

**Team-building strategies that build the dynamic capabilities of globally
distributed teams within South African multinationals.**

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Abstract

Globally distributed teams (GDTs) enable organisations to recruit the best talents, embrace diversity, enhance knowledge generation, and gain maximum effectiveness and innovation for competitive advantage. While these teams permit organisations to operate and compete in the new world of work, their potential, the quality of interactions and lived experiences have not been fully explored. Characterised by absolute reliance on technology-mediated communication, time zone differences, geographic dispersion and membership heterogeneity, globally distributed teams face multifarious challenges that require effective team-building strategies. Although team-building is a buzzword in business environments there is exiguous literature focusing on strategies that are used to drive it, more so in globally distributed teams. Guided by the dynamic capabilities theory and designed as an exploratory, qualitative research, this study investigates team-building strategies that build the dynamic capabilities of globally distributed teams. Conducted through 16 semi-structured interviews of financial sector managers in South African multinationals, the research identified five key team-building strategies namely conducting regular virtual team meetings, ensuring collaboration opportunities, setting clear communication guidelines, enhancing trust-building, and virtually celebrating achievements and milestones. The research also identified that team-building in globally distributed teams is an ongoing, manager-driven process (not a once-off event) realised in all team interactions and communications. The implementation of these strategies yields dynamic capabilities outlined as sensing capabilities (communication and trust-building), seizing capabilities (collaboration and team cohesion), and reconfiguring capabilities (innovation and knowledge sharing). This study also revealed that the implementation of strategies can be hampered by team members' willingness to participate, the cost of GDT building and time zone differences. This research provides recommendations, and suggestions that will benefit existing GDTs, and those aiming to become so.

Keywords

Team-building: This is the informal and formal processes (series of progressive, interdependent, and continual actions) by which individual employees are brought together and turned into a cohesive, functional entity; organised to work together cooperatively and interdependently to address and meet customer needs and business goals.

Team: A diverse group of people who work together to advance and attain a common goal.

Strategies: Plans of action to enhance the achievement of organisational goals.

Globally distributed teams (GDTs): A collection of employees spread around the world that is not using the same physical workspace to accomplish work, with communication, collaboration and connectivity accomplished and strengthened using online communication technology. Some scholars call them global virtual, international, or geographically dispersed teams. Physical and personal contact is minimal with some teams comprising members who have never worked together before or met in person.

Multinationals (MNCs): Large companies with business operations in more than one country.

Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy [International Business] at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

15 November 2023

Table of contents

Abstract.....	i
Keywords.....	ii
Declaration.....	iii
Chapter 1: Introduction to the research problem	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background	1
1.3 Relevance of the research.....	4
1.4 Grounding of the research from a theoretical perspective.....	6
1.5 Research problem	8
1.6 Research aims.....	9
1.7 Research contribution.....	10
1.7.1 Contribution to theory.....	10
1.7.2 Contribution to business.....	11
1.8 Research scope.....	13
1.9 Document structure	14
Chapter 2: Literature review	16
2.1. Introduction.....	16
2.2. Overview of teams.....	16
2.3. High-performing teams	17
2.4. Virtual teams	18
2.5. Globally distributed teams (GDTs).....	21
2.5.1. Defining GDTs	21
2.5.2. Benefits of GDTs.....	21
2.5.3. Challenges faced by GDTs	22
2.6 Dynamic capabilities theory	24
2.7 Dynamic capabilities.....	27
2.8 Team-building.....	28
2.8.1 Definition of team-building.....	28
2.8.2 Tracing the origins of team-building.....	30
2.9 Team-building purposes	31
2.9.1 Promoting goal-setting	31
2.9.2 Providing interpersonal relationship management.....	32
2.9.3 Enabling role clarification	33
2.9.4 Improving problem-solving techniques	33
2.10 Team-building advantages.....	34
2.11 Team-building disadvantages	34
2.12 Relationship between team-building strategies and dynamic capabilities.....	35

2.12.1 Sensing capabilities	37
2.12.2 Seizing capabilities.....	39
2.12.3 Reconfiguring (transforming) capabilities.....	41
2.13 Knowledge gap.....	43
2.14 Conceptual framework.....	45
2.15 Conclusion.....	46
Chapter 3: Research question.....	47
3.1 Introduction.....	47
3.2 The research question	47
Chapter 4: Research methodology.....	49
4.1. Introduction.....	49
4.2. Research design and method	49
4.3. Choice of methodology	50
4.4. Research philosophy	51
4.5. Design purpose	51
4.6. Population	52
4.7. Unit of analysis	52
4.8. Sampling method.....	53
4.9. Sampling frame or criteria.....	54
4.10. Sample size.....	54
4.11. Research/measurement instrument.....	55
4.12. Data collection process.....	55
4.13. Data analysis	57
4.14. Data storage	59
4.15. Research quality and rigour	59
4.16. Ethical considerations.....	60
4.17. Limitations of the research design and methods	61
4.18. Conclusion.....	61
Chapter 5: Results/Findings.....	62
5.1 Introduction	62
5.2 Unit of analysis description.....	62
5.3 Overview of the participation process.....	62
5.4 Participant descriptive statistics.....	64
5.4.1 Overall length of service in the organisation.	64
5.4.2 Length of service in a GDT	64
5.4.3 Number of reportees.....	65
5.4.4 Global distribution of the teams (number of countries represented)	66
5.5 Team-building strategies that build dynamic capabilities	67
5.5.1 Strategy 1: Conduct regular virtual team meetings	69

5.5.1.2 Purpose-driven meetings	71
5.5.2 Strategy 2: Ensure collaboration opportunities	73
5.5.2.1 Knowledge sharing	73
5.5.2.2 Defining roles and responsibilities	74
5.5.3 Strategy 3: Set clear communication guidelines	74
5.5.3.1 Clarity on technologies in use	75
5.5.3.2 Articulate a clear mission, vision, and values	76
5.5.4 Strategy 4: Enhance trust-building	76
5.5.4.1 Creating psychological safety	76
5.5.4.2 Investing in personal relationships	77
5.5.4.3 Diversity and cultural awareness	78
5.5.5 Strategy 5: Virtually celebrate achievements and milestones	79
5.6 Formalisation of team-building strategies	80
5.7 Effectiveness of having team-building strategies	81
5.7.1 Innovation	84
5.7.2 Collaboration	85
5.7.3 Team cohesion	85
5.7.4 Communication	85
5.7.5 Knowledge sharing	86
5.7.6 Trust-building	86
5.8 Dynamic capabilities	86
5.8.1 Sensing capabilities	87
5.8.2 Seizing capabilities	87
5.8.3 Reconfiguring (transforming) capabilities	87
5.9 Challenges experienced in implementing team-building strategies	88
5.9.1 Cost	89
5.9.2 Differences in time zones	89
5.9.3 Team members' willingness to participate	90
5.10 Conclusion	90
Chapter 6: Discussion	91
6.1 Introduction	91
6.2 Participant descriptive data	91
6.3 Team-building strategies that build dynamic capabilities	92
6.3.1 Regular virtual team meetings	95
6.3.2 Collaboration opportunities	96
6.3.3 Clear communication guidelines	98
6.3.4 Celebrating achievements and milestones	99
6.3.5 Trust-building	101
6.4. Formalisation of team-building strategies and dynamic capabilities	103

6.5 Dynamic capabilities that emerge from having team-building strategies.....	103
6.5.1 Sensing capabilities.....	105
6.5.1.1 Communication capability	105
6.5.1.2 Trust-building capability.....	106
6.5.2 Seizing capabilities	107
6.5.2.1 Collaboration capability	107
6.5.2.2 Team cohesion capability.....	108
6.5.3 Reconfiguring capabilities.....	109
6.5.3.1 Innovation capability.....	110
6.5.3.2 Knowledge sharing capability.....	111
6.6 Challenges experienced when implementing team-building strategies.....	113
6.6.1 Cost	113
6.6.2 Differences in time zones.....	113
6.6.3 Team members' willingness to participate.....	114
6.7 Conclusion	124
Chapter 7: Conclusion.....	116
7.1. Introduction	116
7.2. Key research outcomes.....	116
7.3. Principal theoretical conclusions	117
7.4. Research contribution	118
7.5. Recommendations for management and/or other stakeholders.....	121
7.7. Suggestions for future research	123
References	125
Appendices.....	138
Appendix 1: Ethical clearance approval	138
Appendix 2: Informed consent statement	139
Appendix 3: Interview schedule.....	140

List of figures

Figure 1: Positioning of the financial sector in driving economic growth in South Africa.....	14
Figure 2: Analysis of Microsoft 365 collaboration tools use.....	20
Figure 3: Word cloud depicting GDT challenges.....	24
Figure 4: Types of team-building participants.....	35
Figure 5: The three types of DCs and team-building.....	36
Figure 6: Sensing practices applicable in team-building.....	39
Figure 7: Seizing practices applicable in team-building.....	41
Figure 8: Reconfiguring practices applicable in team-building.....	42
Figure 9: Applying Teece's three dynamic capabilities in team-building.....	45
Figure 10: Conceptual framework of the research aims.....	46
Figure 11: Length of employment.....	64
Figure 12: Number of reportees.....	66
Figure 13: Global distribution of teams.....	67
Figure 14: Regularity of team meetings.....	70
Figure 15: Challenges faced by GDTs.....	72
Figure 16: MNCs and formally documented team-building strategies	80
Figure 17: Effectiveness of team-building.....	82
Figure 18: Key capabilities that result from having team-building strategies.....	84
Figure 19: An overview of team-building strategies in GDTs.....	88
Figure 20: The relationships among the six dynamic capabilities.....	104

List of tables

Table 1: Literature on dynamic capabilities.....	48
Table 2: The six phases of thematic analysis.....	63
Table 3: Length of service.....	65
Table 4: Team-building strategies identified by research participants.....	69

Chapter 1: Introduction to the research problem

1.1 Introduction

Today's business environment is rapidly changing due to increased technological advancements, globalisation, innovation, market volatility, high demand for collaboration, an increase in joint ventures and the demand for stricter and tighter product or service delivery deadlines (Turkina & Van Assche, 2018; Webber et al., 2019). When the COVID-19 pandemic struck it destabilised the world, setting in motion massive changes and accelerating pre-existing trends, in particular digitalisation (ILO, 2022). Additional disruptions included COVID-19 induced reduction in people mobility. Furthermore, there has been a rising trend in disparate national regulatory institutions, and anti-globalisation sensationalism (Meyer & Li, 2022). Recently, the Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Palestine conflicts have increased the sense of turbulence and unpredictability in the world. This instability leads to rapid changes in the way global business is conducted and influences business decisions. To keep pace with the rapid changes, and take advantage of the accelerated digitalisation, businesses recruit talented and skilled employees from diverse geographical backgrounds (Reiche et al., 2019).

Organisations are reaching far-flung ends of the globe to “tap into pockets of knowledge that are unavailable locally” (Turkina & Van Assche, 2018, p. 706). According to the ILO (2022), “three in ten enterprises in Africa have already changed their hiring criteria to include new groups of workers they had not previously considered, such as fully remote workers not living near the workplace” (p. 19). This pursuit for talent and skill is yielding more diverse, dynamic, heavily digitised, and globally distributed (4D) teams (Haas & Mortensen, 2016). As a result, what defines and who constitutes a team is also changing. The pursuit for diverse knowledge reservoirs and subject matter experts is giving rise to teams that are more globally distributed teams (Tavoletti et al., 2023). GDTs are a collection of employees spread around the world who are not using the same physical workspace to accomplish work; with communication, collaboration and connectivity accomplished and strengthened using online communication technology (Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018; Seshadri & Elangovan, 2019; Tavoletti et al., 2023). GDTs bring numerous benefits to businesses and challenges that require strategy-driven team-building.

1.2 Background

Dynamic Capabilities (DCs) namely sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring is a term coined by Teece et al. (1997) and is renowned for playing a central function in assisting firms secure a competitive advantage through appropriate and improved resource deployment,

and promoting a rich learning culture thereby reducing the risk of organisational failure. While the centrality of DCs in procuring a competitive advantage is widely recognised (Fainshmidt et al., 2019; Irwin et al., 2022; Kurtmollaiev, 2020; Teece et al., 1997), the link between team-building strategies and DCs remains unclear and seemingly unexplored. In essence, it appears that research in the realm of team-building and DCs relationships is currently quite limited.

Through instituting a categorisation of team-building components – i.e., interpersonal-relationship management, role clarification, goal setting, and problem-solving (Lacerenza et al., 2018; Shuffler et al., 2018) – and establishing how these can play a significant role in DCs, this research gives credence to the perception that there is correlation between team-building strategies and DCs.

Team-based structures are the norm in conducting business and task accomplishment (Benishek & Lazzara, 2019). As more organisations realise and embrace that individual capacities and skills are best utilised in collective environments (Coleman et al., 2021; de Vries & Visser, 2021) it is becoming clearer that high-performing teams do not build themselves; neither are they built overnight. They are built by leaders who are responsible and accountable for processes, activities, and functioning, presiding over team members who have role clarity and a clear reporting structure (Jiang & Chen, 2018; Nordback & Espinosa, 2019).

Team-building is an ongoing process (not a single event) that involves integrating a group of diverse individuals into a socially proficient, success-driven, and unified work unit (Lacerenza et al., 2018; Shuffler et al., 2018). It is undertaken to develop and sustain team effectiveness; enhance and foster connectedness and ensure teams maximise their capacities to attain higher levels of performance (Shuffler et al., 2018). The subject of team processes is scarce in International Business (IB) literature (Tavoletti et al., 2023) which also includes team-building strategies organisations use to drive team-building. This suggests an area of neglect in IB research. Anchored in the dynamic capabilities' theory, this research paper argues that for effective team-building to take place, it must be driven by sound strategies.

As more emerging market economies make inroads into mainstream global business, they must not just become global players but winners as well (Pedersen & Tallman, 2022). Winning requires that business processes, even at the lowest entry-level point, are defined and driven by sound strategies (Deng et al., 2020). This is the essence of dynamic

capabilities as opposed to ordinary capabilities. Where ordinary capabilities are mostly operational, dynamic capabilities are naturally born from strategic intent (Teece, 2019). Without embedding strategy as the bedrock of firm processes and activities, winning remains an illusion. At the team level, South African Multinational Companies (MNCs) need to inculcate a culture of embedding strategies into team-building. This means that even in building teams that compete in the global arena, strategy must inform how, why, and what needs to be done. MNCs that are champions of the world stage are driven by high-performing teams. High-performing teams are a by-product of strategy.

South Africa is an active player and a force to contend with in the global economy (Beri et al., 2022; ITA, 2023). The ability to cultivate dynamic capabilities is closely tied to the ever-changing dynamics of the global environment. Unfortunately, there is innumerable research that has explored the contingencies of emerging economies in relation to dynamic capabilities. South Africa offers a rich context to test dynamic capabilities because of its complex business environment and “a long tradition of innovation and entrepreneurship” (Teece et al., 2020, p.2). Furthermore, the complex and rapidly evolving nature of this country creates a critical need for firms to adapt and thrive to survive and prosper. In other words, to achieve and maintain superior performance in the changing business landscape of South Africa, it is crucial for firms to enhance their dynamic capabilities (Teece et al., 2020). This includes embracing broad-based economic transformation, expanding domestic consumption, tapping into international markets, and embracing the advancements of the new type of industrialization. By doing so, firms can position themselves for success and long-term sustainability (Teece et al., 2020). South Africa's rapidly changing, and highly competitive business and technological environment provides an ideal context for testing and refining dynamic capabilities. The dynamic nature of this environment challenges firms to continuously adapt, innovate, and improve to stay ahead (Pedersen & Tallman, 2022).

By examining and developing dynamic capabilities, firms can enhance their ability to navigate the challenges and seize opportunities for success in dynamic business landscapes (Zahra et al., 2022). Given its shared characteristics and similarities with other emerging economies, South Africa serves as a representative context for studying and understanding the dynamics of emerging economies (Pedersen & Tallman, 2022). Consequently, conducting research in South Africa can have broader implications and provide valuable insights for firms operating in other emerging economies. By leveraging these insights, firms can better navigate the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities

presented in similar contexts, enhancing their overall performance and success (Deng et al., 2020; Pedersen & Tallman, 2022).

Considering the above, this research seeks to explore team-building strategies that build the dynamic capabilities of globally distributed teams in the context of South African multinational companies. This is premised on the fact that for South African MNCs to be globally competitive, challenges experienced by their GDTs must be met by robust team-building processes that are strategy-driven. Building on strategy means that there is deployment of resources; enhancement and alignment of team-building processes to outsmart competitors (Gaur et al., 2019; Teece, 2019). To explore this topic, 16 information-rich and purposively sampled managers/team leaders from the South African financial sector were interviewed.

1.3 Relevance of the research

The COVID-19 pandemic did not just expedite the implementation of digital technology, but it also reshaped trends in the workplace (Vuchkovski et al., 2023). It has significantly changed team tasks (distribution and accomplishment), the role of the individual within the team, knowledge accumulation and flow; made fundamental alterations to where and how people work and even the roles of teams in organisations (ILO, 2022). Therefore, addressing the issue of team-building in a post-pandemic world is not only timely but highly relevant to most organisations today (Sharma et al., 2020). Organisations can gain valuable insights and strategies to foster strong team dynamics, enhance communication, and boost productivity in the new normal. The findings can provide practical guidance for organisations seeking to adapt and thrive in the post-pandemic era (Caligiuri et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2020).

This research is also undertaken as a response to the call made by Shuffler et al. (2018, p. 32) who observed that emerging complexities in teams (use of virtual tools, geographic distribution, diversity in composition) require “that future research attend to these differences in terms of understanding their implications for TDIs (team development interventions)”. Whereas Shuffler et al. (2018) specify ten types of TDIs, Lacerenza et al. (2018) identify four namely, team training, leadership training, team-building, and team debriefing. Shuffler et al. (2018) exemplifies that team-building largely occurs in face-to-face settings and when team members belong to a global multinational organisation such face-to-face interactions may not be possible. What makes this a subject of interest is that even though traditionally GDTs were in different geographic zones, they still had offices to go to and colleagues to meet with face-to-face. COVID-19 lockdown upended many

longstanding practices and norms and fast-tracked South African companies to embrace and normalise doing business globally utilising technology-mediated technologies (Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018; Vuchkovski et al., 2023). For some organisations, today's world of work means there is no office to visit. These facets call for research into team-building strategies.

In comparison to traditional face-to-face settings where proximity builds and sustains a sense of belonging GDT settings are characterised by a lack of the many social, material, and symbolic cues famous for driving engagement with a collective (Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018). The results of this study will assist GDT managers to better comprehend the importance of having strategies in place to drive team-building. The sad reality is that a team of experts can still be unsuccessful if they lack the skills to work well together, to coordinate their actions, and to communicate effectively (Salas et al., 2018). Results of this study are useful to organisations that have been wondering why challenges continue to manifest in teams even after spending money on team-building. External facilitation of team building is costly, but questions abound on how effective it is given that facilitators are detached from the day-to-day workings of the teams. This study assists organisations that intend to do team-building across their GDTs in understanding what dynamic capabilities (DCs) can be reaped from having team-building processes that are strategy-driven.

Organisations that utilise GDTs, GDT team managers, information technology (IT) teams and human resource (HR) personnel will find this research relevant in giving them direction and focus on team-building. As organisations advance more toward utilising culturally diverse and globally distributed teams, there is an increased need to promote and embrace team-building (Lacerenza et al., 2018; Shuffler et al., 2018). By using strategy-driven team-building GDT team managers comprehend how individual competencies must be carefully placed in productive combinations to create and bolster dynamic capacities (Collings et al., 2019). This makes this research highly relevant to organisations that intend to internationalise.

MNCs that implement GDTs need to stay up-to-date, knowledgeable, and current on team-building best practices to foster the right atmosphere and correct processes needed for success (Aquino et al., 2022; Miller et al., 2018). Given that GDTs utilise technology-mediated communication, this research is also relevant to IT departments as they seek to gain a substantial, evidence-driven understanding of how team-building is envisaged in GDTs; and what fundamental role they can play in enabling support to GDT managers and

team members. HR personnel are at the centre of recruitment and this research provides them with a clearer view of the role of cross-border talent acquisition, and how team-building is then used to bring together the various talents (Banks et al., 2019).

Whether an organisation is seeking to set up an invincible global team; enhance the latent potential in its employees; maximise knowledge sharing; or eradicate and reduce conflict among team members; team-building is often the answer. Improving team-building practices holds significant importance as it directly contributes to the effectiveness of teams (Lacerenza et al., 2018; Shuffler et al., 2018; Zhang & Losekoot, 2021). When teams are well-built and cohesive, they can collaborate more efficiently, communicate effectively, and leverage diverse skills and perspectives (Aquino et al., 2022; Benishek & Lazzara, 2019; Vuchkovski et al., 2023). This qualitative research study provides insights for leaders seeking to understand and review team-building, with the aim of successfully addressing some of the challenges they encounter when leading GDTs. This study's findings will be useful for team leaders seeking new strategies to better conduct team-building in their GDTs and improve team-building success rates, which will ultimately impact team performance positively. Every team leader finds great satisfaction and drive in leading a high-performing team. This research's findings will be made available for leaders to implement in their business organisations.

For a long time, IB literature has imagined and positioned the world via the lens of advanced economies (Pedersen & Tallman, 2022). This research derives relevance in that it provides a different and fresh perspective by focussing on MNCs from an emerging market economy, namely, South Africa.

1.4 Grounding of the research from a theoretical perspective

South Africa is home to 77 MNCs that span diverse sectors including mining, financial, retail, industrial, health, technology, and telecommunications (Labour Research Service, 2022). The MNCs' inherent global nature means teams are distributed across different geographic locations (Banks et al., 2019; Grogard et al., 2022; Scalera et al., 2018; Seshadri & Elangovan, 2019; Seo et al., 2020; Piekkari et al., 2022). MNCs are multi-unit, multi-locational, multi-lingual, multi-identity and multi-contextual in nature (Piekkari et al., 2022). In addition, MNCs operate in global business environments that are increasingly competitive, unpredictable, virtual, and fast-paced (Stendahl et al., 2020; Stoverink et al., 2020). South African MNCs are not exempted from these VUCA challenges that are characterised by "volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity" (Millar et al., 2018, p. 5; Schoemaker et al., 2018, p. 15). Therefore, their GDTs must rise above the myriad of

challenges that are known to haunt and hound these teams. This is achievable through adopting and applying new ways of strategic thinking to thrive (Teece et al., 2020).

Challenges that GDTs must navigate in VUCA conditions include performance failure, negative impacts of cultural diversity, geographic distance, communication, collaboration, conflict, and isolation issues ((Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018; Santistevan & Josserand, 2019; Seshadri & Elangovan, 2019). Additionally, GDT members bemoan a lack of confidence in how they fit into the bigger organisational picture (Makris et al., 2018). To maintain high productivity and remain competitively ahead challenges faced by GDTs must be addressed and minimised (Gibson et al., 2019; Jiang & Chen, 2018; Scalera et al., 2018)). Team-building has been touted as one way of addressing these challenges (Lacerenza et al., 2018; Shuffler et al., 2018). However, little scholarly effort and focus has been directed towards team-building strategies in use. This research aims to contribute to this sparsely researched area.

This research focus will be on exploring team-building strategies that South African MNCs utilise to build dynamic capabilities and ensure GDTs attain high performance. The key argument is that to be effectively undertaken, team-building must be strategy-driven. The strategy enables uncertainty management through risk reduction (Sharma et al., 2020). Whether their operations are in Africa or beyond South African MNCs need high-performing teams to thrive in VUCA conditions and withstand and beat global competition. This qualitative research study will provide insights for leaders seeking to review team-building and to understand how they can successfully address the challenges they encounter when leading GDTs. The findings from this study will be highly useful for team leaders who are looking to enhance team-building and adopt new techniques to improve team-building success rates within their GDTs. The study's findings can provide valuable guidance to team leaders, equipping them with the knowledge and tools to navigate the unique challenges of GDTs and foster a strong sense of teamwork, communication, and cohesion among team members.

The dynamic capabilities (DCs) theory will anchor this study for three reasons. Firstly, strategy-driven team-building recognises three DCs namely sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring. To succeed in the digital world that is constantly changing, it is essential for organisations to be able to understand the environment, take advantage of new opportunities, and adjust and use their existing resources effectively (Vuchkovski et al., 2023). Therefore, the use of the DC theory to identify and understand key strategies MNCs

use for team-building and what dynamic capabilities they yield is vital for successfully arguing that strategies must form the bedrock of team-building.

Secondly, when appropriately executed team-building yields strong DCs that are difficult to replicate and are important for organisational survival (Teece, 2018a). Surviving and thriving in VUCA environments requires the development of strong DCs (Teece, 2020). Thirdly, the choice of this theory also follows Groggaard et al. (2022), Kutama (2021) and Vuchkovski et al. (2023) who utilised it to study how MNCs utilise capabilities to achieve organisational flexibility, how environmental dynamism impacts complexity leadership and how teams move from conventional to virtual, respectively.

1.5 Research problem

Today's business environment is complex, competitive, and fast-changing making it imperative to organise work teams smartly (Jiang & Chen, 2018). Sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring capabilities play a practical role by enabling organisations to “better adapt and evolve amid disruptive environments shaped by internal and external change alike” (Kurtmollaiev, 2020, p. 2). Organisations are becoming heavily reliant on GDTs (Vuchkovski et al., 2023). Virtual collaboration and communication in teams that are globally distributed are gaining momentum and becoming the norm in doing work. While the potential benefits of utilising GDTs are indisputable (including larger expertise and talent pool, broader knowledge and skill set source) (Scalera et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2023; Reiche et al., 2019), having team members from multiple backgrounds can be highly challenging (Seo et al., 2020; Reiche et al., 2019; Santistevan & Josserand, 2019). As such, exploring team-building strategies that are useful in addressing challenges experienced by GDTs is imperative.

No employee thrives in a team that is clogged by challenges. No manager enjoys leading a dysfunctional and non-performing team (Richard et al., 2019). While the larger talent pool in MNCs' GDTs is commendable, aligning the different sets of talent from diverse and dynamic geographies can be a mammoth task (Collings et al., 2019). Talented individuals from different parts of the world do not necessarily translate to a functional and top-performing team (Makris et al., 2018; Presbitero, 2021). Different professional values, problem-solving approaches, personality uniqueness, and communication preferences can be a source of problems (Taras et al., 2019). Crafting team-building strategies ensures that these differences and unique attributes are harnessed together to birth a cohesive, coherent, and high-performing team.

VUCA environments require MNCs to design, adapt and adopt new strategies (Petricevic & Teece, 2019). Disconnect, negative distance effects due to lack of physical contact and lack of cohesion can characterise GDTs if no team-building strategies are put in place. Despite this, no researcher has directly focussed on team-building strategies used by GDTs. Closer studies have viewed team-building as one component of evidence-based team development interventions (TDIs) in addition to team training, leadership training and team debriefing (Lacerenza et al., 2018; Shuffler et al., 2018). Additionally, using electronic databases to search for manuscripts that referenced team-building, Miller et al. (2018) focussed on team-building interventions used in non-acute healthcare settings. Research work conducted on team-building shows that there has not been a direct focus on team-building strategies as fundamentally needful in team-building. Team-building needs to be informed and driven by thoughtful strategies (Teece, 2018b). The question then remains: what are these strategies? The whole spectrum of business leaders, team-building mentors, team-building facilitators and even employees can all benefit from empirically driven information relating to team-building (Aquino et al., 2022; Zhang & Losekoot, 2021). This research intends to do exactly that.

Besides team-building, Webber et al. (2019) suggest the use of artificial intelligence while Gibson et al. (2019, p. 1025) propose formalisation, arguing that "it provides individuals with guidance, goal clarity, or direction, without reducing flexibility in the manner in which an individual can execute their job".

1.6 Research aims

Existing literature is silent on how (i) managers/team leaders strategise for team-building (ii) what impact team-building has; and (iii) how team-building enables ordinary teams to become high-performing teams. This research aims to address these fundamental issues by making a case for team-building strategies and providing evidence that will assist MNCs that have not applied their minds to incorporating strategies for team-building. Team-building is an investment in human resources. For the investment to yield profit it must be strategy driven.

Following a qualitative approach, this study aims to

- identify team-building strategies used by GDTs in the South African MNCs context;
- explore whether there is a relationship between team-building strategies and DCs in GDTs in the South African MNCs context; and
- discuss the importance of having team-building strategies

These aims hold vital implications for business and research because existing research fails to provide sufficient, in-depth perspectives on team-building. There seems to be no consensus on what constitutes team-building in GDTs and whether there are strategies in place to drive it. This research seeks to provide clarity on all these fronts.

GDTs are fast becoming the teams of the future as MNCs intensify global activities and compete to increase their global footprint (Dowd, 2022; Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020). The incessant growth in mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, alliances, partnerships, and a host of other internationalisation techniques means that GDTs are here to stay and to define the new and growing world of work. Guided by the dynamic capabilities' theory, the purpose of this research is to examine team-building with a focus on strategies that South African MNCs utilise to address challenges in their GDTs.

MNCs are by nature formidable global forces because of their "multi-unit composition" (Piekkari et al., 2022, p.11). Aligned to this multi-unit nature are multifaceted teams that are put together to drive business goals. The reality is that yesterday's definition and composition of a team are no longer the same as today. It will not be the same in the future either. It is, therefore, necessary for South African MNCs to share and reflect on team-building strategies that are necessary not just to address the challenges of GDTs but also to position their GDTs to survive, perform highly, meet, and surpass business goals and place South African MNCs at the global front.

1.7 Research contribution

This study is useful not just to the development of theory but to business as well. Focussing on team-building strategies in GDTs is critical now given the huge transition that organisations have had to witness. It is highly critical for the good of the IB field and the benefit of all organisations (small, medium, and large) to better understand how to use and conduct team-building effectively (Shuffler et al., 2018).

1.7.1 Contribution to theory

This research seeks to extend knowledge around dynamic capabilities by contributing to theory on team-building, dynamic capabilities, and globally distributed teams based on research conducted on MNCs from an emerging market economy. This setup is important because the perspective regarding these three aspects has largely been derived from MNCs from advanced economies (Pedersen & Tallman, 2022). Focussing on South African MNCs brings a different perspective to this conversation, with the potential to

endorse, enrich or challenge currently held viewpoints. No scholar has studied team-building in emerging market economies and using the DCs theory as the theoretical lens.

Additionally, this research paper enriches team-building literature and the dynamic capabilities by establishing whether there is a correlation between the two. Dynamic capabilities enable organisations to review resources, enhance renewal of resources and adaptation to dynamic environments (Teece, 1997). Team-building is vital when teams require adapting to changing circumstances (Lacerenza et al., 2018). This research paper will thus contribute towards understanding team-building for adjusting to suit varying conditions. This has the potential to benefit global organisations and to also the further development of the dynamic capabilities' theory, particularly as it relates to emerging markets.

This research paper will also contribute to the existing literature by emphasising how the three dynamic capabilities of sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring can be applied to team-building to address emerging and existing challenges proactively and reactively. The DC theory is mature, based on sound and well-developed constructs that have been applied and proven effective in multifarious contexts and settings (Schilke et al., 2018). By applying this theory to team-building in GDTs, this is an opportunity to also assess to what extent and in what contexts team-building results in dynamic capabilities in GDTs and if it does, which capabilities.

By combining research on team-building strategies and DCs, this research extends the strategic scope of team-building beyond its position of being an ordinary team-building intervention (Lacerenza et al., 2018; Shuffler et al., 2018) to enhancing firm-level capabilities. Moreover, the research also addresses previous calls to explore managerial sentiments about team-building (Zhang & Losekoot, 2021). Referring to their netnographic study, Zhang & Losekoot (2021, p. 157) cite that “the focus of this study was employees, but it would also be helpful to understand the (unfiltered) motivations and experiences of management about team-building”. Netnography is a form of qualitative research for investigating social media and online consumer culture (Heinonen & Medberg, 2018).

1.7.2 Contribution to business

Business success or failure is of interest to every businessperson. When organisations internationalise, the aim is to make a mark in the global arena. Not only that, but also to conduct business successfully and take pole position in the industry. To achieve this, it is important to have high-performing teams which are purposefully built.

Team-building is not accorded the place it deserves in organisational discourse because most business organisations assume that by putting individuals in teams, they must function as a cohesive unit. Yet, this is not the case especially in GDTs where team members are globally dispersed, culturally diverse, and only interact in technology-mediated communication (Raghuram et al., 2019). Most team-building is done ad hoc. There are no spelt-out strategies in place to inform and drive team-building (Lacerenza et al., 2018). Using the results of this study, organisational leaders could better understand that team-building is effective when driven by strategies.

Considering the overarching challenges that GDTs encounter in working as a cohesive unit, the findings of this study could provide GDT leaders with strategies to conduct team-building and indirectly enhance team performance (Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018). The information and findings presented will enable GDT managers to better advocate and implement proactive team-building and promote tools, strategies and technologies that will enable team-building to be more effective.

Several well-established organisations have failed to compete globally or have gone obsolete due to a lack of strong and resilient teams. Some teams buckle under pressure; others grow enough discord to disrupt customer centricity which leads to a bad reputation (Pollack & Matous, 2019; Witschel et al., 2022). However, several others successfully traverse through disruption and uncertainty because they are dynamically capable of withstanding pressure. Additionally, even organisations that are not global also stand to gain from this study because it makes explicit the importance of undertaking team-building that is informed by carefully crafted strategies. Being an emerging market economy, South Africa provides a different and untapped setting that can help uncover issues not previously considered in team-building within organisations. MNCs from emerging markets like South Africa bring a different dimension to the whole discourse – depicting a different set of firm-specific resources, tied to different environments and cultures, with unique perspectives that have not been extensively explored.

