

1 **An Assessment of Factors influencing Collaboration**
2 **and Impacts on Organisational Performance: A**
3 **Review**

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14 **Abstract.** Poor organisational performance is partly attributed to lack of
15 collaboration within an organisation. Therefore, this paper sought to establish the
16 factors that influence collaboration and the impact of collaboration on
17 organisational performance. A literature review was conducted to achieve the
18 objectives of the study. Literature from Google Scholar, Emerald, and Science
19 Direct were used, based on the keywords relevant to the study. The materials
20 consulted included journals and conference proceedings. Thematic content
21 analysis was used to identify factors that influence collaboration in an
22 organisation. The findings revealed that collaborative leadership, collaborative
23 culture, attributes of partners, strategic and external environment factors
24 influence collaboration. Further findings revealed that collaboration could
25 influence an organisation's performance in terms of knowledge creation an
26 transfer, innovativeness, ability to leverage resources to achieve maximum
27 benefits, as well as competitive advantage. This study provides knowledge on
28 which factors influence collaboration in order improve the quality or extent of
29 collaboration in an organisation. By understanding the factors of collaboration,
30 which in turn influence organisational performance, strategies can be developed
31 to encourage collaboration and thus performance, by the stakeholders and
32 managers.

33
34 **Keywords:** Collaboration, Organisations, Performance, Success

35 **1 Introduction**

36 The construction industry all over the world contributes to more than 10% of the
37 world's economy [1]. Often, the construction industry is utilised by government to
38 stimulate growth toward the economy since it is a prime indicator of economic activity

39 [2]. With construction being the prime economic activity, it is crucial that construction
40 projects become successful. However, performance in the construction industry has
41 been poor due to poor communication and poor exchange of information and
42 knowledge amongst project participants or project team [3]. This is as a result of lack
43 of or inadequate collaboration among the project teams.

44

45 Collaboration has been described as “shared accountability between individuals,
46 some interdependence between individuals and clarity of roles/goals” [4]. In this
47 arrangement, team tasks were regarded as generally a little more predictable, less urgent
48 and complex. When done right, collaboration can improve productivity and
49 profitability, increase innovation, and result in a cost reduction [5]. Collaboration can
50 be beneficial for all stakeholders during the process of a project in order to improve
51 organisational performance and to be a long-term relationship and to also create value
52 [6], [7].

53

54 Previous similar studies revealed that the functioning and knowledge sharing of the
55 collaboration team is relied has a direct effect on the quality and inter-instituted
56 collaboration and team performance [8]. It is further stated that the collaboration
57 attitude, culture behind each individual and competence reflects the team performance
58 involved in the project [9]. Collaboration has characteristics and attributes contribute
59 to quality improvement and performance in an organisation. Other case studies
60 conducted by [10], [11] and [12] in Hong Kong, United States of America (USA) and
61 in the United Kingdom (UK), respectively, posited that collaboration increases the
62 chances of a construction project being completed on time, at the budgeted cost, with
63 the quality satisfaction from the client, with the least amounts of conflicts, a better
64 relationship with the client and less defects claimed. However, the current study sought
65 to identify the factors of collaboration using a literature review.

66

67 The current study’s objectives were therefore to identify factors that influence
68 collaboration and in turn, organisational performance. The methods used in conducting
69 the review are presented briefly in the subsequent section. Thereafter, the information
70 distilled from the review is presented. Conclusions drawn from the findings are
71 subsequently presented.

72 **2 Methods**

73 The current paper is part of an on-going Master’s study. It presents findings from a
74 literature review stage. Therefore, a desktop study approach was used to conduct the
75 current study in order to identify common themes from existing studies, on the factors
76 that influence collaboration in construction organisations and projects. Materials were
77 sought from databases including Science Direct, Google Scholar, Emerald Insight and
78 Google. The materials used included journal articles and conference papers. The
79 materials were used based on the possession of the keywords relevant to the study
80 including collaboration, construction, teamwork, organisational performance and

81 project performance. Thematic content analysis was used to identify themes on the
82 factors which influence collaboration and the impact of collaboration on organizational
83 performance. The framework of factors developed will be tested using quantitative data
84 in an on-going second phase of the study, in order to validate the framework of factors
85 and test hypothesised relationships. The current paper presents findings from the
86 review.

87 **3. Factors influencing Collaboration**

88
89 Numerous factors influence the development and success of collaboration in any
90 industry aimed at improving organisational and project performance. [13] identified
91 factors such as the environment, strategy, size of the organisation, technology and how
92 it is improving, age of the participants and their cultural background. Other studies
93 identified strategic factors, external environment; attributes of the partners,
94 collaborative leadership and culture as collaboration influencers.

95 **3.1 Strategic factors**

96
97 Strategic factors affecting collaboration may include setting goals that are clear for
98 supplementary purposes [14], [15]; the regulation of distributing results for
99 collaboration in order to prevent important information from leaking out before time
100 [16]; methods of resolving common problems before resorting to harsh methods that
101 involve domination, arbitration or persuasion; governance in order to clarify role of
102 each individual in the collaboration and governance in defining how performance will
103 be measured amongst the main agents [17], [18].

104 **3.2 External environment**

105
106 The external environment incorporates three factors including IT capacity and
107 integration and information system [17]; similar geographic locations of the partners,
108 which affect collaboration positively when they are closer to each other and the
109 management of knowledge, including the management of assets [17].

