



MASTER THESIS

Team AMO: Which abilities, motivation and opportunities do teams required to perform well?

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August 2020

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to expand the ability-motivation-opportunity (AMO) theory and to identify relevant factors that belong to the team level. So far, this model has only been related to the individual level as well as the organisational level, implying that individuals need abilities, motivation and opportunities to perform well. Nowadays, teams play an increasingly important role in organisations. Many studies deal with the effectiveness of teams and confirm that teams achieve better performance compared to individuals. Consequently, the factors of the individual and organisational level differ from the team level, implying that a new conceptual model for AMO is required. In addition, this research focuses on the (inter-) relationship among the AMO factors and their contribution to team performance. For this study, a literature review is created with the purpose to identify current determinants for team performance which are used as a base for the coding process of the 18 in-depth interviews with team managers operating in different fields. The results of the interviews show that numerous factors of the literature review could be detected to determine team performance, whereas new factors could be revealed. With regard to the team abilities, the diversity among experience and knowledge, as well as concrete team-related skills are essential for team work. In relation to team motivation, both internal and external aspects are emphasized to enhance collective work to achieve good team results and for team opportunities, means for communication across the team and their empowerment are essential. It also becomes clear that certain factors, such as leadership, are cross-dimensional and not being assigned to only one dimension. These intersections as well as the interviewees' answers imply that the three dimensions are interdependent on one another and that all need to be present, which confirm the multiplicative model of AMO. Overall, this research provides valuable insights for organisations where team structures are prevalent. The comprehensive framework for team performance can be used by management for team compositions and being aware of relevant ability, motivational and opportunity-related factors. Moreover, the current literature about team performance that mostly uses single variables to determine team performance advantages from a comprehensive framework that allows seeing the bigger picture which is important to make statements about team performance.

Keywords: AMO theory, team performance, individual performance, team manager, interviews, relationship

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1. Introduction

Team performance is increasingly becoming the standard in many organizations in various areas. The challenges of effectively working in teams are substantial, highlighting the importance to understand the determinants of team performance (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). In general the definition for ‘team’ is widely diverse among researchers. One of the early definition comes from Cohen and Bailey (1997) who define teams in an organisational setting as “a collection of individuals who are interdependent in their tasks, who share responsibility for outcomes, who see themselves and who are seen by others as an intact social entity embedded in one or more larger social systems [...]” (p. 241). Furthermore, in relation to team performance the national research council (2015) describes it as a “team’s capacity to achieve its goals and objectives” (p. 22). In turn, this capacity increases the satisfaction of team members and the aim to remain together as well as it raises the produced outcomes (National Research Council, 2015).

Overall, teams outperform individuals because of the benefits that come from a greater diversity of perspectives, resources and competencies (Bouwman, Runhaar, Wesselink & Mulder, 2019). This stresses the importance of having well performing teams as they enable organisation to overcome the increasing market competition and the demand for innovation which in turn extensively contribute to the success of the organisation (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006).

Due to the increase of interest in teams in organisations, multiple researches about team performance have been conducted to identify what makes teams performing. Numerous empirical studies tried to identify relationships between team performance and some specified variables. However, the search for simple relationships neglected to consider the broader picture. Thereupon, environmental factors have been added to team characteristics to obtain a deeper understanding about team performance (Joe, Tsai, Lin & Liu, 2014), emphasizing the consideration for more factors. The identification of complex relationships with regard to team performance and their integration into a single framework is therefore advocated. In relation to that, AMO theory represents a valuable model which displays a comprehensive framework with consistent and strong predictors for performance. These three dimensions of ability, motivation and opportunity have been identified as key determinants for work performance. Until now, this model has been designed for the association between ability, motivation and opportunity in terms of the individual as well as the organisational level. Moreover, this model has been extensively adopted within the human resource management discipline to explain the impact of HRM practices on employee’s individual ability, motivation and opportunity which promote performance-related outcomes (Kellner, Cafferkey and Townsend, 2019). What is missing, however, is the relationship to the collective performance that a team achieves in an organization. As emphasized by Jiang, Takeuchi and Lepak (2013), HR practices are conceptually different across the organisational, teams and individual level, stating that these three performance levels need to be considered differently. In several studies, context variables have been tested which, for example, contributed to the creation of information exchange, but which were attempted to be

explained by individual ability, motivation and opportunity due to the lack of expansion of this model at the team level. This objection has been raised by Beltran-Martin and Bou-Llugar (2018) as they emphasized the need for a model that implies determinants for collective performance. In regard to team performance, it is not enough to look at the individuals and their AMO because there is more than just individual AMO. “In essence, there is the argument that the synergy of the team is greater than the sum of the contributions of individuals” (Solansky, 2010). Thus, it is important to understand team AMO as it represents a holistic picture of team performance and does not only focus on certain aspects. Overall, it is time to focus on teams as global changes entail the shift to team working (Goyal & Akhilesh, 2007).

The aim of this paper is to extend AMO theory to the team level and to form a single framework that comprehends the most important components in terms of team ability, motivation and opportunity. This lead to the central research question of this study, which is: *“Which abilities, motivation and opportunities do teams require to perform well?”*

By integrating these three dimensions which have proven to be reliable performance indicators, successful team performance can be framed and applied for future research studies. As several studies have highlighted, the contribution of well-functioning teams to the success of the organisation is immense (Goyal & Akhilesh, 2007; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). To be successful in the long term, organisations need to be adoptive and flexible which can be obtained by team structures (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). That is why an investigation on this topic can be of high value to companies, irrelevant of the industry it is operating in, unless team compositions are prevalent in the company.

From an organisational point of view, the outcome of this study provides guidance on how to enhance team performance. Furthermore, from an HR perspective, the identified abilities for successful team performance can be taken into account during the recruitment process when team positions need to be filled. Additionally, those factors which are required for the realisation of effective team performance can be adopted appropriately. As an example, the implementation of targeted trainings for teams strongly contributes to enhanced team performance (Subramony, 2009). The AMO model has also been used in previous studies as a framework to guide firms in their choice for HR practices (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013). As this model focussed on the individual and organisational level, this study enhances HR practices in relation to the team level. In conclusion, this study offers an important contribution in terms of team performance for various perspectives of an organisation.

2. Literature Review

In this section, AMO theory will be explained more profoundly. At first, the individual performance level will be taken into account as well as the different functions that represent the relationship of these dimensions. Afterward, the linkage from AMO theory to the domain of human resource

management will be shown and the effect on the organisational performance level. Finally, the dimension of team performance which is focused by this study will be explained more detailed in terms previously adopted measurements.

2.1 AMO Theory

The origin of the model 'AMO' (Ability, Motivation and Opportunity) derived from psychological theorists who assumed that motivation and abilities are fundamental for individual performance. Later on, Victor Vroom (1964) has been one of the first who combined the elements of ability and motivation in an interactive model, explaining performance by the function $P = f(A \times M)$. What this model did not consider at the time was the influence of external environmental effects. This gap has been closed by Blumberg and Pringle (1982) as they contributed to the formation of these elements by adding the aspect of opportunity which comprises external elements which are beyond employees' control, as for example, equipment and working conditions. However, Blumberg and Pringle (1982) used different terminologies for the dimensions of ability and motivation. Nevertheless, their promoted framework OCW (Opportunity, Capacity, and Willingness) is equivalent to the theory of AMO for individual performance.

For a better understanding, at the individual level, the 'A' dimension defines the employee's ability to accomplish work-related tasks (Jiang et al., 2013). The individual knowledge and skills as well as more general attributes as health status and age refer to individual abilities. In contrast, the 'M' dimension includes aspects such as employee attitude, job satisfaction, personality and norms which in turn reflect the willingness to bring up efforts at work (Jiang et al., 2013). Overall, the 'A' dimension highlights the employees' abilities to contribute at work, whereas 'M' is about the willingness to make use of these abilities (Liao et al., 2009). Lastly, the third dimension, which is referred to as the opportunity, is about constraints for work outcomes due to external environmental conditions. They can either enhance or limit individual performance. These factors relating to the 'O' dimension includes variables such as the overall working conditions, the behaviour of the leader as well as the rules and procedures prescribed by an organisation (Blumberg and Pringle, 1982).

The final model of these authors assumes an interactive model ($P = f(O \times C \times W)$), declaring that performance decreases when there is a low level of either of the dimension of ability, motivation or opportunity (Blumberg and Pringle, 1982). Additionally, it implies that all dimensions need to be present to some extent for performance to be achieved.

However, next to the multiplicative model by Blumberg and Pringle (1982), there exist other possibilities to combine this model. Another function comes from Boxall and Purcell (2003), who describe the performance by an additive function $P = (A + M + O)$. According to this formula, neither ability, nor motivation, nor opportunities are dependent on each other. The logic would imply that by using practices that enhance at least one of these dimensions should result in increased levels of the objective. These practices relate to the domain of HRM where AMO has been adopted as a beneficial framework for employee performance (more in section 2.2).

A combination of the multiplicative and additive model derives from Bos-Nehles, Van Riemsdijk & Looise (2013), who argue that employees' abilities are an essential condition that motivation and opportunity can influence in relation to HRM performance. Stated differently, motivation and opportunity can only enhance or lower the effect on performance, whereas ability has a direct effect, giving a relationship of the form $P = f A (1 + M + O)$ (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013). Next to this hybrid model, new application in HRM research have emerged, called necessary condition analysis, which promotes the idea that single HRM activities are mandatory for an outcome to occur and when absent, they cannot be compensated by other activities (Hauff, Guerci, Dul, & Rhee, 2019). In summary, the AMO theory is an established model for individual performance, while it is applied differently in terms of the effects of ability, motivation and opportunities.

The linkage from AMO to the organisational level originated from the adoption of AMO towards HRM practices. Performance measurements at this level have mostly been linked to the effectiveness of HR practices on employees' ability, motivation and opportunity (e.g. Huselid, 1995) which will be explained more profoundly in the following section.

2.2. AMO and HRM

The theory of AMO has become a popular model within the domain of human resource management to potentially explain how the management of employees relates to performance-related outcomes (Kellner, Cafferkey and Townsend, 2019). More specifically, HR researcher have adopted the AMO framework in a way that proposes the association of HRM practices that actually impact an individual's ability, motivation and opportunity. A standard reference for the AMO framework in the HRM discipline comes from Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg and Kalleberg (2000) (Kellner, Cafferkey and Townsend, 2019). Appelbaum et al. (2000) have been drawing on the concept of high performance work systems (HPWS) and the impact of three elements that are needed to enhance employee performance in terms of their individual ability, motivation and opportunity to participate. That means, that improved performance derives from HR practices and policies that grouped together display ability, motivation and opportunity enhancing categories. Despite the diversity among HR systems, as for example, high performance work systems (HPWS) (Becker & Huselid, 1998), high commitment HR systems (Arthur, 1994), high involvement HR systems (Guthrie, 2001) and high investment HR systems (Lepak, Taylor, Tekleab, Marrone, & Cohen, 2007), which have been identified in previous research, the bundle of HR practices is justified to have superior explanatory power in influencing organisational power (Jiang et al., 2012b; Subramony, 2009). Established practices in research on the relationship between HR-enhancing practices and performance comprise skill-, motivation- and empowerment-enhancing practices. Whereas the latter is showing overlaps to opportunity-enhancing HR practices (Jiang et al., 2012). In more detail, the skill-enhancing HR practices do, for example, involve training, staffing and workforce planning (Subramony, 2009). This can be explained as training practices that can shape the development of skills and knowledge whereas during recruitment

practices the final job selection should take the required abilities into consideration (Rauch & Hatak, 2016).

The second dimension of motivation-enhancing HR practices refers, *inter alia*, to compensation policies, incentives as promotion opportunities, which have the purpose to increase employees' motivation to accomplish the organisation's objectives (Huselid, 1995; Jiang et al., 2012; Subramony, 2009). As motivation-enhancing practices of this approach derive from organisational behaviour literature (Deci & Ryan, 1985), the focus has mostly been on extrinsic motivation by focussing on incentives and rewards.

Lastly, opportunity-enhancing HR practices are designed to, for example, strengthening communication between employees and managers and to increase their responsibility and involvement in decision-making processes as well as feedback mechanism (Jiang et al., 2012) or to use HR practices that refer to self-directed team membership (Kellner, Cafferkey & Townsend, 2019). Overall, all practices have the intention to provide employees with the external opportunity to successfully perform at work.

