that were not initially noted. Similarities and variations in data from different focus groups were noted. The data were stored at the researcher's office/home. The participants remained anonymous.

Although participant effect could influence results due to lack of anonymity, this was acknowledged and was a consideration in evaluating the trustworthiness of the results.

This qualitative research project relied on the researcher for data gathering and analysis. The possibility of bias was curtailed through peer review. An experienced researcher reviewed the interviews, transcriptions, analysis and coding and a colleague (an industrial psychologist) accompanied the researcher to all the interviews and took handwritten notes. This enabled the

Data Analyses

During the data analysis phase, relevant data were assessed and grouped into broader categories (Lobiondo-Wood & Haber, 1994). The research circumstances were simple enough for thematic analysis to be used – hence it was unnecessary to utilise a more formal method such as GABEK or Atlas TI.

Strategies Employed to Ensure Quality Data

To ensure quality of data, the researcher reassessed the data continuously until there was a common understanding. Patterns and themes emerged during the data analyses. The quality of the research was enhanced by the researcher’s authority. The researcher established her authority by means of the following (Krefting, 1991): her extended knowledge on the subject, her excellent judgmental skills, her ability to explore and her in-depth personal experience with the game of action netball.

Reporting: The main themes that emerged from the study are the experience related to the disadvantages when playing an organisational team sport, the experience related to the advantages when playing in an organisational team sport and the experience related to the importance of organisational team sport in an organisation, which will be discussed in detail below.

Findings

The participants in the research reported in this article were made up of 65.4% female participants and 34.6% male participants. Almost half of the participants (46.2%) were between the ages of 20 and 25 and 15.4% were between the ages of 26 and 30. Only 11.5% of the participants were between the ages of 31 and 35, 15.4% of the participants were between the ages of 36 and 40 and 11.5% were between the ages of 41 and 45. Most of the participants were Afrikaans-speaking (69.23%). Only 11.54% of the participants were English-speaking and 15.39% of the participants spoke other African languages. The majority of the participants were Christians (92.30%), 3.85% were Hindu and 3.85% were Baha’i. With regard to marital status, half of the participants were married whilst 46.15% were single and 3.85% were engaged. The participants were all from different occupational levels and were working in different departments.

Three questions were asked to give meaning to the three different teams. The interview questions and answers from the participants will be set out in tables 2, 3 and 4.

Table 2: Disadvantages of participating in organisational team sport with co-workers

First theme: Disadvantages of participating in organisational team sport with co-workers	
Question: You are all playing in a sport team. What have you experienced from this team? What are the disadvantages when playing together in a sport team?	
Results	Confirmation
Language	Participant 16: My biggest constraint would be language. It is difficult for me to express myself in English. Participant 17: Language can be a barrier because we are used to shouting in Afrikaans on the court but half the time I sometimes forgets that some of the participants are English. Participant 18: Language, it is difficult to communicate with each other if you don’t speak the same language. Participant 26: Language can be a barrier because someone can say something and the other person takes it in the wrong contents clearly because they don’t know what you mean by it.
Character	Participant 16: And also the different player’s character. I like to shout on the court when we play a game to encourage the other players, but someone else doesn’t like it and they all of a sudden stop and don’t give their best, whilst other people have a boost when I shout and encourage them on the court.
Age	Participant 6: The other day some of my colleagues had a meeting and he said that they were all born in the late 60’s and they are all Baby Boomers and I am from Generation Y. I think we have to look at that, to help the company to go forward because top management is all before the Baby Boomer time and the rest of the organisation is more from the 1970’s / 1980’s. Participant 17: Age can also be a problem. Young people don’t want to have conversations with old people. Participant 20: Because I am almost the eldest, I think age can also be a constraint because I am not as fast as the other young players and when I have an injury it will not heal as quickly as other youngster’s injuries.
Gender	Participant 21: Gender is also a problem. Men think differently than women
Culture	Participant 20: Culture or race can also be a problem. We don’t always understand the other culture’s backgrounds and believes, but it is not always wrong it could be an advantage for the company. Participant 25: Actually I have a good incident to show about this. A lot of people say something that has a different meaning in another culture. Can I tell you a little story now... A couple of weeks ago, this one black guy always said “jisses” and in the black culture, it is just an expression but it means a lot more for especially White Christians, because he was wondering why everyone was picking on him. So I went to him and explain to him that in a black culture that is only an expression but in a white culture, it totally has another meaning.