It is a fact that the growth in global activities by MNCs from emerging market economies assists in giving business leaders a different lens through which to understand GDTs (Gaur et al., 2019). Results from this study may furnish useful and practical information at the GDT leaders' disposal to improve strategy, culture, and employee response to GDT challenges and changes. This in turn will enable employees to enjoy being part of a GDT and indirectly improve team performance.

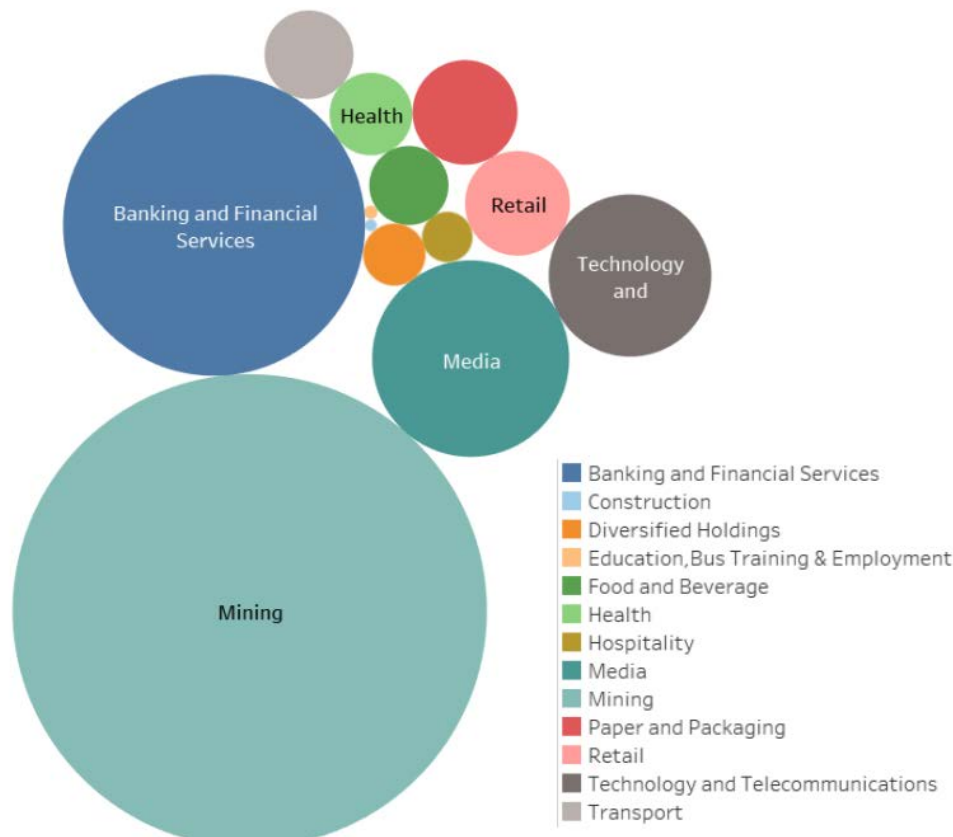
Using team-building strategies, managers/team leaders conduct effective team-building, know when (if necessary) to involve an external consultant and what to implement post an external intervention to ensure that team-building is impactful. Contribution to business this research is best summarised by Teece et al. (2020, p. 1) who believe that "targeted efforts to identify and develop dynamic capabilities in firms will contribute positively to South Africa's economic recovery and longer-term growth." Results and insights from this study will be of benefit to both new and existing teams, global and virtual or aiming to become so.

1.8 Research scope

VUCA conditions are experienced in all business environments, but the financial sector is currently in the throes of massive digital disruptions due to the entry of various players that are introducing novel ways of banking (Castleman, 2018). Exceeding boundaries, altering strategies to suit the latest technological changes and opportunities, and embracing agility to rapidly redesign behaviour for prosperity are MNC expectations (Breznik et al., 2019). As the use of artificial intelligence, non-monetary payment solutions, virtual payment systems, bitcoin, and other disruptors gain traction; financial institutions are looking into clever and sound ways of gaining and understanding new markets. Part of this drive is realised through global hiring. South African financial institutions are not exempted from these VUCA challenges. Their global footprint and continuous urge to explore new markets make this research focus relevant to the financial sector which trails only mining in driving South Africa's revenue base (Labour Research Service, 2020). Figure 1 depicts the positioning of the financial sector in driving economic growth in South Africa. This makes it an interesting focus area.

Figure 1

Positioning of the financial sector in driving economic growth in South Africa



Note. Reprinted from MNC Trends Report, *Labour Research Service*, 2020, p. 18

This research aims to explore team-building strategies used by South African MNCs in addressing challenges experienced in GDTs. This research suggests that strategy-driven team-building plays a dual-purpose influence in effective team-building - proactively anticipating and purposefully having structured procedural responses even before any challenges are experienced as well as reactively responding to challenges that may be experienced in GDTs. To accomplish the goal of exploring team-building strategies utilised by South African MNCS to address challenges experienced in their GDTs, interviews will be conducted with 16 managers/team leaders who oversee globally distributed teams. Managers/team leaders will be based in South Africa and from the financial sector. The study will commence in July 2023 and end in November 2023.

1.9 Document structure

This chapter provided an outline of the background to the research problem under study. It also stated the research aims. Additionally, the chapter also gave the justification and relevance of the study. In the next chapter the literature review will be covered including different work teams (high performance, virtual teams, and GDTs) and their challenges; team-building and its advantages and explore dynamic capabilities and their relation to

team-building. Chapter 3 covers research questions, followed by chapter 4 which explains, discusses, and defends the methodology and design to be used. Presentation of the results/findings is undertaken in chapter 5, while chapter 6 carries a detailed discussion and analysis of results. Chapter 7 concludes with a discussion of the principal theoretical implications, research contribution, recommendations, limitations of the study as a whole and suggestions for future research. All this will be undertaken with the sole aim of exploring team-building strategies that build dynamic capabilities in South African MNCs' GDTs.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1. Introduction

Modern business environments are intensely competitive yet also imbued with numerous challenges and rapid changes (Reiche et al., 2019; Santistevan, & Josserand, 2019; Seo et al., 2020). Team-building is strongly touted as one effective way to build a high-performing team, address team challenges and build dynamic capabilities. This study will explore team-building strategies that build the dynamic capabilities of globally distributed teams in the context of South African MNCs.

This chapter provides a high-level overview of teams including high-performing, virtual and GDTs. It further explores the DCs theory, DCs, team-building (its definition, origin, purpose, advantages, and disadvantages) and the relationship that exists between team-building strategies and dynamic capabilities.

2.2. Overview of teams

Teams are the driving force of how work is done in modern organisations (Einola & Alvesson, 2019; Marlow et al., 2018). They are a critical component for navigating numerous complexities that define today's world of business (Grossman & Miller, 2021). As the business world grapples with numerous unprecedented challenges, organisations are constantly putting together teams that can effectively respond to the challenges (Santistevan & Josserand, 2019). Hence, teams are increasingly changing in distribution and composition (Banks et al., 2019; Gibson et al., 2019; Scalera et al., 2018; Seo et al. 2020). Technological advancements and enhancements are also responsible for the shifts being seen in teams (Turkina & Van Assche, 2018; Marlow et al., 2018). To maintain a global footprint, organisations must display global responsiveness and cultural tolerance (Santistevan & Josserand, 2019). Mobilising resources for effective responses entail maintaining cross-cultural teams that enable novel collaborations and knowledge sharing (Einola & Alvesson, 2019; Piccolo et al., 2021; Salcinovic et al., 2022). Research demonstrates that a team's ability to share knowledge is strongly impacted by the social relationships within the team (Pollack & Matous, 2019).

When two or more individuals with specific roles interact interdependently, dynamically, and adaptively to achieve a common goal, they are referred to as a team (Shuffler et al., 2018). Similarly, Salcinovic et al. (2022, p. 2) define a team as a collection of individuals “with specified roles and responsibilities interacting adaptively, interdependently, and dynamically towards a valued common outcome and who are together embedded in an

encompassing organisational system, with boundaries and linkages to the broader system context and task environment.” Teams are also defined as groups of employees that integrate, structure, and share information with the common aim of collectively accomplishing specific task-driven responsibilities (Reiter-Palmon, 2021).

From the above definitions, it is apparent firstly that teams comprise more than one individual (Shuffler et al., 2018)). Secondly, they are a result of the blending of different skill sets to accomplish objectives that individuals working independently cannot achieve (Banks et al., 2019; Gibson et al., 2019; Scalera et al., 2018; Seo et al. 2020). Thirdly, team members have specific roles that they fulfil in the team (Marlow et al., 2018). Fourthly, team members commit to achieving common goals (Salcinovic et al., 2022). Fifthly, team members interact regularly, communicate, and depend on one another to achieve common goals (Shuffler et al., 2018). Above all, they have a shared sense of responsibility for the task outcomes and hold each other and themselves mutually accountable. This research will adopt these key points in defining a team. Therefore, a team is a collection and combination of two or more individuals who have specific roles, regularly interact, communicate, and mutually depend on one another to fulfil common goals.

Traditionally, teams are known to be static and bounded but global work trends have challenged this status quo. Evidence suggests that individual competencies are being combined and employees are being called upon to interact in productive combinations (Backmann et al., 2020; Banks et al., 2019; Collings et al., 2019). For example, meta-teams are rapidly taking centre stage (Santistevan & Josserand, 2019). These teams get assembled, undergo reorganisation and shuffling, and often dissolve after a project has been completed (Santistevan & Josserand, 2019). Employees with on- and in-demand skills are caught in a web of investing and disinvesting in global projects and teams. Examples of meta-teams include innovation and medical research. Today, teams can be project-based, virtual, operational, self-managed, matrix, leadership, problem-solving, informal, multi-cultural, collocated, global virtual and globally distributed. These aspects of team combinations and variations are central to dynamic capabilities.

2.3. High-performing teams

Team-based approaches have been proven to be highly effective in driving and improving team performance and mitigating challenges. Organisations utilise teams to build and strengthen performance stamina, outperform competitors, and achieve excellent results (de Vries & Visser, 2021). High-performing teams consist of individuals who are goal-

focused, driven to efficiently collaborate, keen to beat obstacles and intent on delivering outstanding results. They achieve this through having clear overall goals, understanding, and sharing in the organisational values and purposes, having respect and trust for one another, openly engaging in communication, being supportive of each other and constantly seeking to improve skills and talents for the greater good of the organisation (Zhang, 2022). In addition, they have clearly defined role expectations, early resolution of conflict, high trust levels, shared goals, and leadership (Coleman et al., 2021).

No matter how big or small the organisation is, teams that work well together are groups of people who have a common goal, depend on each other, and know their roles and responsibilities. They also trust each other and share the same values (Coleman et al., 2021), while having strong leadership (efficiently managed) (Nordback & Espinosa, 2019). They are often regarded as the holy grail in sporting events and health research (Makris et al., 2018; Salcinovic et al., 2022, Coleman et al., 2021).

High-performing team members believe in one another and understand that the failure of one individual is the failure of all. Characteristics of high-performing teams include a high degree of cooperation and self-management, high motivation, the ability to adapt well to changes and to react rapidly when confronted with challenges, a great desire to problem solve and thrive in an environment where continuous learning (even from mistakes) is encouraged (de Vries & Visser, 2021).

High-performing teams are led and managed by highly effective managers who are transformational, adept at leading by example and embracing shared leadership (Eisenberg et al., 2019; Nordbäck & Espinosa, 2019; Salcinovic et al., 2022). Leadership in high-performing teams aims to strategically improve core capabilities through recreating, renewing, redirecting, or developing resources to outclass competitors. Challenges are ubiquitous in high-performing teams, but they are viewed as steppingstones to achieving greater excellence (Gabbett et al., 2018).

In high performing teams, the team members' talents and skills are put to good use, appreciated, and acknowledged for their diversity. Often clever ways of ensuring more engagement and collaboration are required to drive teamwork.

2.4. Virtual teams

Technological advancements and their resultant global impact have led to ease of acceptance and implementation of technology-mediated communication in organisations

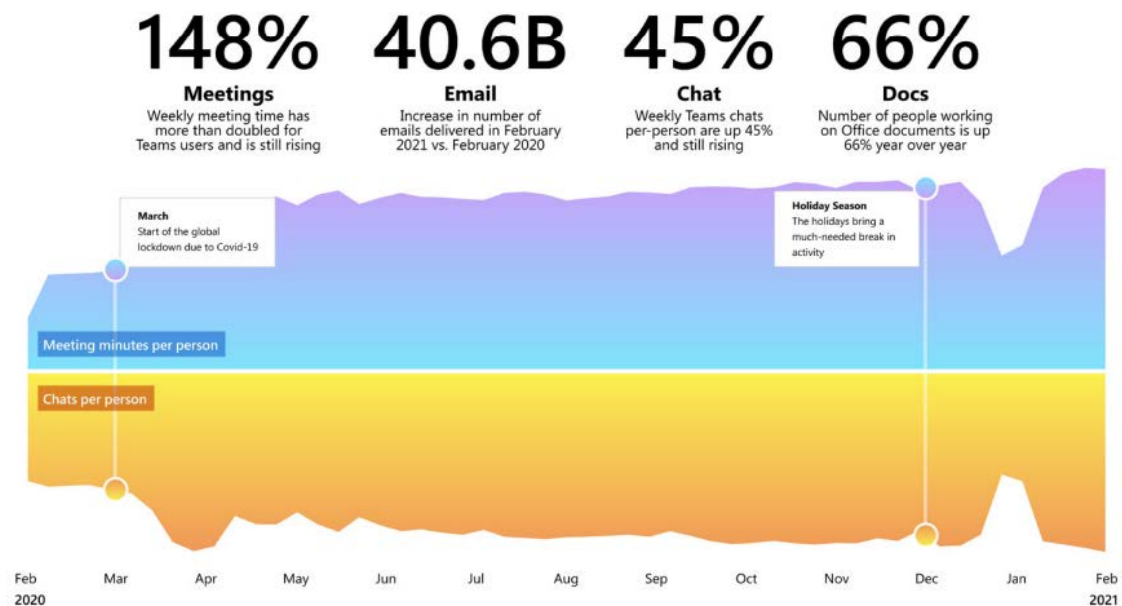
(Vuchkovski et al., 2023). This is rapidly leading to organisations ditching traditional and usual business processes such as hiring by area of residence, use of face-to-face office environments, travel across local and global locations and relocation of staff in some instances. Additionally, team composition, communication and interaction have significantly shifted too. Interaction and communication in teams has evolved from face-to-face to digital that utilises various information and communication technologies (Zhang, 2022).

Virtual teams work from dispersed locations relying heavily on email, application sharing, telephone, tele- and audio conferencing, instant messaging, and video-conferencing for communication and collaboration (Leonardi, 2021; Raghuram et al., 2019). Members of virtual teams work in virtual offices from anywhere in the world (in the comfort of their home, while travelling, in a remote workspace, and can use public places including parks, libraries, coffee shops, restaurants etc.) if they have a stable internet connection (Lauring & Jonasson, 2023). Meetings, conferences, virtual happy hours, team-building activities, games, or events for teams are hosted using online meeting software or virtual conference platforms (Bush et al., 2019). Communication in virtual teams is devoid of verbal and non-verbal rituals and cues which are oftentimes used to decode and enhance meaning in face-to-face teams. In addition to the use of technology-mediated communication, other common characteristics of virtual teams include cultural diversity, time differences, and geographical distance between team members' locations.

Virtualisation has blurred regional and global boundaries and restrictions, allowing seamless communication and interaction across borders (Irwin et al., 2022). COVID-19 fast-tracked most companies into virtual work with proliferation and huge shifts seen in the use of Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, Skype, Zoom, and Slack Apps to mention only a few (Leonardi, 2021; Raghuram et al., 2019). In April 2020, Zoom meeting participants reached 300 million from 10 million at the end of 2019 (Statista, 2022). Microsoft Teams access grew from 20 million users in November 2019 to 44 million in March 2020 (Microsoft, 2020). Between February 2020 to February 2021 collaboration activity across Microsoft 365 tools grew significantly as depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Analysis of Microsoft 365 collaboration tools use



Note. Reprinted from *The next great disruption is hybrid work – Are we ready?* by Microsoft, 2021, p. 9

Virtual teams have several benefits that include information communication efficiency, expansion of professional networks, knowledge dissemination convenience, gaining economies of scale, productivity improvement due to working cycles' flexibility, and exposure to best skills across varied geographic locations (Aquino et al., 2022; Mudambi et al., 2018; Seshadri & Elangovan, 2019; Zhang, 2022). Additionally, the rise of virtual teams has pulverised barriers between organisations and departments, fostering stronger team unity, promoting mutually beneficial cooperation through shared learning, and combining management and technical strengths (Zhang, 2022).

Virtual teams are renowned for their huge reliance on technology (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020) and the absence of face-to-face interactions (Stahl and Maznevski, 2020) which is only possible when there are team events where team members meet at a centrally located place around the world or when some managers visit designated countries. While virtual teams are gaining popularity, they also experience various challenges (Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018; Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020). These challenges can be grouped into over-arching categories namely: communication and collaboration, knowledge creation and sharing, trust and relationships, leadership, perceptions and decision-making, and diversity (Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018). Team-building is therefore needed not just to address these challenges but to also position the team proactively to better navigate these challenges. The next section will define GDTs; and examine their benefits and challenges.

2.5. Globally distributed teams (GDTs)

2.5.1. Defining GDTs

MNCs are exposed to dual dynamics - business environment dynamism and different country environments dynamism. Under the umbrella of virtual teams, lies GDTs, which are of interest to this study. GDTs are an “international group of individuals working together temporarily and remotely to achieve a shared objective, thereby succumbing to interdependence and the joint monitoring of each other's behaviours” (Tavoletti et al., 2023, para. 2). GDTs consist of virtual team members that spread in different locations across the globe and working collectively to attain similar goals (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020; Seshadri & Elangovan, 2019). Work tasks are primarily accomplished via online communication technology (Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018). Also referred to as global teams, global virtual teams, multi-cultural distributed team, internationally, or geographically dispersed teams GDTs consist of team members that operate in different time zones and are culturally distinct. Physical and personal contact is minimal with some teams comprising members that have never worked together or met in person. MNCs use GDTs to increase global innovation, supplement local technologies, and respond to the dynamics of global competition (Asakawa et al., 2018; Gibson et al., 2019; Turkina & Van Assche, 2018).

GDTs are responsible for accomplishing highly cognitive and complex tasks, requiring planning, decision-making, remembering, solving problems, and thinking as an integrated unit (Shuffler et al., 2018). They experience expanded complexities that range from the types of global tasks that must be accomplished, to the extent of diversity amongst team members and the forms of technology in use. Additional complexities that characterise GDTs include less shared values, norms, or priorities thus regular team-building is significantly needed to handle the various complexities. South African MNCs also make use of GDTs. Post-COVID-19; more MNCs are bringing together business streams across subsidiaries in varied global contexts. There are more Group Information Technology (IT), Group Human Resources (HR), Group Marketing, Group Sales teams, with some organisations setting up virtual offices (using cloud-based technologies) in different countries.

2.5.2. Benefits of GDTs

GDTs are adept at assembling and bringing together the best talent and expertise across time zones and geographical locations ((Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018; Morrison-Smith and

Ruiz, 2020; Presbitero, 2021; Seshadri & Elangovan, 2019). This increases flexibility in staffing and enables market demand satisfaction. Diversity and variety are also renowned for enabling knowledge contribution, knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer (Piccolo et al., 2021; Turkina & Van Assche, 2018). Linking MNC regions and departments, GDTs result in flat dynamic networks acclaimed as "the preferred solution for quick knowledge sharing to meet organisational goals" (Zhang, 2022, p. 3). GDTs' cultural diversity is celebrated for innovation, creativity stimulation, and effective problem-solving (Backmann et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2020; Stahl & Maznevski, 2020). In support of GDTs' resource integration across business, Zhang (2022, p. 3) submits that "innovation ability and competitiveness of the enterprise are improved, and the enterprise goals are effectively achieved". GDTs stimulate creativity through learning and sharing highly diverse information insights into tasks and problems (Wang et al., 2019).

Time zone distribution is acclaimed for enabling round-the-clock team member availability which is vital when there are projects that need to be monitored and completed (Presbitero, 2021; Stahl & Maznevski, 2020). Round-the-clock availability (also referred to as "follow-the-sun approach by Morrison-Smith and Ruiz, 2020) means continuous work resulting in faster product development, timeous responses to client queries, and quicker turnaround times to customers. Furthermore, work environment flexibility is achievable because team members can be provided with telecommuting opportunities as well as individually tailored work schedules or accommodations. Using GDTs also enables organisations to save on travel time, and relocation costs and to exchange information in a rapid way (Seshadri & Elangovan, 2019; Zakaria & Yusof, 2020). Due to their virtual nature, GDTs allow for the broadening of skills and provide ample opportunities or enabling environments for team members to learn and share their experiences. More importantly, GDTs empower organisations to not only shine domestically but to also provide multi-dimensional global responses and services that are a product of multi-skills and talents.

2.5.3. Challenges faced by GDTs

Many GDTs' challenges are consistent with common teamwork issues but are often exacerbated by the complexity of combining team members from multiple geographies. Figure 3 depicts most referred GDT challenges. Cultural diversity is the top challenge referred. The similarity-attraction theory and social identity theory shed light on how GDT member diversity can further damage team dynamics. According to the similarity-attraction theory, people prefer to associate with those who are like them, both socially and professionally (Pollack & Matous, 2019). On the other hand, the social identity theory acknowledges that as human beings categorise their social world, they also categorise

themselves into some of the same groups (social identification) leading to in-groups where they gain positive feelings from group membership (Colman et al., 2022). GDT members are known to experience the realities of loneliness, detachment and feelings of social isolation as geographical distance seems to also imply social distance (D'Oliveira & Persico, 2023; Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018; Seshadri & Elangovan, 2019). Therefore, the cultural diversity phenomenon exacerbates these experiences.

Whereas Presbitero (2021) and Stahl and Maznevski (2020) hail the time zone difference, Seo et al., (2020) deplore that scheduling meetings in GDTs is challenging. Boeing's 787 Dreamliner project was delayed by almost three years because coordinating 50 partners across the U.S., Europe, and East Asia proved extremely difficult, resulting in the team collocating for 6 months to complete the project (Seo et al., 2020). GDTs also face challenges of low levels of engagement by team members (Seshadri & Elangovan, 2019). Compared to face-to-face teams, in GDTs trust is known to take longer to be built (Breuer et al., 2020; Costa et al., 2018).

Additional challenges that have been leveraged against GDTs include negative impact of cultural diversity (Backmann et al., 2020; Banks et al., 2019; Taras et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2019; Welch & Welch, 2018); trust issues (Costa et al., 2018; de Jong et al., 2021; Gilli et al., 2022; Stahl & Maznevski, 2020); language issues resulting in foreign language anxiety and communication problems (Ahmad & Barner-Rasmussen, 2019; Glikson & Erez, 2020; Presbitero, 2020; Welch & Welch, 2018); leadership and managerial attributes needed for effective management (Nordbäck & Espinosa, 2019; Seshadri & Elangovan, 2019), knowledge sharing obstacles due to team talent spread (Reiche et al., 2019; Scalera et al., 2018; Seo et al., 2020; Turkina & Van Assche, 2018; Xia et al., 2021); and communication and collaboration failures (Caligiuri et al., 2020; Marlow et al., 2018; Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020; Taras et al., 2019). These challenges are known to negatively impact performance (Stahl & Maznevski, 2020).

Other challenges may arise because GDTs often include team members from multiple subsidiaries; each having unique norms and different approaches to work. Geographic and cultural diversity also means different working styles and communication patterns (Minbaeva et al., 2021). The latter primarily involves style, pace of speech, accent, use of slang, the meaning of 'yes' or being silent, all of which can create misunderstanding and miscommunication among teams.

The above analysis shows that GDTs are replete with challenges and require additional effort to ensure a successful and effective team (Welch and Welch, 2018). Challenges in GDTs require team-building initiatives built on sound strategies, yet no research has been carried out on what strategies need to be implemented. Effective team-building must have a clear developmental structure and process (Shuffler et al., 2018). Instrumental in bringing about that structure are strategies. It therefore remains to be seen what team-building strategies South African MNCs are using to build DCS in their GDTs.

Figure 3

Word cloud depicting most referred GDT challenges (researcher's depiction)



Note. Bigger sized text reflects and gives greater prominence to challenges that appeared more frequently in the literature reviewed.

2.6 Dynamic capabilities theory

To gain a competitive advantage and sustain it, firms must possess strategic resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (Nason & Wiklund, 2018). This is the essence of the resource-based view (RBV) which has been widely used to anchor studies in teams and multinationals (Banks et al., 2019; Collings et al., 2019). Several criticisms have been levelled against this theory. Firstly, it is silent about actual actions that managers need to undertake to create or take advantage from a resource-based advantage (D'Oria et al., 2021). Secondly, it is heavily static. Thirdly, it does not embrace market dynamism. Additionally, it does not explain resource renewal when circumstances dictate so (Teece, 2018b). Despite these shortcomings, it remains a very foundational

theory, revisited after COVID-19 and found still useful, relevant, and applicable in explaining the cross-functional capabilities of a firm (Chatterjee et al., 2023). The RBV theory is so rich it has resulted in offshoots including the dynamic capabilities (DC) theory and the knowledge-based view. For purposes of this research, the DCs theory will be utilised.

Introduced in 1997, the dynamic capabilities theory explains how competencies and resources are developed, positioned, exploited, and protected in organisations (Teece et al., 1997). The DCs theory derives its strength from its capability to focus on the organisation internally (modifying internal resources) and externally (adapting and reconfiguring) in response to dynamic environments (Cyfert et al., 2021). Choice of this theory is underpinned by its application to several other studies of closer composition. The DC theory was used in the study of international strategies of emerging market multinationals (Deng et al., 2020), the digital transformation of teams from conventional to virtual (Vuchkovski et al., 2023), how manufacturing firms navigate through digitalisation (Witschel et al., 2022) and in establishing the intercessory impact of environmental dynamism on complexity leadership (Kutama, 2021) to mention only a few.

The concept of dynamic capabilities came into existence following greater consensus that the resource-based view did not account for how firms managed in dynamic environments (Teece, 1997). When faced with relentless competition, constantly changing business environments and significant shifts in technology, organisations have no choice but to exhibit dynamic capabilities (adapt, reconfigure, renew, and re-create resources, processes, and capabilities) in sync with the environment (Teece et al., 1997; Teece, 2020).

Originally premised on the work of Teece (1994), the DCs theory is used to explain and emphasise how companies that become market leaders take advantage of existing external and internal organisation specific abilities to confront rapidly changing environments (Teece et al., 1997). DCs are built over some time and are "the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal competencies to address rapidly changing environments" (Teece et al., 1997, p. 516). The essence of using dynamic capabilities as adaptive capacity builders in rapidly changing environments is further echoed by Grøgaard et al. (2022) and Suddaby et al. (2020).

The above definitions emphasise adaptation and environments that are rapidly changing without further reference to geographic dispersion. Noting this lacuna, Zahra et al. (2022,

p. 587) extended the definition of DCs as "a firm's ability to effectively and continuously build, bundle, mobilise, integrate, reconfigure, upgrade and protect critical resources, to address rapidly changing environments in geographically dispersed, yet internationally coordinated markets in which it competes". For this research, Zahra et al. (2022) definition will be utilised because of its all-encompassing nature and reference to geographic dispersion.

The DCs theory disaggregates dynamic capabilities into three fundamental clusters of activities that any organisation is required to undertake to survive in extensively dynamic and unpredictable environments. The three clusters are sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring (Teece et al., 1997). The three capabilities enable new opportunities identification and redirection or development of resources to meet new challenges (Teece et al., 1997). They are a rich source of competitive advantage; and useful in explaining how firms thrive and achieve organisational flexibility (Collings et al., 2019; Laaksonen & Peltoniemi, 2018). In addition, managerial actions are pivotal in shaping DCs (Zahra et al., 2022).

The DCs theory will be useful in this research because it explains how individual competencies can be combined and enable employees to engage in productive combinations (Zahra et al. 2022). Both Teece (2020) and Zahra et al., (2022) support the use of the DCs theory. The former states that companies must cultivate robust dynamic capabilities to devise effective strategies for generating and capitalizing on value amidst uncertain and challenging circumstances, while also influencing the business landscape positively through both market and non-market endeavours (Teece, 2020). In making DCs actionable for MNCs, it is "essential for companies competing internationally to effectively develop, hone, and deploy sophisticated DCs to achieve evolutionary fitness" (Zahra et al., 2022, p. 583). The DCs theory is particularly suitable and relevant for this study because "EMNCs from mid-range economies (BRICS) as they typically face fast-moving environments dynamic capabilities provide a mechanism for them to continuously adapt, adjust, or reconfigure their resource base in response to the rapidly changing market and institutional environments" (Deng et al., 2020, p. 412).

Critics of the DCs theory point out that one of its common shortcomings is that there is confusion emanating from the multifarious definitions of capabilities (Apascaritei & Elvira, 2022; Kurtmollaiev, 2020). What exactly are DCs? Furthermore, dynamic capabilities interpretations seem contradictory (Laaksonen & Peltoniemi, 2018; Schilke et al., 2018). Recently it has been brought to light that DCs contribute to competitive advantage

depending on the firm's environmental factors and strategic fit (Fainshmidt et al., 2019). As shown above, scholars emphasise the importance of DCs in VUCA conditions, yet a new understanding of this conversation is that DCs can be practiced effectively in sturdy environments too (Schilke et al., 2018). Despite these criticisms, the DCs theory remains a leading perspective in IB literature and renders a sound framework for a study of this nature. The next section defines DCs.

2.7 Dynamic capabilities

Understanding the dynamic capabilities of MNCs involves analysing multiple level dynamics – individual, business, country, and firm–country dimensions. Therefore, matching the requisites of a dynamic environment and engineering new forms of competitive advantage requires the renewal of competencies through altering, redesigning, amalgamating, and transforming interior and exterior organisational resources, skills, and functional competencies (Teece et al., 1997). DCs are built to procure a competitive advantage over rivals (Teece et al., 1997). The dynamic angle rests on how renewal and reconfiguration are given prominent status in the erstwhile focus to attain compatibility with business environments that are constantly changing. The main thrust of capabilities is its recognition of the pivotal role that strategic management plays in modifying, redesigning, amalgamating, and transforming internal and external organisational resources, skills, and functional competencies to align with the requisites of a dynamic environment (Teece et al., 1997).

In addition to being embedded in the resources, dynamic processes, numerous values and culture of an organisation, dynamic capabilities are also rooted in management teams (Teece, 2020). Dynamic capabilities are a behavioural propensity geared towards upgrading and reconstruction of core capabilities in a changing environment to achieve and sustain competitive advantage (Collings et al., 2019). Key proponents of dynamic capabilities seem to agree that organisations purposefully and reliably modify resource bases when confronted with uncertainty (Pitelis, 2022). Team-building is a useful process in the modification of the resource base.

As higher-order capabilities DCs enable organisations to do the right things at the right time (Irwin et al., 2022). To accomplish this, they must be properly focussed and implemented to produce anticipated benefits and provide solid ground for raising a sustainable competitive advantage (Cyfert et al., 2021). Dynamic capabilities require entrepreneurial styles that are responsive to changing customer demands, technology-driven possibilities, and the ability to respond to emerging threats (Teece, 2020). Dynamic

capabilities are not simple, take time to be built through investment processes in knowledge creation, learning and discovery. In contrast, ordinary capabilities are about doing things right in managing organisational processes and routines in operational, administrative and governance functions (Teece, 2019). While operational capabilities ensure survival in stable environments and allow an organisation to make a living in the present, DCs modify the way an organisation exists and sustains itself (Fainshmidt et al., 2019). One could argue that ordinary capabilities can be bought and are key to achieving short-term success (Teece, 2019). Strong DCs are for medium and long-term success, adequately positioning an organisation to realise evolutionary fitness (Teece, 2020).

2.8 Team-building

While the way team-building has been undertaken in the past has served firms well, it is open to scrutiny due to the rapidly evolving, virtually anchored, globally distributed and inherently digital business environment of today. How are South African MNCs conducting team-building in a work environment where so much has significantly changed? Workplaces are no longer a specific place or office. Working hours are no longer the traditional 9 am – 5 pm. Working non-traditional hours has become a norm (Benishek & Lazzara, 2019). Team leadership is not static. To remain relevant, team-building must evolve in tandem with these changes. A new set of team-building fundamentals is now important. The GDT post-COVID-19 set-up means team-building needs to take place online and as such requires different strategies. The consensus is that team-building is beneficial. However, "not much is known about which specific aspects of team-building are beneficial, how they are beneficial, or how they may be implemented in practice" (Pollack & Matous, 2019, p. 474). The next section defines team-building.