Overall, according to AMO theory, HRM practices tend to affect organisational performance. Researchers have mostly adopted this model in areas dealing with strategic human resource and strategic decision-making areas (Black & Boal, 1994; Jiang, Lepak, Hu, & Baer, 2012). Specifically, in the domain of strategic HRM research, the linkage between HR bundle and systems of HR practices as an indicator for organisational performance has been examined (e.g. Huselid, 1995). The impact of HR practices has mostly been investigated on organisational outcomes as for example, the level of productivity, quality and services. Additionally, the focus on financial outcomes has been used to show the effect of these practices on the organisational performance (Wright, Gardner, Moynihan, 2003).

This research extended when studies have started to test the mediating mechanisms of HR practices on organizational performance (e.g., Gong et al., 2009; Sun et al., 2007; Takeuchi et al., 2007). Another linkage to organisational outcomes has been described in terms of innovative working behaviour which can be determined by HR practices (Shipton et al., 2006). Numerous studies reveal the linkage between HR initiatives and its positive effect on employees' abilities and behaviour which in turn lead to an increase in organizational innovations (Laursen and Foss, 2003; Messersmith and Guthrie, 2010; Mumford, 2000; Shipton et al., 2006). A systematic literature review conducted by Bos-Nehles and Renkema and Janssen (2017) has, for example, identified that the best HRM practices for enhancing innovation work behaviour is achieved by implementing training and development, reward, job security, autonomy, task composition, job demand, and feedback. However in general, HR practices differ in terms of organisational characteristics. Presumably, numerous controls, such as the industry sector, size and capital intensity may influence the adoption of specific HR policies and practices as well as business strategies and have an impact on HRM outcomes as well as the overall organisational performance (Paauwe & Richardson, 1997).

Now, while AMO has been applied at the individual level and adopted to the organisational level, whereas the latter has mostly been done in relation to HR-enhancing practices, it is time to focus on the intermediary level which is team performance. The importance of team performance will be discussed more profoundly in the following section (2.3). Team ability, motivation and opportunity will differ from the current dimension of individual/ organisational performance, as for example, Goyal and Akhilesh (2007) identified that “Group intelligence is a concept distinct from the concept of individual intelligence [...]” (P. 211).

2.3 Dimension of Team Performance

Teamwork has been identified to essentially contribute to the success of an organisation. Already early studies on teams reveal that collective work efforts are better than when they worked as individuals (e.g. Michaelsen et al., 1989). Some of the proposed benefits of teams over individuals relate to cognitive, motivational and integration advantages achieved through the aggregation of individual contribution (Hackman and Wageman, 2005).

In general, the outcome of teamwork is understood as team performance or team effectiveness. These two terms are used interchangeably as identical outcome measurements are commonly used in research. The term “team performance” is used throughout this paper. Overall, team performance is an objective or subjective assessment of how well a team achieves its estimated goals (DeChurch and Mesmer-Magnus, 2010). Studies proposed that teamwork enhances creativity and the ability to solve problems. Through the organisation’s adoption of team workflows and knowledge the firm’s flexibility enhances (e.g. Fay, Shipton, West, Patterson, 2015). These characteristics, achieved through teamwork, have been linked to increased organisational innovations. The importance of this performance outcome is based on fact that it “fosters sustainable management and allows managers to achieve a competitive advantage” (Bulińska-Stangrecka & Bagieńska, 2019, p.1).

In addition to innovation, numerous other variables for measuring team performance are used in research. Most often, a framework for team performance adopts an input, throughput and output format (e.g. Hackman, 1987). Team characteristics and capabilities describe potential input formats whereas team collaboration and decision-making processes explain throughput formats. The output measurement is often defined in terms of goods or services produced by the team (Hackman, 2002). This framework is partially identical to the performance measure called IPO which describes the outcome of inputs, processes and outputs. It defines outputs as the quality of care which is influenced by team-related processes, as for example, communication and decision-making. Moreover, these processes are influenced by numerous inputs like team members’ experience and task complexity (Schmutz, Meier, Manser, 2019).

Several studies are also combining categories of performance to capture the whole picture in terms of team performance. So did Cohen and Bailey (1997), who used three dimensions that teams are supposed to affect. The first determinant for performance effectiveness has been assessed in terms of quality and quantity of outputs which fit to previous named formats of outputs. Concrete

measurement examples can be customer satisfaction or innovation. The second dimension relates to group member attitudes, trust in management, commitment and employee satisfaction. Finally, the third dimension includes behavioural outcomes which can be defined by absenteeism rate, turnover or safety. The first two dimensions get approval by Colenson (2000), who further added the outcome of creativity which can arise by the effective use of teams. In addition to the assessment of currently performing work teams, the future team performance, which can be defined as the capability to continue working together, can contribute to a more comprehensive assessment (Hackman, 1987).

3. Conceptualisation of AMO on the Team level

3.1 AMO-framework

As already mentioned, research has neglected to investigate on team performance in terms of AMO theory. However, numerous antecedents on the team level have been provided (e.g. Flinchbaugh, 2016; Beltran-Martin & Bou-Llusar, 2018) which can be distributed to the dimensions of ability, motivation and opportunity. This literature review about team performance highlights common determinants for team performance in respect to the appropriate dimension of AMO. A summary (see Table 1) of all aspects can be found below the sub-section 3.4. The factors that are highlighted in this section serve as potential codes for the coding process of the interviews which were carried out to extent important aspects for team performance and to allow the creation of a holistic framework of team AMO.

3.2 Ability

The meaning of ability that is the potential to perform a task effectively is the same for the individual, team or organisational level. However, the contributing factors vary with regard to the different levels. Numerous scholars have tested on factors that can be defined as abilities which are crucial in terms of team performance. One highlighted characteristic relates to the diversity among team members, which, however, shares different opinions among researcher. Depending on its definition, job-related diversity in terms of the education level and company tenure have shown to positively affect team performance as it influences the quality of team decisions (Simons, Pelled, and Smith, 1999). Support was also found by Horwitz, S. and Horwitz, I. (2007), who identified a positive impact of task-related diversity on team performance. In addition, Cox and Blake (1991) argued that improved decision-making relies on diversity in age and experience among team members, but in contrast to that, bio-demographic diversity could not be confirmed by another study conducted by Horwitz, S. and Horwitz, I. (2007). A possible disadvantage of such a diversity of opinions and perspectives among team members is the time it takes to find congruence in the decision-making process (Nemeth & Staw, 1989).

Another key component of team performance is team tenure. The study by Gonzalez-Mulé, Cockburn, McCormick, Zhao (2019) revealed that team performance benefits from additive team tenure, i.e. having team members who have a high level of skills and knowledge to navigate the team

and by having collective team tenure which defines a communal knowledge base through the members' shared experiences and finally team tenure dispersion describing the variety in perspectives and knowledge of the individual team members. Accordingly, teams should be composed with individuals who have enhanced individual experience, enhanced shared experience among team members as well as enhanced diversity of experience.

Furthermore, the concept of collective intelligence which defines a group's general ability to perform multiple tasks and which has been studied by Woolley, Chabris, Pentland, Hashmi and Malone (2010) in the performance of human groups, revealed to explain whether a group has the ability to perform a task successfully. Therefore, the collective intelligence is not only property of the individual group members but also of the group itself and allows the prediction of their collective performance.

In addition, a link between the team members' traits on the overall group performance has been examined by Barrick, Stewart, Neubert and Mount (1998). Their outcome revealed that conscientious teams, cognitive-ability teams are performing better compared to teams that are less conscientious and which score lower in cognitive ability. In addition, these results indicate that teams that are more agreeable and more emotionally stable are likely to perform better. Overall, the strongest performance occurs when none of the team members have any particularly disagreeable or introverted traits. In relation to that, the reference to the team's capability to continue working as a team in the future has been identified to increase when the team has high cognitive ability and it is more extraverted as well as emotionally stable. The aspect of team cognition has been revealed by DeChurch and Mesmer-Magnus (2010), too. Team cognition defines the way in which relevant team knowledge is mentally expressed and distributed within the team and consequently enables the anticipation and performance of action for its members (DeChurch and Mesmer-Magnus, 2010).

In conclusion, as teamwork is increasingly used in organisational settings, these results have important implications for how work teams should be composed to achieve a good performance. These results promote that preferred abilities of team members that are either present or not contribute to team performance as well as the longevity of the entire team.

3.3 Motivation

Several meaningful factors for motivation to perform successfully in a team could be identified in literature about team performance. One of them is the aspect of group cohesiveness. Numerous studies have demonstrated the positive effect of group cohesiveness on performance outcomes (Langfred, 2000; Summers, Coffelt, & Horton, 1988; Zaccaro, 1991). According to Feldman (1984), an enhanced performance orientation is generated by cohesiveness within a group as it promotes conformity among members and furthermore group norms are more likely to be adhered. Additionally, the influence of cohesion prevalent in teams has shown to positively influence coordination between team members and does in turn simplify operations of the whole group (Evans & Dion, 1991; Mullen & Copper, 1994). Two particular job characteristics have proven to enhance team cohesion and therefore improve

the overall team performance. These two characteristics are job autonomy and complexity (Man & Lan, 2003). As explained by Langfred (2000), job autonomy promotes team members' commitment to the whole team and their goals. Furthermore, the team is likely to raise its importance and identity within the whole organisation due to their salience of the group as a unit, as well as of the group's task environment. In relation to job complexity, the enhanced motivation is explained by the team's willingness to overcome such challenges (Tesluk and Mathieu, 1999). The evoked interactions among team members are likely to bring more diversified solutions, thus leading to enhanced performance (Hackman, Brousseau & Weiss, 1976).

Another important factor that enhances team motivation is the aspect of identification with the team. As argued by Van der Vegt and Bunderson (2005), a team's performance is dependent on the "degree of collective team identification within a group" (p. 533). According to previous studies, team identification increases the likelihood that team members will show behaviours associated with organizational citizenship (Van Dick, Wagner, Stellmacher & Christ, 2004). Furthermore, it promotes constructive tendencies by strengthening members' identification which in turn leads to improved performance outcomes (Desivilya and Eizen, 2005).

Another important component for team motivation represents incentives. Pearsall, Christian, & Ellis (2010) identified that a hybrid rewards which simultaneously influence the team as well as the individual level, are most effective for successful team performance. Hybrid reward structures have the ability to promote effective team action processes by directing attention and effort to shared responsibilities (Chen & Kanfer, 2006). By for example solely using individual reward structures, the level of information sharing will be reduced (Johnson, Hollenbeck, Humphrey, Ilgen, Jundt & Meyer, 2006). However, collective knowledge-sharing has been identified as an important variable in terms of team performance (Flinchbaugh, 2016). Further, Betrain–Martine (2018) supports the aspect of knowledge sharing and indicates that it is promoted by equality of exchange relationships with co-workers. This has demonstrated to be important for sharing information, ideas and feedback. This can be aligned with team cohesion as it has identified to be promoted by the continuous exchange of team members as well as idea sharing (Man & Lan, 2003). In addition, Kozlowski & Ilgen (2006) concluded that teams that learn more collectively will demonstrate enhanced performance.

Overall, collective efficacy is more likely to develop when team members are more interdependent and interactive. In summary, group cohesiveness and identification, incentives, collective knowledge-sharing as well as collective learning have an effect on team performance as these components represent antecedents for team motivation which are crucial to achieve team performance.

3.4 Opportunity

External influences that have an impact on team performance belong to the third dimension of AMO theory, defined as opportunities. A frequently used indicator that has been identified to have influence on team performance is leadership. The leader's enactment with the team members has shown to play

a key role in shaping the nature and strength of climate perceptions (Hofmann, Morgeson, & Germs, 2003; Zohar & Luria, 2004) which in turn affect team members working behaviour. The important tasks of leadership which influence the overall team performance cover the setting of team learning goals that commensurate with current team capabilities and the diagnosing of performance deficiencies and guidance of the feedback process (Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006). The importance of feedback has been shown in various field and laboratory studies, as team feedback has a positive effect on team processes and results (e.g., DeShon et al., 2004; Geister et al., 2006; Schippers et al., 2013). As stated by DeShon et al. (2004), feedback is an essential part for providing direction towards the attainment of goals (DeShon et al., 2004).