A probing question was asked to ascertain whether these disadvantages prevented them from playing together in one team. The participants agreed that the disadvantages did not play a major role in their sport team.

Table 3: Benefits of participating in organisational team sport with co-workers

Second theme: Benefits of participating in organisational team sport with co-workers	
Question: What are the advantages of participating in an organisational team sport?	
Results	Confirmation
Relationship / communication	<p>Participant 3: When you only work together, it is basically a work relationship, you work together and then you go home, but with netball it is more like a family relationship and you keep that relationship forever. You learn a lot from your team members. You learn how to speak with someone, what or what not to do to another person.</p> <p>Participant 6: The other day I had to phone Finance, a certain Mr. Fourie. The name sounded very familiar and when I phoned him we chatted like old friends, only because I met him through netball. He is the CEO. The relationship is much more relaxed.</p> <p>Participant 7: We became friends. It is amazing.</p> <p>Participant 12: If you walk up and down the hall and you see people that you play netball with, you will find that there is always something that you can talk about, because we play netball together.</p> <p>Participant 12: "It [sport] definitely enables a more open communication than we had before the time. When we played the departmental games, it made a big difference to communication. You can work with a person who sits next to you for 5 years and never really speak to him if you don't do anything outside work together.</p> <p>Participant 14: ... and yes, the whole office was more friendly with one another after the departmental challenge.</p> <p>Participant 14: Sport makes friends that would normally not happen.</p> <p>Participant 15: Before the departmental challenge, you would walk passed someone and didn't greet them at all, but during the departmental challenge you talk and joke with one another and the next day at work you can actually greet him and have a chat.</p> <p>Participant 17: Because we play in the same team, we don't just walk past them what we would have done if we have not played in the same team. We actually stop and start a conversation. Just to hear how it goes. We always have something to talk about, even if it was about last night's game.</p> <p>Participant 17: ...Well, I wouldn't know them that well if they didn't play netball. We are all working in the accounting and actuary department and one of the other netball players that is playing in another team is working in the finance department and if I need something from the finance department, I normally phone him because, regardless of the fact that he knows everything, he became my friend.</p> <p>Participant 24: And we meet other people that we probably would not interact with.</p> <p>Participant 25: I know more about my team mates as what I would have known if we did not play netball together. Honestly, I wouldn't know them at all. If I see them now I say hi, how's it going. And I can go out to them and say "Hey guys, you would not believe what had just happened to me".</p>
Trust and respect	<p>Participant 19: We also ensure that we are on time for the games. The team needs us and we need them. We trust and respect one another.</p> <p>Participant 24: You learn more about each other and when you understand a person and you know a person or when you are willing to go the extra mile, things immediately will become better, the trust issue and the respect issue.</p> <p>Participant 25: We are very close knit. We depend on each other in the team. Trust is very big in our team.</p> <p>Participant 26: When you understand a person and you know a person or when you are willing to go the extra mile, things immediately will become better, the trust issue and the respect issue, because in a way you acknowledge yourself and the people around you. The organisation gets to actually have a harmonious feeling, because people are different but they acknowledge it and work around it or work together to make the organisation succeed.</p>

Participants were also asked whether they knew the other teams' (of that specific organisation) netball players. The participants reported that they knew them and when they (the other teams) were participating in a game, they would sit next to the court and support them. They also became friends with the participants in the other teams,

and when the other teams needed a team player, they would be more than willing to help out. According to one participant, the whole team supported other teams such as rugby, soccer, cricket and volleyball teams, and not only the netball teams. The participants' perceptions support the view regarding the advantages listed in Figure 1,

which confirms that employees who share knowledge, time and space with one another usually become friends. This also confirms the views of Muleskinner (2003) and Kortex (2006) that organisational team sport participation improves mutual trust among employees. Downs's

(2009) statement that organisational team sport participation improves mutual respect among employees is also confirmed once again.