2.8.1 Definition of team-building

Team-building is one way of keeping teams together; not just to work ordinarily but also to meet and surpass organisational goals. This term is viewed and defined differently by various scholars. Team-building refers to "activities that focus on improving the team, its process, and its work" (Hastings, 2018, p. 4). Team-building is "an intervention designed to foster improvement within a team, providing individuals closely involved with the task with the strategies and information needed to solve their problems" (Lacerenza et al., 2018 p. 13). While this latter definition references strategies, the aspect of individuals solving their problems seems to undermine the essence and synergistic benefits of a team which is the "capability to achieve what cannot be accomplished by one individual acting alone" (Zhang & Losekoot, 2021, p. 151). In teams, problems are collectively tackled (team ownership). Lacerenza et al. (2018)'s definition does not acknowledge this.

Team-building refers to "a myriad of activities, games, interventions, and processes" that range from simple to long-term; and are aimed at addressing team challenges and improving team effectiveness (Zhang & Losekoot, 2021, p. 152). Team-building is the most common method focused on enhancing team processes and impacting team outcomes (Webber et al., 2019). Team-building augments social relations and defines roles by promoting goal setting, providing interpersonal relationship management, role clarification and improving problem-solving techniques (Lacerenza et al., 2018; Shuffler et al., 2018). By delineating these four typologies, Lacerenza et al. (2018) and Shuffler et al. (2018) capture the essence of team-building. Some scholars view team-building as planned interventions facilitated by third-party consultants. This research views facilitation by a third-party consultant as just but a fraction of what team-building involves.

Team-building should be regarded as an essential and regular process in the developmental journey of a team (Hastings et al., 2018; Lacerenza et al., 2018; Miller et al., 2018; Shuffler et al., 2018). For this research, team-building is defined broadly, particularly recognising the shifts in team shapes and shifts. Firstly, team-building refers to informal and formal processes (series of progressive, interdependent, and continual actions and activities) by which individual employees are brought together and turned into a cohesive, functional entity; organised to work together cooperatively and interdependently to address and meet customer needs and business goals. This definition deviates from viewing team-building as informal and fun activities undertaken by team members away from the office. This is an outdated view given that teams are now virtual and geographically dispersed, and meeting in person for a team-building event is not cost-effective and no longer a priority (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020). Therefore, team-building also refers to everyday management-initiated and driven processes that are meant to give team members belongingness, confidence in their abilities and assurance that their role in a team matters.

Team-building is a series of sequential, planned, and unplanned actions and processes intended to increase team effectiveness and improve team integration (Pollack & Matous, 2019). It is not a single event. It is a never-ending process. It is an everyday managerial responsibility that can be enhanced by additional activities (Zhang & Losekoot, 2021). Team-building comprises deliberate processes which are intended to encourage the application of effective work practices in a team (Hastings et al., 2018; Miller et al., 2018). There is an effort application to build effective working teams through improving internal team processes such as communication and conflict resolution. This research emphasises

that team-building should be seen as both a proactive (preparing and anticipating possible challenges) and a reactive (responding after the occurrence of an event) process in the development of a team. Team-building has largely been viewed as a reactive response (Zhang & Losekoot, 2021). It is well known that the use of proactive strategies better places an organisation to seize and retain competitive advantage in comparison to competitors. Provided below is an overview of the origins of team-building.

2.8.2 Tracing the origins of team-building

Team-building can be traced back to the United States of America between the 1920s and 1930s (Mathieu et al., 2018). Elton Mayo (a scientist) and colleagues experimented with the Western Electric Company Works to improve the industry's production. Different scenarios were presented to employees. The aim was to discover conditions optimal for production improvement and performance and this became popularly known as the Hawthorne Studies (Mathieu et al., 2018). During the Second World War, United States citizens embraced a patriotic attitude that drove men to join the army and women to work in factories. This patriotic mode continued after the end of the war resulting in the spirit of teamwork in industries.

In the 1960s and 1970s T Group meetings (training groups focussing on human emotions and experience) that focussed on workers' emotions and experiences became popular. These meetings were conducted to discuss and solve the problems emanating from the workplace (Salas et al., 2018). These group sessions aimed to enhance team relationships and mitigate conflicts by providing a platform for participants to openly express and analyse their emotional reactions triggered by the actions of their teammates. T Group meetings played a role in eliminating detrimental group dynamics and fostering positive interactions by enabling employees to voice their concerns and collaboratively find resolutions as a team (Mathieu et al., 2018). T Group meetings yielded pleasant work environments that enabled employees to work better.

Teamwork became more prevalent in the 1980s and 1990s as managers realised that better working relationships could be built outside of the organisation (Mathieu et al., 2018). These popularised nature and outdoor activities (hiking, mountain climbing, game drives, safari camping, water rafting, archery, under-the-moon drum beating, etc.) that are not related to the job per se. From 2000 to 2010 technology companies adopted team-building as an essential and widely-accepted business practice. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying lockdowns compelled most organisations to adopt work from home

or from anywhere (Vuchkovski et al., 2023). Subsequent challenges that were faced as organisations grappled with supply chain and value creation issues drove organisations to embrace virtual teams and GDTs as a way of coordinating activities. As a result, team-building is in the process of evolving from merely being seen as face-to-face, outdoor activities to online interactions and events. This research intends to explore team-building strategies SA MNCs use to build dynamic capabilities in their globally distributed teams. The next sections explain team-building purposes, advantages, and disadvantages.

2.9 Team-building purposes

To enunciate team-building purposes, four typologies have been identified by researchers. The four typologies can be implemented separately or in combinations depending on the developmental stage of the team and the aim of team-building (Lacerenza et al., 2018; Webber et al., 2019; Zhang & Losekoot, 2021). The four typologies have distinguished characteristics, and this means the nature of capabilities required for the four is also different. Each typology addresses and accomplishes a different purpose (Shuffler et al., 2018). These typologies include goal setting, interpersonal relationship management, role clarification and problem-solving (Lacerenza et al., 2018; Shuffler et al., 2018). For purposes of this research, attention is directed towards these although Zhang and Losekoot (2021) have extended typologies to include indoor and outdoor fun activities, socialisation, creativity, trust cohesiveness, motivation games, and communication exercises (p. 152).

2.9.1 Promoting goal-setting

Goal setting is targeted towards setting clear objectives and developing individual and team goals (Begerowski et al., 2021; Shuffler et al., 2018). It provides a clear sense of purpose for the team member about their role in the team. Clear goals are fundamental in ensuring team output (Pollack & Matous, 2019). The team leader/manager must ensure that individual and team goals are constantly aligned with organisational goals (Makris et al., 2018). In describing individuals that make up high-performing teams de Vries and Visser (2021) postulate the need to have goals that are subservient to those of the team and the organisation. By promoting goal setting, team-building aims to ensure team alignment which describes how team members understand, collaborate, and work toward a common goal (Bush et al., 2019). Aligned teams communicate, collaborate, and efficiently execute tasks better than their counterparts.

This typology means team-building processes are clearly defined to include goal formulation, planning, pursuit, commitment, execution and ultimately goal achievement.

Goal-setting processes set the path of team-building as a continuous process that is undertaken throughout the lifespan of a team or project. From a team developmental stage, goal setting is fundamental at the forming stage but also continues to be nurtured throughout the other four stages (Gibson et al., 2019). In essence team-building is therefore positioned as a collective process where team leadership and team members engage in goal setting together. The absence of clear goal-setting processes results in confusion, frustration, demotivation, creativity stifling, and productivity loss and team disengagement. The social identity theory postulates that when team members personally identify their position with the group, there are higher chances of meaningfully contributing to the team's welfare and goals (Pollack & Matous, 2019).

2.9.2 Providing interpersonal relationship management

It is common for teams to struggle to communicate and find each other at team inception (Hastings et al., 2018). In technology-mediated teams, struggles are exacerbated by the absence of social cues (Eisenberg & DiTomaso, 2021; Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018). This further diminishes interpersonal allure which affects team members' perception of team inclusivity (Lauring & Jonasson, 2023). Although cultural diversity brings numerous advantages, it is also known to yield conflict types that include task, process and interpersonal (Davaei et al., 2022; Richard et al., 2019). Whereas Davaei et al. (2022) posit that electronic-mediated communication creates more conflict Stahl and Maznevski (2020) are of the view that GDTs are credited for less conflict compared to collocated and face-to-face teams. On the conflict in GDTs, Davaei et al. (2022) explain that this could emanate from perceived or real differences that impact interpersonal relationships. Whether there is conflict, team members require psychological safety, which is an unwritten, shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking (Breuer et al., 2020; Hastings et al., 2018). Psychological safety enables team members to feel comfortable and secure in expressing their thoughts and ideas (Aquino et al., 2022; Begerowski, et al., 2021; Eisenberg & DiTomaso, 2021; Pollack & Matous, 2019). The establishment of psychological safety also helps create an open and collective mindset where team members are aware of each other's areas of knowledge (Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018) and are open to discussing errors and how to address them (Lacerenza et al., 2018).

Trust development, conflict reduction and quicker conflict resolution are the key aims of team-building for interpersonal relationship management (Lacerenza et al., 2018). Trust is the cornerstone for effective collaboration in teams (Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018). Interpersonal relationships are necessary for people working together because they enable collaboration, and good communication, and open avenues for knowledge creation,

contribution, sharing and transfer (Aquino et al., 2022). Team members need to share a distinct connection to develop trust and reach their full potential in collaborations. Trust starts at a low level in technology-driven team contexts (virtual) but improves with time to levels like face-to-face teams (Aquino et al., 2022; Breuer et al., 2020; Costa et al., 2018).

Low quality and negative interpersonal relationships can impact employees' mental well-being, feelings of self-esteem and self-worth; and assessment of their own psychosocial and physical well-being, leading to lower productivity, an increase in absenteeism, or higher staff turnover (Bush et al., 2019). High-quality and positive relationships act as a buffer against stress; and are instrumental in promoting emotional and social functioning as well as improving wellbeing, which generally results in better performance for the individual, team, and organisation. Therefore, team-building should be directed towards enhancing the quality of interpersonal relationships.

2.9.3 Enabling role clarification

Role clarification involves clearing role ambiguities, conflicts and setting clear roles within the team (Lacerenza et al., 2018). Like face-to-face teams, role clarity is equally important in GDTs (Santistevan & Josserand, 2019; Seo et al., 2020). When roles and responsibilities are delineated team members gain a better understanding of their own and colleagues' roles and responsibilities thereby eliminating role ambiguity (Begerowski et al., 2021). Team-building can be set up to acknowledge team members' strengths and assigning and aligning roles in the team with strengths helps with job satisfaction and attrition reduction (Makris et al., 2018).

Role ambiguity is known to create confusion. It is also the root cause of stress, anxiety, depression, poor performance and lowered productivity in the workplace (Caligiuri et al., 2020). Role clarity is important in almost any team but may be particularly so in GDTs that need to be adaptive (Benishek & Lazzara, 2019). Targeted team-building allows team members to discuss and determine situations and task characteristics that call upon team members to assume other roles. This type of openly discussed and agreed role flexibility reduces misunderstandings and increases cooperation.

2.9.4 Improving problem-solving techniques

The problem-solving component assists team members in identifying and solving task-related problems as well as identifying effective decision-making processes and implementing solutions (Lacerenza et al., 2018). Problem-solving helps team members identify task-related problems and implement solutions by providing a structure for teams

to work together and pool individual resources to address key team problems (Makris et al., 2018).

2.10 Team-building advantages

The use of team-building in organisations is associated with several advantages. Team-building leads to the enhancement of the quality of relationships among team members. This creates a harmonious team atmosphere and environment which is good for collaboration and problem-solving. Team-building promotes organisational culture, builds capacity, boosts productivity, and improves company performance by enabling team members to attain goals (Lacerenza et al., 2018; Marlow et al., 2018). It is also renowned for stimulating creativity and innovation. When regularly undertaken team-building is also acclaimed for providing opportunities to identify team strengths and weaknesses enabling teams to achieve results, accomplish work tasks and meet team goals.

Team-building is highly needed due to the numerous issues that characterise GDTs and that militate against effective communication and collaboration. “When team members represent a wide variety of disciplinary and institutional backgrounds, team processes like communication, coordination, and connection become increasingly difficult” Begerowski et al. (2021, p. 3).

2.11 Team-building disadvantages

While team-building is famed for improving performance (Lacerenza et al., 2018), Hastings et al. (2018) argue that team-building has no impact on actual performance. Existing literature suggests that team-building is useful in addressing several challenges that teams face. However, this is so if it is done effectively.

Team-building can lead to festering conflict emanating from unmet needs and a mismatch between team members’ expectations and delivery. This means, that in instances where team-building is facilitated, it requires a thorough analysis (sensing) of the enablers and disablers. Within existing literature, criticisms levelled against team-building include that it is more about playing games and less about changing behaviours (Lacerenza et al., 2018; Zhang & Losekoot, 2021). Because team-building has traditionally been associated with outdoor activities and games, critics suggest that while these can be engaging and fun during the event when employees return to the office no meaningful changes are evident.

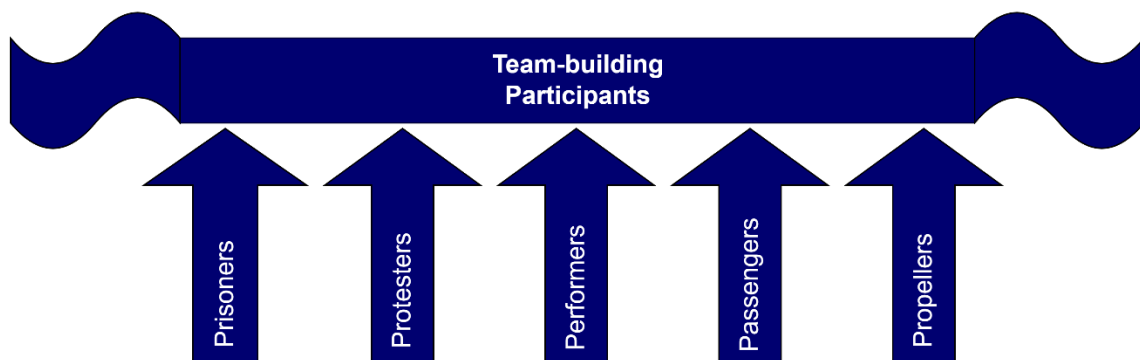
Unlike traditional face-to-face teams where team-building means informal, outdoor activities done away from the office, GDTs’ team-building is online and requires carefully

structured ways to rally the team towards a common goal. By analysing Zhang and Losekoot's (2021) views on team-building attitudes and behaviours of employees and combining it with the 4Ps of delegates, the framework in Figure 4 was birthed. This framework distributes team members into six categories depending on their attitude towards team-building.

These categories are prisoners, protesters, performers, passengers, propellers, and participants. Prisoners do not believe in team-building but participate because they feel they have an obligation to do so. Protesters believe team-building does not work and will use every opportunity to shoot down any motion to have team-building. Performers create distractions and do team-building for the creative purpose of spoiling and sabotaging the events. Passengers are not convinced of either. They cannot decipher whether team-building works or does not work hence they are inactive and will align with the majority decision. They go with the flow (Zhang & Losekoot, 2021). Propellers exude highly positive attitudes about team-building events, always participate in such events and believe that all employees should join. To them, team-building is effective and useful (Zhang & Losekoot, 2021). The role of strategies is to ensure that all five types of team members become participants to yield dynamic capabilities. In addition, having various strategies persuades the whole team to buy into team-building processes and to fully participate.

Figure 4

Types of team-building participants (researcher's depiction)



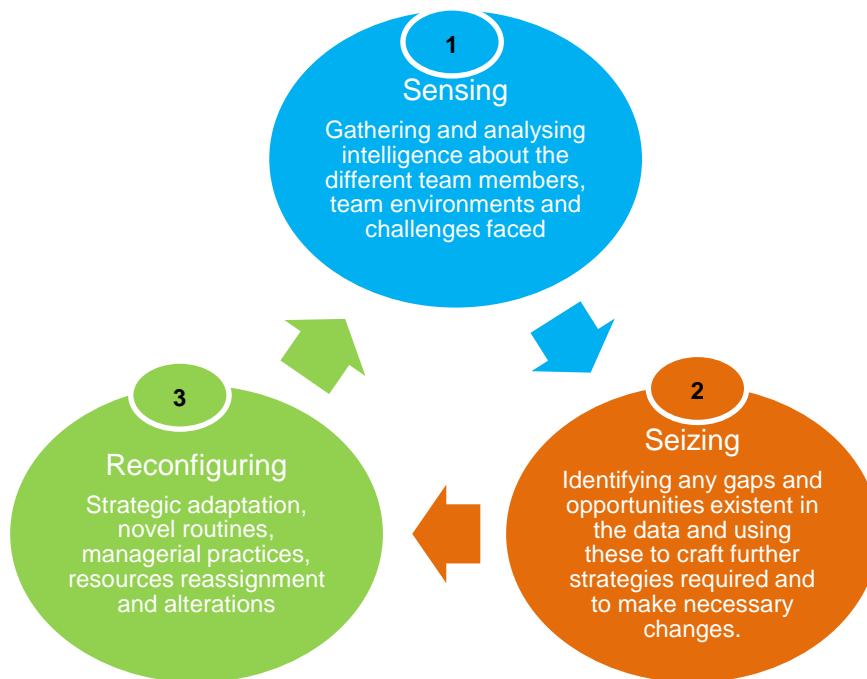
2.12 Relationship between team-building strategies and dynamic capabilities

DCs are useful for responding to changing environments (Schilke et al., 2018). Team-building strategies are carefully designed approaches utilised by management to ensure a tight-knit team that can respond to the uncertainties and turbulences that characterise changing business environments. Strategy-driven team-building can be utilised to build DCs that pre-empt future problems and solve pre-identified problems in the team. For this

reason, Figure 5 is depicted in a continuous series demonstrating that the attainment of DCs is an ongoing process. Strategies that are put in place need to ensure that team-building is a continuous process and there are continuous feedback loops to facilitate this ongoing process. Tripartite capabilities of sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring are organisational and management-driven activities (Kutama, 2021). The manager's motivation (willingness) to drive sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring is the chief starting point for realising positive results.

Figure 5

The three types of DCs and team-building (researcher's depiction)



Note. The above illustration shows the dynamic capabilities continuum starting from sensing to reconfiguring. Sensing is always the starting point.

While definitions of team-building emphasise activities and exercises, it is important to point out that team-building is an ongoing process. Before engaging in activities and exercises strategic thinking and planning need to take place. Strategies and dynamic capabilities are closely intertwined (Teece, 2019). Team-building must be research and science-driven (involving data gathering) to ensure that intended benefits are achievable (Lacerenza et al., 2018). Secondly, team-building needs to be properly designed and methodically implemented to yield effective results (Zhang & Losekoot, 2021). Accordingly, Shuffler et al. (2018) demonstrates that a lack of clear objectives and strategies matching team-building processes "creates the potential for the intervention to be viewed as useless

or a waste of time". Thirdly, team-building needs to be a process that is intentional, purposeful, and guided by a sound strategy (Aquino et al., 2022). No matter the stage of the team's development, team-building strategies remain vital. Implementing strategies is fundamental in ensuring coordination and increasing the global integration of the team (Gibson et al., 2019). Tuckman developed the five-stage team development model to explain how teams evolve (Driskell et al, 2018; Jones, 2019). The five stages are forming, storming, norming and performing; with the fifth stage (adjourning) added 13 years later following a review conducted by Tuckman and Jensen (1977). Team-building is not just about team functioning and getting the team together, but it is also about the needs to be met (Miller et al., 2018). It could be forming needs or needs to address storming.

Sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring are viewed as "cognitive meta-capabilities" that are valuable for alignment and realignment of resources and processes (Suddaby et al., 2020, p. 532). DCs take time to develop but eventually get ingrained in an organisation's way of doing things. The first two capabilities (sensing and seizing) introduce and consist of basic functions whereas reconfiguring is highly complex and may require full redesigning of business models (Breznik, et al., 2019). DCs alter the firm's operational capabilities to sustain superior performance (Teece et al., 1997; Teece et al., 2020). This research seeks to understand DCs that are born when team-building is strategy-driven. When team-building is strategy-driven, it yields powerful DCs with proven potential to impact team performance (technical fitness) positively and indirectly. Dynamic capabilities cannot explain performance but rather changes that lead to increased performance (Laaksonen & Peltoniemi, 2018). The following sections investigate each DC to understand the relationship that exists between it and team-building strategies.

2.12.1 Sensing capabilities

In its broadest application, sensing is commonly associated with an organisation's entrepreneurial capability (opportunity identification, proactive behaviour, ambiguity acquiescence, and risk-taking) in identifying and shaping opportunities (Teece, 2019). Sensing requires an understanding of the demand environment, the evolution of markets, technological opportunities, and learning and interpreting customer needs and wants (Teece, 2018a; Witschel et al., 2022). To sense opportunities that result in action, knowledge derived needs to be associated with practical meaning to drive concrete actions (Zahra et al., 2022). Engage in effective sense-making, scanning, learning and direct interactions with the teams and their work environment must be made possible (Teece et al. 2020).

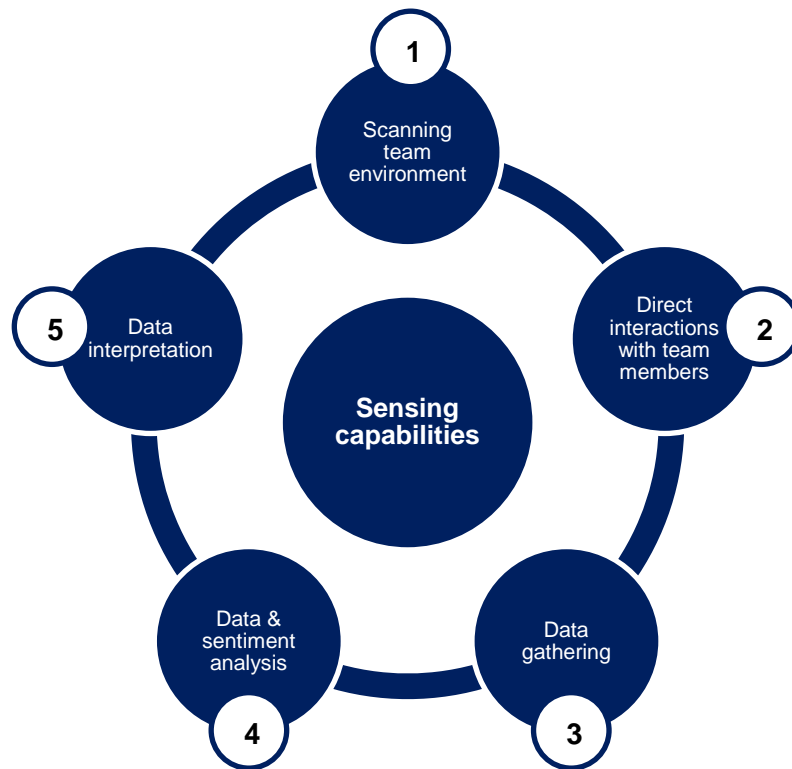
Strategy-driven team-building results in strong sensing capabilities. These permit an organisation to assess the efficacy of team-building and to determine if there is a need for change (Schoemaker et al., 2018). This aligns with Kump et al. (2019) observation that high sensing capabilities enable continuous and reliable searching for strategically significant information and best process practices. If team-building is a process of developing dynamic capabilities, it makes sense that it "should not be treated as a once-off, passive action, constituting an ex-post reaction of the organization to changes in the environment, but should be a process allowing for the anticipation of change" (Cyfert et al., 2021, p. 4). Sensing also involves searching and identifying appropriate technologies and organising intelligent team-building activities using the technologies. For team-building in GDTs, sensing entails a deep comprehension of what drives and informs teamwork.

Data gathering, analysis and interpretation must be undertaken by the manager with the different team members to fully understand the length and breadth of changes and challenges they face; and what they envisage to be ways of addressing these. It is vital for management to "carefully and systematically examine employees' opinions about and their desires or preferences for team-building activities" (Zhang & Losekoot, 2021, p. 156).

Sensing in GDT team-building must be cyclical in nature as depicted in Figure 6 because the operational environment is dynamic and exposed to ongoing changes and pressures. The sensing process is initially driven by team leadership and begins by intentionally scanning the team's work environment to obtain a high-level overview of team climate and relations. This is followed by direct interactions with team members in one-on-one conversations followed by group sessions. These sessions include data gathering about individual and team goals, interpersonal relationships, role clarity and problem-solving techniques. Step 4 involves data and sentiment analysis (gauging emotional tones to determine if team atmosphere and relationships are positive, negative, or neutral). Team leadership draws patterns and themes, and the final step is data interpretation. Interpretation is also closely aligned with principles that inform team-building. Sensing that is cyclical in nature leads to uncertainty reduction and involves gaining insights which are valuable impacts in any team-building strategy formulation process (Sharma et al., 2020). The ability to detect the team environment is a vital first step in team-building, as effective sensing capabilities facilitate the monitoring of the team's environment and identification of relevant opportunities and threats (Witschel, 2022). This enables a company to evaluate the effectiveness of its strategies and determine whether adjustments or changes are necessary.

Figure 6

Sensing practices applicable in team-building (researcher's depiction)



Note. To sharpen sensing capabilities various activities must be undertaken as outlined in Figure 6

2.12.2 Seizing capabilities

Sensing alone is not enough to drive team-building. It must be immediately followed by the capability to seize (Schoemaker et al., 2018; Teece, 2019). In its broadest application, seizing includes taking opportunities available, making choices and resource mobilisation to take advantage of opportunities identified at the sensing stage (Fainshmidt et al., 2019). It involves converting the learning and data analysis that took place at the sensing stage into meaningful actions (Priyono & Hidayat, 2022). This is undertaken following a sound methodical analysis that involves identifying emerging themes, existent gaps, and opportunities.

In team-building for GDTs, emerging themes encompass challenges and any team misalignment. This may uncover evidence of negative conflict or hostility among team members, assignment and task confusion, unclear and misunderstood relationships and decisions, general apathy, absence of initiative-taking, imagination, or innovation and low participation in team meetings (de Vries & Visser, 2021). Additionally, poor decision-

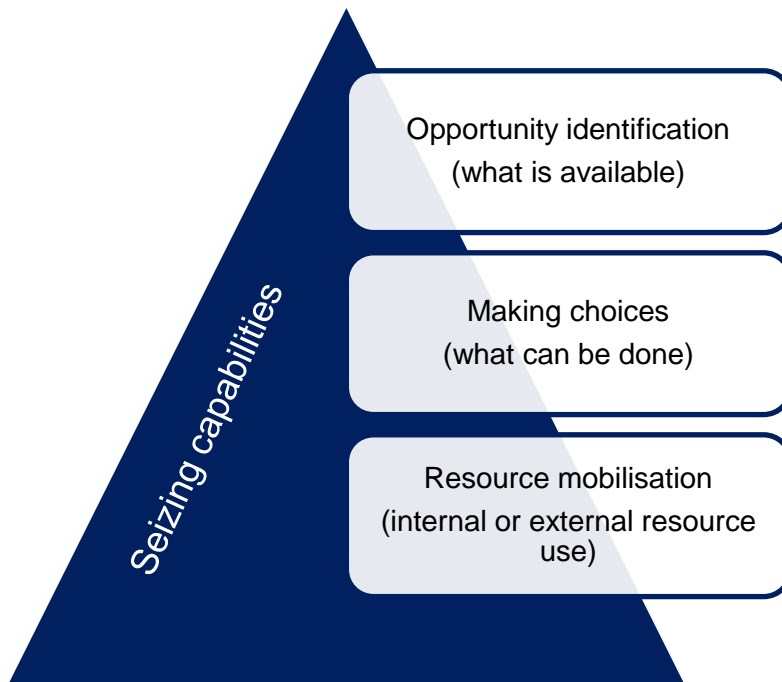
making and problem-solving, and increased dependence on or negative reactions to leadership may also be observed. From a performance perspective, complaints from users or customers regarding service quality, decreased production and or team output and a continued unexplained increase in costs may also present emerging themes. Seizing overlaps sensing and considers any potential risk of lack of success due to incomplete information obtained at the sensing stage (Priyono & Hidayat, 2022).

High seizing capabilities enable efficient decision-making about evaluating whether information has potential value and can be translated into viable opportunities, business models and processes that are in sync with the strengths and weaknesses of an organisation (Kump et al., 2019). Getting the timing right is important as is fostering employee motivation and meticulous cultural fit (Teece, 2019). The results of sensing are utilised to form the basis of ongoing strategies. This leads to the implementation of necessary changes to the way team-building is conducted.

Figure 7 shows that opportunity identification is vital in determining what is available that can assist in team-building. This is followed by making choices regarding the right avenue to be followed. At the seizing stage, it is important to consult with team members on opportunities and choices. This means one-on-one sessions with each team member are vital. Resource mobilisation in team-building involves ascertaining resource availability and determining whether internal resources are sufficient to execute the team-building required. Although not the researcher's recommended avenue this may also involve determining if an external resource (consultant/facilitator) is required to assist in crafting strategies and conducting team-building.

Figure 7

Seizing practices applicable in team-building (researcher's depiction)



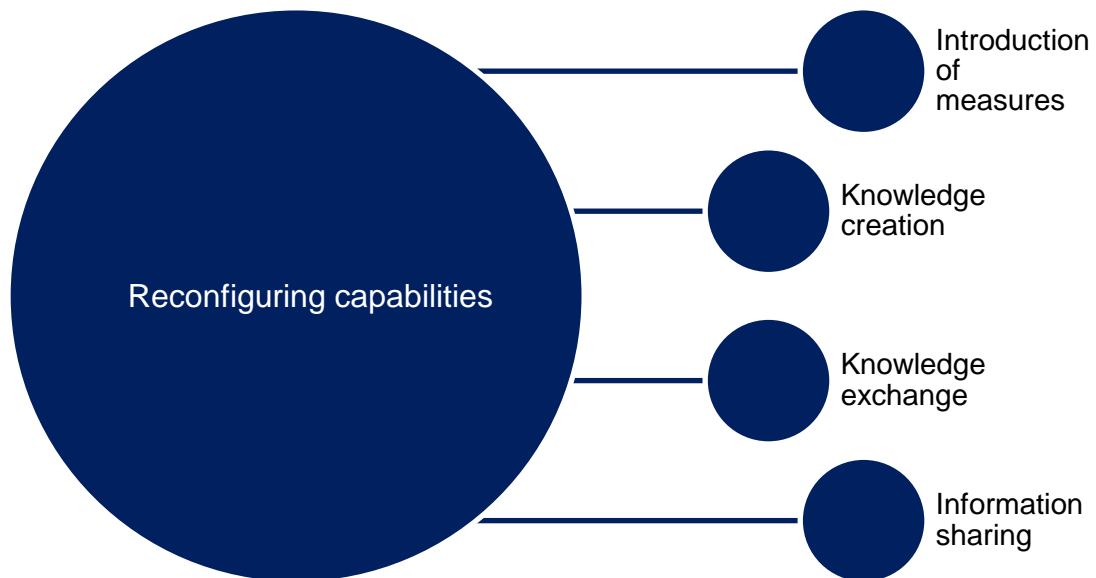
2.12.3 Reconfiguring (transforming) capabilities

Kump et al. (2019) describe reconfiguring capabilities include “assigning responsibilities, allocating resources, and ensuring that the workforce possesses the newly required knowledge” (p.10). This is where the whole essence of adapting, renewal and reshaping of entire ecosystems takes place (Schoemaker et al., 2018). Also referred to as the transformation stage, at reconfiguration it is important for decisions to be made on what strategies must be implemented, reassigning and making alterations that are informed by strategies (Fainshmidt et al., 2019).

Organisational and cultural elements are transformed to address new opportunities unearthed and identified at sensing and seizing (Teece, 2018a). Figure 8 depicts that solid measures and activities are introduced to enable sustainability. These tie back to references made earlier on that dynamic capabilities are not simple but require investment in knowledge creation, learning and discovery processes. The relationship that exists between dynamic capabilities and knowledge management amply demonstrates how dynamic capabilities are vital for the "acquisition, creation, absorption, distribution and reconfiguration of knowledge for the processes of competitive advantage" (Cyfert et al., 2021, p. 5). At this stage, attention is also directed towards fostering internal information sharing and knowledge exchange. These are required to raise and change awareness and create transparency among employees (Warner & W'ager, 2019; Witschel et al., 2022). Rigidity and resistance to change are also addressed at this stage.

Figure 8

Reconfiguring practices applicable in team-building (researcher's depiction)



As communication is more formal in GDTs, with very limited opportunities for team members to exchange informal information psychological detachment may result (Lauring & Jonasson, 2023). This is characterised by the formation of social distance and minimal group identification. Strategy-driven team-building becomes pertinent in addressing various forms of psychological detachment.

Inculcating organisation-specific team-building strategies transform an organisation from being reactive to challenges to being proactive by sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring. Some organisations invest financial resources to improve teams to maximise employee output. Although financial investment is made into team-building little to no effort is exerted in fully understanding the concept. Team-building is largely perceived as just another element or process that must be done in the organisation. This research explores team-building to show that it must be conducted intentionally and informed by strategy.

Team-building is more than just team-based activities. When driven by sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring it is fundamental in driving strong dynamic capabilities. Dynamic

capabilities do not happen overnight but are built over a period (Teece, 2019). In the process of building dynamic capabilities, mistakes will happen but should not be allowed to detract from long-term goals. Although the DCs concept was developed to analyse firms, it applies to a whole range of entities including individuals, teams as well and whole economies (Teece et al., 2021). Laying and implementing sound strategies as the bedrock of team-building is a subject that has been neglected in research.