In addition to the influence of leadership and feedback, is the aspect of empowerment which has been identified to be “a key ingredient to building a self-directed work team or a high-performing team” (Peterson, 2007, p.65). Capable resource and accurate information are a few examples of empowerment components (Peterson, 2007). Moreover, trust within a team has been identified as an essential determinant for successful collaborative relationships. In this regard, HR practices are crucial in supporting collaboration and trust within organisational teams as it enhances the team’s success (Jørgensen and Becker, 2017). The implementation of interdependent tasks and workload sharing as well as the introduction of group rewards and collective responsibility represent approved HR practices that enhance team trust and in that improving the overall team performance (Bulinska-Stanfrecka and Bagienska, 2019)

Further, influential factors have been addressed by Guzzo and Dickson (1996). The first cover the aspect of group design. Specifically, the diversity of membership and the size of the group, (e.g. Shaw, 1981) have been found to be related to team performance (Guzzo & Dickson, 1996). In relation to diversity of team members, Fujimoto et al. (2000) revealed the importance of openness of team members towards diversity as it contributes to improved team performance. The second factor pointed out by Guzzo & Dickson (1996) relates to the group process in which interventions can be carried out to improve team performance. However, group process is strongly constrained by technology (e.g. computers) which highlights another important factor which is required to give teams the opportunity to achieve performance.

In conclusion, as demonstrated by different studies, leadership, feedback, empowerment, trust, group design in terms of size and composition of diversified members, HR practices as group rewards and technology are essential external factors that affect team performance. All components from the literature review of all three dimensions of ability, motivation and opportunity are summarized in Table 1.

Team performance

| Ability | Motivation | Opportunity |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity among team members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of education • Company tenure • Task diversity • Age • Experience • Team tenure • Collective intelligence • Team member's traits • Team cognition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group cohesiveness • Team identification • Incentives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hybrid reward • Collective knowledge-sharing and learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality of exchange relationship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback process • Empowerment • Resources • Information • Group Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composition of diversified members • Group size • HR practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for collaboration and trust • Technology |

Table 1: Preliminary framework for team performance

4. Methodology

Within this section, the methodology and research design of the study as well as the interviewee selection and structure are demonstrated and explained in detail.

4.1 Methodology and Study design

This research is designed according to a qualitative research approach where semi-structured interviews are conducted to identify teams' abilities, motivation and opportunities which are required for successful team performance. As stated by Edmondson and McManus (2007), qualitative data is appropriate for, inter alia, the generation of theories. The AMO theory which has not been linked to the team level beforehand illustrates the achievement of a new perspective of this theory. Overall, these three primary guiding topics, identical to the dimension of AMO theory are thoroughly used in the interviews to identify the underlying aspects for team performance. That in turn allows a new composition of AMO theory at the team level.

This study is primarily of qualitative nature because of the research question. Due to the structure of three predefined topics, the use of semi-structured interview is most appropriate and furthermore, "[...] allows the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick 2008, p. 291). Additionally, semi-

structured interviews are advisable when the aim is to grasp independent thoughts of a group (Adams, 2015). Overall, the acquisition of personal stories, experiences and perspectives of the individual can be optimally achieved through in-depth interviews.

In qualitative research, the ideal number of interviews is not uniformly presented by literature (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar & Fontenot, 2013). However, several researchers agree that “interviews should continue until theoretical saturation is reached” (Nissen, 2005, p. 235). Hennink, Kaiser and Marconi’s methodological study (2017) has further explained code saturation and meaning saturation and provide a guideline for the amount of required interviews. Their analysis identified that nine interviews are relevant for code saturation and 16-24 interviews are relevant for meaning saturation. The latter describes the point when no additional dimensions or insights of issues can be spotted. For this study 18 in-debt interviews are held with team managers in order to reach meaning saturation about the AMO of teams.

The duration of the single interviews is scheduled to last approximately 60 minutes, which is the upper limit of the optimal interview length for semi-structured interviews (Adams, 2015). It should therefore be realistic that after this time all relevant information is provided by the interviewee.

4.1.1 Interviewee structure and selection

The interviews were initially supposed to happen face to face. However, due to the pandemic that broke out in early 2020, the interviews are carried out using virtual tolls such as Skype, Facetime or telephone calls. Although no personal interviews can take place, the use of video calls allow similar conditions whereby detailed and personal interviews can be guaranteed and a reduction of the quality of the interviews is prevented.

The interviews start with a short introduction for the respondents about the overall topic of this study. Subsequently, the key questions on the three topics as well as the interview-specific, probing questions on the answers of each individual respondent are asked.

The selection of respondents for the interviews is based on few conditions. Most importantly and in relation to the research question, the interviewees must be part of a team of an organisation and have experience with team-related work. For this analysis, teams are defined as “a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and working approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable” (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993). In addition, these teams are characterised by a membership size of two or more individuals. These conditions are particularly suitable for project teams. Project teams are characterised for interdependence of tasks and consistency in pursuing the same goals. The person most suitable to make judgements about the whole team is the team manager. They have an extensive overview of the team activities and are the best candidates to judge on required team abilities, motivation and opportunities. Overall, in accordance to previous conditions mentioned, the interview partners are chosen. Other types of team managers are also interviewed, if their teams show similar cohesion or

dependencies. For the most part, a snowball sampling method is used to find interviewees who meet the relevant criteria.

All interviewees are anonymous and will solely be identified by numbers (e.g. the first interviewee will receive No. 1 and the second one No. 2 and so on) to differentiate between them within this research paper. Finally, the contexts of respondents as the industry in which they work, the team size and the team type are taken into account to highlight business-related differences and similarities.

4.1.2. Analysis and coding

The interviews are voice recorded and subsequently transcribed. For the following coding of the data, the chosen method of analysis for this study is a hybrid approach of qualitative methods, incorporating inductive coding from themes emerging in the informants' discourse and deductive coding that derived from the conceptual framework. As stated by Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid & Redwood (2013), "[...] a combined approach is appropriate when the project has some specific issues to explore, but also aims to leave space to discover other unexpected aspects of the participants' experience or the way they assign meaning to phenomena" (p. 3). With the literature review on team performance (see section 3) an overview has been created which is used as the base for the coding of transcripts of the interviews. If codes from the conceptual framework are found in the interviews, their names are adopted. In addition, new codes are created based on the respondents answers. Thus, the literature review serves exclusively as a foundation for the coding process.

For the coding of the interviews, the software ATLAS.ti has been used. In the first step, an open coding process is used to identify relevant indicators which fit to either of the dimension of ability, motivation or opportunity. Whenever factors are identified that match previously known aspects from the conceptual framework, these are coded accordingly. In the next step, axial coding is used to identify synonyms of codes which can be grouped together and to ensure that all pieces of text are thoroughly coded. Whenever codes are overlapping, these are combined into one code and those codes which are not relevant and contributing to answering the research question are deleted. In table 2, all identified codes and the corresponding code groups are provided. An explanation of all relevant codes will be presented in the findings presented in section 5.

| Codes | Code Groups |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Collective intelligence | Ability |
| Team members' traits | Ability |
| Team cognition | Ability |
| Diversity among team members | Ability |
| Team tenure | Ability |
| Social skills | Ability |
| Conflict ability | Ability |
| Communication skills | Ability |
| Communication | Motivation |

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Group cohesiveness | Motivation |
| Interpersonal relationship | Motivation |
| Equality among team members | Motivation |
| Member's similarity | Motivation |
| Collective knowledge sharing | Motivation |
| Leadership | Motivation |
| Goal identification | Motivation |
| Intermediate targets | Motivation |
| Celebration of target achievement | Motivation |
| Feedback | Motivation |
| Empowerment | Motivation |
| Leader-team relationship | Motivation |
| Error culture | Motivation |
| Incentives | Motivation |
| Appreciation | Motivation |
| Information and communication | Opportunity |
| Leadership | Opportunity |
| Feedback process | Opportunity |
| Empowerment | Opportunity |
| Group design | Opportunity |
| Group size | Opportunity |
| Resources | Opportunity |
| Technology | Opportunity |
| Company culture and history | Opportunity |
| HR practices (Teambuilding) | Opportunity |
| Home office / Virtual meetings (Corona) | Opportunity |

Table 2: Codes and Code groups

4.1.3. Verification and Trustworthiness

In order to verify and enable high trustworthiness of the interviews, the interviewees have given their consent of the transcript of interviews. They verified their correctness and that they intending answers are appropriately reflected. Agreement for each interview transcript has been given by the corresponding respondent. Additionally, to improve validation of this methodology of this research as well as the coding process, feedback has been provided by the supervisor of this master thesis. This method has been highlighted in the article by Burnard (1991) who outlined two methods of checking for validity.

5. Findings

In this section the findings of the interviews in relation to team's abilities, motivation and opportunities are presented. The identified codes will be analysed more profoundly and contextual differences are highlighted. For clarification, the definition and corresponding sample quotes of concepts that require explanation can be found in the appendix.

5.1 Ability

Based on the interviews, eight codes are found that are representative for team ability, whereas some codes represent sub-concepts for an overarching concept. Collective intelligence displays a main concept that is either positively or negatively influenced by the team members' traits and team cognition. Diversity among team members in terms of the level of education and age is another identified code, followed by team tenure, the team's social skills and conflict ability. In addition to the aforementioned abilities, communication skills represent another important factor when talking about team performance.

Collective intelligence

In analysing team abilities that influence team performance, the aspect of collective intelligence which defines a group's general ability to perform multiple tasks through collaboration among team members is identified to play an important role. As shown in the following quote, bringing together different opinions is an important part of developing shared information within the team.

"Teamwork lives from the fact that you can work together and allow other opinions and then continue to work with those other opinions and basic ideas." (Team manager 15)

As can be seen from the interviews, collective intelligence plays an important role in relation to project-related teamwork. It represents a part that is essential for the achievement of team performance. In terms of project teams, good team performance is determined based on whether the project goal is achieved within the budget and the prescribed time. In that respect, the respondents emphasized that collective intelligence, the ability to perform a variety of tasks, can only arise if the individual project members have sufficient knowledge and skills as can be seen in the following quote:

"The basic requirement is, of course, that the team knows what it is doing. Their qualifications and intellect must enable them to do so." (Team manager 13)

Team members' traits

In relation to collective intelligence, specific characteristics of the team members were highlighted by the team managers surveyed, which relate, among other things, to the role perception among team members. It seems very important that each team member accepts and understands the individual roles in a team, so that a successful collaboration is possible and knowledge can be shared.

"It is vital that the roles of the team are clearly understood. There are very different roles in the project and if everyone has the right understanding of the roles, it helps a lot that the team works well together as a team. It is not so much the personal expert knowledge that is required, but rather what I have to do in my role and how I have to communicate with others." (Team manager 8)

“Responsibilities must be clear, so who ultimately has to make the decision, where does my responsibility begin and where does it end.” (Team manager 12)

These statements illustrate that the team must on the one hand see themselves as a unit, but also understand the individual roles, so that the whole team can work together successfully. This understanding of roles is therefore particularly important when a team from different areas of competence is explicitly put together. This factor therefore represents a sub-concept of collective intelligence.

Team cognition

As shown before, the team members' trait in form of the perception of the team roles, influences collective intelligence which is an essential ability in terms of team performance. Likewise, the aspect of team cognition which defines the way in which relevant team knowledge is mentally expressed and distributed within the team and consequently enables the anticipation and performance of action for its members is stated to be a relevant factor, too.