Table 4: The benefits of sport events in the workplace

Third theme: The benefits of sport events in the workplace	
Question: Do you think that organisations need to use sport?	
Results	Confirmation
Relationship / communication	Participant 10: ... and I play soccer with the guys as well, and I mean, I am the only "whitey" and I would not have gotten to know them as well as I do today, had I not been playing with them in a team. Participant 25: ... in terms of sport in companies, especially big companies, there are so many people and you are so busy during the day that you never get the time to know the people you are working with, so things like sport and team outings help a lot, not only in growing yourself, but in knowing your fellow players but also the people who are working with you. Participant 26: ... regardless whether it is sports, even at work, as I said, it is easier for me to go to one of them since I know them in a way instead of going to someone I never had to deal with in the company before. Participant 26: I have to say, me and the girl are now friends and from 1 January I will start to work with her in the same department, so I already have a friend by the time I move in there, so it is quite nice, because I know I can talk to her about other stuff and not only work, because she knows me on a more personal level.
Trust and respect	Participant 10: I was in an English school where I played soccer. I feel trusted in the netball team and feel trusted in the soccer team. We played in the finals yesterday and in our team itself, it is accepted that I am the main defender. Participant 26: ... sport helps you to have better communication, you learn from one another, there is trust and respect and friendship between the participants.

The participants were asked whether they thought that sport was time-consuming and that the company would lose productivity because of the time spent on sport events. At the time of the interviews, the participants were all playing in an action netball team and all their games took place after hours. The participants agreed that when organisational team sport is implemented in organisations the participants feel valued. They are willing to work longer hours and to work towards company success because they are now friends. Sport also increases open communication, support and commitment among employees. The organisations do not lose production time. The converse is actually true: the company gains more from employees who participate in sport. The participants' perceptions support the view regarding the advantages listed in Figure 1, which confirms that employees who share knowledge, time and space with one another usually become friends. This also confirms the views of Muleskinner (2003) and Kortex (2006) that organisational team sport participation improves mutual trust among employees. Downs's (2009) statement that organisational team sport participation improves mutual respect among employees is once again confirmed.

DISCUSSION

Management implication

The contribution that organisational team sport makes to an organisation is that a strong bond is established between employees in the organisation during sport events. They are encouraged to trust and respect each other, which helps to increase productivity. Organisational team sport is therefore a vehicle to create opportunities to improve relationships and increase trust and respect in a workforce. The contributions that organisational team sport makes to an organisation are all requirements for effective relationships, trust and respect in the workplace.

Organisations that have not implemented organisational team sport can use this research as guidelines to establish organisational team sport interventions.

It is therefore recommended that organisational team sport be used in organisations to improve relationships and increase trust and respect between employees. Organisations need to work towards a more harmonised workforce.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusion from this study is that the employees experienced organisational team sport activities positively and that it can be used to enhance healthy relationships, trust and respect among employees in the organisation. Although the participants experienced some constraints, they confirmed that sport does promote open communication, trust, respect, support and friendships.

If employees from an organisation participating in organisational team sport, it will give the organisation an advantage over other organisations whose employees do not collaborate. Based on the conclusions drawn from the findings, recommendations can be made for using organisational team sport activities to improve positive relationships, trust and respect between employees.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Since this study was conducted in two financial organisations, the findings cannot be generalised. When considering transferability of the findings, the context in which the study is conducted should be taken into account. The focus of this study was on the employees in two financial organisations participating in a team sport. The researcher interviewed only those participants who played in a netball team. Several other sports such as hockey, cricket, soccer, rugby and volleyball should also be considered as team sports. It is recommended that the research should be repeated to include more differentiation of organisations and a larger sample group. Several other team sports should also be included in the research.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The participants did experience several benefits when participating in organisational team sport with co-workers. These experiences include enhanced communication, stronger relationships and increased mutual trust and respect between team members. It is concluded that the participants felt that sport events in an organisation have several benefits which are similar to the benefits they experienced when participating in organisational team sport. The participants' perceptions of the benefits of participating in team sport with co-workers as well as the participants' perception of the benefits of sport events in an organisation concur with similar findings in the literature. If employees in an organisation can work together because they participate in organisation team sport, this will give the organisation a competitive edge over other organisations whose employees are unable to work together. Organisational

team sport is therefore an excellent vehicle to increase relationships, trust and respect between employees.

SUMMARY

The objective of the study reported in this article was to explore the possible influence that organisational team sport activities may have on employees' relationships, as well as on their mutual trust and respect. The results indicated that a strong bond was established between the employees in the organisation during organisational team sport. The participants reported that employees' relationships, mutual trust and respect increased. This led to greater productivity in the organisation. When an organisation uses formally organised organisational team sport to improve relationships, trust and respect in a workforce, it seems to motivate employees to focus on their similarities instead of their differences. Once the focus on differences has declined, it could enhance the competence in the organisation because the organisation's sport teams are unified to work towards shared goals. Once the goals and efforts of the sport teams are in alignment, the organisation could then aim to move forward through strong leadership and supportive systems.

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