Dynamic capabilities impact organisational and strategic procedures underlying resource-based decisions. Dynamic capabilities assist firms in reconfiguring their resources to maintain relevance in emerging business ecosystems (Teece, 2018b). GDTs, at whatever stage of their development, are bound to experience a myriad of changes and challenges. DCs are applied to existing resources to bring about change (Kutama, 2021). The underlying base of DCs is that existing resources and processes can be subjected to rigorous reconfiguration and refreshing to create new ones that drive competitive advantage (evolutionary fitness). Any alterations to existing resources and processes are undertaken as a response to changes in the business environment (Teece et al., 1997).

2.13 Knowledge gap

Teece (2019) avers that strategy “is a critical adjunct of dynamic capabilities” and always needs to be “consistent and coherent” (p. 15). A strategy is a clearly defined road map or detailed plan aimed at achieving success. Merely having resources is not enough because a resource’s value only derives meaning when a strategy is implemented to ensure value creation and realisation. If team-building is to birth dynamic capabilities, then it must be strategy driven. Existing literature does little to clarify the importance of strategies in the team-building discourse. Even more, there is an existent gap due to a lack of scholarly documents that identify team-building strategies utilised by South African MNCs in their GDTs.

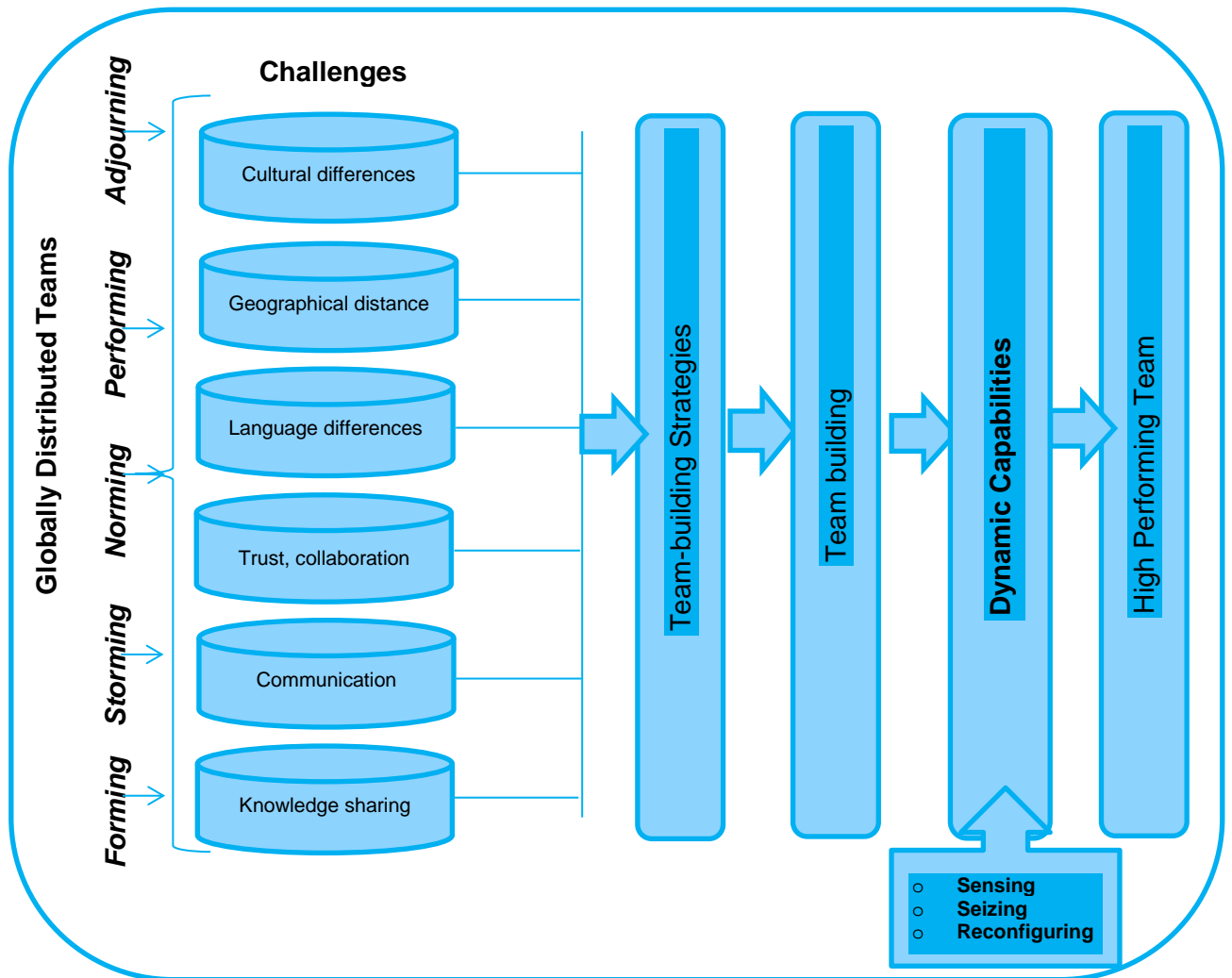
While the importance of teams in organisations is undisputed (Salas et al., 2018; Shuffler et al., 2020), and the significant shifts, complexities, and fluidity evident (Benishek & Lazzara, 2019), the place of team-building has received little attention in IB literature. Where it has featured, the focus has been on activities that organisations undertake. A netnographic study of 104 employee postings about team-building on sites such as Facebook, TripAdvisor and Twitter concluded that “As long as something is a team-based activity and somehow the manager believes in or approves of it, it could be performed in the name of a team-building intervention” (Zhang & Losekoot, 2021, p. 151). This assertion may sound harsh but acts as a useful starting point in understanding how team-building is

viewed in organisations. Lacerenza et al. (2018, p. 25) share the same sentiment as Zhang and Losekoot (2021) when they state "Unfortunately, we have seen many organizations use other team interventions with the false hope that simply giving a team the chance to spend time together or perform some fun activity together will make them into a better team." Team-building is "often misused and abused" evoking "strong, overly positive or negative affective reactions based on experiences" (Shuffler et al., 2018, p. 2). The three scholars concur with the researcher that team-building needs attention, especially in the context of GDTs and the emerging aspect of the use of online technologies. Team-building is a potential source of various DCs.

Figure 9 provides a high-level overview of this study's argument. This theoretical model depicts DCs (sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring) in strategy-driven team-building. The theoretical model begins by demonstrating that in the GDT world, no matter the team's stage of development (forming, storming, norming, performing, adjourning) there will always be different challenges. To mitigate the risk of those challenges, team-building that is driven by sound strategy must be implemented. When that happens, any team has the potential and ability to acquire DCs and become a high-performing team. This agrees with Teece (2018b) whose view is that resources, capabilities, and strategy are intertwined elements collectively determining an organisation's competitive advantage. Additionally, strong dynamic capabilities permit a firm to create an exemplary cycle of innovation and growth (Teece et al., 2020). The three interdependent, core processes that underlie dynamic capabilities (sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring) are instrumental in explaining why it is necessary to have team-building strategies.

Figure 9

Applying Teece's three dynamic capabilities in team-building (researcher's depiction)



Note. Adapted from Stages of small-group development revisited by B. W. Tuckman and M. A. C. Jensen, 1977, *Group & Organization Management*, 2(4), p. 419-427.

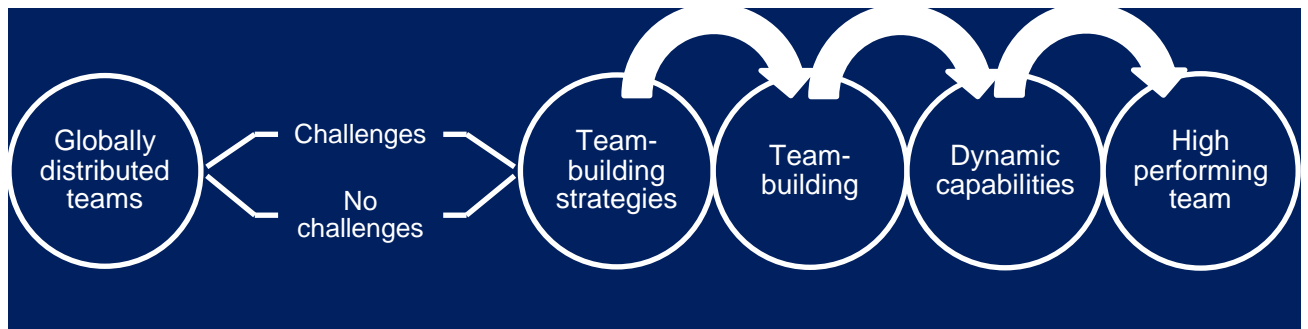
2.14 Conceptual framework

Provided in Figure 10 below is a conceptual framework of the research aims. It depicts the relationship that exists among GDTs' challenges (or lack thereof), and how team-building strategies are required to drive team-building. The basic argument is that whether a team is experiencing challenges or not, team-building strategies must be put in place to drive team-building. In putting forward the argument for proactive team-building Shuffler et al. (2018, p. 27) states that “a healthy individual still needs a regular check-up to fine-tune health habits for wellbeing maintenance and improvement, even well-functioning teams can benefit from proactive TDIs that pre-emptively address potential future needs.”

Proactive team-building positions teams to look at and move beyond the current status quo. Managers need to build teams that are flexible enough to respond to uncertain and unexpected events (Teece, 2019).

Figure 10

Conceptual framework of the research aims (researcher's depiction)



GDTs are known to have unique challenges that include high levels of functional and cultural heterogeneity, varying virtuality degrees, heavy reliance on technology for communication, project management and knowledge sharing and the challenges of working across space and time (Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018; Santistevan & Josserand, 2019). Team-building strategies are utilised to reduce the risk embedded in these challenges.

2.15 Conclusion

Not all teams are successful from the onset. The general decline in morale, process derailment, productivity loss, failure to meet targets and team depletion can result if no team-building is done or if it is poorly executed. The onus is on team leaders to ensure that team-building is given priority, regularly revisited, and implemented to yield positive outcomes for team members, teams, and organisations at large. This chapter examined three types of teams (high-performing, virtual and GDTs), their benefits, challenges they face, the role, origin, and purpose (goal setting, interpersonal relationship management, role clarification and problem-solving (Lacerenza et al., 2018; Shuffler et al., 2018).), of team-building and how DCs (sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring) enhance understanding of strategy-driven team-building. What remains to be seen are the team-building strategies that South African MNCs utilise in their GDTs to build DCs. The next chapter focusses on clarifying the research question which is: what are the team-building strategies that build the dynamic capabilities of South African MNCs' globally distributed teams?

Chapter 3: Research question

3.1 Introduction

This study is set to explore team-building strategies that build the dynamic capabilities of South African MNCs' globally distributed teams. Despite the geographic distance and distribution, cultural diversity and complexity of tasks, GDTs are still expected (like face-to-face teams) to act as a unified whole in planning, organising, decision-making, problem-solving and task execution. Fulfilling these tasks requires a committed team, good leadership, strong collaboration skills and a focused approach to team-building.

3.2 The research question

The research question to be addressed in this study is: what team-building strategies build the dynamic capabilities of South African MNCs' globally distributed teams? The question seeks to establish whether a relationship exists between team-building strategies and dynamic capabilities. Engaging in virtual teamwork presents both challenges and opportunities not faced in face-to-face team settings (Aquino et al., 2022). This research argues that for effective virtual team-building (that yields strong dynamic capabilities) to take place this must be strategy-driven.

Poor strategy compromises the effectiveness of dynamic capabilities (Teece, 2019). The concept of dynamic capabilities recognises the choices that managers make to enable resources to be more productive and to meet customer needs (Teece, 2019). Capabilities, resources, and strategy constitute an interdependent system with elements that collectively determine the competitiveness of a firm (Teece 2018). Dynamic capabilities emerge when sound strategies are implemented and dynamic capabilities that are core to enhancing processes and exploiting possibilities must be guided and informed by sound strategies (Teece, 2018)

Teams are fragmented by poor communication, disagreement on purpose and goals, lack of clarity on team roles, lack of motivation, conflict, and power struggles (Morrison-Smith, & Ruiz, 2020; Santistevan & Josserand, 2019). The research question addresses the aspect of what specific team-building strategies are in use. Organisations periodically review and revise strategic plans to adjust priorities and re-evaluate goals given that business conditions are constantly changing and new opportunities/threats emerging (Teece, 2020). It is therefore critical to explore whether team-building strategies in use are working towards building dynamic capabilities. This not only enables managers to self-reflect but also provides an opportunity to build and implement practical strategies.

Table 1 below provides a summary of the literature which will assist in answering the research question.

Table 1

Literature on dynamic capabilities

RESEARCH QUESTION	LITERATURE REVIEW	DATA COLLECTION TOOL	LITERATURE REVIEW INSIGHTS
<p>What are the team-building strategies that build the dynamic capabilities of South African MNCs' globally distributed teams?</p>	<p>Aquino, Riss, Multerer, Mogilner, & Turner (2022, p 1, para. 2).</p> <p>Lacerenza, Marlow, Tannenbaum, & Salas (2018, p.13, para. 3).</p> <p>Shuffler, Diazgranados, Maynard, & Salas (2018, p 3, para. 3)</p> <p>Teece (2018 p. 366)</p> <p>Zahra, Petricevic, & Luo (2022, p. 760, para 3)</p>	<p>Research questions 1 – 8</p> <p>Thematic analysis to recognise patterns and interrelationships between dynamic capabilities and team-building strategies that are being utilised.</p>	<p>Team-building is a beneficial process that drives team cohesion, enhances team communication, and indirectly results in high performance and productivity.</p> <p>Given the VUCA nature of the global business environment, team-building in GDTs requires continuous revision, extra effort, and carefully crafted strategies for strong dynamic capabilities to be realised.</p> <p>Sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring capabilities are the chief components of dynamic capabilities, essentially evident when team-building is strategy-driven.</p>

The next chapter addresses the research methodology utilised in addressing the question: what are the team-building strategies that build the dynamic capabilities of South African MNCs' GDTs?

Chapter 4: Research methodology

4.1. Introduction

This research explores team-building strategies that build the DCs of South African MNCs' GDTs. In Chapter 3 a detailed discussion of the research question was conducted. The literature review in Chapter 2 demonstrated that team-building is a crucial process in GDTs as it assists in addressing challenges experienced. What is lacking in literature is an indication of team-building strategies that are used by South African MNCs. This chapter discusses the research design and statistical methods, population and sampling aspects, the data collection, level and unit of analysis, and storage methods. It ends by addressing the research quality and rigour procedures, ethical considerations and limitations of the research design and methods.

4.2. Research design and method

The difference between a research method and a research design is that the former is a technique, and the latter is a framework utilised to generate research evidence based on certain quality criteria (Bell et al., 2019). A research design is a framework for how collection and analysis of data will be conducted (Bell et al., 2019). The different types of research designs are narrative, case study and phenomenological. This research employed a phenomenological and qualitative research design. Strategies used in team-building in GDTs is an understudied area hence the appropriateness of a qualitative research design. Gibson et al. (2019) also used the qualitative research design to develop a clear understanding of the experience of formalisation in global teams.

The phenomenological research design method was selected due to the exploratory nature of this study. Phenomenological research is a strategy where the researcher engages extensively with a small number of subjects (Saunders et al., 2019). Extensive engagement is undertaken to develop and establish patterns and relationships of meaning (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This design requires that the researcher identifies and understands human experiences about a subject as described by participants. This means the researcher suspends any pre-conceived assumptions, allowing the lived experience of participants to take centre stage and inform the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Sanchez et al., 2022).

Despite some criticisms levelled against this design (participant difficulties in correctly conveying experiences and challenges in organising data meaningfully and properly presenting results), this research benefitted from its numerous advantages. Firstly, this

method enabled the acquisition of unique insights and perspectives on the subject (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022). It also made it possible to view phenomena from an unexpected side as many intricate details were uncovered, which would not be obvious otherwise. In studying cross-cultural experiences Alhazmi and Kaufmann (2022) made use of the phenomenological research design. Secondly, the researcher gained a deeper and richer understanding about the subject or event in question. Thirdly, it enabled access to undistorted first-hand data. In utilising this research design Sanchez et al. (2022) warns that researchers must maintain a natural attitude, by keeping an open-mind when collecting and interpreting new data.

Data for this research was collected between 4 July and 12 August 2023 to explore patterns of association in GDTs' team-building strategies and dynamic capabilities in South African MNCs.

4.3. Choice of methodology

Researchers can employ qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods when conducting research. This research seeks to gain profound knowledge of team-building strategies that build the dynamic capabilities of South African MNCs' globally distributed teams. To accomplish this purpose, a mono, qualitative method (as opposed to the quantitative or mixed methods) was utilised. Some researchers employ the quantitative research to explain a phenomenon and test hypotheses. This study does not include testing hypotheses about variables' characteristics or relationships; therefore, the quantitative method was not used. A mixed-method study was not selected either because it incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2018); and was not practically suitable given time constraints.

This research aimed to obtain richer team-building data and gain a deeper understanding of GDTs managers' experiences and perceptions; and this was achievable using the qualitative method (Gibson et al., 2019). Qualitative research makes use of words and images (Bell et al., 2019). Additionally, qualitative research regards people as active participants whose experiences are vital in building theory (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research explores and understands individuals or groups and the meanings they ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This process involves emerging questions and procedures, data analysis inductively built from particulars to general themes as the researcher interprets the meaning behind the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The qualitative research method was best for this topic as it allowed an up-close look at the perspectives of GDT managers on team-building and the strategies in use. Qualitative research works best when the topic is new. It is also when a topic has never been addressed with a certain sample or group of people, and existing theories do not apply with the sample or group under study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this instance, no study has been undertaken to address team-building strategies in use by South African MNCs. When a phenomenon is less known and greater detail is required regarding it then embarking on a qualitative study journey is ideal (Rashid et al., 2019).

4.4. Research philosophy

The choice of research philosophy was interpretivist. Interpretivism is associated with qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018) and attaches importance to context. Interpretivism examines the 'how' and the 'why' of social actions (Bell et al., 2019, p. 31). Of interpretivists, Saunders et al. (2019) explain that they study meanings that are created by humans in their social worlds. Interpretivism is based on the view that researchers require a strategy that grasps the meaning of social action (Bell et al. 2019).

Interpretivists focus on non-prejudicial observation by interpreting lived experiences objectively (Sanchez et al., 2022). This is backed by Einola and Alvesson (2019) and Nordbäck and Espinosa (2019) who both used the interpretivist approach in their studies. The latter researchers focussed on shared leadership in global virtual teams, conducted 71 in-depth interviews in two organisations with leaders and members of eight global virtual teams. Interpretivists are more concerned about interpreting the world through the eyes of the participants (Bell et al. 2019).

Most importantly, interpretivism enables new themes to emerge resulting in rich insights. This philosophy defines that humans create meaning. Using an interpretivist philosophy also enabled a clearer understanding of GDTs and their team-building strategies from the point of view of those who have experienced or are currently experiencing the GDT phenomenon. To borrow from Saunders et al. (2019), this research was able to create novel, deeper understandings and interpretations of GDTs and strategies that are useful in team-building.

4.5. Design purpose

Research design purpose can be descriptive, explanatory, or exploratory (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Makri & Neely, 2021). For purposes of this research, the design purpose was exploratory. Exploratory research is undertaken when enough is not known about the

phenomenon under study, the population and deeper knowledge is required (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Mbaka & Isiramen, 2021). In this case, little or nothing was known about the strategies South African MNCs use to conduct team-building for their GDTs.

In summary, using an exploratory approach enabled the researcher to find out what is happening in GDTs, plough deeper into how team-building is being conducted, seek, and access new insights and make assessments of phenomena in new light (Makri & Neely, 2021; Saunders et al., 2019). In their study of the role of team leadership in complex global MNEs, Santistevan and Josserand (2019) made use of the exploratory design. In defending this approach, they explain that it helped participants reflect on the way that they lead their teams.

4.6. Population

When conducting research all members of any well-defined class of people, events or objects is the population. It is the totality of individuals, events, items or objects sharing characteristics from which a statistical sample for research will be drawn (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019).

The population for this study was all managers of GDTs with experience in leading GDTs in MNC financial institutions headquartered in South Africa. Managers were important as the population in this study because the concept of strategy is embedded in management. Additionally, using the DCs theory also propelled the research towards managers because evaluating team-building in relation to sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring made sense at managerial level.

4.7. Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis refers to the individuals that are the subjects of interest and that contribute rich insights to the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Dynamic capabilities govern organisational activities, are resident in organisational processes and management teams (Teece, 2007) and are found at various units of analysis (Schilke et al., 2018). In this research, the unit of analysis was an individual GDT manager employed within South African MNCs. This unit of analysis choice is supported by Breznik et al. (2019) who also used numerous managerial types and levels in their research on “exploiting firm capabilities by sensing, seizing and reconfiguring capabilities: an empirical investigation” (p. 11). The choice of managers as participants is also effectively driven by a sound understanding that for dynamic capabilities to be formed, they are embedded in learning and transformation which is spearheaded by leadership (Teece, 2019). Teams are built by

managers, and they are responsible for organising team-building events and interventions (Zhang & Losekoot, 2021). Participants selected were considered experts in the subject matter because they were directly involved in the research problem (Makri & Neely, 2021). Leaders need to give strategic direction. Interest will therefore be the team-building lived experiences of the managers. Participants were from financial MNCs.

4.8. Sampling method

Studying an entire population is difficult, impractical if not impossible due to costs involved, limited resource capacity and time constraints (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Makri & Neely, 2021). As such, obtaining insights from all GDT managers in South Africa would have been mammoth task to achieve. It became indispensable, necessary, reasonable, and practical to study a portion of the population. This portion is described as a sample. To ensure effectiveness and to manage numbers, sampling was undertaken.

Sampling refers to the act, process, or technique of extracting, selecting, or taking out a portion of a population for representability. This process involves selecting certain members or a subset from the whole population (Wang & Cheng, 2020). Sampling techniques can either be probability or nonprobability sampling. In probability sampling, well-defined mathematical guidelines are used as the basis to ensure that each population member stands an equal chance of being selected. Probability sampling includes simple random sampling, stratified sampling, cluster, and multi-stage sampling (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019; Wang & Cheng, 2020). On the other end, there is the non-probability sampling technique which does not follow any mathematical guideline hence population members do not stand an equal chance of being selected. Types of non-probability sampling include purposive, expert, quota, heterogeneity, snowball, and accidental sampling (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019; Wang & Cheng, 2020).

This research made use of purposive sampling (also referred to as judgemental or subjective sampling) which depends on the researcher's judgment when selecting research participants (Wang & Cheng, 2020). Purposive sampling entails extracting people, events, or objects because they are more readily available. When applying purposive sampling, one needs to apply own judgement criteria and decision-making skills on whether to include or exclude cases (Saunders et al., 2019).

Purposive sampling is mostly utilised when one needs to reach a targeted sample quickly and make use of participants with important insights on the topic in line with eligibility

criteria. The goal of purposive sampling is to strategically sample cases/participants for relevance to the research questions (Bell et al., 2019). The sample was established at the outset of the research, with no additions as the research proceeded (Bell et al., 2019). For purposes of this research, selection criteria were utilised to obtain participants for data reliability.

4.9. Sampling frame or criteria

Participant selection criteria for this study included a GDT manager/team leader

- (a) Working for a large MNC
- (b) With at least 1 year of work experience in the target organisation, and
- (c) With at least a year in service of managing a GDT.

Participant access was gained through work, college, and personal acquaintances. This aligns with Vuchkovski et al.'s (2023) use of personal contacts and referrals from academic colleagues.

4.10. Sample size

A qualitative approach to research involves extracting a smaller sample size to gain richer insights and results. The sample size for this research was the recommended 16 managers/team leaders that meet participation requirements set out above on the sampling criteria. Vuchkovski et al. (2023) in their study on the digital transformation of teams from conventional to virtual interviewed 18 senior level manager (information-rich participants) selected using the purposive sampling logic. In justifying this approach, they explained that “this allows for interpretive research and grounded theory building to produce original, useful and insightful findings” (Vuchkovski et al., 2023, p. 2). A sample of 16 participants is in sharp contrast to Nordback & Espinosa (2019) who conducted 71 in-depth interviews in their study of shared leadership coordination in global virtual teams.

Identified participants possessed the required knowledge, expertise, and experience in the research topic, and so a small sample size was sufficient. Besides strategic thinking and dynamic capabilities having an alignment with management practices, the additional reason for sampling managers was an affirmative response to Zhang and Losekoot's (2021) recommendation. They recommended the need to comprehend the (unfiltered) motivations and experiences of managers in team-building. The financial sector was the focus of this study because it is significantly impacted by numerous VUCA changes including new competitors, regulatory compliance, blockchain-based digital disruption, cybersecurity, and fraud, to mention only a few. Changes provided a fertile, working environment for the application of the DCs theory especially relevantly so because strong

dynamic capabilities are critical in industries operating in rapidly changing environments or facing deep (unforecastable) uncertainty (Teece, 2020).

4.11. Research/measurement instrument

Research instruments are tools that are utilised to obtain, collect, measure, and analyse data from research participants. Observation, interviews, and document analysis are the most utilised research instruments. This research employed semi-structured interviews (carried out in English) using MNCs in the South African financial sector. Semi-structured interviews are advantageous in qualitative research because the researcher enjoys the versatility to improve questions or engage in direction change at the emergence of new themes and as the research progresses (Makri & Neely, 2021). In their study of how meta-teams get global work done in MNCs, Santistevan and Josserand (2018) also employed interviews. However, in their case they also incorporated on-site observations, and deliberately chose participants and sites to challenge developing concepts they were noticing.

The interview guide (Appendix 3) comprised four introductory and eight main questions that were administered to the participants. Interviews were audio recorded using Microsoft Teams and transcribed verbatim, and confidentially. These interviews allowed flexibility to probe, seek further clarity, and explanation for unanticipated responses. It was anticipated that by using semi-structured interviews rich data with thick descriptions relating to team-building strategies would be gained.

Pilot testing quality assures and assists in improving any shortcomings in the measurement instrument. To ensure that the measurement instrument was relevant to the research, pilot testing using two participants (one college colleague and one work colleague) was carried out before the actual interviews. Pilot testing enabled question refining and cleaning of questions to assess whether they solicited answers that address the research question (Saunders et al., 2019). It also allowed for efficacy improvement and reassessment of the ordering of questions and their relevance. The results of the pilot test were used to revise and review the interview questions.

4.12. Data collection process

The GIBS Ethics Committee granted ethical clearance on the 3rd of July 2023. Ethical clearance was undertaken to protect the rights of participants and to ensure researcher accountability. Once the study received ethical clearance, the researcher started reaching out to potential referrers and participants.

Qualitative research allows for up-close information gathering by talking directly to people in a natural setting (Creswell & Creswell, 2019). Data collection uses methods that include interviews, surveys/questionnaires, observations, records/archival review and focus groups. Interviews were utilised for this research. Interviews are a common data-gathering instrument mainly used by social scientists in expanding how humans perceive and act in their social worlds (Philipps & Mrowczynski, 2021). Using interviews researcher probed deeply to uncover new clues, and dimensions of the problem based on personal experience (Makri & Neely, 2021). The choice of qualitative research (interviews) is also supported by Fainshmidt et al. (2019) who argue that dynamic capabilities are very difficult to measure using archival data, so interviews provided a suitable solution.

In collecting data for this study, theoretical sampling logic was used. This method is widely used in qualitative studies as it permits selection of participants with rich information and experience regarding the research topic (Vuchkovski et al., 2023). Supervisors and middle-level managers from different MNCs were interviewed. Contact details were obtained from personal contacts from work and then referrals from academic colleagues.

The interviews were undertaken between 4 July and 12 August 2023 (spanning over a month to allow participants flexibility in availability). This is in sharp contrast to Breuer et al. (2020) who conducted all 55 interviews in a face-to-face setting in Germany. Interviews were conducted by consent and lasted between 45 and 60 minutes for each participant. This contrasts with Nordback and Espinosa (2019) and Vuchkovski et al. (2023) whose interviews lasted between 37 and 128 minutes and a little less than two hours on average, respectively. A set of four general questions (tenure at organisation and as a GDT manager, number of direct reportees and their countries of residence) was asked. An additional eight questions as in the interview protocol (Appendix 2) were also included to guide the conversation and to ensure that the interviewer covered the various areas of focus of this study. The eight questions mainly addressed challenges experienced in GDTs, the benefits and effectiveness of team-building in addressing these challenges, team-building strategies in use, and how effective the strategies are.

The researcher conducted the interviews personally and gathered the information using questions developed based on the literature review and the research purpose. The interview protocol acted as a guideline, but the researcher allowed flexibility when participants took a direction, they felt they would like to share insights on. Following

participants' leads uncovered elements that were not previously thought of and considered by the researcher (Makri & Neely, 2021).

A total of 16 interviews were conducted with managers/team leaders of GDTs in the South African financial sector. To ensure anonymity, participants were given pseudonyms. They were named Participant 1, Participant 2 up to 16. The interviews were video (by choice), and audio recorded after participants gave their consent. All participants consented to being audio recorded unlike Vuchkovski et al. (2023) who encountered a situation where some participants did not consent. This resulted in them taking notes during the interviews. The preferred mode of interviews was Microsoft Teams. This was deemed practical and convenient, and allowed interviews to be conducted at a time most convenient to the participants. Nine interviews were conducted during working hours, four were conducted in the evening and three were done over the weekend.

An interview schedule that had an appointment time, and date of the meeting was kept in Excel format and marked off as interviews were secured, done, or cancelled. One participant cancelled a day before the interview citing confidentiality concerns. The researcher thanked the potential participant and proceeded to find another participant. By recording the interviews, losing valuable information was minimised while still ensuring correct information was captured. The recording also allowed for full concentration during the interviews. All interviews were transcribed during the session using MS Teams transcription services.

The final interview was conducted at 9 p.m. on 12 August 2023. The month of August was mostly used to clean the transcripts, coding, and data analysis. Comprehensive data analysis and report findings were conducted September 2023.

4.13. Data analysis

Data analysis is an ongoing process that involves continual reflection about the data, and asking analytical questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2019). Data analysis involves preparation and organisation of data, transcription, familiarising with the data corpus, memoing, coding, producing themes and categories from underlying coded passages (Lester et al., 2020). From the above definitions data analysis involves making sense out of the collected data. Emerging themes result from the creative labour of coding and are derived at the meeting point of data, analytical process, and subjectivity (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Research falls into three typologies namely, inductive, deductive, or abductive (Makri & Neely, 2021; Saunders et al., 2019). Some research activities that involve an inductive approach are testing hypotheses, observing and interpreting patterns, developing codebooks, comparing across units of analysis, and finding key themes, among others (O’Kane et al., 2021). In contrast, deductive research entails using existing theory in research questions or hypotheses formulation (Makri & Neely, 2021). Abductive research involves moving between induction and deduction while constantly using comparative methods (Makri & Neely, 2021). Like Colman et al. (2022), data analysis was carried out inductively. Theorising inductively is the cornerstone of qualitative research and is mostly appropriate in new or understudied empirical contexts where there has been no prior work (Bansal et al., 2018). It allows the researcher to get the narrative of the experiences and delve even deeper. The other methods do not enable one to do that.

As an initial step in the inductive process, the transcripts were read several times to understand participants’ insights and views and to reflect on overall meaning. To ensure accuracy of the transcriptions the researcher listened to the interviews again while following along in the Word document. This process entails asking questions like “What general ideas are participants saying? What is the tone of the ideas? What is the impression of the overall depth, credibility, and use of the information?” (Creswell & Creswell, 2019, p. 173)

As indicated earlier each interview was recorded and transcribed on Microsoft Teams. The transcripts were cleaned by the researcher to capture the accuracy of the conversations. A total of 16 transcripts were later uploaded to Atlas.ti. In their study on managing dual embeddedness in organisational identity work in MNE subsidiaries Colman et al. (2022) used Atlas.ti to generate codes. In their study on managing formalisation to increase global team effectiveness and meaningfulness of work in MNCs Gibson et al. (2019) also utilised Atlas.ti. They were able to start coding by creating a codebook and assigning codes, creating memos to facilitate understanding of, and links between, codes in the data, keeping track of code frequencies, and examining excerpts related to codes (Gibson et al., 2019). Coding involves dividing the material into parts or sections of text and then giving meaning to the information (Creswell & Creswell (2019). It means breaking down the text data collected during data collection into sentences (or paragraphs) and assigning a label to those categories with a word (Creswell & Creswell (2019). Coding is based on emerging data and not from the researcher’s previous knowledge or experience (Makri & Neely,

2021). This research followed the same procedure in Gibson et al. (2019) and Nordback and Espinosa (2019) who also identified terms, concepts, and categories in the data.

Coding was done until theoretical saturation point was reached at 16 participant responses which was all the interviews conducted. Similar with Colman et al. (2022), coding for this research involved several rounds, moving back and forth between the data and the literature to generate the conceptual model. Theoretical saturation is a point when data becomes repetitive without any new ideas, themes, or information forthcoming in data analysis. This redundancy signals that data collection may cease (Saunders et al., 2019). Throughout this process, the researcher navigated between theory and data to compare insights from the data with the literature reviewed and vice versa.

4.14. Data storage

In this research, preparing and organising data included putting all interview files into one location, clearly labelling each file, and producing a master data repository indicating source of data, location, and date of collection (Lester et al., 2020). Data was stored without obvious identifiers (importance of use of pseudonyms referred to earlier).