“[...] It can also go completely wrong if opinions or expectations diverge too much. That is such a point that I think can be controlled well if the people who are in the project team know each other well or can assess themselves well enough.” (Team manager 14)

In this context it can be seen that a prerequisite is that the team members have worked together for a longer time. Therefore, this aspect of ability is likely to be less transferable to newly formed teams. If the mutual behaviour and the way of working are known, the team can adapt better to each other. There must also be a will to share knowledge, which in turn indicates the ability to work in a team, as expressed in the following quote:

“There is always a grey area in which it is important that the two understand each other and simply find a solution, even if this is not explicitly defined in the job description. This is related to the quality of communication, the ability to work in a team, which makes these issues essential.” (Team manager 8)

Diversity among team members

In addition to the concept of collective intelligence, the aspect of diversity within a team that alludes to relevant skills, the level of education, age of the members is emphasized with regard to relevant team abilities. Respondents who advocate such diversity operate in different fields, as for example, the banking sector, in engineering offices and in large corporations, indicating that the industry is not relevant in this context. As an example, the up-to-date knowledge of team members who have just completed their studies can bring added value to the team. Overall, the age differences in a team relate to the level of experience as well as the different ways of thinking. However, the diversity related

aspects are linked to one another, as for example, the level of education is likely to depend on the age level as can be seen by the following quote:

“A corresponding mix in terms of the team’s age structure is advantageous. I am now among the experienced and we can of course provide some input. We know the company inside out, in principle we almost always know what is meant. However, it could be a danger that old ways of working keep lasting. It is important to think out of the box and this is where younger team members can be beneficial. They may have other ideas and they can bring them up, which is also desirable that they contribute. A good mix between experience and innovation is very helpful.” (Team manager 13)

When looking at the team size, it emerged that the respondents who supported the diversity aspect within the team are responsible for project teams that are larger than six people, which indicates the benefit especially for larger teams. It is conceivable that especially small teams, less than three members, need an overall high level of skills and experiences in order to perform well. Likewise, the advocacy of diversity depends on the task that has to be accomplished in the team. For very demanding projects, as shown in the following quote by team manager 13, a fundamentally high level of qualification and experience is required which excludes less experienced and thus younger team members.

“If it is about presenting a legal assessment of a new branch that is to be established, then it will certainly not be possible for a junior to do so and we are therefore talking about the qualification requirements that are simply a basic requirement for such tasks.” (Team manager 13)

It can be concluded that in most cases the aspect of diversity within a team is seen as advantageous in relation to team performance. However, contextual aspects such as team size and the difficulty of the task can speak for uniformity of team members, specifically in terms of skills and education.

Team tenure

As has already been shown, diversity is an important aspect in a team in order to perform well. However, it becomes clear that a uniformly high level of qualification can be more advantageous for certain teams. Specifically, one respondent working for a research and consulting institute indicate that an overall high level of skills and knowledge as well as the general experience of working in teams are required to achieve good performance. This is achieved through long-term cooperation and experience, which in this case is referred to as team tenure. The following quote illustrates the advantage of shared team experience and the disadvantage of less experienced team members.

“[...] we have such a wide range in the team and we now have two newcomers. One of the colleagues is currently writing his master thesis and the other colleague is finished with the bachelor thesis and of course you can clearly see the difference. It can be seen that the longer teams have worked together

and the more often they have carried out projects, the better they understand each other or can develop common ideas, the aim and scope of the project and the earnings situation.” (Team manager 7)

“The ideal mix for a team is that you have a sufficient number of experts who know what to do.” (Team manager 10)

These two abilities, the former with respect to diversity among team members and the other focusing on an overall high level of knowledge and skills (team tenure) across the team are showing to be dependent on the team task. Diversity has been highlighted in terms of incorporating new ideas or the benefit that comes from younger team members who have the latest technical knowledge. Conversely, the experienced team members can pass on their knowledge to the younger ones. On the other hand, it is an advantage for highly complex projects if the team has a high level of knowledge and experience from the start, which indicates that diversity is less advantageous.

Social skills

In addition to team tenure, it also turns out that specifically social skills are extremely important for the functioning of a team because it enables, inter alia, respectful interactions which are crucial for good team dynamics. This skill should preferably be in possession in any team irrespective of the industry a team is operating in.

“A high level of social skills, that the team knows when they can disturb each other and when they can talk to someone and a high level of loyalty and trust, that’s always very important.” (Team manager 5)

“Such things as openness to the entire team and fairness to everyone, you cannot like everyone equally, it always has to do with chemistry, but I think the team has to be ready to accept everyone. That applies to everyone.” (Team manager 1)

In contrast to that, one team manager who is working in a software service company highlights the absence of social skills among the company’s teams and its negative effect on the team dynamics. Specifically, a lack of social skills has a negative impact on team communication which is an important ability as presented later on.

“[...] Software developers are very difficult to deal with. A software developer is very much convinced of him and is considered very complicated and self-broking outside of this software world. I actually have the whole range here, everything that is known as prejudice up to completely normal people, everything is represented. This makes the communication with each other difficult and it gets loud in the teams every now and then.” (Team manager 17)

Overall, this shows that if there is a lack of social skills in the team, the potential for conflict increases, which can harm the communication in the team and consequently make the achievement of the team goal more difficult.

Conflict ability

Just as relevant as the social skills are certain traits of the team members that are highlighted to be beneficial in terms of team performance. More concrete, the ability to be criticised has been emphasized in that regard as illustrated in the following quote:

“What you need in a team is the ability to accept criticism.” (Team manager 18)

As mentioned by the interviewees, different opinions come together in a team and that is why team members should be able to deal with criticism so that the team can continue to work well together and that criticism is not misunderstood, potentially causing discrepancies in the team. The following quote shows the ramifications for performance when team members are lacking conflict ability.

“A large number of employees cannot handle criticism, which is a major weakness. Criticism can be positive, but can also be negative and it is mostly negative and this criticism is mostly taken personally. The moment that it is taken on the personal level, the head stops thinking and the actual facts are ignored and the performance cannot be maintained.” (Team manager 3)

Communication skills

Lastly, the respondents state that communication skills are extremely important in order to perform well as a team. Good team communication enhances the achievement of goals and the cooperation among team members as illustrated in the following quote:

“The communication should be good, especially for the people on the team who are on the same level, because that enables them to perform well together. You can notice this when doing exercises if that is not the case, because then something goes wrong and then, for example, setting up a mine lock takes much, much longer. This is because they do not communicate properly with each other and the agreements do not fit.” (Team manager 2)

This statement comes from the military when larger groups up to 25 people perform a mostly physical task. However, the communication skill has also been confirmed by other team managers, such as a manager from a large corporation where numerous project works are carried out.

“You just have to talk about it and talking about it together helps in many cases. Through these conversations, the team can develop the cohesion that it takes to work well together.” (Team manager 10)

“Members of the team must also have the ability to address problems clearly and at the same time be open enough when certain tasks overwhelm them.” (Team manager 14)

One can see that it is not so much about the general ability to speak but about the correct expression, so that no misunderstandings arise in the team and efficient cooperation is possible.

Summarizing the findings about team ability

It becomes clear that there are different factors that relate to team ability that contribute to successful team performance. First of all, collective intelligence is needed which is characterised through team member's collaboration. The team must share their ideas and knowledge which is guaranteed by constant exchange between team members. Mediating factors for collective intelligence are the team members' traits in relation to the perception of roles as it enhances collaboration and team cognition which defines whether a team shares their knowledge mentally so that behaviour can be predicted and internal conflicts avoided.

Next to that, the aspect of diversity among team members has been highlighted. Diversity in terms of age, education and skills is useful for either knowledge sharing and that those differences complement one another. However, this aspect is content related. Whenever an overall high level of knowledge is required for a challenging task, team tenure which includes long-term experiences turned out to be preferred. In this case, diversity is less in demand. Nonetheless, social skills are defined as uniformly important. If social skills are lacking, it reduces the ability to achieve good performance with the team. The same applies to conflict ability among team members which is needed to avoid personal conflicts among team members. Next to the aforementioned aspects, communication skills have been emphasized, too. The ability to communicate within the team allows the exchange of knowledge, collaboration, and collection of ideas and lastly the avoidance of misunderstanding.

Despite the fact that the aspect of communication is named in relation to relevant team abilities, the dimension of motivation has also been taken into account. In the following section the aspect of communication is pursued with respect to team motivation.

5.2 Motivation

In this chapter it will be defined what team managers perceive as important team factors that belong to the dimension of motivation. Overall, motivation plays an essential role when it comes to team performance. Later on, this will become clear when the structure of the three dimensions of AMO are discussed. Both, internal team aspects as well as external aspects are essential when talking about motivational factors. Based on the interviews, 16 codes could be identified that belong to team motivation. Communication and group cohesiveness which is moderated by concepts such as the interpersonal relationship, the equality among team members, member's similarity and collective knowledge sharing, represent essential factors for team motivation. Leadership is another important aspect of motivation which entails aspects of feedback and empowerment and the definition of

intermediate targets and their celebration, followed by the aspect of goal identification. Other relevant codes identified deal with the leader-team relationship, encompassing the aspect of error culture and finally incentives and appreciation are identified in relation to team motivation.

Communication

Respondents indicated that communication is not only a basic skill requirement, but that it also takes an important role in terms of motivation.

“Communication must also be there, i.e. communicative skills in a team, because through communication you also achieve motivation in the team.” (Team manager 12)

Communication is particularly important in this context, as the team knows what needs to be done through the exchange beyond team boundaries, and if this communication is not present, it is likely to negatively influence the team’s motivation as illustrated in the following quote:

“When it comes to communication, it is not only important that they can communicate with each other, but communication in both directions, from top to bottom and from bottom to top is extremely important. Otherwise the motivation factor will extremely suffer. If nothing is communicated there, the teams are not motivated in the long run.” (Team manager 12)

Furthermore, the motivation through words across the teams has been addressed, since it is necessary for each team to do their best in order to successfully finish a project. Communication motivates in different ways, on the one hand team communication allows for the development of solutions through informal talks and on the other hand it helps to motivate to continue working.

“It is really a team success - a gear wheel seizes perfect into the other. If one does not work, everything comes to a standstill and that is why the team motivate themselves and says: “Hey, that was great, it worked and now we can go on.” In addition to these weekly meetings, where information is exchanged, informal chats have to take place at the coffee corner which enables the search for solutions that are outside the box.” (Team manager 13)

It can be seen that team communication is very motivating. In this context, it does not matter what kind of team it is, how many people it consist of or what environment it works in.

Group cohesiveness

In talking about motivation, the team managers mentioned the importance of cohesiveness among the team. A team consist of individuals and it is essential that they see themselves as a unit. This is expressed in the team dynamics and atmosphere as presented in the following quotes:

“It is also important to have good a team dynamic, that it is fun to work together. That the team knows that everyone like to come to work because they know that they have nice colleagues around them and

do not go to work and work their bunch from left to right. I think all of this is very motivating that everyone likes to work together.” (Team manager 1)

“I believe that team member cohesion still plays a crucial role. I think it motivates again when the team stick together and increases performance for themselves and the others.” (Team manager 12)

If there is no team cohesiveness and some team member separate themselves from the others this clearly seem to make the teamwork difficult as mentioned in the following quote:

“They must see themselves as a team and if there are individuals who want to distinguish themselves and try to play a special role, it always makes it difficult for such a team.” (Team manager 9)

The previous comments illustrate that team manager see the aspect of group cohesiveness as an essential element when talking about team motivation. It is probably more difficult to find cohesiveness in particularly large teams, but this can be overcome by dividing large teams into subgroups to simplify coordination.

“The bigger the team, the more likely we have sub-project managers. Once, I was the project manager for an 18-person project and there were additional four sub-project managers that good coordination could be guaranteed.” (Team manager 17)

Interpersonal relationship

The previous quotations illustrated the relevance of team cohesiveness. This aspect can be moderated through the interpersonal relationship. If the team gets on well, the motivation and the performance of the team increase.

“I think interpersonal relationships matter. If you get along well, the collaboration works well.” (Team manager 11)

“I think the success of a team in this sense depends more on the interpersonal relationship. Of course, we all harmonize and can work well with each other, but of course you have people with whom you may be more on the same wavelength because you work in the same way.” (Team manager 7)

Based on the previous quotes, it becomes clear that the team managers consider an interpersonal relationship in the team to be particularly important and influential in relation to the aspect of group cohesiveness. If the team gets to know each other on another level, as for example, through private activities, team member's relationship can be enhanced.

“When you not only experience the other team members in their function or at work, but also as a private person and talk about other topics and find a common ground. To give an example, if you find out that someone likes sailing too, then you already have a common theme. I think that changes the way the team is interacting and will contribute to better teamwork.” (Team manager 8)

This quote illustrates that the personal relationship is related to the previous aspect of group cohesiveness. The second can be achieved by strengthening the first. Especially within project teams that have to travel for their project, they have the opportunity to spend the evenings together, which in turn helps to improve interpersonal relationships.