110 **3.3 Attributes of the partners**

111
112 The attributes of partners or team members influence their level of collaboration. Such
113 attributes include technological ability where they are able to develop and innovate new
114 technology [17]; complementarities where partners can complement one another's
115 technological abilities, experience in collaboration; diversity in gender, age, and
116 education levels, knowledge absorption and integration of new knowledge [19], [20].

117 **3.4 Collaborative leadership**

118
119 Collaborative leadership influences collaboration in an entity. Effective leadership
120 brings about competitive advantage [21]. The traditional form of leadership mostly
121

122 consists of power, hierarchical, command and control structure. An organisation
123 requires leadership skills in a hierarchical model from top down; however, that
124 approach and model of leadership is no longer enough [22]. With collaboration being
125 about bringing individuals together with a shared goal to address shared concerns of
126 the organisation, there must be a collaborative leader that is employed in almost any
127 situation. Therefore, collaborative leadership involves the process of engaging
128 collectively in order to achieve common goals [21]. It is “the process of engaging
129 collective intelligence to deliver results across organisational boundaries when ordinary
130 mechanisms of control are absent” [21]. Intellectual individuals gathered together are
131 more smart, and creative, and believe that power is greatest in collective team. This
132 encourages suggestions and ideas from the team, allows roles and responsibilities to
133 evolve and fluctuate, and offer ongoing and immediate feedback with personalised
134 coaching [21].

135 **3.5. Collaborative culture**

136 Collaborative culture between the partners is to be fair in order to overcome differences
137 quicker. Confidence in perceiving the partners’ honesty, believing that information is
138 to remain within the organisation and believing in the collaboration to be of a positive
139 effect influence the extent of collaboration in an entity [23], [24], [25], [26]. Further,
140 immersion in forming a long term relationship and investing in a good collaborative
141 relationship as well as communication to allow information flow, participation,
142 exchanging of information, and mutual communication determines the level of
143 collaboration among partners and culture in an organisation [17], [26].

145 **3.6 Political factors**

146 Political influences have great potential outcome on collaboration due to organisations
147 being able to increase the amount of certainty and have a certain degree of
148 organisational influence [27]. For example, stakeholders that are more powerful in the
149 organisation collaborate with the ‘weaker’ individuals together in order for the
150 stakeholders to have control over what they do; while the stakeholders also collaborate
151 amongst themselves in order to prevent opponents from reconditioning the domain in
152 which they work in [28]. A political perspective on inter-organisational collaboration
153 is said to have an advantage due to it being a tool also for acquisition of power and
154 influence [29].

155 In summary, the above factors, strategic, political, external environment, leadership and
156 culture, influence collaboration in an organisation, which in turn affect an organisation
157 in one way or another.

159 **4. Effects of Collaboration on Organisational Performance**

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161 There is a wide variety of literature that has been studied all over the world, each of
162 which is written about the different effects of collaboration on knowledge creation and

163 organisational performance creation [27], [30]. Collaboration is about working together
164 with partners or stakeholders in order to leverage all kinds of resources and provide
165 maximum benefits [31]. In addition, one of the most crucial effects of collaboration is
166 its potential to build an organisation capacity through the transfer of knowledge [27].
167 Collaboration is about learning from each other or your partners whereas it is used as a
168 necessary tool that creates transfer of organisational or individual knowledge [27].
169 Amongst the context of a community or organisation is where the process of knowledge
170 creation occurs. Not only can the transfer of knowledge exist from one organisation to
171 another, through collaboration, new knowledge is able to be created and transferred
172 within an organisation [32].

173

174 Knowledge exchange has been found to be the fundamental role of what people in
175 collaboration are supposed to be doing [33]. According to [34], the central position of
176 the concept of collaboration is taken by knowledge exchange. An industry of
177 knowledge intensity, such as construction, requires different combinations of
178 knowledge sharing for innovation [35]. This suggests that knowledge creation is related
179 to innovativeness in an organisation. These views are shared by [36] and [36] who
180 viewed that in order for industries to innovate, there should be combinations of
181 knowledge sharing. Since knowledge exchange spans throughout all the project phases,
182 it provides a continuous assessment and improves the quality of collaboration.

183

184 In summary, the literature synthesis presented above revealed that the extent of
185 collaboration in an organization could depend on certain factors. The concept of a
186 collaborative structure leads to critical thinking and with disposition such as habit,
187 desire to be well-informed, a readiness to seek reason, inquisitiveness and flexibility,
188 better collaborators are borne [37], [38]. Further, culture, leadership, and strategic and
189 external environment factors including geographic locations, knowledge and asset
190 management were observed to influence the level of collaboration in an organisation.
191 It was therefore hypothesized that these factors influence the degree of collaboration
192 which in turn influences organizational performance. These relationships are depicted
193 in the Figure 1. The framework, which is not exhaustive at this stage of the Master's
194 study, will be further developed and tested in the quantitative research.

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Figure 1. Hypothesized relationships between collaboration and organizational performance.

203 **5. Conclusion**

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205 The study sought to identify the factors that influence collaboration. As a smaller part
206 of a wider study being conducted on the impact of collaboration on organisational
207 performance, key concepts and relationships were identified from the preliminary
208 review and presented in the current paper. The factors include strategic factors,
209 leadership and culture, external environment and political factors. However, it is
210 notable that the factors presented herein are not exhaustive. The findings of the study
211 are envisaged to be beneficial to managers in different sectors in forming strategies to
212 improve collaboration and thus performance in their organisation.

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214 Further studies are on-going to test the identified relationships and validate the findings
215 herein in order to determine the critical factors that influence collaboration and which
216 should be encouraged or harnessed to improve performance and achieve desired targets
217 or results.

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