Recordings were safely stored for accessibility for ten years after publication. All personal information was removed from the written record of an interviewee's contribution and all reasonable steps were taken to protect the anonymity of the participants involved in this project. A strong password protected computer, with a Microsoft one drive back up storage and a Google drive account was used for safe online storage of the data.

4.15. Research quality and rigour

Research quality involves measuring the suitability of collected data to meet the purpose of research, assessing whether it is fit for the intended use and whether it is of high quality. This measure is applied to dimensions that include reliability and validity. Reliability includes checking transcripts to make sure that they do not contain obvious mistakes made during transcription, making sure that there is no drift in the definition of codes, constantly comparing data with the codes and writing memos about the codes and their definitions.

Validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing procedures that include accuracy, completeness, reliability, relevance, timeliness, dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability. All these dimensions were considered. In this research, accuracy involved checking the correctness of the gathered information, completeness considering whether all the data was available, and reliability

pertained to replication and measures of consistency, that is, whether the data had no contradictions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Relevance addressed whether the data was really needed while timeliness considered how up-to-date the data was. Dependability covered the extent to which the study could be repeated and replicated by another researcher. Credibility means how much the findings reflect the opinions of the participants and not the researcher. while transferability refers to the degree to which the findings could be used in other contexts. Confirmability entails the degree to which the findings reflect the collected data.

4.16. Ethical considerations

Research requires that one is fully aware of ethical principles and concerns. This covered no harm to participants, no invasion of privacy, no deception, and no lack of informed consent. Data collection for this research was only started after ethical clearance was received on the 3rd of July 2023. This was important to ensure protection of the rights of participants, their privacy and confidentiality at the same time guarding against improper conduct that may potentially reflect negatively on GIBS as an institution of high learning. Appendix 1 contains the ethical clearance approval document. Ethical consideration also addressed transparency issues. This included specificity, detail and disclosure on the steps, decisions, and judgment calls made during research (Aguinis et al., 2018).

Ethical clearance also involved undertaking from researcher that they would take all reasonable precautions to ensure that participants were in no way directly harmed or adversely affected due to their participation in the research. Voluntary informed consent sought to ensure that prospective research participants were given as much information as possible about the research to be able to make informed decisions about whether they wished to participate in it. Each participant received an informed consent letter (Appendix 2)

Informed consent also included confidentiality, no privacy invasion, non-disclosure of participant and organisation data, and upholding anonymity considerations. Participants were furnished with all relevant information about the study and voluntarily agreed to be part of it. It was also emphasised to participants that they could withdraw from the research at any given moment. This agreement was signed at an individual level with transparency and clarity about the nature of the study, the participants' potential role, researcher and organisation anonymity, research objectives, and how the results would be used. All interviews were conducted voluntarily, were handled with the utmost respect and confidentiality.

4.17. Limitations of the research design and methods

The first limitation pertained to the sample size that was small. Data saturation was reached at 16 research participants. This raises concerns about generalisability to the entire population of the research. The study was of South African MNCs – hence the question of the generalisability of results to MNCs outside of South Africa. This means a study of this nature will also need to be undertaken to focus on MNCs outside of South Africa. Although participants were managers of GDTs, a sample of 16 participants cannot be said to be representative of South African MNC managers.

Conducting this study within a shorter, stipulated timeframe was another limitation. Future studies may need to incorporate a longitudinal approach to explore specific team-building strategies that build the dynamic capabilities of South African MNCs' GDTs. In their study on the making and unmaking of teams, Einola and Alvesson (2019) made use of the longitudinal approach which enabled them to make comparisons without sacrificing what was unique in the teams.

4.18. Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research design and statistical methods, population and sampling aspects, the data collection, analysis, and storage methods, and ends by addressing the research quality and rigour, ethical considerations and limitations of the research design and methods that were applied in analysing data obtained from interviews held with GDT managers. This research aims to explore team-building strategies that build the DCs of South African MNCs' GDTs. Chapter 5 delves deeper into the findings of this research.

Chapter 5: Results/Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from interviews undertaken to explore team-building strategies that build the dynamic capabilities of South African MNCs' globally distributed teams. Interviews conducted yielded five key strategies that are presented in this chapter. The literature reviewed in chapter two provided huge insights into the constructs under study, demonstrating that team-building strategies are vital in driving team-building and building the dynamic capabilities of GDTs. As discussed in chapter two, the study uses the dynamic capability theory, and the nature of the study followed an inductive thematic analysis. The structure of this chapter is as follows: firstly, an overview of the unit of analysis, participation process, and descriptive statistics of the participants is provided. This is followed by a presentation of team-building strategies that build dynamic capabilities and effectiveness of team-building strategies. Lastly, challenges experienced in implementing team-building strategies are provided. Findings revealed five strategies (conducting regular virtual team meetings, ensuring collaboration opportunities, setting clear communication guidelines, enhancing trust-building, and virtually celebrating achievements and milestones) and the dynamic capabilities that emerge, namely, innovation, collaboration, team cohesion, communication, knowledge sharing, and trust-building capabilities.

5.2 Unit of analysis description

This research's unit of analysis comprised managers employed by South African MNCs with varying levels of tenure. These were middle-level and lower-level managers. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that the study focussed on team-level strategies and GDTs' managers and their lived experiences. The sample consisted of 16 participants. Their overall work experience ranged from five to 20 years, and four to 17 years spent in GDTs. Participants represented a heterogeneous group. Of the 16 managers, 14 lived in SA at the time of conducting the interviews and two were outside of South Africa.

5.3 Overview of the participation process

Due to participant preference, all interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams. For this research, work and class networks provided contact numbers of potential participants. These were received via WhatsApp. Thereafter, contact was made with the potential participant. On discussing the topic via WhatsApp, an agreement was also reached

regarding confidentiality and assurance provided on the meeting date. Thereafter, email addresses and preferred meeting times were requested. On receipt, the researcher proceeded to set up Microsoft Teams meetings and send invitations. Communication to set up the interviews was conducted mostly via WhatsApp and emails. On the date and time agreed upon, consent forms were sent. To ensure and maintain confidentiality participant numbers were used as identifiers. One participant requested to see the interview questions before the actual meeting.

From the 16 interview responses, 99 codes were generated, and theoretical saturation was reached at interview 16. At this point, no new insights were obtained from the participants. Coding of the insights and views was accomplished through careful analysis, excel and ATLAS.ti. A step-by-step process of Braun and Clarke's (2019) six-phase thematic analysis process was followed in data familiarisation processing, coding, and theme recognition. A code book in Microsoft Excel was created first. Using interview transcriptions, testing of the codes in ATLAS.ti was done. Table 2 provides the key components of the six-phase thematic analysis.

Table 2

The Six phases of thematic analysis

Six Phases of Thematic Analysis			
Phase	Description	Actions	Result
1	Data familiarisation	Spent time listening to the recordings. Repeatedly read the transcriptions highlighting interesting insights	Initial codes and Excel notes
2	Initial codes generation	Coded interesting features of the data in a methodical fashion across data sets Collated data relevant to each code	A list code directing how the research question will be answered.
3	Searching for themes	Organised data into potential themes Proceeded to gather all data into relevant themes	Potential themes
4	Reviewing the themes	Checked that themes work about the coded extract	Relevant themes
5	Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and overall patterns the content shows. Generated clear definitions for each theme	Greater understanding of relevant themes

6	Producing the report	Selected vivid and compelling extract examples	Excellent description of the output
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Note. Adapted from “Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis” by V. Braun and V. Clarke, 2019, *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), p. 589–597.

5.4 Participant descriptive statistics

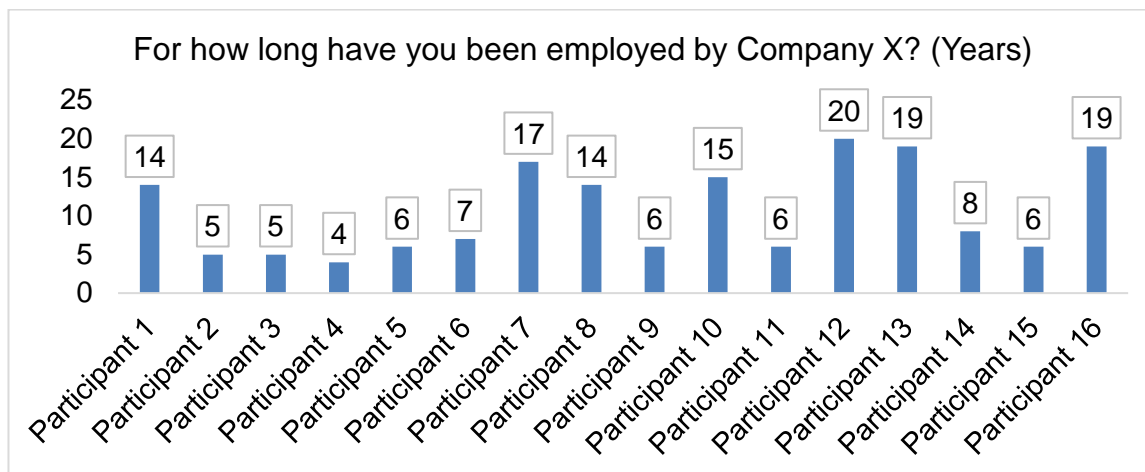
As mentioned earlier the total number of participants was 16. Provided below are general descriptive statistics that were collected at the start of the interviews. Descriptive statistics are reported numerically in a table or graphical format. They give the main features of a dataset and normally provide information that is regarded as non-causal.

5.4.1 Overall length of service in the organisation.

Of the 16 participants, 10 had an overall length of service below 10 and the remaining six have been employed for more than 10 years in their respective organisations. The least length of service was four years while the highest was 20. The graph below in Figure 11 provides a high-level overview of the participants with a particular focus on overall years of service in the organisation.

Figure 11

Length of employment



Note. There were 16 participants in total.

5.4.2 Length of service in a GDT

With regards to GDT tenure, only two participants had a length of service above 10 and the remaining 14 have been in a GDT for less than 10 years. The shortest tenure in a GDT was three years while the highest was 17. The table below (Table 3) provides a high-level

overview of the participants with a particular focus on the length of service within a GDT. Except for one participant the rest of the participants had been involved in GDTs prior to the outbreak of COVID-19.

Table 3

Length of service

Participant No.	For how long have you been working within a globally distributed team? (Years)
Participant 1	5
Participant 2	5
Participant 3	3
Participant 4	4
Participant 5	4
Participant 6	4
Participant 7	17
Participant 8	4
Participant 9	6
Participant 10	8
Participant 11	6
Participant 12	10
Participant 13	5
Participant 14	6
Participant 15	6
Participant 16	6

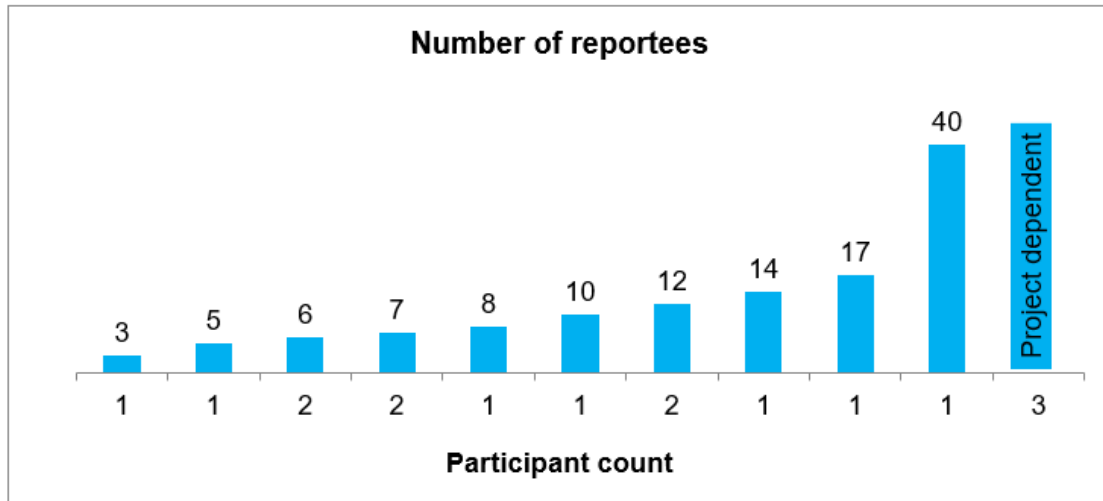
5.4.3 Number of reportees

The number of reportees ranged from three to 40 as depicted in Figure 12. In three instances, participants disclosed that they had no specific number of reportees because the number is determined by the project being conducted and the number of countries involved in the project. In these project teams, two participants explained that one of the key strategies was recruiting the right people at the onset of the project. Traits required included self-management, self-motivation, good communication, time management, conflict resolution and collaboration. Participant 2 explained that *“The recruitment is a defined process that combines personality tests and behavioural interviewing techniques as we try out a few people to check proper fit. We mostly recruit skilled, subject matter experts.”*

Understanding the number of reportees was also prompted by findings from the literature review that in GDTs, team size mattered because smaller teams fostered better engagement.

Figure 12

Number of reportees

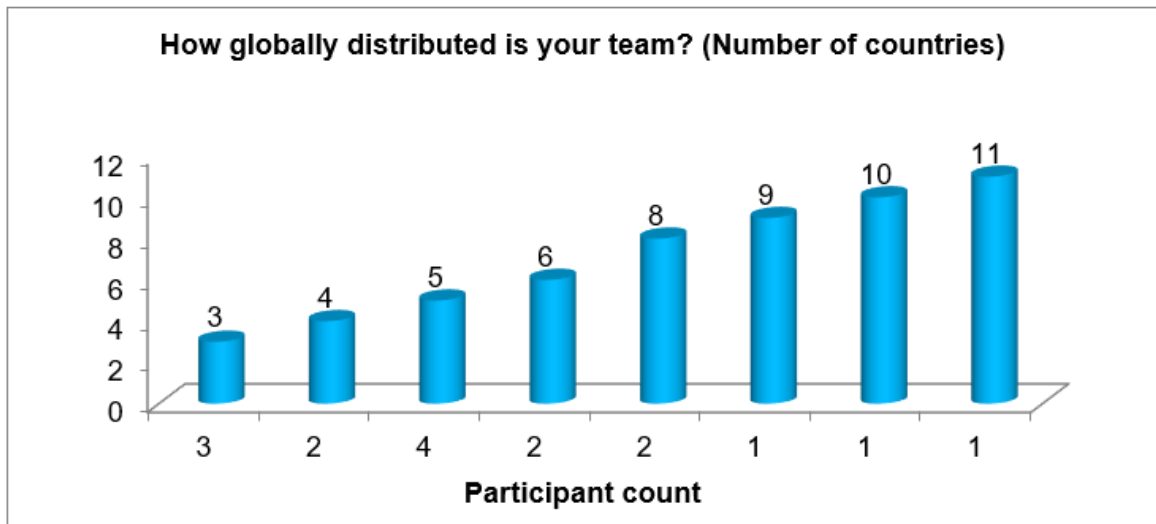


5.4.4 Global distribution of the teams (number of countries represented)

Three was the least number of countries represented and 11 was the greatest number. Three participants disclosed that their reportees were in three countries; two participants had reportees in four countries; four participants had reportees in five countries; two in six countries; another two in eight countries; and the remaining three participants had reportees in nine, 10 and 11 countries as depicted in Figure 13 below.

Figure 13

Global distribution of teams



5.5 Team-building strategies that build dynamic capabilities

Team-building plays a pivotal role in addressing challenges faced by GDTs. The DCs theory explains how GDTs take advantage of geographic variations, and individual differences in background and competencies, combining them into productive combinations that are integral for innovation and high performance. Having team-building strategies yields DCs that are indispensable in maintaining a competitive advantage. Eleven participants indicated that unlike in face-to-face teams, in GDTs every interaction is a prolific, unwritten opportunity to conduct team building. The argument put forward by Participant 9 was that *“we do not meet as often so anything, a formal meeting, an email, a Teams group discussion must enhance team building.”* To add on to this Participant 3 said *“Every time I aim to pull everybody together whether it is a Teams meeting or a project.”* On an interesting note, Participant 15 and 14 suggested a redefinition of team building to embrace GDTs. *“And when we talk about team building, people think of going out, having fun without understanding exactly what it means operationally. How do we go about it digitally?”* (Participant 15). Participant 14 indicated that redefining team-building was needed to consider extending beyond face-to-face outings.

Whereas team-building in collocated teams is often associated with light-hearted, outdoor activities (e.g., soccer playing, going for a team lunch, drum beating sessions, and rope-climbing courses), for GDTs separated by thousands of kilometres there are no face-to-face events. Team-building takes place online, except for a few instances when team members get the rare opportunity to meet in person (annual conferences or country visits). In describing digital team-building Participant 6 indicated that *“there's no naturalness in it as compared to when people are interfacing one with another.”* They went on to describe how *“one needs to wait for another one to speak, raise hand then wait to be*

acknowledged’, and how network connectivity loss or interruption can interfere with activities.

93.8% of participants shared that it was the manager’s responsibility to enhance and facilitate team-building. Among these participants, general agreement was that in GDTs every team interaction was a befitting opportunity for the manager to enhance team-building. One common thread shared by this cohort was that team-building required managers to understand the different team member personalities, and commit time, effort, and resources to come up with sound strategies in sync with the identified personalities. To reinforce this point, Participant 12 explained that managerial and internally driven team-building was *“more natural”*. Unlike the rest of the participants, Participant 5 was the only one who shared that their team-building sessions were externally driven - *“facilitated by our Wellness providers.”*

Research participants reiterated the value of having team-building strategies and expressed various strategies that they utilise to drive team-building. Research participants shared various insights and views that were coded, and five key themes were derived. Establishing strategies in use was in line with the research aim of identifying team-building strategies used by GDTs in the South African MNCs context. The following five key themes emerged:

1. Conduct regular virtual team meetings.
2. Ensure collaboration opportunities.
3. Set clear communication guidelines.
4. Enhance trust-building.
5. Virtually celebrate achievements and milestones.

Additional themes identified included playing online games, purposeful team staffing, and cultivating a respectful environment as shown in Table 4. It was interesting to note that few participants (31.3%) referred to playing online games. Even though, in face-to-face teams playing outdoor games is a popular team-building strategy this does not seem to be the case regarding playing online games. Participant 12 revealed that they tried playing an online game during COVID-19 and it was a flop. *“During COVID, we tried an informal game online with the team, which was then like hundreds, close to 150 people. But it didn’t work out. It was really, awkward”* (Participant 12).

Table 4

Team-building strategies identified by research participants

Strategy	Count (T=16)	Percentage
Conduct regular virtual team meetings	15	93.8%
Ensure collaboration opportunities	12	75.0%
Set clear communication guidelines	11	68.8%
Virtually celebrate achievements and milestones	9	56.3%
Enhance trust-building	8	50.0%
Playing online games	5	31.3%
Purposeful team staffing	2	12.5%
Cultivate a respectful environment.	2	12.5%

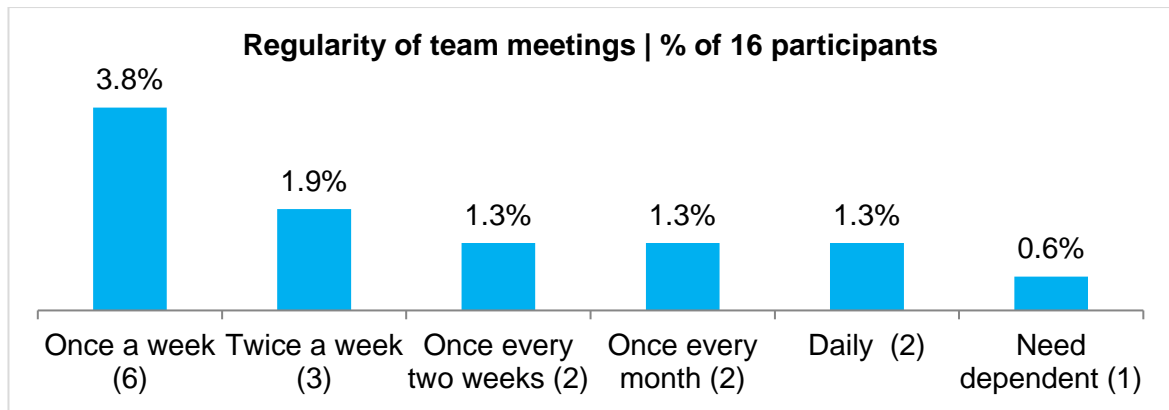
For GDTs to be productive, GDT leaders must invest time in team-building processes, activities, and initiatives. There was consensus among respondents that conducting regular meetings/check-ins was vital as a team-building strategy.

5.5.1 Strategy one: Conduct regular virtual team meetings

As a key team-building strategy, 93.8% of research participants indicated that holding regular virtual meetings was fundamental in team-building, as depicted in Figure 14. Meeting regularity spanned from once a week (37.5%) to need dependent (6.3%). By enabling regular opportunities to engage with team members as a team and as individuals, managers explained that this is a powerful way of opening lines of communication and instituting a metaphoric “open door policy”. This is regarded as a healthy way of team-building and embracing every team member. Emerging sub-themes included adaptability and flexibility and having purpose-driven meetings.

Figure 14

Regularity of team meetings



5.5.1.1 Adaptability and flexibility

Since GDTs often face changing circumstances and unexpected challenges, team-building helps team members develop adaptability and flexibility in their approach to problem-solving. Therefore, strategies that require quick thinking and creative solutions enable team members to learn to adapt to new situations and overcome obstacles quickly. Key reasons for having regular team meetings included discussing work progress, exchanging feedback, sharing updates and information, providing support to one another, strengthening team relationships, addressing emerging challenges, ensuring team cohesion, and ensuring team alignment.

Participants also shared techniques mostly utilised when onboarding new team members into the team to build relationships and trust. Techniques included not diving right away into work, preserving the first meeting to e-meet, and conducting personalised introductions to form personal connections. Referring to weekly meetings, Participant 1 disclosed that *“Let's just say per project or purpose of the meeting, it'll just be once a week. It's something that happens every week I guess about two to three times a week depending on what we're working on.”*

The frequency of meetings is mostly project or task-dependent – some projects or tasks seemingly require more frequency while others work best with reduced frequencies. Participants demonstrated that flexibility is key in making the determinations. While 60% of participants indicated that their teams are flexible and open to the idea of conducting more regular meetings, 40% stated that workload challenges militate against meetings and believe it will be harder to convince teams to schedule additional meetings. On the other hand, 25% of participants reported that it is more likely their team members would prefer reducing the number of meetings.

On the regularity of team meetings, participants whose teams meet regularly indicated that they ensure their meetings are purposeful and goal-directed. Participant 3 indicated that *“each meeting has to have a purpose.”* This implies that whether the purpose is formal or informal, it is important for the purpose or agenda to be known. In support of this view, Participant 7 explained that the purpose *“reduced having meetings for meetings about meetings”* which often leads to meeting fatigue. Having a meeting purpose/agenda or outlining the objectives assists in providing a structure, ensuring preparation and participation from team members, increases efficiency by specifying items to be actioned and follow-up tasks.

In instances where participants conducted meetings that spanned from once every two weeks to once every month, emphasis was placed on goal clarity and a rich understanding of the vision and mission of the organisation. This mostly applied to teams that had been together for longer and where organisational norms and values were deeply ingrained. Participant 12 cited that *“this team already understands the bigger vision”*. Unlike Participant 12 who indicated that the team already understood the organisational vision, Participant 9 demonstrated that there was need to clarify the vision and mission especially in teams that often incorporate new team members. Participant 9 explained that the nature of projects undertaken required bringing on board new subject matter experts to ensure excellent execution.

5.5.1.2 Purpose-driven meetings

Participants shared that purpose-driven meetings enhance team-building, ensure attendance, and yield good outcomes. Without purpose, meetings become nice-to-have sessions which may result in meeting notification overload, digital, and meeting fatigue. In support of having a purpose, Participant 6 explained that *“There must be a purpose for which we are engaging, and that purpose is driven by the mission, the vision, and the values of the organisation.”*

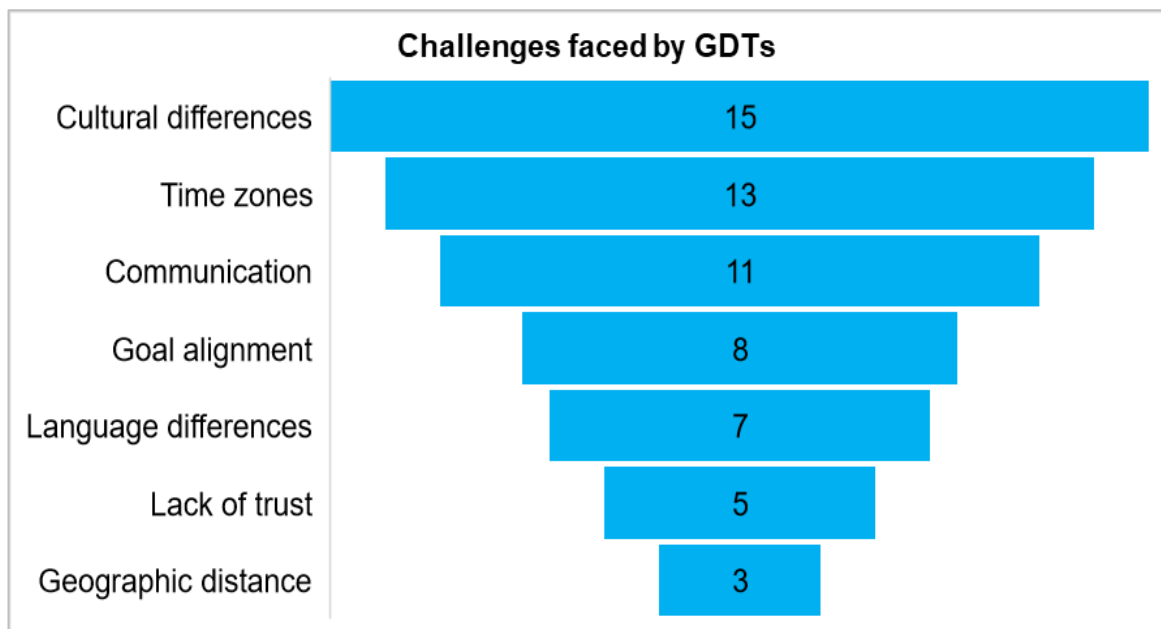
Research participants who disclosed daily meetings endorsed the importance of purpose-driven team stand-ups (stand-up meeting; daily scrums). These involve a 10 – 15-minute virtual daily call where everyone shares their goals and tasks for the upcoming week. Participants explained that this ensures every team member starts the day knowing what they are doing and what the others are also doing to enhance clarity and better working relationships.

Most commonly participants demonstrated that team-building strategies are crucial in addressing challenges rampant in GDTs. Figure 15 provides the common challenges. For participants that had recently started managing GDTs; being in a globally distributed team itself was the first challenge they had to contend with. They disclosed that they were still trying to anchor their feet and find their rhythm.

Based on challenges revealed, team meeting purposes range from enhancing cultural awareness and sensitivity, bridging time zone differences, enabling good and effective communication, and goal alignment.

Figure 15

Challenges faced by GDTs



In as much as GDTs are revered for cultural diversity, managers view this as a challenge. In explaining the impact of language and culture differences Participant 5 gave an interesting example *"One of my reportees sent an e-mail in French. I didn't know what it was saying. I had to copy, paste and Google Translate, you know."* Participant 15 explained that *"obviously leading people from different backgrounds and cultural differences comes with its challenges but the biggest one I think is the communication aspect of it"*. This was corroborated by Participant 11 who explained *"Sometimes you can lose each other in communication. There's a cultural aspect of what is the norm, what is OK, what is not, what is disrespectful. And sometimes you assume people are aloof, but it's a cultural thing."*

In conducting regular team meetings, regularity was defined as context and need specific (once a week, twice a week etc.). There is no prescribed number. Regularity of team meetings considers flexibility, adaptability and is bound by purposefulness. The latter was emphasised on to reduce having meeting fatigue. To enhance team-building meetings must be purpose-driven.

5.5.2 Strategy two: Ensure collaboration opportunities

75.0% of participants shared that collaboration is a key strategy in driving team-building. Participants cited that collaboration opportunities are a prerequisite for knowledge sharing and transfer between and among team members. In addition, participants also shared that interpersonal relationship building, increased participation, and learning of various cultural dimensions to enhance and embrace diversity are also made possible during collaborations. Collaboration opportunities are highly effective in opening avenues for knowledge creation, contribution, sharing, and transfer. Knowledge sharing and defining roles and responsibilities were sub-themes identified under collaboration.

5.5.2.1 Knowledge sharing

Echoing the relevance of collaboration, research participants posited that more effective problem-solving, finding unique solutions to problems, creativity, and innovation are more likely to emerge from collaborations. Managers build strong teams by creating opportunities for people to get a deeper understanding of each other's work and enabling teams to work together on projects or tasks with clear goals, roles, and appropriate feedback and recognition.

Collaboration opportunities ensure team members get to know each other, close the geographic distance gap, and share ideas, information and resources, expertise, lessons learned, and best practices. The richness of different backgrounds results in varied perspectives that can be exploited to drive innovation. Participants also stated that collaborative opportunities are often carefully patterned to ensure they yield the best team-building outcomes. Participant 11 attributed knowledge learning to collaboration and explained that *"because of collaborating, we are now able to learn one from the other"*. One example given was rotating collaboration team members. About this, Participant 4 mentioned, *"Yes, it's very important to rotate them because you know in collaborations on team projects you find that if you keep putting the same people together, they get used to each other and then don't interact with others as much or call each other to accountability"*.

Furthermore, Participant 5 exemplified how they strategise their collaborations “*So, I pick one person from one country and another person from a different country and put them together. Also, I try to make sure that I get someone who is more outgoing and someone who's not as outgoing just to make sure there is a bit of a balance there.*”

5.5.2.2 Defining roles and responsibilities

Clearly understanding who does what prevents role overlap and redundancies, ensuring streamlining the workflow and averting potential chaos with further benefits that extend beyond efficiency. Role and responsibility definition transcends job descriptions to include recognising and harnessing individual strengths to the collective. Careful patterning often involved ensuring meeting frequently at project inception, providing clarity of roles, contributions, expectations, and goals to be achieved.

Participant 7 adduced that defining roles and responsibilities ensures effective collaboration which is “*all about giving every person within your team the voice, the power, and the ability to do things*”. Additionally, Participant 6 explained that “*when we talk of collaboration, we are saying you bring in your resources. I bring in my resources because we've got a common objective to achieve*”. This increases team dependence on each other's expertise and ensures team cohesion. One participant expressed that through collaboration team members act as one another's source of motivation. Individuals may not experience this working on their own.

Ensuring collaboration opportunities drives knowledge-sharing, and rests on clarity of roles and responsibilities. Team-building is enhanced by creating opportunities for team members to collaborate in pairs or quadruples depending on the task. Collaborations must consider mixing of differing personalities and diverse country representations.

5.5.3 Strategy three: Set clear communication guidelines

Communication was cited among the challenges that GDTs must contend with. Not surprisingly, setting clear communication guidelines emerged among the top five team-building strategies, accounting for 68.8% of responses. Participants were in general agreement that in driving team-building that results in the realisation of dynamic capabilities it is important to focus on communication. This includes ensuring clarity and setting clear expectations at the forming stage of the team throughout to adjourning. Participants shared various views on communication differences including informal vs. formal, spontaneous vs. structured, and synchronous vs. sequential. Having clear

communication guidelines means strengthening relationships by adhering to communication protocols and response times. Two key sub-themes identified included providing clarity on technologies in use and articulating a clear mission, vision, and values.

5.5.3.1 Clarity on technologies in use

Since communication in GDTs is electronically mediated, the absence of social cues is the driving force behind the importance of clarity. Participants stated that clarity of communication starts from streamlining the technologies to be used so that each team member is aware and clear. Instant and electronic messaging, file sharing, teleconferencing, and video and audio conferencing are largely used for communication purposes in GDTs. Participants indicated that emails are mostly utilised for formal communication. In addition, participants concurred that their teams have a formal WhatsApp Group that is utilised to communicate any urgent and formal requests. About this, Participant 5 cited that *“My team is in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and South Africa, so every day at 7:00 AM, we have a WhatsApp Group call to hear how everyone is doing, to go through the diary of the day and to allocate some tasks.”*

Another additional strategy participants cited was staying in contact with team members on a one-on-one basis via WhatsApp. One participant indicated that once a week they informally communicate with their team members. These regular, informal check-ins create a safe space and ensure the focus is on team members' well-being, ideas, thoughts, and concerns. Participants disclosed that this helps check the pulse of the team. It also provides opportunities to learn about team members' personalities, likes, and dislikes. These learnings effectively position interpersonal relationships and comfort levels with each team member better. Understanding each other at that personal level means communication can be done more effectively. It also makes it easier to distribute roles and responsibilities across the team.

It was also disclosed as common practice to have informal WhatsApp Groups. These are used to share all the team jokes and personal news/stories. The strategy of having clear communication guidelines aids team-building by encouraging all team members to make contributions to projects and to share ideas. This often results in increased levels of collaboration, and productivity in the workplace. Research participants revealed that they largely use email and instant messaging based on the urgency of communications. Each participant shared that it is important to find a rhythm and set appropriate hours that work best for their teams and context.