“[...] when we are together in Frankfurt we go out for dinner in the evening. It should not be overdone, that you always do something together but that you just end an evening together. Or that you just talk about private things while doing sports. All this strengthens the relationships with each other and in turn motivates to work together in a team.” (Team manager 6)

Equality among team members

With regard to team motivation the aspect of equality among team members is emphasized, specifically in context of projects operating in large corporations and the banking sector. These teams are often cross-departmental and include employees from different hierarchical levels. The team itself must have the aspiration for equality and the team leader is also responsible for treating everyone equally to avoid any friction that could harm the team motivation. As the previous factor of interpersonal relationship, equality among team members represents another concept in relation to group cohesiveness.

“That is of course the team spirit and it is the first priority that people work really well and without friction. It is disadvantageous when a competitive situation comes up within the team, as for example, who is allowed to speak or who has a particularly responsible task to solve or perform. Ultimately, the team members are, I'm not talking about the head now, they are on an equal footing. Now regardless of the internal title they have, whether one is a director and the other is a vice president that does not matter at all.” (Team manager 13)

“I personally do not like this competitive thinking, because I think that if you fight individually then the work process is much more difficult than if you fight in a team and that's why I'm personally a big fan of working in a team and to sell the results as a team effort.” (Team manager 14)

As already mentioned, the leader is also responsible for treating the team members equally. This challenge does also depend on the personality of the team members. If there is an imbalance in the treatment of team members, the motivation is likely to suffer as reported in the following quote:

“Once I had the experience that I only had dominant people in a team and then bringing them together in a team is a real challenge. To treat them equally and evenly and in a balanced manner so that no one can develop the feeling of not being as important as the other is difficult. You always have to take everyone equally seriously and give them the feeling. It is a real challenge, but incredibly important for the team motivation.” (Team manager 10)

The previous comments illustrate that equality is a crucial aspect in relation to team motivation. On the one hand, it depends on the characteristics of the team in terms of personality and the leadership style which should foster equality among team members and influences whether cohesion among the team can develop.

Member's similarity

An equally relevant aspect in the discussion about team motivation is the fact that team members have something in common; a common ground that they share with each other. This creates a basis in the team, which positively influences the collaboration and group cohesiveness which contribute to team motivation. The following quote illustrates that even small similarities, especially regarding the way of working, do already bring an advantage in terms of team motivation.

"I think that is exactly the thing of having a common basis. It can just be a series on television that everyone likes or the common project goal. You need a point where they come together. [...] That can be the goal or project goal, but it could be anything and I think if the team has the common goal, they work on it more effectively and are more passionate about things than when you have five or ten people and everyone has a different attitude towards the work or the customer." (Team manager 1)

Team manager 17, head of a software service provider, explained that similar working behaviour is also a crucial aspect that a team should have in common. If this differs from one another, the working conditions in the team become more difficult which can ultimately negatively influence the team motivation. In his example, two outsiders who worked differently were removed from the team and merged into a new, now well-functioning team.

"They have one peculiarity in their way of working and that is a problem within a team, now we formed them together in one team and involve them as external experts and that works very well." (Team manager 17)

Collective knowledge sharing

In addition to previous aspects, the team managers appointed the willingness to share knowledge while they are asked about motivational factors that are relevant in teams. Regardless of the industry or the team size, this aspect is very important in promoting team performance.

"You need to have team spirit, i.e. you are not fighting for your own, but are also willing to share your knowledge and are willing to share the results and recognitions with the others." (Team manager 1)

"It is very important that people are willing to collaborate and that they work well with one another in a team, in the department but also across departments or across plants." (Team manager 3)

The willingness to share knowledge must be present in a team in order to make progress, especially if the team is made up of different competencies and mutual help is required for the accomplishment of tasks.

“In the team everyone can work together a bit overarching, because everyone has their core competencies, but the colleagues also accept the knowledge of others and can then also work across the board. We do not have a rigid division of tasks. There are always tasks where colleagues need mutual help. It is very important that everyone is willing to collaborate because this way, group cohesion can be created.” (Team manager 6)

Leadership

Team managers appointed that the motivation within a team is strongly dependent on the manager who leads the team. The team managers interviewed see themselves as a decisive external factor when it comes to motivation which, inter alia, can be stimulated by words or with other incentives that are provided.

“I think if you promote this as a team and say as a team leader, “think around the corner, ask questions if you do not understand something, deal with it”, that is a great motivator because, as I said, it stimulates your own creativity and you then develop yourself accordingly.” (Team manager 7)

“I think what motivates the teams the most are good leaders. Good managers give fair criticism, praise where it makes sense and motivate people, it does not have to be monetary but incentives can mean that I spend more time with people, do events with them and bring the team on stage where they can say what they did great.” (Team manager 18)

These quotes illustrate what team leaders can do in order to motivate the team. The team leader's attitude also affects the motivation in the team, indicating its strong influence in either a positive or negative way as can be seen from the following statement:

“If the leader is not motivated himself, this is quickly reflected in the team. [...] if the team or project manager, if he does not feel like it, then the whole team does not feel like it.” (Team manager 1)

As mentioned by a team manager from a large corporation, the authenticity of the team leader plays a major role in this respect.

“I think that is a very important motivator for a team that you stay true to yourself in such a leadership position and do not try to play a role. In such positions, this only works for a short time, and certainly not for everyone. You should avoid this.” (Team manager 6)

In addition to leadership in project teams, this role plays an essential factor for team motivation in the armed forces, too. In this case, it is effective if the leader experiences the same as the team members and therefore sets a good example.

“It is motivating to share crops and deprivation with the team. If the team has little sleep, then the leader sleeps little, too and if the team runs with 20 kilograms, the leader also runs with 20 kilograms. Simply, that you always share suffering.” (Team manager 2)

Feedback

Feedback is another factor that has been appointed by team managers when asking about team motivation. Again, in relation to project work if the team knows what happens, for example, after project completion and whether the way of working is sufficient, this in turn can enhance the motivation within a team. This aspect therefore belongs to the leader of the team.

“I think it is very important to pass on the feedback to the team and that they notice what happens after task finalisation. The fact that I say very precisely that the work, the preparation was great, that we achieved the goal and that of course motivates the team again, just that you get such feedback again.” (Team manager 6)

Empowerment

Lastly, the autonomy that a team possesses has been mentioned in relation to team motivation. Irrespective of the size of the project, less control through the leader is emphasized by the team managers to enhance the motivation in the team, as illustrated in the following quote:

“I think what is very important for motivation is autonomy, regardless of whether the projects are large or small. The project teams should ideally have a goal that is suggested or specified by management. [...] and it is then up to the project team to implement the project accordingly.” (Team manager 13)

In addition, the team managers mentioned that this aspect is particularly seen as strengthening the intrinsic motivation of team members, for example through the ambition of personal development. Although there are prescribed guideline that need to be followed, the team is free to act within this scope. The aspect of empowerment specifically applies in context of a firm, where creative customer solutions are needed. Creativity can arise from freedom of action.

“Most people take responsibility very young in our company and that is what people enjoy doing. The software development is something very creative and although we have standards, rules and guidelines, the teams are relatively free. They define how they do something and what they do on a very large scale. Of course, this creates intrinsic motivation because they can develop themselves.” (Team manager 17)

“If you offer trust and act accordingly and give the team confidence to make their own decisions within their area of responsibility. I also find that this is a big motivation boost that you do not always stand behind the team, but that they can act freely in their work environment which is also incredibly motivating that they can and must make their own decisions and do not need to ask me or any other supervisor for everything they do. I think that is very important for intrinsic motivation.” (Team manager 16)

The previous aspect of feedback and empowerment can be assigned to leadership. The team leader has the opportunity to empower a team and to give you feedback on their performance, both of which have an impact on team motivation.

Goal identification

Besides the aforementioned factors, it is relevant that the team identifies with the goal. If a goal is not clear or the benefits are not recognized, motivation starts to suffer. The following team managers operating in a consulting firm and a large corporation emphasize that the involvement of the team in the goal setting is particularly important as well as that the team understands the added value that is being delivered.

“I think that motivation primarily points to the team's goal of saying that they want to bring the customer further, but at the same time want to take our company further and identify with the products, a kind of passion for what they do” (Team manager 1)

“The team needs to be involved as much as possible in the decisions and needs to be provided with as much information as possible. The more the team knows, the more they can support. Then they are also more motivated, because then they are also interested in the results or interim results, which is absolutely important. (Team manager 5)

“[...] when we introduced the process management it was very important to emphasize that we were creating added value. That it was not just a pastime project, but that we had an advantage afterwards.” (Team manager 11)

It can be seen that this factor is specifically related to external motivation. The team's motivation is dependent on external circumstances, as the transfer of information from management to the project team. Due to the given transparency, the team has the ability to recognise the project's value and increases the will to achieve the project goal. Therefore, the team leader plays an important role in conveying the goal transparently to the team.

Intermediate targets

Moreover, specifically in relation to project work, the aspect of intermediate targets is highlighted to be important in terms of motivation. Specifically, when projects are very lengthy it is particularly important that the team has intermediate goals to prevent a decrease in motivation.

“What are the goals for the next three months and what are the goals for the next six months and what will be in a year when we have reached, these milestones motivate people.” (Team manager 18)

“The most important point is that when working on a project, you cannot define goals that are too far in the future. That means you always have to define milestones that are realistic if possible. Otherwise the motivation will drop in the team.” (Team manager 10)

These statements show that the setting of intermediate goals has a moderating effect on team motivation. Its presence or absence influences the team motivation either positively or negatively.

Celebration of target achievement

Besides the importance of having intermediate goals, is the celebration of their achievements when talking about team motivation. This aspect is specifically emphasized in context to project-related work which is characterized by the fact that it runs over a certain period of time and where the project work takes place alongside another main activity. The celebration influences the achievement of the current project goal as well as it motivates for future projects.

“If you really achieve partial goals, then you can also celebrate these successes. I personally find that very, very important. This motivates for the current project as well as for future projects” (Team manager 13)

“You can include an event in the schedule and celebrate intermediate goals. That you have a cooking event with the team for example, what exactly you do does not matter, but it always help in terms of motivation, that is the way it is.” (Team manager 18)

Leader-Team relationship

As already mentioned, the team leader plays an important role in respect to team motivation. The leader's actions and behaviour can strongly influence the motivation within a team. Unlike this aspect, the relationship between the leader and the corresponding team plays a decisive role, too. For example, a good relationship between the two parties is characterized by mutual trust and the support of the team leader, as illustrated in the following quotes:

“Trust is very important. For my role it is also very important to give the team a certain amount of trust and to show that they are allowed to make mistakes, because an error culture is very important, specifically in relation to motivation.” (Team manager 16)

“My team always knows what I'm doing as a manager and I'm always 100% behind my team, as for example, in front of the management team, unless it is somehow justified and someone really screwed it up, but they always know that they can rely on me. No topic remains closed and will be communicated openly. We also discuss critical questions. So if something happened in our house or if there are rumours, I always ask: "Is there another topic besides the series that concerns anyone,

something that we have to discuss here in context?” We once had such a case when I quit someone, that was not so long ago and it does something to the team because it was a teammate and I explained that in a very transparent and open manner. We have this openness and I believe that contributes positively to the way of working.” (Team manager 15)

These quotes show that the interviewed team managers put emphasis on what kind of relationship they have with their team. If there is a good relationship, it influences the team's motivation to achieve a good team result. In contrast, team manager 17 operating in a professional field that is dominated by men revealed a negative effect on the team performance if a team of men is led by a female manager. It seems to be the case that a team of men has difficulties to be led by a female leader as expressed in the following quote:

“The criticism from men comes to me more often and more directly compared to when the teams are led by male project managers. Mostly completely unjustified, because the women I have here as a project manager are usually at least 20% more qualified than the men, so rather better, but the men still feel disadvantaged more often.” (Team manager 17)

As a result, a relationship seems to develop less well between the team and the leader, which leads to team dissatisfaction and in turn lowers the motivation in the team, expressed by complaints to the management. This could be a sign that gender moderates the relationship between the team and their leader.

Error culture

Another decisive factor in relation to team motivation is the presence of a good error culture. The teams need to know that they are allowed to make mistakes and that they are aware of having the constant support from their supervisor. The team-leader relationship and the aspect of error culture are very closely related as they both depend on one another.

“Trust is important, for my role it is also very important to have a certain amount of trust in my team and that they know that they are allowed to make mistakes, because an error culture is quite important, especially in relation to motivation.” (Team manager 16)

“It is important that the team learns how to deal with setbacks and not to pull it in a way that leads to demotivation, but that the team also recognizes, especially when you are in projects, that these are topics that are done for the first time in contrast to a line task. It must simply be clear to the team that in projects not everything works like for line tasks where everything has been done a thousand times and every process is optimized and tested and tried and tested. But that you set the right expectations of the team members. I think all of that is very important in relation to team motivation.” (Team manager 9)

These comments illustrate that a good prevailing error culture is important between the team and the corresponding team leader. In return, it can be deduced that team motivation is likely to suffer if the team faces punishment for mistakes. Specifically in context to project work, a good error culture is essential, as the tasks for the team are new and there is no routine.

Incentives

In addition, incentives are another concept for team motivation. The team managers widely voice this aspect, but with differences in monetary and non-monetary incentives. The latter is considered by the respondents as being more promising. Non-financial incentives can be varied. As illustrated in the following quotes, they could either include the whole team, for example in joint activities or affect individuals who can benefit from further training.

“When milestones are reached or good results are achieved, that one promises to go out for dinner for example. I really think that smaller things like this motivate the team a lot more than financial incentives.” (Team manager 14)

“We also regularly carry out research projects here. This is a lot of fun for people and there is motivation right away. They know that only those come in, who are constantly busy with new things and achieve good results in the team.” (Team manager 17)

As already mentioned, financial incentives also contribute to motivation. This appears to be dependent on the age, whereas younger team members seem to be incentivised with monetary incentives who usually earn less money compared to older team members.

“The younger team members do not earn as much as the older ones and I try to give them some special support. With my colleagues, one 55 years old and the other 60 years old, we have reached a salary structure that can hardly continue and I can motivate my younger colleagues if there is something special at the end of the year or in between.” (Team manager 6)

As already mentioned, the non-monetary incentives are generally seen as more motivating compared to financial incentives. An argument is that monetary rewards are short-lived and other aspects have stronger effects on the team motivation.

“Of course, all of this is part of it, as is payment. But I do not think that is the main point, especially the payment. I do not think it is the most important thing, it is more important to have a great team around you.” (Team manager 1)

“[...] a bonus that can be achieved, these are just short-term incentives. They do not mean that a team is motivated in the long run” (Team manager 16)

“I believe that the financial aspect plays a role, but also non-financial incentives. I would say it is a combination. To give an example from my side, I managed a lot of projects myself and also worked in project teams myself and I had two very special projects, both of them also included a corresponding bonus payment. It was a one-off payment for one project and for another which was an international project, where we also won the first prize, for this one we were invited with the whole project team to a trip to Barcelona which was sponsored by the company. We spent one week in Barcelona with eight people where we could do anything. So when I look back today, I would hardly remember the one-time payment of the first project, whereas I still have a very good feeling about the other project. So I think getting incentives in some way is a nice thing, but it does not just have to be some kind of monetary payment. It can also be a group activity that is also a lot of fun. Basically, it is very good in terms of team motivation.” (Team manager 4)

Based on the previous quotes, one can see that incentives, whether monetary or non-monetary are commonly considered across team managers of different industries to stimulate team motivation. Their experiences show that the effect of monetary incentives is of shorter duration than non-monetary incentives, whereas the former seems to be more attractive for younger teams.

Appreciation

In addition to incentives, appreciation represents another external factor that positively influences team motivation.

“[...] the topic of recognition and praise is of course always very, very important. It was always the case with my employees that they were always very happy when they were praised. Ideally not only within the department, but also across the company, so that the others also know what the team has achieved.” (Team manager 15)

“I would say that appreciation from above is always a component that contributes to motivation.” (Team manager 11)

If there is no appreciation, the question arises to what extent the effort is worthwhile for the team. The more important it seems that the team receives recognition from higher authorities as the following quote illustrates:

“It is always very important to get support from above, to motivate employees and to get appreciation from the management. For many, this is the highest praise they can get. [...] It was often the case that the board level emailed a two-liner to the project team after the project was completed. That is enough for the team to feel good. If this email does not come, it is difficult to keep the team motivated. Then a lot of people wonder why they do it and whether anyone cares about it.” (Team manager 11)

The importance of appreciation towards the team in relation to motivation is highlighted. It becomes clear that on the one hand, the appreciation of the team leader up to other higher positions

such as that of the executive board play an important role. A common form of appreciation for project teams is to communicate how well a team is performing, as illustrated below:

“On the one hand appreciation can be orally transmitted or through various types of advertising. One can distribute newsletters and communicate how great the team is, or another way is to put up posters, or if there is a corporate event, the team can be presented on stage as well as their success. In principle, appreciation can be transferred in different ways.” (Team manager 9)

Summarizing the findings about team motivation

The interviews represent many concepts for team motivation. Some of the codes that have emerged from the conceptual framework could be detected in the interviews, as for example, group cohesiveness, incentives and collective knowledge sharing. Furthermore, it turned out that motivation can be influenced by on the one hand external aspects and on the other hand by aspects within the team.

In relation to external aspects, the function of the team leader is emphasized to be a relevant element when talking about team motivation. It seems that the respondents' experience as team managers has shown them how important their behaviour is for team motivation and how much influence they have on it. The feedback, empowerment, as well as goal identification are components that belong to leadership. These aspects enhance the intrinsic motivation of a team. Specifically empowerment, which deals with the fact of how much autonomy is given to a team and if the team is independent in their way working and is not constantly controlled, is positively reflected in the team's motivation.

Another decisive concept for team motivation is group cohesiveness. This aspect can be enhanced through other factors such as the interpersonal relationship among team members, their equality as well as similarity and sharing of knowledge. If team spirit is created, it positively influences the team motivation.

Overall, the aforementioned aspects for team motivation can differ regarding context-related aspects. With regard to team incentives, the interviewees' opinions on monetary and non-monetary incentives are diverse.

5.3 Opportunity

In this chapter it will be outlined what team managers identify as important factors concerning opportunities that are relevant for team performance. Overall, 12 codes are spotted in the interviews that belong to the dimension of opportunity. These are: Information, leadership, feedback process, empowerment, group design and size, scope of the project, resources, technology, company culture and history, HR practices specifically in relation to team building and finally home office / virtual meetings with respect to the current situation of a pandemic when employees suddenly had to work from home.

Information and communication

It is particularly important for a team to have relevant information from outside so that a team has the opportunity to perform the tasks well and consequently to achieve high performance. Passing on information to the team enables it to understand the task and implement it accordingly.

“Information and communication is absolutely important that the whole project team is also interdisciplinary informed beyond its own framework and knows where they are. In addition, to understand the context, they need to know where exactly they can find their work and what project responsibilities they have. I think the information and communication that these two points are of absolute importance.” (Team manager 13)

“We talk a lot with each other, for example we sit down a lot and discuss what the customer's goal is and how we can translate it into our tasks.” (Team manager 1)

Leadership

Previously, the team leader has been cited as elementary in terms of team motivation. In the interviews, however, it becomes clear that the role of team leader also plays a decisive role as an external opportunity. A leader is responsible for the team coordination and compares the current state from the desired future state in order to take adjustments if necessary. Clear communication and transparency with the team is important in this regard as illustrated in the following quotes:

“The team leader has a special role, his function is to control. One have to say that all of this, as the goal achievement and performance, that is all important as well as motivation, but in the end the results have to be right and there always has to be someone who can control and assess that. You still need someone in every team who still coordinates and sits above it, so to speak. For this you simply need the team leader, the project leader. Someone who controls, not necessarily that strictly but the leader needs to know what is going on and how to prevent unforeseen circumstances and how to deal with them.” (Team manager 1)

“In terms of team performance, this can strongly be corrected by the team leader. Not always, but this is an absolute must. If the team leader is not good, the team below cannot be good either.” (Team manager 18)

These statements come from team managers from various industries. In large corporations as well as in consulting, the leadership role is particularly important in terms of team performance. It gets clear from the interviews that every team, regardless of its size, need to be led by a team leader, highlighting its relevance to team performance.

Feedback process

In line with the aforementioned aspect, it seems particularly important that the team receives feedback from higher authorities, such as the team leader. The team can assess their performance accordingly

and thereby knows either to keep the current way of working or to make changes. Overall, this aspect is emphasized by respondents from different fields, such as the armed forces, a large corporation and services.

“When the conditions are set, feedback and constant exchange is very important. In my eyes, the role of the team leader plays an elementary role in that respect.” (Team manager 12)

“Here we talk again about the feedback, first an assessment of the situation and recognizing the defect, then we go into planning and then into training, preparation and implementation and at the end there is another review. Did it work as intended as we tried to improve certain aspect, did the team understand or do we have to adjust it again.” (Team manager 2)

“The same thing is to provide feedback when the team has made some progress in projects and then to give feedback on a regular basis, that turned out to be very beneficial. On the one hand, for the team as recognition, but of course also to show that they are on the right path and can keep working that way” (Team manager 16)

Empowerment

In addition to the feedback process, the empowerment given to a team represents another opportunity which is relevant in terms of team performance.

“If they have these skills, it is at least very important, that they also have the freedom or freedom of design, that not someone is always watching them and strictly controlling, but if they have these skills that they also have the freedom to move within their boundaries to achieve the goals being set.” (Team manager 16)

This statement shows that a precondition for empowerment, to accomplish tasks independently as a team, is the presence of relevant skills. In addition, a lack of empowerment can have negative consequences, such as an increased absence rate as illustrated in the following quote:

“A team needs freedom. They need a certain degree of responsibility and if they do not have a lot of responsibility, they are also not willing to do a lot for example, to do special tasks or to delve into tasks. Even when it comes to the disease rate, it tends to increase if you have no responsibility. Responsibility is therefore extremely important. Without responsibility, they no longer take on work, tend to work less and report sick more often.” (Team manager 12)

Group Design

Furthermore, the team managers highlight the effect of group design on team performance. Particular attention is paid to the abilities of the individual member, which should complement each other in order to achieve good team results. Specifically, in context to project teams, diversity in terms of skills within the team is advantageous, as illustrated in the following quote:

“One team member can analyse particularly well, whereas another one can put these analyses well into a story and nicely prepare them in PowerPoint in order to make it understandable and clear for the customer. Overall, I allocate team members according to their strength, that they fit as good as possible and complement each other.” (Team manager 1)

In contrast, there are disagreements about the frequency of changes in group design. Some team managers emphasize that it is advantageous if the team has been working together for a long time and others in turn if the team is regularly changed.

“A team has to get to know each other and gain experience together and sometimes it needs to go through difficult times together and when this happens a team gets better over time. If I constantly exchange employees, I do not have this learning effect.” (Team manager 9)

“We cover around four to five core competencies and not every one of my employees possesses all competencies and therefore the team has to be put together again and again. There is actually no fixed structure that exists over years. There are basically three parts, the backend developers, those who actually do the background processes and the surface developers and the third part includes the project managers, who are responsible for the organisational purposes. The pool is then always mixed together.” (Team manager 17)

Team managers who work in a large corporation in which the project work is not the main activity, the maintenance of the group constellation is preferred. This is justified by the fact that it contributes to the achievement of a learning effect, consequently enhancing the team performance. It should be noted that due to the size of the company, no labour shortages are present for the formation of project teams. The other perspective is offered in context of a service company in which project work is the main activity and where the size of employees is much smaller compared to a large corporation. The service company employs around 30 employees which are repeatedly formed into teams. Care is taken to ensure that customers have the same contact person, but the group designs are not retained for a longer period of time to prevent stagnation. If teams stay consistent it can negatively affect innovation as the team potentially relies on their habits.