5.5.3.2 Articulate a clear mission, vision, and values

By taking a top-down approach in explaining the organisational mission, vision, and values and cascading down to the same for the team, the strategy fosters a sense of belongingness and commitment. This aligns team members, communicates purpose, guides action, and motivates the team. In explaining this strategy Participant 6 revealed that *“The first strategy is a common understanding of the mission, vision, and values, and that must start from the top to the bottom. We are all denominated by the values of the organization which everybody must subscribe.”* Participant 9 revealed that infusion of subject matter experts in the lifespan of a project meant that articulating the mission, vision and values was an ongoing process. This drives a shared sense of commitment to the team, the organisation, and the organisation’s clients. Failure to articulate and clarify the mission, vision and values led to a disjointed team.

Setting clear communication guidelines starts from defining and streamlining technologies in use and clarifying how these are utilised and in what contexts – informal or formal communication. Articulating a clear mission, vision and values enhances communication clarity and drives decision-making.

5.5.4 Strategy four: Enhance trust-building

While there is a need for trust-building only half (50%) of the participants identified it as a fundamental strategy in team-building. In line with the literature review, participants were convinced that trust played a crucial role as a strategy in team-building. Participant 15 indicated that initially it was difficult to build trust. *“Can you imagine dealing with somebody that you've never seen? Or you just see them online. But again, with this changing technology, you know the artificial intelligence and all that, people can easily fake their faces and all that”.* Where trust exists, there is less competition and more collaboration. This finding aligns with the study of interpersonal and collective trust with an emphasis on its multilevel, emergent, and dynamic nature. Techniques disclosed included creating psychological safety, regularly investing in personal relationships, and increasing diversity and cultural awareness training. These three elements are explained below.

5.5.4.1 Creating psychological safety

Five research participants mentioned psychological safety as being quintessential for proper and effective team-building in GDTs. They argued that creating a safe work environment allows team members to be confident and not nervous or reluctant to share

information. Purposefully creating psychological safety starts with a round table conversation so the voices of all members including the quieter ones are heard. One participant also stressed the importance of sharing stories of their own professional (or personal) challenges or missteps, to promote more safety and risk-taking. Participant 8 explained that psychological safety that assists in clarifying target goals is essential. In reflecting on their team, Participant 8 explained that team members often realise that *“we are in this for the same target goals. We are in this for the same outcome, so that has helped build that trust and bridge the mistrust that we initially had.”*

Psychological safety is viewed as a mutual belief that team members hold in taking interpersonal risks and being confident that they are free from being negatively judged or ridiculed. Teams with psychological safety are free to raise concerns and even engage in difficult conversations about a problem which is critical for effective teamwork. Creating psychological safety is fundamental at the forming stage of the team.

5.5.4.2 Investing in personal relationships

Without face-to-face interaction, trust takes much longer to build, and strong relationships are hard to develop. In building trust, respondents also emphasised the use of technology, especially cameras and mentioning team members by names during meetings. While most participants indicated that this was largely left to the discretion of team members (especially after the first introduction meeting), one participant expressed strong feelings about the importance of putting the cameras on. In defending this position, Participant 14 stated that every team member needs to know that *“behind the e-mail address there is a full human being”*. Personal introductions were also considered vital. Participant 16 revealed that *“Each month a different person does what we call a personal introduction. It's like this is who I am. These are photos of my family. This is the holiday I went on. Or these are the countries I've lived in so we get to know everyone in the team, even if two individuals may never ever meet in person.”*

Three participants explained their experiences with the strategy of asking team members to put their cameras on. Participant 8 stated, *“We do it weekly, so we feel a bit more connected as individuals, so we encourage people to have their cameras on, but we never enforce this because you know they have their comfort zone”*. Participant 10 elaborated that *“we don't force people to switch on videos. Sometimes people switch on videos in the beginning and then they don't. Some people like videos, some don't, and we give everyone the space to decide”*. In addition, Participant 13 explained that *“Depending on the team we prefer to have our cameras on so that we see the person that's sitting in Singapore, how*

they look like so that when I send an e-mail to them, I know whom I'm sending to". Regarding this issue, Participant 13 disclosed that they had an encounter with a team member who eventually resigned – never wanted to put their camera on asking “*Are you interested in my face or my brains?*” Participants also conveyed that it was imperative particularly at the forming stage to have cameras on so that one can attach a name to a face.

Three participants expressed that part of the strategy involved bringing in some fun including “*bring a hat, a favourite scarf or T-shirt*” (Participant 13), “*crazy hair or makeup day*” (Participant 5), “*pyjama day*” (Participant 7) and “*bring family to work*” (Participant 2). Participants also shared different names given to weekdays depicting expectations from team members to personally showcase themselves according to that rhythm for example Monday Madness, Fun Friday, Webcam Wednesday, etc. Participants explained that participating was not compulsory, but team members loved them.

5.5.4.3 Diversity and cultural awareness

In GDTs, team members represent multiple disciplinary, and institutional backgrounds that make team processes like coordination, communication, and connection increasingly difficult. Commenting on diversity and culture awareness as a team-building strategy Participant 10 commented “*We get to understand each other's personalities and even each other's journey through life and that you know then defines who we are, our understanding of each other and it builds us together*”. When team members embrace diversity and are culturally respectful towards one another, rivalry, competition, and conflict are reduced.

Four participants articulated the importance of respecting team members and their cultures within virtual teams for team-building purposes. Participants explained that this involves recognising the diverse personalities, backgrounds, and cultures of team members and respecting them. To get this right, one participant explained that they make use of a business psychologist to help analyse the different personalities and provide recommendations on what team-building strategies work best. Participants mentioned that team-building develops when team members feel welcome and accepted, irrespective of their backgrounds and cultural beliefs. In this light, Participant 12 explained “*We do culture days every first Friday of the month, where a country can portray their foods, their habits, their history, and we always make a nice kind of small party outfit. We like creating cultural awareness, around cultural diversity.*”

To support this view Participant 7 shared that during lockdown they held cook-off demonstrations where each team member prepared a quick traditional dish in camera view by the rest of the team. Another recurrent notion that participants alluded to involved remembering all key holidays for the different countries to structure meetings and work submissions outside of these.

For team-building to be successful, trust-building must be enhanced. This starts from enabling psychological safety, being diversity and culturally aware of the team composition and investing in personal relationships. This strategy is particularly useful given that trust in GDTs is believed to develop slowly.

5.5.5 Strategy five: Virtually celebrate achievements and milestones

Celebrating achievements and milestones featured among the top five themes on team-building strategies. Participants shared how important it is to be able to celebrate achievements and recognise “hard work and impact”. Participants stated that it is important to explicitly acknowledge team member achievements, for example, after completing a project or task, promotion, and work anniversaries. Encouraging an atmosphere of recognition and acknowledging achievements celebrate positivity which is a hallmark of employee contentment. Participants disclosed that they conduct online awards/achievements sessions to encourage teams. Participants also cited that they try to meet once a year at a chosen location/country to celebrate achievements. Participant 14 explained that *"It's almost like an achievement together and we give each other a pat on the back to say well done on achieving this milestone. We made it through ... We reflect on what we did wrong, what we did right, what worked and what didn't work"*.

In addition, Participant 15 commented that they *"bring the teams together for physical interaction, which is very important also to celebrate. We also look at how to fix the challenges that we faced in the previous year or the year that we are in"*.

Most commonly participants shared that before COVID - 19 they held annual gatherings a lot to celebrate successes and bring the teams together. During COVID – 19 due to the lockdowns, this was stopped and after COVID – 19 things were yet to pick up. Some participants disclosed budgetary constraints and cost implications as inhibiting factors.

Besides work achievements, participants also shared that team-building celebrations also include personal milestones such as birthdays, graduations, and special occasions for example the birth of babies, adoption, weddings, buying a house, etc. Participants gave

examples of having virtual team lunches together, doing a show and tell, an online quiz or two truths and a lie game focussing on the person being celebrated, and having an online baby gender reveal session.

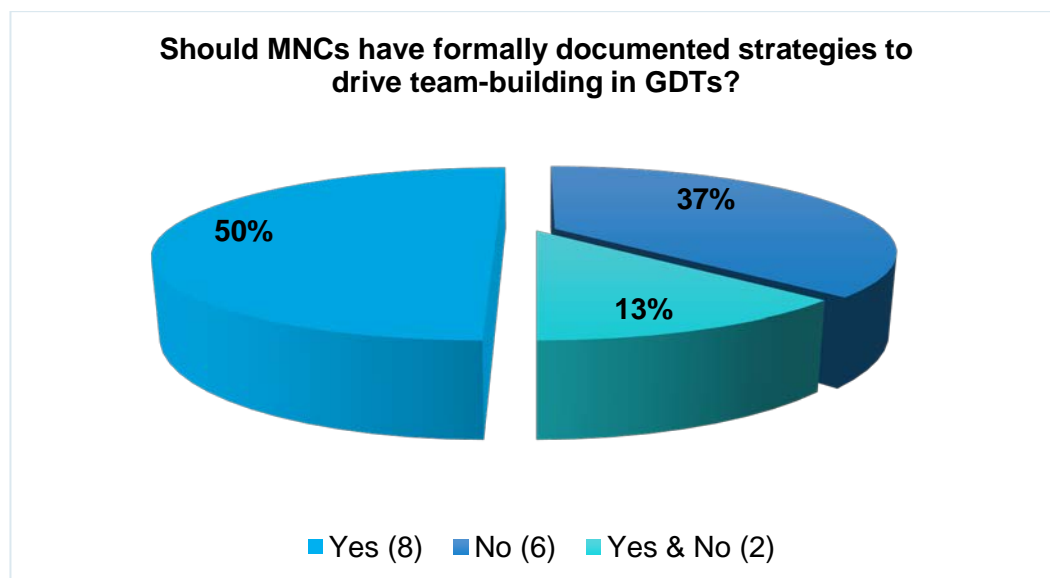
Celebrating individual, team and organisational victories is key to promoting strong interpersonal relationships and creating stronger bonds. At the organisational level, this provides the once-off opportunity to meet in person once a year. The face-to-face opportunities are however hampered by costs and budgetary constraints.

5.6 Formalisation of team-building strategies

Building on the DCs theory, the issue of formalisation is centred on the importance attached to structured routines, standardised procedures, and established protocols that can provide a framework for organisations to manage and coordinate their activities. As shown in Figure 16, 50% of participants believed that MNCs need to have formally documented strategies.

Figure 16

Should MNCs have formally documented strategies to drive team-building in GDTs?



Key reasons provided for formalisation included consistency, bringing about structure, accountability, and access to guidelines. In supporting this view, Participant 2 stated that “Yes, it would be good to have strategies documented and to also record every time that you carried out a specific team-building strategy, to then see what works and

what doesn't work because some strategies work in theory.”

Furthermore, Participant 4 opined that lack of formalisation will be *“just a recipe for chaos. It's just a recipe for confusion, for frustration...”* Whether formalised and consciously structured, or informal and unconscious, team-building was assumed to begin at team development, into the various teaming stages and to take place on an ongoing basis.

Formalisation of team-building strategies was not regarded as a solution especially in GDTs as 37% of participants believed it was not necessary and could yield numerous unintended consequences for leaders such as restricting creativity. In as much as formalisation was believed to result in better coordination, participants with contrary viewpoints believed that formalisation could serve to reduce flexibility. One participant said that once formalised team-building would start being seen as a *“chore”* thereby losing its appeal. In addition, Participant 4 believed that once formalised it would be *“limiting”* since for a leader team-building *“should come from within”*.

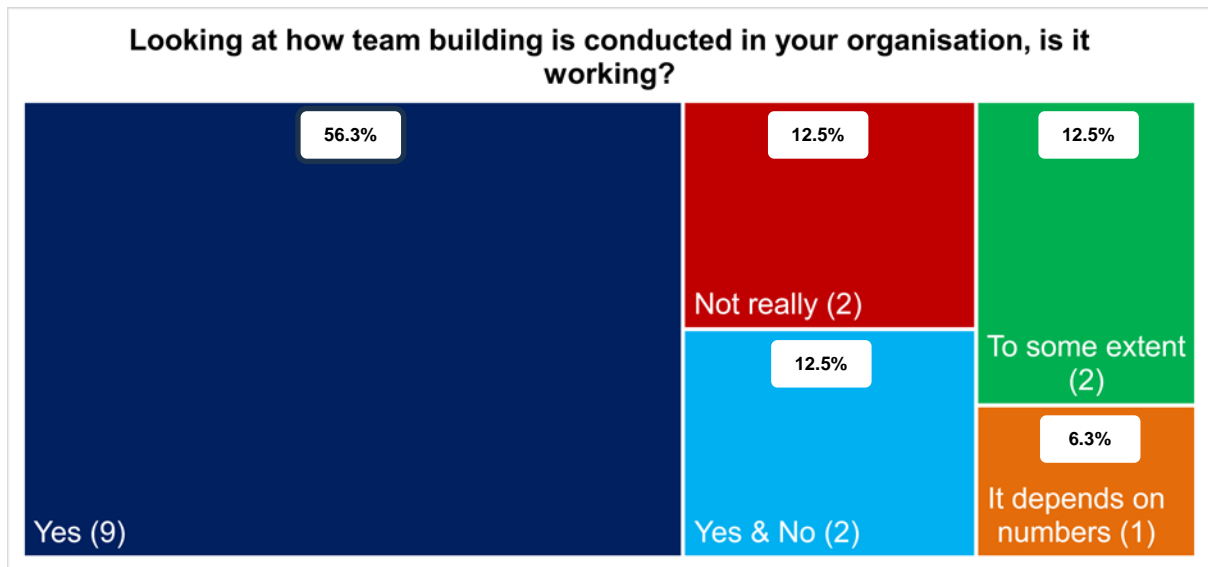
The remaining 13% responded with a "Yes" and "No" and proceeded to explain that they were torn between them because they had worked in organisations where team-building strategies were formalised and where they were not. In both cases, they had seen both positive and negative effects. One participant concluded that team-building strategies should be dependent on the organisation's mission, vision, and values, and these should drive team-building.

5.7 Effectiveness of having team-building strategies

The final interview question sought to understand whether team-building in the participants' organisation was achieving the results intended. Figure 17 below provides an overview of the results obtained. 56.3% of participants indicated that it was effective. There was an equal split (12.5%) between those who thought it was effective to some extent, not working and those who were undecided hence they responded with both a yes and a no. One participant believed this was dependent on numbers. Participants cited that even though the strategies were not formal, they were able to evaluate the strategies based on the various changes they could see in team interactions and processes.

Figure 17

Effectiveness of team-building



On the reasons why they thought team-building strategies were working participants shared the following sentiments:

- *Since we started having regular team meetings, the team has been more innovative. (Participant 6)*
- *Umm, it has helped build strong work streams and personal relationships between individuals. (Participant 15)*
- *We have achieved a positive working environment through constant interaction with each other. (Participant 11)*
- *Team members have come to identify and rely on one another's strengths and other positive traits to achieve company common goals. (Participant 9)*
- *I would say that without team-building it would be worse if you factor in all the challenges that we face. (Participant 13)*
- *So, it is the team-building strategies and team-building activities that have helped, you know, navigate these challenges that we face. (Participant 16)*
- *There is more trust than when we initially started. (Participant 8)*

Participants were also adamant that team-building is dependent on team numbers. The smaller the number the more likelihood of effectiveness and the opposite was regarded as true. A range of between two to ten team members resulted in effective team-building. Any number beyond 10 was viewed as making it difficult for real and effective team-building to take place. Not that it is impossible, but it becomes an uphill task. The recommendation was to consider having smaller teams, where possible and applicable.

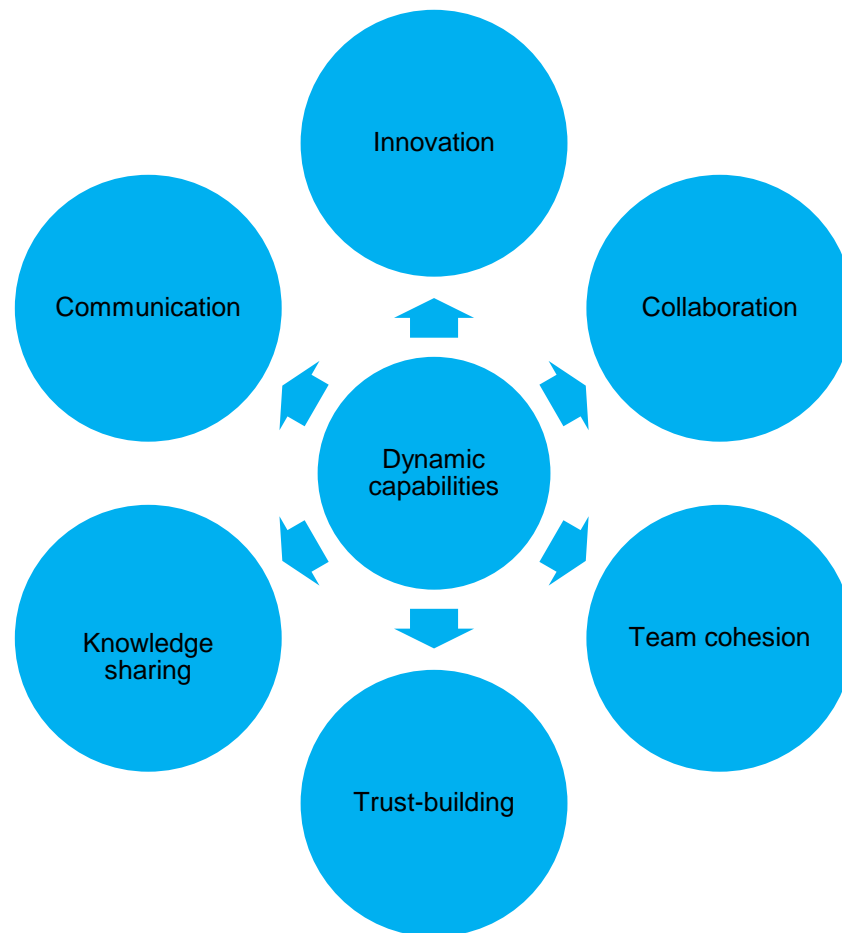
One key reason given was that it was easier to ensure active participation by all, ensuring all team members are involved thereby creating an inclusive and comfortable environment for all team members. This was partly accomplished through conducting a lightning round at the start of the meeting, a final recap at the end, and ensuring everyone got an opportunity to express their views. Additionally, knowing team members' religion, culture, and national holidays and respecting them was viewed as easy in smaller teams. Except for meta or project teams where team lifespan was short, time-bound, and project completion focussed; participants cited that having an opportunity to meet face-to-face at least once was essential in team-building.

Among those who responded in the affirmative, the general sentiment was that there was room for improvement. Participant 12 described that *"we are not at the level of team building that I would like, but it has the attention and we're, yeah, we have lots of things to improve on"*. Participant 5 stated, *"For a team-building session or programme to be effective, the first strategy that you need to have is a common understanding of the mission, vision, and values of the organisation."*

In expressing why, they think team-building is effective participants disclosed six key capabilities that they believe result when team-building is strategy-driven (see Figure 18 below). These capabilities include collaboration, communication, innovation, knowledge sharing, team cohesion, and trust-building as shown in the depiction below. To maximise effectiveness, team-building must be strategy driven.

Figure 18

Key capabilities that result from having team-building strategies



5.7.1 Innovation

Having team-building strategies was regarded as beneficial in stimulating creativity and innovation. Having strategies that include collaboration enhances out-of-the-box thinking which generates new ideas, devices, and methods of doing things in new ways to meet market needs and create value. Participant 8 acknowledged that the global distribution drives innovation as *“the viewpoints are always diverse”*. Participants identified that it is not always smooth-sailing from beginning. However, once the team members settle in creativity and innovation is unstoppable as explained by Participant 11 *“Take-off is slow initially but once the team spirit is built, the innovative ideas flow.”* As participants pointed it was believed that once team-building was conducted effectively it would enhance and yield innovative capacity, essential in improving products and processes. However, innovation was an outcome where employees had management support and confidence to believe that they were allowed to experiment, try, and even not get it right. Participant 9 explained that *“team members need to know that failure is part of the learning process that ultimately gets the surprise product out.”* (Participant 4).

5.7.2 Collaboration

Team-building strategies that enhance collaboration involve sharing knowledge, skills, and resources to accomplish a shared objective. Participant 14 on the other hand explained collaboration in this manner *“So in principle what I aim to achieve is a seamlessly coordinated team that works together creatively and are able to self-organise to optimally produce bigger output”*. In essence, collaboration unleashes team creativity, which keeps employees engaged and inventive. One participant noted that *“once the roles and streams are clear for collaboration the creativity adrenalin flows easily. Lack of role clarity creates a mess”* (Participant 5). Like knowledge sharing, collaboration also met with unwillingness and lack of commitment challenges.

5.7.3 Team cohesion

Team cohesion is a dynamic process that ensures that talents are maximised while also enabling employee engagement and satisfaction. This is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of goals and objectives. The pursuit of goals was emphasised by Participant 6 who claimed that *“The first win was to align and glue everyone to look in that one direction and have a common goal and common vision et cetera.”* In this regard, Participant 14 cited that cohesion was about having confidence that the team can depend on each other. The elaborated that the aim was *“to create that bond within teams so that you know you they can then rely on each other as well”*.

5.7.4 Communication

Having multiple modes of communication, and articulating the organisational mission, vision, and values were strategies meant to enhance communication capability. Communication capability ensures a good exchange of ideas, opinions, thoughts, data, and knowledge so that the message is received, processed, and understood with clarity and purpose. However, the absence of spontaneous communication was seen in negative light. Participant 14 explained *“more meetings have to be scheduled unlike when you are in the office you can just walk to someone’s desk.”* As a result, Participant 14 explained that as part of their team building once every month, they schedule a “blank meeting” that has no agenda and is used for reflection. Participant 14 cited that *“it is great to have an opportunity to have a conversation because I just believe it’s add something to the energy of us as humans.”* They further explained that *“sometimes it might be to pause and think differently. Sometimes it might be to connect. Sometimes it might be to view a problem in a different way.”*

5.7.5 Knowledge sharing

Through the strategy of collaboration, team members exchange explicit (codified and documented) and tacit (based on intuition and experience) information, skills, or expertise resulting in more creativity, learning, innovation, decision-making, and problem-solving. To enhance knowledge sharing participants explained that pairing or grouping team members worked well. Some participants used brainstorming sessions to get the team members to share how they were problem-solving, meeting targets and selling products. Participant 14 revealed that *“we often ask team members to share one tip that works well for them.”* In addition, they then ask others to try implementing same and providing feedback on the results. Participant 13 also shared that knowledge sharing sometimes meets with resistance with some team members not willing to share their winning formula or tips and mentor colleagues or vice versa (mentees not keen).

5.7.6 Trust-building

Trust builds slowly through repeated interactions and is regarded as the glue (social system fundamental lubricant) that holds teams together. Team members gain confidence to trust when they realise that colleagues are consistent and dependable, and they can relate to them as human beings with faults and fine lines. In demonstrating the importance of building trust on knowing each other as human beings. Participant 13 explained that *“we try to get to understand each other's personalities and each other's journey through life and that you know then defines who we are, our understanding of each other and it builds us together.”* Investing in forming and sustaining personal relationships, enabling psychological safety and diversity, and cultural awareness training programmes were identified as team-building strategies that lead to trust-building.

In appraising the effectiveness of team-building strategies, six DCs emerged namely collaboration, communication, innovation, knowledge sharing, team cohesion, and trust-building.

5.8 Dynamic capabilities

Team-building enhances team dynamics, boosts morale, and increases productivity using a range of carefully crafted actions and exercises to foster a positive and cohesive team environment where individuals feel connected, motivated, and supported to achieve common goals. In driving team-building, strategies are indispensable in ensuring that dynamic capabilities are built and deeply baked into an organisation's culture. The following three paragraphs provide a summary of the tripartite dynamic capabilities and

the researcher's findings on team-building strategies used in driving team-building in South African MNCs GDTs.

5.8.1 Sensing capabilities

GDTs face the reality of having team members that are strewn across the globe hence the need to sense team-building opportunities and threats. Engage in effective sense-making, scanning, learning and direct interactions with the teams and their work environment must be made possible. These direct interactions take the form of both one-on-one conversations and team sessions. Interviews revealed that sensing capabilities in GDTs are driven by strategies that include having regular team meetings, ensuring effective and good communication, and celebrating work achievements and personal milestones. Sensing capabilities to determine if there is a need for change also reside in rotating team members for collaborations. Sensing capabilities initiate and enhance the exploration of what possible solutions exist.

5.8.2 Seizing capabilities

Sensing is immediately followed by seizing. Seizing involves converting the learning and data analysis that took place at the sensing stage into meaningful actions. Seizing enables quick responsiveness in formulating appropriate actions that guide the use of resources in a timely fashion to change processes as required by the environment. Seizing capabilities demonstrate that decisions on teamwork factors are related to knowledge acquisition linked to adaptation and the meaningful strategic actions identified during interviews included conflict resolution, flexibility, collaboration, and trust-building.

5.8.3 Reconfiguring (transforming) capabilities

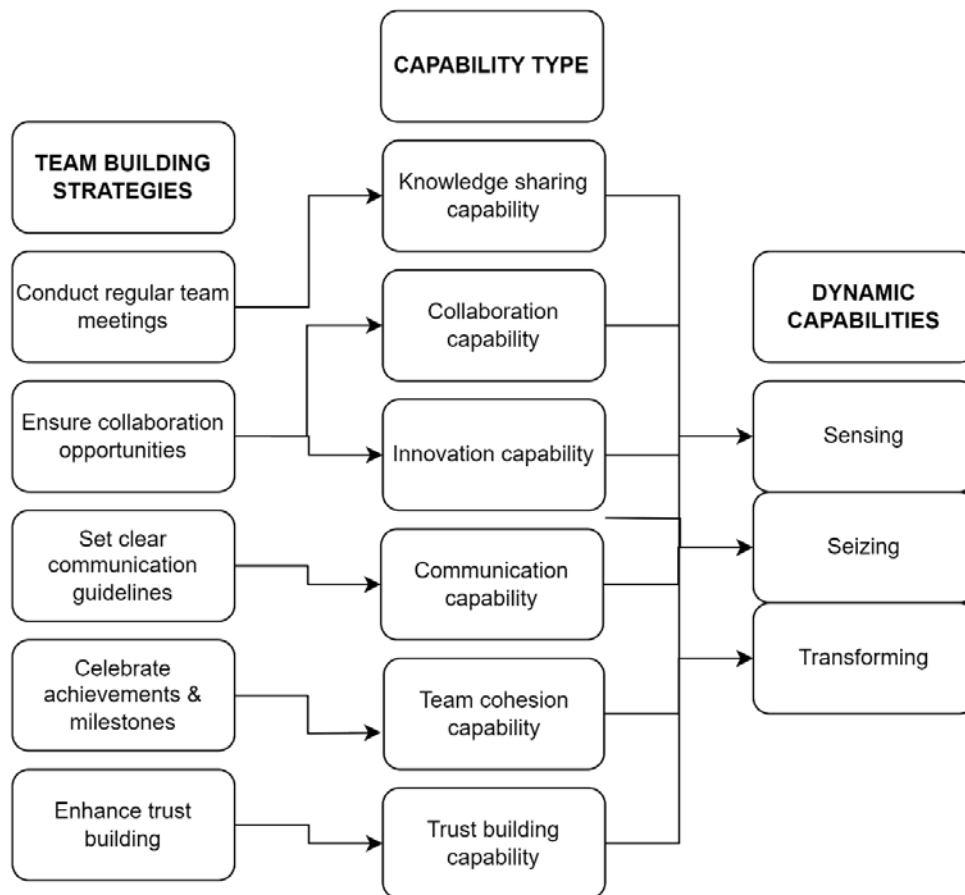
Reconfiguring enables responsibility assigning, resource allocation, and demonstration of sensed and seized capabilities. Adaptation, renewal, and reshaping take place with strategies that embrace knowledge sharing, and team cohesion for creativity and innovation. Reconfiguring capabilities enable the transformation of organisational and cultural elements.

Figure 19 provides a depiction of the above-mentioned dynamic capabilities that are born when team-building is strategy driven. These capabilities include collaboration, communication, conflict resolution, innovation, knowledge sharing, team cohesion and trust-building. Participants showed that when team-building is strategy driven it indirectly

impacts team productivity and performance by bringing in various benefits that support this.

Figure 19

An overview of team-building strategies in GDTs (researcher's depiction)



5.9 Challenges experienced in implementing team-building strategies

As a process that involves improving relationships, communication, and collaboration among members of a team, team-building can never be without challenges. Two participants shared examples of ideas that had been suggested but that did not work out. Examples given included getting a team member to showcase their home office, exercising together, and hosting a live remote working session much like in an open-plan office where employees chat away as they work, asking each other questions, brainstorming, or working in silence.

Three important challenges emerged from the interviews conducted. These mainly relate to cost, differences in time zones, and team members' willingness to participate. In the ensuing paragraphs, each of these challenges is explained.

5.9.1 Cost.

The cost was largely a concern for participants who felt there was a need to meet team members face-to-face at least once at team forming and thereafter perhaps once a year. Participant 16 shared that *"due to cost reductions I can't travel so much, so, it's having a trust-based team that trust you and you trust them"* while Participant 7 stated that *"the concern nowadays is about cost cutting. So, my biggest challenge I would say over the last two or three years without being able to travel so much has been understanding each team and particularly those that have a less open culture"*. Cost examples included travel expenses, transportation, accommodation, meals, hiring venues, and other additional expenses. One participant also included facilitator fees especially when hiring a professional facilitator or team-building expert to help design and lead activities. About the latter point, depending on the specific activities planned, the need to purchase supplies, equipment, or resources to support team-building activities was also cited.

5.9.2 Differences in time zones

In scheduling and coordinating activities, for example, meetings that require real-time important to find a time that works for everyone, considering the time zones of all team members. This requires flexibility and compromise to accommodate different schedules. One participant indicated that on first joining a GDT, they worked very long hours in trying to accommodate the different time zones represented in the team. This impacts work-life balance and integration. Participant 13 (check bold) explained *"Sometimes you must join calls until 7:00pm. Or to catch someone you must wake up earlier... **sometimes it happens, and it's not great for family. But you sign up for a job and you know this is the norm.**"* Participant 11 also explained that *"**it's a given** that you tend to work those hours and you can't log off at like 6:00 for instance because you will still have people on your team still working till 7-8 at night"*. Participants also explained that recordings assist in managing the time zone issue. Participant 16 cited that *"It's hard ... in the 3 1/2 years we have never had a single team meeting where we've all been together So, it's either the Australian and Singapore team who attend or my LATAM team that attend and the other listen to a recording."*

Some participants explained that they had to find a working schedule by taking advantage of overlapping working hours. Whereas some participants viewed time zone differences as a challenge, one participant disclosed that they had used this to their advantage by implementing staged work processes where they passed on projects from one team to another. By the time they start work, they need to finalise or continue their slot of the project. For meetings, team recordings were cited as helpful. However, for meetings that require everyone's participation and involvement overlapping hours were utilised.

In some cases, participants disclosed that time zone differences resulted in response delays or missed interactions. Participants also shared that they had to ensure inclusivity by avoiding favouring one-time zones consistently. Team meetings included rotated schedules to give everyone an equal opportunity to participate in real-time.

5.9.3 Team members' willingness to participate

Participants shared that another key challenge was team members that are not enthusiastic about coming together. Participants explained that some team members prefer being given tasks and deadlines and working individually without being called to be involved with the rest of the team. Another cohort prefers not to participate in meetings (passengers). This aligns with the five team-building participants explained in the literature review (prisoners, protesters, performers, passengers, and propellers).

In implementing team-building strategies, three challenges exist namely cost, differences in time-zones and team members' willingness to participate.

5.10 Conclusion

This research sought to explore team-building strategies that build the dynamic capabilities of South African MNCs' globally distributed teams. The purpose of this chapter was to provide the findings obtained from the interviews. Five essential team-building strategies identified include regular virtual team meetings, collaboration opportunities, clear communication guidelines, celebration of achievements and milestones and trust-building. Through implementing team-building strategies innovation, collaboration, team cohesion, communication, knowledge sharing, and trust-building capabilities are built.

The next chapter discusses the findings, focussing on meaning, importance, relevance, and limitations; and how the findings relate to the literature review.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This study explores team-building strategies that build the dynamic capabilities of South African MNCs' GDTs. Chapter 5 provided the findings of this research. The findings revealed five key team-building strategies that include conducting regular virtual team meetings, ensuring collaboration opportunities, setting clear communication guidelines, enhancing trust-building, and virtually celebrating achievements and milestones. Whereas team-building for face-to-face teams is mostly outdoor activities (team lunches, rope climbing, drum playing) in GDTs every interaction, and every activity is a team-building opportunity. In GDTs, team-building is an on-going, dynamic process. Teams are constantly undergoing refurbishing, reassembling and revision as the business environment undergoes constant change. This chapter discusses the five strategies and the dynamic capabilities that emerge, their meaning, importance, relevance, and limitations; and how the findings relate to the literature review. Team-building strategies yield innovation, collaboration, team cohesion, communication, knowledge sharing, and trust-building capabilities.

6.2 Participant descriptive data

From the results, the average tenure length in a GDT is 6.2 years. This implies that participants were involved with GDTs long enough to determine whether their team-building strategies were working or not. They could also share insights and views spanning before COVID - 19, through it and after. With the number of reportees ranging between three and 40, the level of diversity is significantly high, requiring combined and higher level of strategies to build trust. These findings confirm Salas et al.'s (2018) reference to larger teams that are called multi-team systems, or teams of teams.