In addition, the interviewees working in a large corporation indicate that it is beneficial to allocate someone to the team who challenges the other team members and is committed to improving team performance, as illustrated in the following quote:

“Sometimes I go that far to include a challenger in such a team, because when it comes to cost optimization programs, this is what we are currently concentrating on in the administrative area, it pushes the team. When you invite five people, everyone will tell you that what they are doing right now is optimal and that no changes are needed and those are not even possible. You need people who are challenging and willing to hold back to get the other team members to think.” (Team manager 3)

“I really see the team structure as important. As I just said, you need to have sparring partners because they help each other to keep going.” (Team manager 14)

Group Size

Just like the design of the team, the group size also seems to be relevant when it comes to team performance. Smaller teams up to a maximum of five people are stated to be more effective than larger teams. As soon as teams consist of significantly more people, sub-leader are needed.

“The larger the team, the more likely it is that we have sub-project managers. In an 18-person project, I was a project manager and we still had four sub-project managers who then took over different plants because otherwise it was no longer possible. A reasonable project size for us is five people that are the maximum. From then on, it becomes difficult.” (Team manger 17)

“Two people are an ideal team but this only works up to project sizes of 300,000 Euro with a period of time of one year. As soon as you have a shorter timeline or need more people, they have more work to do. Up to four, the loss is relatively small, but as the number increases it will become more difficult.” (Team manager 17)

In general, the result of the project work can be measured with the help of performance indicators. However, the team size plays a special role in relation to for example, service companies that are characterised by project work which is focussed on individual customer orders. In this case, the yield depends on the corresponding team size.

Resources

Besides the size of the group, the availability of relevant resources plays a decisive role with regard to team performance. Resource is a generic term and in relation to team performance, aspects such as the time, the equipment as well as the leadership have been emphasized. Equipment is inevitable for military teams, while leadership in organizations is particularly important because, for the most part, the leader also has to organize the other resources.

“Equipment is a huge issue for the armed forces. If I do not have good equipment to work with, no matter what, then I cannot expect the team to perform well.” (Team manager 2)

“First of all the resources have to be given. It is clear that the one who places the order must also provide the resources. Resources could be the providence of good guidance for the task, which is done by the team leader. Resources can be anything, resources can be people, resources can be time and resources can be money or other equipment. It could also be information technology, methodological know-how or training and development. As a manager, I have to check what is required in terms of skills and methods, for example, and whether my team is capable of doing this. If not, the question that needs to be answered is whether I can temporarily use external or internal resources of the organization.” (Team manager 18)

If the required resources are lacking, the team may no longer focus on performance, as shown in the following quote:

“For example, it is important whether the project team has its own space. How the project team is technically equipped and it is always a waste of time if a project team spends 30% of their energy complaining that they are not properly equipped, instead of using this 30% for the project work. That means you have to clearly define what the scope of the project is, what the individual project steps are, preliminary studies etc. and everything that goes with it and how the project team is equipped.” (Team manager 10)

Regardless of the organisation a team works for, resources represent an indispensable requirement. If, on the other hand, there are no resources, an essential basis for performance is missing.

Technology

Another important factor that belongs to opportunities, relevant for team performance, is the availability of technology for the teams. On the one hand, it enables the communication when the team is physically separated and on the other hand, through necessary technical equipment e.g. laptop, the access to relevant software is given.

“Communication opportunities are of course important and that you have a room where you can come together with the team. It is also the question of the technical infrastructure that the VPN tunnel to the company works and that everyone has a laptop with which they can carry out virtual video conferences. [...] that is an essential basis, the technical infrastructure.” (Team manager 7)

“Above all, the IT must of course also be very good, that you do not work with old computers that keep crashing and that you do not work with old programs, but that you are technically up to date.” (Team manager 5)

Especially with regard to the physical separation, access to relevant documents and the other team members plays a crucial role. If not, teamwork is not feasible, as can be seen from the following quote:

“[...] this would restrict users from the start if they cannot access systems, get to a file drive, or when they cannot reach one another.” (Team manager 18)

Company culture and history

The company culture and history seem to be other external aspects that have an impact on team performance. Depending on these two aspects are the team composition and the leadership style, as can be seen by the following quote from a team manager operating in a large corporation.

“In this function I am also responsible for different locations and I notice very strongly that cultural differences as well as regional differences at the different locations determine, among other things, how well teams work together. It has a lot to do with the culture and history of a company. How did this company grow, how did it develop and how old is it? These things are very important.” [...] The corporate culture is also different if, for example, you have a plant in Hamburg that has existed for over 150 years, or if you compare it with a plant in Bulgaria or a plant in South America, for example. In some cases, a team has to be managed differently, the right combination has to be found, which is then different everywhere.” (Team manager 3)

HR Practices (Teambuilding)

Furthermore, HR practices are named in terms of externalities that are relevant in terms of team performance. The respondents emphasise teambuilding activities to be enhancing for the performance of teams.

“Further external interventions of the company are training sessions in which you are trained not only in technical and methodological terms, but also in social interaction. This is very well received by the participants and also helps everyone to look at them through a mirror and on the other hand, to convey constructive criticism to other people, so that it is sensible for both sides, for the sender as well as the recipient.” (Team manager 10)

“The standard training of our employees is also very team-oriented. Then there are special courses that deal with team building, the sender-receiver principle, i.e. basic communication principles. It is specifically about how communication works with each other.” (Team manager 6)

The quotations make clear that these team building practices deal in particular with the aspect of communication. This emphasizes how strong good communication is able to influence team performance. The focus of HR practices in relation to team building activities, focussing on communication seem to be in line with the fact that communication has already been mentioned in relation to team abilities and motivation. On the one hand, the possession of communication skills and on the other hand, its contribution to team motivation through in-team communication as well as across team boundaries.

Home office / Virtual meetings during times of Corona

Finally, the possibility to work together virtually is emphasized by the respondents due to the current circumstances. As indicated in the methodology, the interviews took place at extraordinary times when a pandemic forced most employees to work from home and thus affecting the way how teams work together and perform. In general, many complications are identified, particularly with regard to team communication and the increased effort to work together as illustrated by the following quotes:

“The current situation is difficult. We are trying to communicate even more. Agreements that you normally do in a small team, when five people sit together in a room usually last half an hour, these meetings now last up to three hours. Sometimes you cannot reach everyone, sometimes the teams deal with technical problems and then there are misunderstandings when emails are sent back and forth because you cannot be as precise as before anymore. It is a special challenge. Therefore important projects are currently being postponed.” (Team manager 13)

“We cannot have weekly meetings anymore. We used to use Microsoft teams or conference rooms, but now we have to staff the hotline and therefore we work in shifts. That means we cannot get together now and that makes it absolutely difficult.” (Team manager 15)

“We have solved this in such a way that we have a virtual team meeting once a week and then we discuss the relevant matters. I definitely have to say that it is not as efficient as working in an office together.” (Team manager 13)

It becomes clear that teamwork is much more difficult and sometimes even no longer possible. In companies in which projects are a secondary activity, these are interrupted accordingly, whereas other companies need to rely on virtual meetings to keep working in a team. Thus, this view varies depending on the company and therefore positive effects have been highlighted, too. The possibility of working from home and to have virtual meetings is seen as an important aspect when talking about team performance during times where physical separation is required. A positive effect of physical separation refers to the increased concentration as illustrated in the following quote:

“I truly have to say that right now, the performance is actually slightly better, because I think everyone approaches the matter more structurally. [...] When you are at home like this, you just focus a lot more and think about what really needs to be done and that is why I feel that the team performance increases.” (Team manager 7)

“My team exchanges ideas with each other. They talk a lot on the phone. I am getting the impression that this physical separation is not that dramatic. I am relatively certain that after Corona we will have a significantly higher proportion of home office than we already have.” (Team manager 17)

In conclusion, different experiences with these circumstances exist among the respondents. It seems as long as good communication can be maintained, the team performance does not seem to suffer that much. In this respect, this emphasizes the importance of the technical infrastructure that must now be guaranteed for each team member working from home and to have communication tools which enables team members' virtual connection.

Summarizing the findings about opportunities

In relation to the opportunities that are relevant in terms of team performance, a number of significant factors are mentioned in the interviews. It becomes clear that the role of the team leader is an

important external variable that has an impact on team performance. The respondents emphasise that the feedback process and the charge of responsibility towards the team are relevant practices that contribute to enhanced team performance. Moreover, the team designs as well as the size of the team also have an impact on its performance. In focusing on project work, the presence of different competencies and a rather small group size seem to be beneficial for the team performance as stated by the respondents. Furthermore, organisational aspects such as its history and culture, the availability of relevant resources, technology as well as HR practices, the latter emphasising teambuilding activities, are emphasized to influence team performance, too. Lastly, the interviewees highlighted the importance of virtual meetings where everyone can still see each other's face, in case the team has to work from different locations. The providence of such tools is crucial for the team to be able to continue its performance. However, it turns out that some respondent see the physical separation as more challenging than having real meetings that take place in an office room. Therefore, the performance is likely to decrease for some teams whereas other teams seem to be able to work under such circumstances as sufficient as before. However, virtual tools that allow virtual meetings are a basic requirement for teamwork in times of Corona.

5.4 Relationship between the AMO factors

In this section it will be outlined how team managers assess the importance of team abilities, motivation and opportunities. In addition, an assessment of the relationship of these three dimensions will be provided. It turns out that different views exist among team managers, as there was no unanimous opinion among the respondents about the assessment of the individual importance of each dimension. However, in terms of the relationship among ability, motivation and opportunity, several quotes support the idea that all three factors are interdependent on one another. The team managers argue that when motivation is missing, the team cannot use its abilities and, vice versa, if the team is motivated but does not have the ability, the motivation is not enough to achieve performance.

"I believe that all three components are very interdependent and if one component is not present, the rest will not work either. If I had to distribute 100%, I would do this evenly. If a team is not motivated, it will not achieve performance and if it does not have the abilities, the motivation cannot compensate for that. Ultimately, if the external opportunities are not provided by the company and are made transparent by the manager to the team, the abilities cannot be used and the motivation will suffer."
(Team manager 12)

"I see no difference in importance. I believe that there is always an interaction between all three components. I would not say that there is a hierarchy or that, for example, team abilities have top priority. Ultimately, these things have to come together in a company and it has to support the development of relevant skills or other aspects relevant to successful team performance. How the support should take place depends on the respective team" (Team manager 3)

“I would say that these three dimensions form a triangle. If one is missing, it becomes difficult. Ultimately, I do not think you can classify them. You have to make sure that every aspect is present.”
(Team manager 9)

The dependence of the respective dimensions is emphasized by the former quotes. However, other than all factors to be seen as equivalent, some interviewees emphasise the importance of team motivation in relation to performance in context of project-related work. The team managers argue that if a team is not motivated, it is less likely to use its abilities in order to perform well. This represents that the factor of team motivation is above the two others as shown in the following quotes:

“I think motivation is the most important element, however you need the other two as well. For me, these two follow equally after the aspect of team motivation.” (Team manager 1)

“I actually think motivation is the most important thing because a team might not get to the point of using their skills because they are not motivated at all. I would put motivation first, then the skills and then the opportunities.” (Team manager 11)

Additionally, this opinion is in line with teamwork in the military. An opportunity in terms of technical support is less relevant, whereas the team has to be willing and be motivated to work closely together because it is most important that they can rely on each other in every situation.

“If I had to classify them, I would say that motivation comes first, because if I am highly motivated, I can also acquire the skills that may still be missing and I think the circumstances (opportunities) are rather luxury, so they come third.” (Team manager 2)

As previously mentioned, there are other views, such as that the team opportunities are most relevant, because without the opportunities a team would not have the ability to access their skills. That means, even if the team has the ability and is motivated to perform well, the organisation must provide the team with relevant opportunities in order to perform.

“If you demand a miracle from a team and the external conditions are not present, you ask something unrealistic. [...] If the basis is not provided, the team cannot perform as it could under good conditions.” (Team manager 10)

In talking about the importance of opportunities, some of the interviewees named their leadership function as an inevitable and even complementary dimension for AMO. The respondents highlighted that in particular the team leader plays a crucial role when talking about team performance. On the one hand, by selecting team members in advance, the team leader can ensure that the necessary skills are available. Furthermore, the leader can contribute to team motivation by supporting the team and offering incentives, empowerment and feedback.