The global distribution of teams revealed three as the lowest number of countries represented and 11 as the highest. Trust development is slow in GDTs (Aquino et al., 2022; Breuer et al., 2020; Costa et al., 2018). More dispersion implies more diverse communication styles, different working patterns and approaches to problem-solving and decision-making (Minbaeva et al., 2021). Dispersed team members and larger team sizes impact cooperation, and goal alignment. There is also potential for members to become siloed and divergent in their contributions. Simply understanding how various personalities

complement one another requires additional managerial time and skills (Nordback & Espinosa, 2019). To address this, one participant elaborated that they make use of a business psychologist to assist them in understanding the different personalities and to get recommendations regarding team-building strategies that would work best. This demonstrates how team-building strategies must be carefully crafted to cater for the higher level of diversity. When team members are from diverse backgrounds their view of the world and of problems is different leading to diverse solutions and robust problem brainstorming sessions (Minbaeva et al., 2021).

6.3 Team-building strategies that build dynamic capabilities

The DCs framework demonstrates that strategies are closely connected with, but separate from, capabilities ((Schoemaker et al., 2018). Strategy is about the careful choice of methods to exploit opportunities perceived based in the business environment. Extending on prior research efforts on team-building processes, which already identified the importance of team-building (Lacerenza et al., 2018, Shuffler et al., 2018), this research identifies five practical team-building strategies for GDTs. The team-building strategies confirm reviewed literature that team building is a continuous and on-going process rather than a fixed objective to achieve (Pollack & Matous, 2019). In addition to the task of selecting suitable team members (not the focus of this research), team-building involves nurturing relationships, fostering trust, and establishing a shared agenda based on mission, vision, core values, and strategic planning. While the way team-building has been positioned in reviewed literature presupposes a reactive process (Zhang & Losekoot, 2021) this research's findings demonstrate that team-building is highly-effective when proactively administered as a continuous process undertaken even before any teamwork challenges are identified.

This research confirms that team-building is essential in GDTs given that the concept of team and teamwork has significantly shifted in the new world of work. Zhang & Losekoot (2021, p. 151) summarise this confirmation by stating that “when properly designed and implemented, team building can greatly help organisations”. This research further supports the theory that strategies are important in enhancing DCs (Witschel et al., 2022). Socialising and feeling connected in a virtual workplace environment can be challenging (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020). It takes more effort to create relationships with colleagues using digital devices. In MNCs, constant change requires agility, integration, renewal, and upgrading of resources (Zahra, et al., 2022). Thus, team-building in GDTs must enhance dynamic capabilities that strengthen relationships and enhance trust-building. As will be shown later, strategy-driven team-building yields different DCs.

This research's findings build on existing evidence that when team-building is strategy-driven, it yields powerful DCs with proven potential to enhance teams that are ready to compete in dynamic environments (Shuffler et al., 2018) and indirectly impact team performance (Laaksonen & Peltoniemi, 2018). Whereas the initial conceptual framework indicated that team building strategies would drive effective team building resulting in DCs that lead to high performance, this research did not find a direct correlation between team-building that is strategy-driven and performance. Firm performance is a fundamental component of the DCs theory and is usually seen as the supreme aim and result of carefully embedded dynamic capabilities (Laaksonen & Peltoniemi, 2018). However, none of the participants showed that there was a straight line leading from team building strategies to team-building and high performance.

Team-building in GDTs is not an automatic, once-off activity. It is carefully interwoven into the day-to-day activities of the GDT thereby enhancing easy transfer to the work environment. This demonstrates that team-building starts at the forming stage through to storming, norming, performing and adjourning (Jones, 2019). 93.8% of research participants shared managers had the responsibility to enhance and facilitate team-building. This contradicts the claims by Zhang and Losekoot (2021) that team-building is outsourced to external facilitators which is erroneous as they lack familiarity with the business environment or team. The high-level overview briefing they are given informs them about challenges faced, the thrust and direction of team-building they need to conduct but one wonders if that is sufficient to drive team-building that is impactful in the long term. Findings demonstrate that no team-building strategy is worth initiating unless team managers are willing to commit time and resources to come up with sound strategies. This aligns with Pedersen & Tallman (2022) who emphasise the importance of the individual attributes of a manager. One manager (Participant 7) interviewed indicated that team-building is "*woven into the fabric of the managerial role*". Investment in effective strategies is vital and these strategies must be carefully crafted, harnessed and applied appropriately (Welch & Welch, 2018).

Findings reveal that team-building interventions are methodically designed. This contradicts Zhang and Losekoot's (2021) assertions that not all team-building interventions are methodically designed and properly implemented. Like Zhang and Losekoot's (2021) findings this research is not conclusive that all types of team-building strategies are effective. For example, Participant 12 demonstrated that they tried playing an online game and it flopped. In addition, participants also shared challenges experienced when

implementing team-building strategies. These challenges are discussed in greater detail in section 6.5.

In face-to-face teams, team-building is about off-site events/activities that are detached from the work environment. Making that direct transfer from off-site to on-site is always met with challenges (Webber et al., 2019). In face-to-face teams, activities that are light-hearted and funny are scheduled thereby increasing time spent between team members. Examples of activities undertaken include engaging in dance routines, tai chi, drum beating sessions, rope-climbing courses, and ice breakers. Team-building activities that do not have components based on scientific evidence may have short-term effects, plus there is not much proof that they are effective. (Lacerenza et al., 2018). Whilst face-to-face activities work for colocated teams, for GDTs separated by thousands of kilometres it is practically impossible to conduct this regularly due to distance and cost constraints. Hence GDT strategies align with the technology-mediated environment.

Participant responses indicate that occasional face-to-face meetings (cameras on) are helpful in team-building in GDTs. This assists in encouraging real conversations, overcoming proximity bias, communicating presence and engagement, discouraging multi-tasking, and accelerates trust-building. Advocates for cameras-on argue that people are known to remember what they see more than what they hear. However, detractors of this notion argue that having cameras-on brings distractions and takes away from the meeting agenda.

Participants cited that team-building impact in GDTs varies depending on whether the team is small (two – 10) or big (more than 10). Additionally, whether the team is assembled short-term or long-term is also a determining factor. Shorter, project teams work on tight deadlines leaving little time to devote a lot of attention to team-building processes and activities that do not fall within the scope of the project/task to be executed (Benishek & Lazarra, 2019). In these teams, the main strategy is recruiting the right people at the onset of the project (skilled, subject matter experts). Research participants who had the opportunity to meet with their team members face-to-face even once cited that it was a meaningful and great experience due to the social presence, energy, empathy, and camaraderie created during the encounter.

Provided below is a discussion of team-building strategies that build dynamic capabilities of GDTs in South African MNCs. Identified team-building strategies inculcate Lacerenza et al. 's (2018) and Shuffler et al.'s (2018) primary components of team-building which

include goal setting, interpersonal-relationship management, role clarification, and problem-solving. Team-building strategies must ensure that team-building processes and actions enhance agility, flexibility, integration, and resilience to meet business environment diversity and the accompanying “VUCAIity”

6.3.1 Regular virtual team meetings

To respond timeously to opportunities and market changes, it is vital for GDTs to meet regularly. Regularity and frequency of team meetings positively influences interpersonal relationships and trust-building (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020). Interpersonal-relationship management is a key team-building principle (Lacerenza et al., 2018; Shuffler et al., 2018) fundamentally appreciated for enhancing belongingness, mental wellbeing, feelings of self-esteem and self-worth. It also enables feedback exchange, provision of support to one another, addressing emerging challenges, and ensuring team cohesion, and alignment. 93.8% of research participants indicated that holding regular virtual meetings was fundamental in team-building. Participants cited that keeping track of what everyone is doing can be challenging. Therefore, having regular team meetings enabled team members to quickly do a “lightning round” so everyone is abreast of tasks and progress. Regular team meetings provide opportunities for sharing knowledge and aligning everyone towards a shared purpose and common goal. Attainment of that shared purpose enhances psychological safety which enables comfort and security in expressing thoughts and ideas (Aquino et al., 2022; Begerowski, et al., 2021; Eisenberg & DiTomaso, 2021; Pollack & Matous, 2019).

While meeting regularly ensures bond creation and connection, a high level of cementation is attained through ensuring meetings are purpose-driven. It is not so much about the frequency of the meetings but the quality. A compelling direction or purpose has vital implications for the success of the meetings (Webber, et al., 2019). Purpose drives and increases bonding, energy, and focus, and provides a succinct framework for a meeting. With participants revealing that meetings ranged from once a day (STUM and daily scrums) to once every month and need dependent, the level of coming together also gets determined by the flexibility allowed. This flexibility includes decisions on regularity. In the absence of a purpose or emerging challenge necessitating a meeting, flexibility dictates that regularity can be changed. This is done to avoid meeting fatigue or meeting as a nice-to-have.

When appropriately done, regular team meetings result in strong interpersonal relationships which enable collaboration, and good communication, and open avenues for

knowledge creation, contribution, sharing and transfer (Aquino et al., 2022, Caligiuri et al., 2020). This challenges Gilli et al.'s (2022, p. 328) assertion that because GDT members "rarely or never meet personally, they face difficulties engaging in regular exchanges". Regular team meetings enable sensing capabilities (gathering and analysing intelligence about the different team members, team environments and existent challenges). Managers check the pulse of the team and determine if goals are on course to be met. GDTs function effectively when managers regularly check in on members' personal situations and emotions. This boosts morale, contributes to interpersonal bonding (Grossman & Miller, 2021), solidifies positions, and clarifies everyone's role in the team (Vuchkovski et al., 2023).

Furthermore, participant categories (prisoners, protesters, performers, passengers, propellers) can also be easily sensed and measures implemented to mitigate negative outcomes and embolden positive contributors. This aligns with Zhang and Losekoot's (2021) placement of team-building participants into eight main categories (the true believers, rational thinkers, go-with-the-flow, pragmatists, saboteurs, political drop-outs, saboteurs, honest opt-outs, and absentees with genuine reasons) based on overall attitude and behavioural intentions towards team building. However, Zhang and Losekoot's (2021) focus was on face-to-face team-building.

This analysis supports the theory that team-building needs to be properly designed and methodically implemented to yield effective results (Zhang & Losekoot, 2021). Regularity, accompanying adaptability (the capability to adjust and deal with changing task demands), flexibility, and purposefulness drive sensing capabilities (Bush et al., 2019). Adaptability involves four stages that are all important in solidifying team-building for effective results. These stages encompass recognition (noticing and acknowledging change), reframing situations, responding, and reflecting (Benishek & Lazzara, 2019). Research participants referred to "lightning round" or quick WhatsApp call where team members share what they are working on. Further extension into sharing details, successes and challenges must be encouraged to generate a dialogue that others can use to proffer recommendations or learnings.

6.3.2 Collaboration opportunities

Based on the findings that 75% of participants cited collaboration as an essential strategy for effective team-building, this supports earlier findings by Microsoft (2020). It was shown earlier on that collaboration opportunities are highly effective in team-building as they open avenues for working together, knowledge creation, contribution, sharing, and transfer

(Aquino et al., 2022). Through collaborations team members learn to share ideas, listen actively, and communicate effectively across cultural and geographical boundaries (Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018).

The diversity that characterises GDTs also means the presence of varied expertise, skills, and knowledge diversity (Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018). This is essential in driving multi-faceted solutions to problems through knowledge spillovers (Vuchkovski et al., 2023). When harnessed properly, diversity drives creativity. This is possible when there is knowledge of one's role and responsibility in the collaboration. So, clearly defining roles and responsibilities becomes an essential strategy to reduce conflict and enhance collaboration (Aquino et al., 2022). When roles and responsibilities are clearly delineated team members attain a better understanding of their own and their teammates' responsibilities thereby reducing conflict and confusion (Lacerenza et al., 2018). Additionally, there is also reduction of stress and, anxiety which hamper productivity and effective interpersonal relationship management.

Enabling collaboration opportunities breeds several advantages that research participants articulated as effective problem-solving, finding unique solutions to problems, creativity, and innovation. It also reduces the silo-mentality which refers to the reluctance to share valuable information in a team or within an organisation. Dynamic capabilities are built on collective activities that take place inside the organisation (Fainshmidt et al., 2019). Collaboration in GDTs involves clarity in roles and goals, distribution of tasks and information, being considerate to members of all locations and setting communication norms.

This strategy demonstrates that by engaging in collaborative activities that require brainstorming, ideation, and finding unique solutions, team members develop the ability to think outside the box and find innovative approaches to challenges. Organisations embrace with agility to opportunities and market changes (Benishek & Lazarra, 2019). Collaboration opportunities enable teams to adjust the resource base and vary competence building in response to changes. Through collaboration tools, formal collaboration communication can easily be tracked, team members easily tagged, and shared files easily attached.

GDTs also encounter collaboration failures due to collaborators delaying responses (Caligiuri et al., 2020; Marlow et al., 2018; Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020; Taras et al., 2019). Technology-mediated collaboration has potential to create lags in information exchange,

lead to more misunderstandings (Benishek & Lazzara, 2019; Vuchkovski et al., 2023) and result in less coherent messages (Benishek & Lazzara, 2019). This may drive team members to feel disconnected to the team and organisation. Managerial competence is required to rescue the situation.

Managers play a central and crucial role in designing collaboration teams and tasks as shown in the research findings that team members can be combined and shuffled around in response to team and organisational needs. This is in line with Zahra et al.'s (2022) observation that dynamic capabilities are largely shaped by managerial actions. Based on their knowledge of team members' skills, abilities and personalities managers seize the best opportunities and combinations for collaboration. One participant disclosed the use of a business psychologist to understand personalities, strengths, and weaknesses to assist in setting up collaboration teams. Team leaders/managers must continuously look for ways to foster cross-team collaboration, and spontaneous idea-sharing (Microsoft, 2021). Collaboration opportunities and routines help to eliminate silos, unhealthy friendship cliques, and strong office politics that can inhibit trust-building between team members.

6.3.3 Clear communication guidelines

Communication is a major component of team-building. The shift from direct (face-to-face) to indirect (technology-mediated) communication results in disruptions in speed, availability, quantity, and quality of communication, knowledge, and information transfer (Vuchkovski et al., 2023). Whether the communication is verbal or non-verbal, clear communication guidelines are essential ways of nurturing psychological safety (Grossman & Miller, 2021), fostering effective communication, respect for one another, consideration, consistency, and stability. This builds the team's operative capacity. Having communication guidelines ensures everyone has the same understanding regarding the expectations and duties of the team. Establishing clear norms of team member communication and conduct enhances team-building. When team members are certain of standards, channels, and processes, this yields a favourable environment for trust and team-building (Caligiuri et al., 2020). Clarity and understanding of technologies enhance virtual team communication and interaction. Team members need to be confident in distinguishing channels for formal and informal communication (Eisenberg et al., 2019). Having this clarified at team formation or when a new member joins the team, gives the team clarity and stability.

The managerial effectiveness in GDT acts as a strong predictor of communication satisfaction and effectiveness with standards set for frequency, clarity, and quality.

Effectiveness is useful in team-building as seen in enhancing a team capable of promptly responding to questions and acknowledging suggestions (Gibson et al., 2019; Grossman & Miller, 2021; Shuffler et al., 2018). When guidelines are clear and communicated effectively, they assist team members in knowing how to behave as part of the team. When everyone knows what they are supposed to do it unleashes communication energies (Bush et al., 2019). This ultimately brings team members closer to achieving a more synchronized work effort (Shuffler et al., 2018). Ensuring effective internal communication in teams translates into the bigger organisation and spills over into external clients. This creates a positive and strong public impression.

Research participants also revealed the importance of one-on-one check-in meetings that serve to build trust, gather honest feedback, and understand different perspectives. In this way, managers fulfil the role of monitor (scanning environments, monitoring units, probing, and seeking information) thereby, acting as the processing centre of incoming information (Seshadri & Elangovan, 2019). Informal one-on-one meetings regard team members as unique individuals and sustain ongoing dyadic relationships. They also foster cohesion, result in generation of great ideas, and drive nimble action essential in completing projects. In the absence of one-on-one interactions, employees lose their sense of connectedness and belonging to the team and the organisation.

By setting and standardising rules of engagement at the initial planning period the manager injects inclusive communication behaviours into the team (Seshadri & Elangovan, 2019). Inclusive communication assists members in overcoming conflict, developing understanding, and building trust. Commenting on standardised rules of engagement Grossman and Miller (2021) draw up vital points that must be collaboratively planned for up front. These include the choice of software, the format of meetings, team interaction policies (e.g., giving every team member a chance to speak), email turnaround times and cut-off working hours for instant messaging. These are essential to rally team members towards one direction, have them on the same page and ensure a reduction in miscommunication (Einola & Alvesson, 2019).

6.3.4 Celebrating achievements and milestones

According to Jones (2019), celebration gives a boost of confidence to the team and enables an atmosphere that is positive, inclusive, and supportive. Strategies that focus on, and foster motivation and confidence-building yield successful teams. Appreciation and recognition provide a sense of security and assurance to the team (Jones, 2019) and form an integral part of acceptance. Acceptance gives any team member a sense of belonging.

Appreciating and recognising good work, standards and the value others bring to the team in their role is the basis of a transforming capability.

By celebrating individuals and their achievements as a team, inclusion, appreciation, affirmation, innovation, and collaboration are born (Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018). Participants also expressed their desire for a transparent exchange of their respective personal experiences and acknowledged that this practice added significance to their work. This confirms Gibson et al.'s (2019) assertion that sharing personal realities made work more meaningful. Most importantly, motivation is realised.

When members believe they are on the periphery of team recognition and activities, contributing ideas and expertise wanes which impairs ability utilisation of resident, diverse talent bases to deliver innovative products and services. On the other end, when team members feel included and recognised, their contributions of ideas and expertise flourish, enabling the effective utilisation of diverse talent pools to deliver innovative products and services (Gibson et al., 2019). Being recognised for accomplishments gives employees a huge sense of pride, motivation, accomplishment, and validation. Research participants shared how annual achievement awards, mostly conducted face-to-face are utilised to bring teams together at an organisational level. Participants cited that team-building works well when conducted face-to-face; and in GDTs this is required at the initial phase of team formation (Seshadri & Elangovan, 2019). Project completion, scoring a deal, and meeting a difficult deadline or target are some of the achievements that teams celebrate.

Achievement celebrations are chief cornerstones of social bonding and pave the way for creative thinking and increased focus. By setting clear and meaningful goals, celebrations achieve a lasting impact. Additionally, intentionality is evident in the choice of creative and appropriate rewards. As a team initiative, it is vital for the recognition rewards and awards to resonate with the recipient. Additionally, sincerity, specificity and timeliness are vital. This means the manager or organisation must conduct some research about the recipients to ensure proper fit - either tailored to the personalities and preferences of the team members or crafted to imbue organisational values.

In today's VUCA environments, fostering a culture of belonging is also essential for employee retention. The key is to be intentional, authentic, and natural in genuinely recognising and appreciating employees whether it is reaching a significant tenure, earning a promotion, completing a major project, or receiving an industry recognition. By marking these pivotal moments in an employee's professional journey, team-building is enhanced.

There is a demonstration of a genuine understanding and acknowledgement of employee achievements. Work milestones not only symbolise professional accomplishment and personal growth but are also a reflection of the contributions and dedication of employees within the organisation. Recognising employees for a wide range of achievements increases employee engagement, and productivity while motivating employees to continue excelling at work.

Apart from celebrating work achievements, the other dimension identified by research participants was utilising personal milestones as celebration opportunities. It is easy for GDT members to feel isolated and detached from their team (D'Oliveira & Persico, 2023; Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018; Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020; Seshadri & Elangovan, 2019). Milestones are a recognised human experience that includes birthdays, wedding anniversaries and all other historical markers in between that instil a sense of pride, the opportunity to showcase accomplishments, and largely provide a reason to celebrate. These opportunities bring colleagues into each other's homes, seeing each other's pets, and children; deepening personal relationships and knowledge of one another. However, this is applicable to only those team members who are acquiescent to this form of personal intrusion.

When team members share these personal moments, it results in a great family feeling (Caligiuri et al., 2020). This is essential in team-building as teams that celebrate together appreciate one another and have a higher probability of staying together. Furthermore, a positive, engaged culture is created where team members feel recognised, valued, and appreciated, and this inspires greater employee satisfaction and retention. Employee milestone recognition is essentially effective in increasing employee engagement and loyalty.

6.3.5 Trust-building

In line with reviewed literature, participants cited that trust played a crucial role as a strategy in team-building. Team-building strategies are effective in enhancing affective outcomes including trust (Shuffler et al., 2018). Trust determines psychological safety which defines whether team members speak freely, ask each other for help, comment on or share feedback, and discuss issues and areas of conflict (Grossman & Miller, 2021; Salas et al., 2018). The absence of opportunities for team members to see what is happening spells the importance of psychological safety as it positions team members to ask questions and speak up. Literature review has held that building trust in GDTs can be challenging due to different backgrounds and perspectives (Gilli et al., 2022, Morrison-

Smith & Ruiz, 2020). In arguing this Morrison-Smith and Ruiz (2020) state some of the reasons as the absence of close bonds often observed in teams working in the same location, challenges in establishing deep personal connections due to the absence of nonverbal communication and struggles in deducing others' intentions.

For the proper functioning of GDTs, workplace trust and psychological safety is quintessential. Trust in the workplace carries varying interpretations (coat of many colours) from person to person, team to team and organisation to organisation. More importantly, it is a high level of confidence that employees have in each other, in leadership and in the organisation. This confidence is founded on consistency, relationships, credibility, and ability to follow through on commitments (Breuer et al., 2020). Consistency renders trust sustainable and means that actions match words and the existence of a follow through on commitments builds trust for team-building. GDTs encounter a lot of regular and irregular changes and turbulence. Trust solidifies the team making it easy to remain productive and effective even amid VUCA circumstances (Costa et al., 2018).

Trust in the workplace hugely impacts how employees collaborate and their ability to perform (de Jong et al., 2021). It influences everything from creativity and collaboration further extending to productivity and profitability. Security and psychological safety are built on trust. It opens doors to receiving feedback and freely giving it to others (Lacerenza et al., 2018; Salas et al., 2018). Creating psychological safety is fundamental at the forming stage of the team and throughout the team's journey (Aquino et al., 2022). Trust enables team members to accept vulnerability, overcome uncertainty and enable better team coordination (Lacerenza et al., 2018).

When team members work interdependently, more trust matters. A strong trust culture includes openness with information; support reciprocity; and perceived accountability and integrity in decision-making and consistency. It matters even where high autonomy exists, and team members can complete tasks with input from fellow team members. When trust is high, feelings of vulnerability are easily managed, and teams can work past any differences leading to higher-quality outputs. Where trust exists behaviours such as blaming and withholding information are minimised (Lacerenza et al., 2018). As teams become increasingly and strongly integrated through forming, storming and norming phases, trust becomes deeply ingrained in the fabric of the team.

Difficulties in establishing trust negatively impacts collaboration in decreased eagerness to communicate, less feedback from collaborators, corrosion of task cooperation and

coordination, and fewer members willing to take initiative. A lack of team trust leads to missed deadlines, avoidable work conflicts, collaboration issues, and even and communication mishaps.

6.4. Formalisation of team-building strategies and dynamic capabilities

GDTs depend on technology mediated processes to stay connected to the mission, vision, and values of the organisation since they do not have easy access to the proverbial water cooler and coffee talk conversations. This research's findings reveal that 37% of participants believed formalisation is not necessary and can yield numerous unintended consequences for leaders. In examining formalisation, Gibson et al., (2019) calls it a bureaucratic constraint which can limit the range of potential changes that the team can explore and diminish their motivation or ability to seek out improvements that are specific to different locations.

GDT leaders do not always know what to do to bring the team together. Vuchkovski et al. (2023, p. 9) exemplify this based on their findings *“I have 25 employees in Slovenia and another 30 to 40 in ex-Yugoslavia, and no one has ever taught me how to maintain the motivation, competence, and satisfaction of people you have not seen in person for a whole year, but only through a screen”* Therefore, inculcating levels of formalisation of strategies goes a long way in unlocking and unsticking managers. In describing formalisation Gibson et al. (2019, p. 1095) refers to codified rules, policies, and procedures that “shape behaviour, guide actions, and govern social positions and role relationships between individuals.” In support of formalisation, Gibson et al. (2019) corroborate that it provides guidelines and helps build identity and cohesion, without which global teams may struggle to effectively coordinate and prioritise their work activities.

6.5 Dynamic capabilities that emerge from having team-building strategies

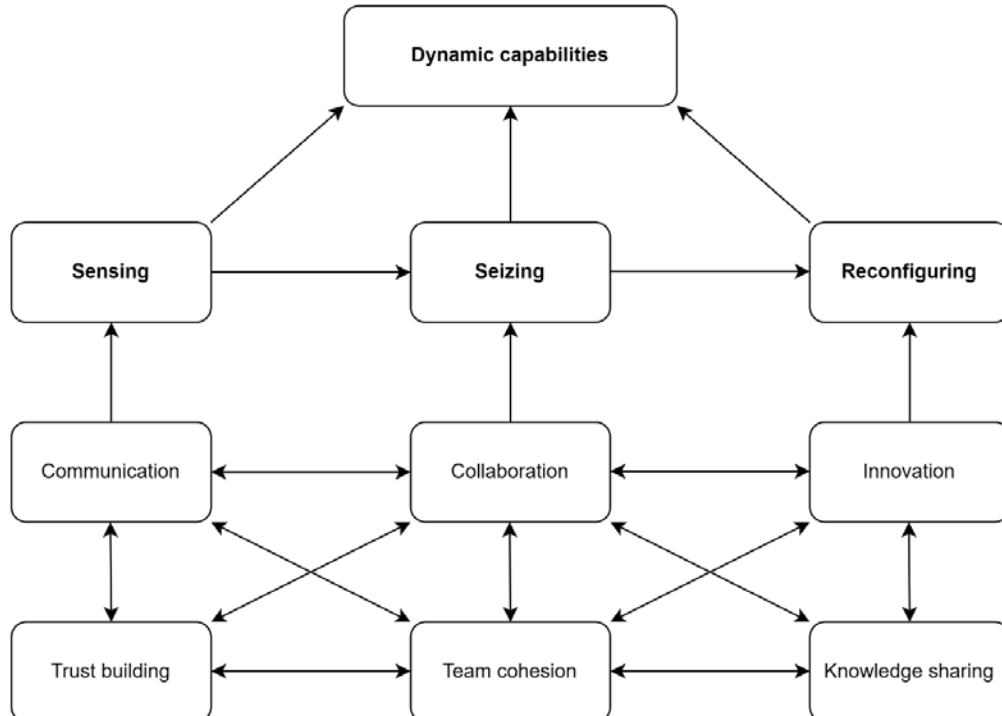
Dynamic capabilities consist of heterogeneous capabilities that each company fosters, deploys, and develops individually through interconnected processes (Teece et al., 1997; Teece, 2020). The tripartite capabilities of sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring (transforming) are interrelated and not interchangeable (Fainshmidt et al., 2019). Through novel value-creating strategies, ordinary capabilities are modified and transformed into dynamic capabilities (Laaksonen & Peltoniemi, 2018). Making capabilities actionable depends on embracing unique team processes (Zahra et al., 2022). From the research findings, six capabilities emanate from embracing strategies in team-building. The six are (1) innovation capability; (2) collaboration capability; (3) team cohesion capability; (4) communication capability; (5) knowledge sharing capability; and (6) trust-building

capability. This is a testament to Fainshmidt et al.'s (2019) assertion that DCs are resident in collective activities that take place inside the firm. MNC activities and the global spread amplifies the importance of pluralism in DCs (Zahra et al., 2022). These DCs must be carefully orchestrated and deployed (Zahra et al., 2022).

Although split into sensing (communication and trust-building), seizing (collaboration and team cohesion) and reconfiguring (innovation and knowledge sharing), these dynamic capabilities are interdependent and interwoven as shown in Figure 20. Each of these capabilities is unique but complementary, and beneficial in any organisation that seeks to gain a competitive advantage in any industry (Fainshmidt et al., 2019). Plus, they are at their most effective when combined to achieve organisational outcomes (Shuffler et al., 2018). Identification of these dynamic capabilities aligns with Collings et al. (2019) who also examined global talent management as a fundamental dynamic capability. Their argument is that in fluid contexts, more dynamic capabilities are required.

Figure 20

The relationships among the six dynamic capabilities (researcher's depiction)



The six dynamic capabilities are discussed in greater detail below.

6.5.1 Sensing capabilities

The survival of any organisation is sustained by the capability to sense. Sensing enables organisations to recognise shifts taking place in dynamic environments (Priyono & Hidayat, 2022). In team-building this involves organising intelligent activities (communication and trust-building) that align internal resources for collaboration, process, and product innovation.

6.5.1.1 Communication capability

Communication lies at the core of team-building dynamic capabilities in GDTs. Communication is a form of interaction and relationship building which occupies a distinguished place in any organisation. Communication in GDTs is often more formal and diminishes knowledge-sharing abilities (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020). It is a significant indicator of increased commitment to the team (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020). Through it, interactions are processed, ensuring the continuous circulation of information, and understanding. Substantial research has been devoted to defining communication (Eisenberg et al., 2019; Marlow et al., 2018). Simply put, communication is an essential process that allows team members to send and receive back-and-forth information. It is organised by combining and arranging various elements including source, encoder, channel, message, decoder, and receiver. The effective combination of these elements yields robust capabilities. These capabilities ensure employee participation, cooperation, and motivation in organisational processes. Communication enables team members to be influential, and integrated, and to facilitate and maintain a positive work climate. Good communication strategies enable information to be transformed into value-creating knowledge.

In GDTs communication effectiveness is largely attained in the presence of closed-loop procedures (Grossman & Miller, 2021). This entails confirmation that the information sent has been received and correctly interpreted. Previous research has noted that efficient information exchange faces greater obstacles in GDTs due to a lack of traditional face-to-face meetings. Communication is vital in decision-making and correcting work procedures. For communication to be successful, it is necessary that employees share a common frame of reference, including a set of values. Research participants shared widely on communication guidelines and regularity of meetings as common frames of reference that allow for better communication. The shared frames of reference are essential for communication to be effective.

This research demonstrates that with proper communication guidelines, it is possible to build communication capability which is an essential sensing capability. While it is possible to experience challenges including time delays, misinterpretation of written texts and the absence of non-verbal cues (Gilli et al., 2022), there are ways of going around these problems. One of the ways demonstrated in this research has been embracing technology-mediated opportunities to ensure regular team meetings and regular communication.

Communication capability enables sensing which is a fundamental capability in any organisation's external delivery and productivity enhancement. GDTs exist in an increasingly complex context and era of rapid change which means communication (internal and external) and information exchange must be fast and not bureaucratic. Organisations need to be equipped with a new logic of communication management to face competition, survive, and thrive. Good and effective communication has a positive impact on the organisation, enabling increased productivity and profits to be achieved. However, the way communication takes place in GDTs is responsible for slowing down decision-making (Vuchkovski et al., 2023).

6.5.1.2 Trust-building capability

Trust is the willingness to be vulnerable to another simply based on the expectation that the trusted party will perform an action irrespective of a monitor or controlling mechanism (Costa et al., 2018). Trust involves a continuous social process of interpreting, sense-making, signalling, and reciprocating. Whether it is practical trust (earned by initiative taking, good time- and promise-keeping and meeting deadlines) or emotional trust (demonstrated by levels of concern and care based on feelings of security in the relationship) in GDTs it is built on timely information sharing, and great communication responsiveness. For trust-building to be effective, team members must trust their leaders, each other, and the organisation since trust fosters open information exchanges. Dynamic environments where GDTs operate require high interdependence, teamwork, close cooperation, and flexibility which are founded on trust (Costa et al., 2018).

Enabling collaborations stimulates team members' intellectual interest, driving them to search for ideas and solutions necessary and relevant to solve challenging problems (Jiang & Chen, 2018). This research has challenged a previously held viewpoint that trustworthiness is challenging to examine when team members have never met in person (Gilli et al., 2022). Findings have shown that 50% of participants believe trust-building is possible in GDTs if there are strategies intentionally focused on that. Team trust increases

knowledge sharing within the team and between teams. It develops a climate of psychological safety which induces team learning and enables team organisational citizenship behaviours. It also stimulates learning and innovation within the team and across the organisation (Costa et al., 2018).

This research's findings confirm that establishing trust is crucial for the success of virtual teams as individuals who have trust in their colleagues are more inclined to engage in risk-taking actions (Breuer et al, 2020). Teams with high degrees of trust are known to be more focused on task output, more proactive, more frequently initiate interactions, more optimistic, and provide more substantive, productive feedback. This yields signature sensing capabilities.

6.5.2 Seizing capabilities

An organisation with strong seizing capabilities can select the most suitable opportunity and utilise it at the right moment. It also creates innovative results based on various opportunities and knowledge identified through the sensing capability. Seizing capabilities are embedded in managerial effort and attention to activities that yield collaboration and cohesion. At this stage, all the learnings and information gathered at the sensing stage are put into action (Priyono & Hidayat, 2022). Using various collaboration techniques, team cohesion is enhanced which enables seizing.

6.4.2.1 Collaboration capability

Collaboration in GDTs takes various forms including rotational assignments and short-term projects (Caligiuri et al. 2020). GDTs are devoid of parking lot, water cooler, coffee talks and hallway conversations (unplanned) that have a strong bearing on collaboration (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020). Unlike knowledge sharing, innovation capability demonstrates the application of novel ideas that stand a high chance of changing existing technologies and routines. Collaboration enables accessing, converging, and sharing useful knowledge and skills both inside and outside the organisation (Piccolo, et al., 2021). When harnessed correctly, collaborations ensure strong social ties, and greater interpersonal relationships that lead to a better, shared understanding of team goals, identity, tasks, and social norms (Graesser et al., 2018). Collaborations are enhanced by coordination. Coordination involves aligning the skills, behaviours, and knowledge of individuals to achieve a common objective (Salas et al., 2018). A productive method of coordinating team members is through team goal setting. As demonstrated in the reviewed literature, by defining specific goals, ambiguity is reduced, and the team gains a collective understanding of what needs to be accomplished (Lacerenza et al., 2018; Shuffler et al.,

2018). This fosters a shared mental model, ensuring that all team members are on the same page (Bush et al., 2019).

Collaboration promotes the processes of knowledge co-creation and co-evolution built on enduring relationships of trust, sustainable communication, and innovation collaborations. Priyono and Hidayat (2022) hold the view that collaboration leads to disruptive innovation. Through initiating and facilitating change, innovation redefines critical resources and enhances the alertness skill set through rethinking, rearranging, and repositioning resources. One of the main goals of collaboration is to ensure a company's swift response to its competitive environment by collecting information on rapidly changing markets and technologies. The dynamic capabilities framework is designed to analyse what enables organisations to effectively strategise in environments characterised by rapid change and deep uncertainty (Teece et al., 1997). Unforeseen shocks can emerge from anywhere in the global economy. This includes shifts in client needs, demands, technologies, and government policies and actions (Teece, 2020). Teece (2020) gives an example of China, where foreign firms are aware they are subjected to regulatory surprises at any time.

Managers must create a greater appetite or absorptive capacity that enables strong collaborations and create shared norms (Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018). Collaborative work has potential disadvantages that include ineffective communication, social loafing, diffusion of responsibility, and conflict (Graesser et al., 2018). However, as shown above collaboration advantages far outweigh disadvantages. When effectively utilised, collaborative work involves the distribution of tasks, diverse perspectives, the emergence of innovative ideas, and the evaluation of multiple sources, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of the work (Graesser et al., 2018).

6.5.2.2 Team cohesion capability

Team cohesion is multidimensional and refers to the strong bonds (closeness) that characterise healthy interpersonal relationships (one another and the team), driving team members to stick together in the pursuit of a common goal (Benishek & Lazzara, 2019; Makris et al., 2018). Cohesion starts from ensuring that individual and team goals are constantly aligned with organisational goals (Makris et al., 2018). Team-building strategies impact all team cohesion dimensions that include interpersonal integration (affective relations to other team members), functional integration (commitment to team goals) and normative integration (loyalty and pride of belonging). The stage of a team's development also predicts team cohesion with the forming and storming stage characterised by low cohesion levels.

Team-building strategies enable team cohesion through fostering open and honest communication, personal accountability, organisational prioritisation (bigger sense of purpose and reason for existence), high levels of trust and ultimately, conflict reduction. Perceived or real differences lead to tensions between team members. This carries the potential to obstruct team spirit and building at interpersonal and group levels (Gilli et al., 2022). Conflict is a normal part and experience of human interaction. It should be regulated by emphasising openness and collaboration when it arises instead of relying on avoidance and competition.

Open communication, discussing their ideas, and learning from each other are driven by team cohesion among team members. Group cohesion is critical for productivity. When team members understand their roles, and feel connected, they are more likely to commit to team decisions and strategies, believe in accountability and work together towards common goals (Pollack & Matous, 2019). Better communication and honesty among cohesive teams lead to improved skills in decision-making and problem-solving (Lacerenza et al., 2018). By providing a framework for teams to collaborate and combining individual resources, problem solving helps team members find and solve task-related problems (Makris et al., 2018). Cohesive teams constitute a greater sense of purpose and agree more readily leading to increased motivation and higher job satisfaction (Grossman & Miller, 2021; Salas et al., 2018). Impactful problem-solving is often a result of diversity of experiences, viewpoints, professional roles, skills, and personal interests.

Members of a highly cohesive team shape a positive social climate by identifying and resolving any signs of conflict, focusing on processes and not on people, respecting each other and holding on to good motives (Grossman & Miller, 2021; Salas et al., 2018). Cohesive teams have high morale due to increased team member communication, and contribution towards the decision-making processes. Over time team cohesion predicts team performance based on clarity on goals and roles, open communication, a positive work environment, and ample opportunities for collaboration (Makris et al., 2018). However, cohesion can be challenged by conflicting personalities, different working styles, team members' lack of buy-in, and limited resources.

6.5.3 Reconfiguring capabilities

Although GDTs are famously known for assembling team members with great skills, expertise, and knowledge resources (intellectual assets) they may fail dismally to fully drive

reconfiguration if trust, communication, knowledge-sharing, collaboration, cohesion, and commitment among members is lacking (Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018). Reconfiguring is designed carefully by management and has spillover effects from one team to the entire organisation through innovation and knowledge sharing. Reconfiguring abilities are associated with the ability to integrate, reconstruct, renovate, create, and in some cases, dispose of existing resources for product innovation (Priyono & Hidayat, 2022). At this stage, resource interplay becomes significant as teams assemble and orchestrate difficult-to-replicate innovations that shape competition and position the organisation as leaders. Therefore, transforming capability is a prerequisite to ensure that the detection of internal and external changes and innovation activities are performed well, and important innovation activities of companies are carried out prior to strategic determination of sensing and seizing activities.

6.5.3.1 Innovation capability

Innovation entails various complex behaviours and actions and is associated with timeliness. Innovation is the deliberate introduction and application of processes, services, ideas, procedures, or products that are new and designed to be beneficial to the organisation (Jiang & Chen 2018). This definition emphasises processes and outcomes that are collective and transcend any single individual in a team. In fact, Priyono and Hidayat (2022) even extend the concept of innovation to open innovation where the thrust is on purposive inflows (internal innovation) and outflows (external innovation) of knowledge to accelerate expansion into other markets. Innovation is the critical gateway to gaining a competitive advantage in MNCs. By balancing exploratory (acquisition of new knowledge trajectories) and exploitative (efficiency and control maximisation) innovations simultaneously, organisations can achieve a stable and lasting competitive advantage. GDTs' cultural diversity is referred to as "a double-edged sword" by Minbaeva et al., (2021, p. 47) or as "an asset and a liability" according to Stahl and Maznevski (2020, p. 705). It improves creative problem solving, but also carries the cost of reduced coordination, and efficiency, and increased conflict (Minbaeva et al., 2021, p. 45). GDTs stimulate creativity through learning and sharing highly diverse information insights into tasks and problems (Wang et al., 2019).

Findings of this research confirm reviewed literature that innovation dynamic capabilities bridge the gap between the present and the future resulting in organisational success (Seo et al., 2020). This DC is vital in birthing, maintaining, and sustaining a competitive advantage regardless of industry (Wang et al., 2019). Without innovation capability, any organisation remains stuck, stagnant, and deeply disrupted by change. The ability to

innovate accumulates overtime (Vuchkovski et al., 2023). When teams implement team-building strategies that enable trust-building and collaboration, innovation results. Innovation involves challenging previously held beliefs and mindsets, problem reframing to identify root causes, looking beyond current boundaries, seeking to understand data from multiple entry points, holding success and failure as critical insight sources and staying agile and course-correcting quickly (Schoemaker et al., 2018).

Innovation sees beyond the status quo and unleashes big thinking (Seo et al., 2020). Innovation is required in GDTs because of the uncertainty of the environment, and the reduced likelihood that the strategy and business model working today will be viable tomorrow (Schoemaker et al., 2018). When team-building strategies enable innovation capability, innovation becomes a simplified process. Innovation works best when an efficient and integrated collaborative structure is implemented that enables interdependent task completion and goal achievement. Team members become released into future focus thinking and less on inappropriate past experiences that may not be important in VUCA conditions. Much attention and reliance become directed towards rapidly creating situation-specific new knowledge. The greater the organisation's ability to innovate, the greater the DCs.

6.5.3.2 Knowledge sharing capability

The knowledge sharing capability is paramount in the GDT discourse as evidenced by Meyer and Li's (2022, p. 563) research question "How can MNEs best integrate global and local knowledge to develop globally and locally relevant solutions?" Compared to innovation capability, knowledge sharing centres on the exchange of ideas and thought patterns; therefore, team-building that drives knowledge sharing may entail distinct consolidative processes, that include knowledge-related activities, to embrace, generate, utilise, and implement new ideas (Meyer & Li, 2022). To yield effective capabilities, knowledge sharing must take place vertically and laterally (Jiang et al., 2023; Xia et al., 2021). In addition, whether the knowledge being shared is tacit or explicit, technological, or managerial, knowledge acquisition and sharing is a fundamental resource for multinationals (Gaur et al., 2019).

Knowledge exchange demonstrates competitive advantage when it is transferred quickly, transformed, assimilated, and utilised (Welch & Welch, 2018). The rise of digitalisation and the use of big data as communication tools and means of creating, sharing, and integrating knowledge, directly impacts knowledge flow (Benishek & Lazzara, 2019). Because tacit knowledge is firmly embedded in various organisational processes and practices, and

deeply etched in individuals, active human involvement is required to enable its transfer (Gaur et al., 2019). Such transfer of tacit knowledge cannot be easily done online (Meyer & Li, 2022). Some team members may not be comfortable sharing their knowledge freely for fear that their services may not be needed anymore. This attitude hinders the building of trust. Therefore, managers must create an enabling environment in which team members are confident and not reluctant to share information.

Knowledge sharing is also dependent on team numbers. Smaller teams (two – 10) are widely regarded as better enablers of knowledge sharing. Having a large team and geographically dispersed members can pose significant challenges to team efficiency, particularly in terms of maintaining alignment with goals, fostering cooperation, and sustaining overall team objectives. As teams grow, there is a risk of objectives deviating, leading to members becoming isolated and their contributions diverging (Seo et al., 2020). This issue can be further amplified when teams involve multiple institutions and are spread across different geographical regions.

Diversity and variety of team members enables knowledge contribution, knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer ((Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018; Piccolo et al., 2021; Turkina & Van Assche, 2018). However, Gaur et al., (2019) examine individual factors that affect knowledge sharing. These include ability/willingness/motivation, cognitive styles, cultural intelligence, demographic factors, and experience (Gaur et al., 2019). In GDTs, team members involved in knowledge transfer are ensconced within different countries, which means country-level differences (institutional, cultural, spatial geography) potentially impact knowledge sharing (Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018). Good managers must be able to identify the social categories that get created within teams and that carry the potential to discourage knowledge-sharing. In teams which lack strong team-building ties, knowledge sharing can be executed poorly (Driskell et al., 2018). In-groups (sharing similar worldviews and perceptions) and out-groups (holding dissimilar worldviews and perceptions) possess different levels of trust and impact knowledge-sharing, trust-building and ultimately team-building.

By facilitating idea generation and implementation, internal team knowledge-sharing bypasses these factors and results in innovation, coalition-building and the combining of team members' knowledge stocks. For example, language differences between countries potentially affect knowledge sharing, and MNCs promote the use of a common corporate language (mainly English) to iron out these differences. However, levels of proficiency in the use of English as a medium of knowledge-sharing differ. This poses a challenge that

requires careful managerial navigation to ensure knowledge sharing is still carried out with team members from less proficient countries not having to feel that they are a weak link.

6.6 Challenges experienced when implementing team-building strategies

6.6.1 Cost

When participants revealed challenges that relate to cost, they pointed to face-to-face arrangements conducted once a year to commemorate organisation-wide achievements. As shown in Chapter 5, 56.3% of participants disclosed virtual celebrations as a strategy for team-building. Cost examples included travel expenses, transportation, accommodation, meals, hiring venues, and facilitator fees (including supplies and equipment that the facilitator may require if one will be used). Hiring external consultants and other professionals who facilitate team-building carries another cost (Fainshmidt et al., 2019).

There are other costs that can involve investment in personality assessments, for example, to understand how team members approach work. However, there are many online platforms (DISC assessments, Myers Briggs Type Indicators, Belbi Teams Roles, and Kiersey Temperament Sorter) that provide free online personality assessments. Teams only need to assess and ascertain what works best for their environment and intended purposes. One participant shared their use of a business psychologist to help analyse the different personalities and provide recommendations on what team-building strategies work best. Knowing each member's strengths is vital in strategising to make up for existing weaknesses to achieve the team's goals, enhance cooperation and enable synergistic solutions. Zhang and Losekoot (2021) acknowledge that team-building events involve costs, and it is of paramount importance to gauge the return on investment beforehand.

6.6.2 Differences in time zones

Participants shared that team-building strategies encounter difficulties when there are different time zones. For example, the regularity of meetings can be impacted by narrow meeting windows as in Lisbon and Istanbul (2-hour difference). In some cases, there are no windows at all, like the case of Berlin and Sacramento. One participant disclosed how the different time zones led to problems with work-life balance and integration when they had just started in a GDT because they thought they could not switch off when they still had team members working. Working longer hours and compromised work-life balance are real challenges when there are different time zones (Benishek & Lazzara, 2018; Vuchkovski et al., 2023).

The technology-afforded flexibility, failure to account for time zone differences and changes can invade personal time (Benishek & Lazzara, 2019), result in irritation, burnout (Apascaritei & Elvira, 2022), create work-life balance dissatisfaction and inconvenience for team members and may result in missed meetings and deadlines. At onboarding, it becomes crucial to establish team agreements, expected response times, clarity on core working hours, clear processes and ensure mutual understanding from the beginning of the onboarding phase. It also requires planning, negotiations and sensitivity to early morning or late-night schedules for certain employees.

6.6.3 Team members' willingness to participate

Participants revealed that team members' willingness to participate in team-building was a challenge. Unwillingness to collaborate, share knowledge and make contributions in meetings were mostly disclosed. Passengers, protesters, and prisoners make up this category.

Ensuring team members are aware of the purpose of a team meeting and are clear about collaboration outcomes creates a participation expectation which is vital to encourage participation. Addressing each other by name and politely asking for team members to have their cameras on is also crucial in online meetings. However, the latter can meet with resistance as demonstrated in research findings when a team member asked whether what was needed was their face or brains. When team members are acknowledged by name, they feel recognised since we all have cognitive attachments to our names.

Unwillingness to participate can also be overcome by conducting personality assessments and taking time to understand language and cultural diversity since some of the unwillingness can stem from these aspects.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed this research's findings, focussing on the five strategies that were identified. Taken together, the strategies of regular virtual team meetings, enabling collaboration opportunities, establishing clear communication guidelines, enhancing trust-building and celebration of achievements and milestones endow GDTs with the capacity to build dynamic capabilities that are essential for competing in VUCA environments. Through implementing these team-building strategies innovation, collaboration, team cohesion, communication, knowledge sharing, and trust-building capabilities are built. These dynamic capabilities demonstrate the importance of implementing team-building

strategies. Formalised or not, there is a relationship between team-building strategies and DCs in GDTs in the South African MNCs context. Team-building is an essential component of functional, business, and corporate processes. The presence of linguistic, cultural, temporal, and spatial distances as well as distinct economic, political, and societal institutions in GDTs makes the coordination of team-building activities of critical significance.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1. Introduction

This study explores team-building strategies that build the dynamic capabilities of South African MNCs' GDTs. Chapter 6 discussed the key research findings. This chapter highlights the key research outcomes and demonstrates the theoretical conclusions, contributions, implications for practice, recommendations for future research and research limitations.

7.2. Key research outcomes

Following a qualitative approach, this research was conducted with three aims namely to identify team-building strategies used by GDTs in the South African MNCs context, to explore whether there is a relationship between team-building strategies and DCs in GDTs in the South African MNCs context and to discuss the importance of having team-building strategies

There are five key takeaways from this research. Firstly, it appears that there are five key team-building strategies that GDTs use. These are outlined as conducting regular virtual team meetings, ensuring collaboration opportunities, setting clear communication guidelines, enhancing trust-building, and virtually celebrating achievements and milestones. Secondly, there seems to exist a relationship between team-building strategies and DCs. This research identified six DCs. These are communication, trust-building (sensing capabilities), collaboration, team cohesion (seizing capabilities), innovation, and knowledge sharing (reconfiguring capabilities). Thirdly, having team-building strategies is vital in driving effective team-building.

The initial framework conceptualised that implementing team building strategies would result in improved performance. Findings have not confirmed this. It seems no direct relationship exists between implementing team-building strategies and performance. By enhancing the six DCs, team-building eventually indirectly contributes to team performance and ultimately organisational performance. Fourthly, it seems that every GDT activity, communication, and interaction is viewed as a team-building opportunity. Fifthly, team-building is regarded as most effective in smaller teams. Additionally, organisations must consider formalisation of team building and the associated team-building strategies. Based on this research, it seems implementation of team-building strategies is negatively impacted by different time zones, costs, and team members' willingness to participate.

7.3. Principal theoretical conclusions

Team-building is effectively conducted using carefully crafted strategies. This study uncovers the fundamental strategies that organisations use to build teams. This work explains how the identified strategies give rise to dynamic capabilities with the strategies working interdependently and reinforcing one another. The argument that has been brought forward is that strategy-driven team-building builds dynamic capabilities that are indispensable in MNCs. No strategy is better or more effective than the other. The strategies complement each other and work best alongside each other. Too much emphasis on one strategy may result in inefficiency.

This study offers new insights into team-building. Whereas in face-to-face teams, the emphasis on team-building is on face-to-face activities, team-building in GDTs is an ongoing process that is realised in every interaction and communication activity. This research demonstrates that strategies do not only enhance team-building but also yield sets of dynamic capabilities needed by organisations to operate effectively in dynamic environments. Furthermore, team-building strategies improve the capacities of teams working towards integrating all team members into one component poised to innovate and be a market leader (Shuffler et al., 2018).

When strategies are put in place internal resources at the team level assist organisations in building strong dynamic capabilities within the firms. Thus, innovation, collaboration, team cohesion, communication, knowledge sharing, and trust-building capabilities are born. Success in integrating these capabilities capacitates organisations for industry leadership. The continuous integration of strategies enables organisations to consistently develop new and more meaningful capabilities.

Supported by these strategies, organisations can create and unlock new team-building value. This is important given that GDTs are the teams of the future (Dowd, 2022; Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020). This research also demonstrates that a certain level of formalisation of strategies is required to flatten the team-building ground and translate the same story throughout the organisation. This assists in clarifying what strategies work effectively, when, and why within an organisation. Lack of uniformity with each team left to figure out what works best for them has potential hazards. Some teams may not focus on team-building at all.

This study has also shed light on the importance of managers in driving team-building. Managers are responsible for implementing the strategies, communicating them to the

employees, and monitoring progress. Managers also need to adapt their strategies to changing circumstances and resolve any conflicts or challenges that arise along the way. Therefore, the success or failure of strategies depends largely on how managers shape them. Team managers lead team-building strategies and foster the various capabilities that result from having the strategies in place. This implies that the level of importance of managers in team-building must always be understood across the organisation. External facilitators/consultants play a part in team-building but the central locking devices for team-building are the managers (Zhang & Losekoot, 2021)

For each strategy, this research has identified crucial decisions and engagements that guide teams to integrate team-building. From a macro perspective, team-building strategies are not a one-size-fits-all. Managers are required and encouraged to assess creatively and intentionally what works best for their teams, for example, whether one meeting a week is sufficient or not. Team flexibility, agility and adaptability are key as business environments shift, this impacts teams and managers must be alert to the impacts and changes required to ensure the team remains intact (Groggaard et al., 2022; Bush et al., 2019).

This study disproves that team-building directly improves performance. Among the participants, none confirmed the existence of this relationship (Jarvenpaa & Keating, 2021). Consequently, organisations must investigate how team-building strategies and processes can be enhanced to impact performance directly and positively. This could further unlock team-building effectiveness.

7.4. Research contribution

The importance of this investigation stems from a lack of research demonstrating team-building strategies that need to be implemented by GDTs given the numerous challenges they face including feelings of isolation and exclusion (Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018). Results from this study suggest that carefully crafted team-building strategies yield various dynamic capabilities that are essential in attaining a competitive edge. Notably, for GDTs, every interaction and exchange are team-building opportunities hence the importance of inculcating simple but effective strategies. No research has tackled the question of how to deal with the alienation that GDT members experience from distributed work. This study derives its uniqueness from its focus on supervisors and managers (and not executives) since they are the operational drivers of teams and team activities.

This study provides several practical insights. Firstly, it is paramount for organisations with GDTs to communicate clear, high-level over-arching team-building strategies that can be translatable, and tailor-made to suit various teams and levels of the organisation. Strategy formulation and planning guide team activities, enable planning for eventualities, and sequence processes to get work done (Bush et al., 2019). For most organisations this is lacking resulting in managers improvising as they go – sometimes the improvisations work well and, in some instances, further challenges are experienced.

Secondly, it is necessary to invest in creating opportunities for team members to meet face-to-face, at least at the start of working together or just once. This makes it possible to sense and seize opportunities to know personalities and to develop and deploy important interpersonal skills. There must be a willingness to invest in the opportunities and allocate financial assistance to leverage the existing regular virtual meetings. As indicated earlier, this might not be possible for meta-teams or project teams that are put together for a specific project and get dissolved at project completion (Santistevan & Josserand, 2019).

The better an organisation is at capitalising on existing strategies the more successful they will be. As organisations turn towards more GDTs, the need to understand how team-building and aligning unfolds across multiple, trans-functional processes gets more critical and is potentially a source of competitive advantage. While GDTs' research has explicated the emerging patterns and complexity of aligning meta and project teams' processes, few organisations have focused on aligning strategies to include these teams because their lifespan is very short (Santistevan & Josserand, 2019).

By adopting a dynamic capabilities approach, sensing, seizing, and transforming capabilities were analysed according to specific aligning actions within the various strategies identified (Benishek & Lazzara, 2019). Aligning team level strategies, while necessary and effective for team-building and building dynamic capabilities, will always need the support of decisions made at executive levels since some of the strategies may require financial input e.g., celebrating achievements. Misalignments between the emergent strategies and existing resources can give rise to tension. Organisations must be attentive to the strategies and ongoing shifts taking place, selecting from the range of team-building strategies, to enact the appropriate aligning actions to successfully navigate the team-building initiatives.

One of the key learning points from this study is that MNCs must purposefully and creatively implement team-building strategies by taking advantage of the numerous

technology-mediated communication platforms. Team-building is an ongoing process and not a once-off event. Managers are responsible for driving team-building rather than making use of external facilitators that are far removed from the daily activities of the team. External facilitators are useful but must be used sparingly. It has also been brought to light that team-building in GDTs is most effective when teams are smaller. Teams of two – 10 members were recommended. Participants emphasised the importance of team members meeting at least once a year. Face-to-face meetings are credited for the social presence, energy, empathy, and camaraderie that is created during the encounter. Additionally, trust and better team-building are touted to form and sustain effectively when there has been a single face-to-face meeting for introduction (Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018).

The team-building strategies articulated do not follow a particular order. It is incumbent on the team leader/manager to assess team needs and personalities to determine what is applicable (Nordback & Espinosa, 2019; Seshadri & Elangovan, 2019). With the increasing prevalence of GDTs (Benishek & Lazzara, 2019; Dowd, 2022; Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020), it is indispensable to have an entire set of strategies potentially applicable to needs and contexts. The different strategies proposed are not all exhaustive and will help GDTs to meet team goals to increase effectiveness across the entire organisation (Gibson et al., 2019; Grossman & Miller, 2021; Shuffler et al., 2018).

The strategies identified are helpful for managers and team leaders as they embrace different ways to view team-building and its impact. Operating contexts, massive technological developments taking place, novel ways of organising work, and new types of teams that the new and future world of work is bringing require effective strategies (Schoemaker et al., 2018; Teece, 2020). Meta-teams' recognition as a new team structure shows that managers and team leaders must be alert to team-building strategies and processes (Santistevan & Josserand, 2019). Strategies need to fit in the characteristics of the organisational embedding environment. This capacity depends on managers and team leaders perceiving their diverse teams as sources of opportunities for collaboration, creativity, and innovation (Coleman et al., 2021; Collings et al., 2019; Zhang, 2022).

The empirical outcomes of this study confer a new perspective of how team-building strategies yield dynamic capabilities that strengthen any organisation's competitive advantage. This study is the first research amalgamating and co-opting team-building into the dynamic capabilities discourse.

7.5. Recommendations for management and/or other stakeholders

The team management skills and abilities of GDT managers require continuous improvement (Vuchkovski et al., 2023). Team leaders and managers must be intentional about team-building by setting overarching strategic parameters. This includes creating opportunities for collaboration and ensuring that this works. Greater awareness of the various barriers to collaboration work and encouragement of more knowledge sharing and information exchange when necessary to achieve team goals should be prioritised (Piccolo et al., 2021). Without strategies, it is easy for teams to become any other group unlikely to catapult an organisation to being market leaders and establish a long-term competitive advantage.

At the core of the dynamic capabilities architecture is a strong appeal for managers to orchestrate both internal and external resources to be able to embrace dynamic capabilities of sensing opportunities (and threats), seizing (and neutralising) them, and transforming internal systems, organisational culture, and business models to achieve evolutionary fitness (Teece, 2020). By naming the strategies that GDTs utilise, this study hopes to objectively contribute to the literature focused on GDTs. When it is clearer for organisations what strategies can be used and the benefits thereof, they can implement these. After all, the future of teams is GDTs (Dowd, 2022; Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020).

Since it is very easy for GDT team members to lack a sense of belonging and feel isolated (D'Oliveira & Persico, 2023; Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018; Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020, Seshadri & Elangovan, 2019; Vuchkovski et al., 2023) GDT managers should communicate more effectively and go an extra mile in encouraging more openness and enhancing psychological safety. Managers should encourage team members to openly engage and express their feelings for optimal task completion and effective process flow.

Like all other team processes, it is vital to plan for team-building based on team members personalities. The more dispersed the team, the greater the need for more effort towards team-building. It has been shown that the smaller the teams, the more effective team-building can be conducted.

There is a need to utilise all available opportunities to enhance personal connections and understand psychological in its different dimensions. This is fundamental for trust-building. Trust is known to develop slowly in GDTs so managers must be patient while exploring all avenues to enhance trust-building (Breuer et al., 2020; Costa et al., 2018).

Managers need to ensure role clarity in teams. Just as in face-to-face teams, when roles are not clear this leads to role ambiguity, drives conflict and team discord (Begerowski et al., 2021; Davaei et al., 2022; Santistevan & Josserand, 2019; Seo et al., 2020). Providing clear and compelling directions is essential for anchoring commitment to the team, communicating success criteria and positioning team members to understand how they should relate to other team members. Compelling directions are further heightened for GDTs since they are faced with greater diversity and business environments that are continuously shifting and shaping (Benishek & Lazzara, 2019, Teece et al., 1997, Teece, 2020). Without strong compelling directions, ideally at a strategic company level, GDTs are unlikely to drive and plough through diversity challenges and silos to achieve their objectives.

Managers must communicate and include team members in designing what would work best for their environment (Benishek & Lazzara, 2019; Nordback & Espinosa, 2019). This could be done formally or informally. This combination enables team member buy-in and allows team members to determine when and how team-building will be conducted. By implementing a consultative approach team engagement and motivation is increased. This has practical benefits on application and attendance. Team members enjoy participating in processes they helped build (Coleman et al., 2021; Einola & Alvesson, 2019). The suite of strategies equips managers with handy tools that are vital whether at forming, storming, norming, performing or adjourning phase (Jones, 2019, Miller et al., 2018) and perhaps when there is a need for a “pit stop”. Dynamic adjustments are needed during team-building as detection and early interventions towards potential team malfunction, must embrace both reactive and proactive processes and actions. Small on-the-go adjustments may save teams from collapsing.

In today’s world of work, leaders use wide lenses and adjust them effectively and timeously (strong dynamic capabilities). Managers must ensure DCs are kept current and deployed effectively as they grow and lose value for different reasons and at different rates (Zahra et al., 2022). Entrepreneurial orientation infusion (creativity, curiosity, adaptability, experimentation, adaptability, and innovation) also enables the DCs to work effectively.

7.6. Limitations of the research

The research has provided rich insights regarding team building and DCs. These present fruitful further research avenues. However, the outcomes do not exhaust all potential strategies. Team building in GDTs is still a nascent area. Further limitations of this research include the research context. Firstly, the data included in this analysis is derived from a

single country (South Africa) and is also limited to the financial industries. Therefore, this study is limited in generalising to all or other countries and industries. The research was set in South Africa, an emerging market economy, and that could pose limitations as people are more amenable to research conducted in developed economies. However, it is important to note the importance of the culture of an organisation, or unit, which is relevant than the geographical origin of the participants. There is a need for care to be taken in extending these results to other settings.

Secondly, due to time constraints, the qualitative approach (interviews) used a snapshot at a point in time and this does not track changes and trends over time. Future studies should consider a longitudinal approach that enables identifying, tracking changes over time, and establishing cause and effect relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Einola and Alvesson (2019) spent ten weeks researching the making and unmaking of teams. Over a three-month period, Pollack and Matous (2019) used the social network analysis to conduct a study on the impact of targeted team building on project team communication.

Team-building is not yet a full-fledged phenomenon in GDTs. It would be beneficial for future studies to conduct a quantitative and mixed-method approach to supplement this qualitative approach. Team-building literature will be enriched resulting in further insights. To confirm generalisability of these results a survey method can also be utilised so that many participants are covered.

7.7. Suggestions for future research

Various limitations were identified as explained in 7.6. Since change lies at the heart of the dynamic capabilities theory it is important to use longitudinal data to better understand team-building strategies. For example, checking the transition process. There is also a need to dig deeper into specific strategies to better understand their effectiveness. Other contextual factors can be considered too. Future research should explore the emerging DCs discussed in this research. Additional insights into how these DCs are created and supported can enrich team-building.

This research focused on entry-level and middle management. It would be interesting to focus on employees and find out what their views and insights are on team-building strategies. Understanding employees' views on team-building strategies and activities would be both theoretically interesting and practically beneficial (Zhang & Losekoot (2021). Zhang and Losekoot (2021) employed a netnographic approach to explore employees'

views. A mixed method approach could provide further insights into this subject. Another dimension would be to explore the manager's role in team-building.

It would also be interesting to carry out a comparative case study that focusses on specific firms. Future research should use a larger sample, comprising multi-country teams, and consisting of other data collection methods conducted over a longer period (Reuber & Fischer, 2022). This could yield further important and different outcomes.

The strategies presented here are valuable for GDT managers and team leaders, HR and other personnel in organisational people and processes space. They set a stage for expansion as different team types, projects and organisational contexts generate evolving needs. This research offers an open toolbox conducive to team-building improvement. Alternative research methods may also reveal new strategies and DCs. Using alternative conceptual frameworks could reveal additional and useful team-building strategies.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethical clearance approval

GIBS ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPLICATION FORM 2023/24

G. APPROVALS FOR/OF THIS APPLICATION

When the applicant is a student of GIBS, the applicant must please ensure that the supervisor and co-supervisor (where relevant) has signed the form before submission

STUDENT RESEARCHER/APPLICANT:

29. I affirm that all relevant information has been provided in this form and its attachments and that all statements made are correct.

Student Researcher's Name in capital letters:

Date: 25 Jun 2023

Supervisor Name in capital letters: MICHELE RUITERS

Date: 25 Jun 2023

Co-supervisor Name in capital letters:

Date: 25 Jun 2023

Note: GIBS shall do everything in its power to protect the personal information supplied herein, in accordance to its company privacy policies as well the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013. Access to all of the above provided personal information is restricted, only employees who need the information to perform a specific job are granted access to this information.

Decision:

Approved

REC comments:

Date: 03 Jul 2023

Appendix 2: Informed consent statement

I am conducting research on **team-building strategies that build the dynamic capabilities of globally distributed teams within South African multinationals.**

Our interview is expected to last 60 minutes and will help us understand what team-building strategies South African MNCs are utilising to address challenges faced by GDTs?

Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without penalty.

By signing this letter, you are indicating that you have given permission for:

- the interview to be recorded;
- the recording to be transcribed by a third-party transcriber, who will be subject to a standard non-disclosure agreement;
- verbatim quotations from the interview to be used in the report, provided they are not identified with your name or that of your organisation;
- the data to be used as part of a report that will be publicly available once the examination process has been completed; and
- all data to be reported and stored without identifiers.

If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me. Our details are provided below.

Researcher name:

Email:

Phone:

Research supervisor name:

Email:

Phone:

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3: Interview schedule

The following questions were asked:

General questions

- For how long have you been employed by Company X?
- For how long have you been working within a globally distributed team?
- How many people directly report into you?
- How globally distributed is your team?

Main questions

1. What challenges do you face as a globally distributed team?
2. To address challenges stated above, do you make use of team building? If yes, explain. If no, what solution do you use?
3. Do you think team building is beneficial? How?
4. What team building strategies do you utilise? Identify and explain.
5. Based on your experiences, do you think organisations with GDTs need to have formally documented strategies to drive team building?
6. Are there any barriers or challenges that you have encountered in implementing the strategies? Identify and explain.
7. Do you think having team building strategies is effective in driving team building? If yes, in what way? If not, why not?
8. Looking at how team building is conducted in your organisation, is it working? Elaborate on your answer.