“I would always take leadership first. The topic of leadership comes with the intention that people have to understand what they are doing and under leadership comes the precise definition of the goal [...] the topic of leadership is absolutely important. It also affects team motivation.” (Team manager 18)

“In addition to the three dimensions, I would like to emphasize in a civilian context that the team leader plays a very important role, for example in terms of education and training, that the team members are properly trained. (Team manager 2)

Furthermore, the initial situation also influences the evaluation of the dimensions. It emphasizes the importance of having access to software that enables communication when team members are working from different locations, as required by the corona crisis. The following quote illustrates the importance of opportunities, specifically to enable to exchange of information under such circumstances.

“In times of Corona, the external circumstances are just as important as the other two. If this is not the case and nobody can exchange information properly because, for example, we do not have the software, a good team performance is just not possible.” (Team manager 15)

Another contextual factor that plays a role in evaluating the three components is the difficulty of the tasks that need to be performed in a team. Thus, the team skills are considered to be particularly important when it comes to demanding team tasks.

“The external circumstances are the least important from my point of view, whereas the skills are extremely relevant. If you simply do not have enough competences to cover everything that is required in your team, you should not forget that things like artificial intelligence are extremely demanding and the team would feel constantly overwhelmed, the performance could not be achieved and the motivation would quickly start suffering.” (Team manager 17)

In summary, one can see that all three dimensions (ability, motivation and opportunity) are interdependent and consequently related to one another. However, the importance of each of the three elements differs with respect to the prevailing context. Motivation is in the foreground when skills are easier to learn and conversely skills are most important when it comes to particularly demanding tasks. The opportunity, on the other hand, is an essential basis if, for example, the communication is dependent on the technology.

The following Table 3 represents a summary of the interview-based concepts and sub-concepts for team ability, motivation and opportunity that are relevant for team performance.

Team performance

| Abilities | Motivation | Opportunities |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective intelligence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team members' traits • Team cognition • Diversity among team members • Team tenure • Social skills • Conflict ability • Communication skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Group cohesiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal relationship • Equality among team members • Member's similarity • Collective knowledge sharing • Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback • Empowerment • Goal identification • Intermediate targets • Celebration of target achievement • Leader-Team relationship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Error culture • Incentives • Appreciation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and communication • Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback process • Empowerment • Group design • Group size • Resources • Technology • Company culture and history • HR practices (Teambuilding) • Home office / Virtual meetings |

Table 3: Refined framework of concepts and sub-concepts for team performance

6. Discussion

The purpose of this study is to identify relevant factors for the dimensions of ability, motivation and opportunity that in turn determine team performance. The literature review about team performance has the purpose to show potential codes that can be used for the coding process of the interviews. In fact, numerous antecedents for team performance coming from the literature review are detected and used as code label accordingly. Likewise, many new aspects of the dimensions are revealed and some of the factors also turn out to have a cross-dimensional meaning. Overall, Table 1 represents team ability, motivation and opportunity coming from previous literature about team performance and Table 3 displays a refined version based on the results of the interviews.

In relation to team abilities, the aspect of diversity among team members has been highlighted by researchers. More specifically, diversity in terms of the education level has been identified to positively influence team performance (Simons, Pelled, and Smith, 1999). Moreover, diversity in respect to team members' age and level of experience as well as task-related diversity has been confirmed (Horwitz, S. and Horwitz, I. 2007; Cox and Blake, 1991). The respondents of this study clearly emphasise the aspect of diversity among team members, too. Diversified opinions and perspectives due to age and experience differences are stated to have a positive effect on team performance.

However, the context of the teams also affects whether the diversity of team members is beneficial for team performance. The interviewees emphasise that a uniformly high level of knowledge is needed when the team has to cope with demanding tasks. This aspect is termed team tenure, describing enhanced team performance through a team composed of members with enhanced experience as well as shared experience and diversity in experience (Gonzalez-Mulé et al., 2019). This indicates that diversity in relation to team members' experience and knowledge is less advantageous when teams have to perform tasks that require a high level of knowledge. In addition, Nemeth and Staw (1989) have highlighted a possible disadvantage of diversity in the perspectives and opinions of team members, as it is likely to increase the time it takes to make a group decision. However, this downside is not mentioned by the team managers of this study, while highlighting the benefit of diversity in terms of improved solution finding and innovation through collective learning.

Team members' traits represent another important factor in relation to team performance. The team literature has been testing common personality traits, such as agreeableness and emotional stability (Barrick et al., 1998) whereas the interviewees of this study mention in that respect the ability of team members to perceive each other's role in the team. In general, an overlap can be recognized, in that the focus on the mutual acceptance of team members.

Moreover, team cognition which defines the way in which relevant team knowledge is mentally expressed and distributed within the team belongs to important abilities of the team. As can be seen from the interviews, these two factors of team members' role perception and team cognition belong to the concept of collective intelligence. This results from the mutual acceptance of roles by the team members, as well as their cognitive abilities, which is in possession of the whole team and not just the individuals. That way, team knowledge can be expressed and distributed within the team.

In addition to that, the results of the interviews show that there are other important factors that need to be taken into account in relation to relevant team abilities. Emphasis is given to social skills as well as the team members' ability to deal with conflicts and to be able to communicate with each other. Especially in teams, social skills enable the interaction and communication between team members which is necessary for a team to perform as a unit. These components have not been considered in literature. Potentially, these concepts have been used as sub-components of the team members' traits. However, during the interviews it becomes clear that these two aspects need to be stressed as they have a major impact on whether a team is able to perform or not.

In respect to motivation which is the second dimension of AMO, the team managers emphasise internal team-related factors that need to be present as well as external factors. Internal team-related factors that are essential for motivation are, according to the literature: Group cohesiveness (e.g. Langfred, 2000), team identification (Van der Vegt & Bunderson, 2005) as well as collective knowledge sharing (Flinchbaugh, 2016). The aspect of group cohesiveness is presented in the responses of the team managers, too. In line with previous literature this aspect is particularly important as it motivates the exchange of knowledge of team members which is crucial for the

occurrence of team performance (Man & Lan, 2003). Thus, collective knowledge sharing which is identical to the exchange of team members could be revealed as a sub-concept of group cohesiveness through the conduction of interviews. Moreover, equality among team members as well as their interpersonal relationship and similarity are emphasized by the team managers to contribute to team spirit and the main concept of group cohesiveness. Another concept that is in line to the literature about team performance is about incentives. Whereas team literature has emphasized the use of hybrid rewards, i.e. rewards for team and individual performance (Pearsall et al., 2010), the interviewees focus on non-monetary and monetary incentives in relation to team performance. Incentives promote the achievement of the team goal and through non-monetary incentives, such as team activities, it positively contribute to enhanced team dynamics.

Another aspect that the interviewees mention in relation to team motivation is the concept of leadership. According to the definition of the AMO theory, leadership represents an external opportunity that need to be present for the achievement of performance. However, the respondents emphasise leadership and associated sub-concepts of empowerment and feedback as particularly relevant in relation to team motivation. The team is motivated by the fact that it can take on more responsibility through the trust of the team leader. In addition, the aspect of goal identification has been emphasized in relation to leadership. The team need to understand the value of the corresponding team task which can be best achieved through transparency that is provided by the team leader.

In conceptualising team performance literature into the dimensions of AMO, leadership specifically in respect to empowerment and feedback (Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006; Peterson, 2007) are assigned to the third dimension, the opportunities. Autonomy promotes team members' commitment to the whole team and their goals (Langfred, 2000). In line with that, the team managers emphasise these concepts for opportunities with the same reasoning that feedback provides direction towards the achievement of goals and empowerment promotes team members' commitment.

Likewise, both group design and group size affect team performance. As stated by the respondents diversity in relation to team members' skills is advantageous for performance as they complement one another. When talking about team size, smaller teams are preferred due to the coordination, which is more difficult with an increased number of team members. In this regard, the team managers emphasize forming sub-groups with additional sub-leaders so that coordination can be maintained. Another aspect that has not emerged in the team literature but is declared important by the interviewees is the company's culture and history. This concept has stated to influence the quality of team performance and determines how teams should be treated.

As mentioned before, when considering the concepts for team opportunities, some concepts appeared from the previous dimensions of ability and motivation. The concepts of leadership with respect to feedback and motivation as well as communication have a cross-dimensional meaning which indicates the interrelationship among the three dimensions.

When looking at the interaction between ability, motivation and opportunity, previous researchers have emphasized different relationships. Blumberg and Pringle (1982) has identified a multiplicative model and supports the interdependence of factors, whereas an additive function has derived from Boxall and Purcell (2003) highlighting their independence and a more recent model which represents a combination of both model that has evolved through research conducted by Bos-Nehles, Van Riemsdijk & Looise (2013). Based on this study it can be concluded that all factors have been emphasized to be relevant for the achievement of team performance. The team abilities, motivation as well as opportunities are stated to be interrelated and therefore present some interdependence among each other. This assumption is also supported by the fact that factors such as leadership and communication belong to more than one of the three dimensions of AMO.

For that reason, the multiplicative model by Blumberg and Pringle (1982) seems to align with the outcome of this study. For example, if the relevant opportunities are not provided, the ability and motivation cannot compensate, which means that performance is not achievable. For that reason, the outcome does not confirm the additive function from Boxall and Purcell (2003), where performance can still be achieved even if one dimension is missing. The assumption of the model, which combines an additive and multiplicative function (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013) cannot be fully substantiated, too. This model implies that the environmental variables as well as the motivation do not depend on each other and only abilities have a direct effect on performance. However, this study illustrates that the abilities are not the most relevant dimension for team performance and that motivation and opportunity are dependent on one another. An explanation for this could also be that the team members can complement each other, which is not possible with individual performance. As stated before, a multiplicative model fit best to represent the relationship among team AMO.

The resulting discussion emphasise how the final framework about team performance evolved and the type of relationship among the three dimensions. The basis is the AMO model, which so far has only been applied at the individual and organizational level (e.g. Jiang, Takeuchi & Lepak, 2013). The interviews conducted for this study clearly show that different factors in relation to ability, motivation and opportunity are required for collective work compared to individual work. Nevertheless, certain similarities could be detected which might emphasize that team AMO is not completely independent from individual AMO. This gives rise for future research to test to what extent individual AMO influences team AMO. It would also be interesting to see to what extent HR-practices are likely to differ from previous models when being applied at the team level. So far, the interviews revealed the importance of team building practices with the focus on communication in a team.

6.1 Practical implications

This study provides insights for organizations in which teamwork is predominantly represented and who are interested in which factors in terms of team abilities, motivation and opportunities are relevant to achieve good team results. Those managers, potentially HR managers, who are in charge of the

composition of teams, can take relevant team abilities into account for the design of the group. Depending on the type of team, diversity in terms of knowledge, skills, experience and age among team members provide the ability to achieve high team performance. In this respect, it is also important to promote team spirit so that the team can optimally combine their knowledge and experience. Team spirit can be facilitated through different ways, as for example, team building practices. Another important aspect is the open communication within the team. This ability should be exemplified by the team leader that there is certain transparency, important information is passed on and conflicts are avoided.

Moreover, motivation represents an important dimension for team performance. The organisation as well as the team leader should promote team motivation through incentives as well as the empowerment and the providence of feedback. The group cohesiveness plays an essential role, too. This can be enhanced through off-company activities and in the team itself, especially through the right composition, not only in terms of skills but also personalities, as certain similarities lead to improved team performance, as it is more enjoyable to work together.

Furthermore, the external dimension should not be underestimated when talking about team performance. The framework by Blumberg and Pringle (1982) has already added this dimension for defining work performance. In this study on team performance, managers are to realize that the facilitation of externalities as technology which, inter alia, supports the communication among team members, as well as the relevant resources in respect of time and money influences the team performance. The team itself has little influence on these aspects and is therefore dependent on the company to be well equipped. Due to the interrelationship among the dimension, a lack of opportunities negatively influences the team's motivation as well as ability required for successful team outcomes.

6.2 Theoretical implications

For this research, the AMO theory is extended to the team level, in which factors for each dimension has been identified that contribute to team performance. A previous literature review about team performance through AMO's lenses provided an impression about identified determinants for team performance and potential codes for the interviews. The terms were used as code names when being recognised in the transcripts of interviews whereas many new codes could be detected, too. Moreover, the relationship among the three dimensions is explained through the respondents answer.

Single studies about team performance have mostly focused on antecedents that can either be distributed to team abilities, motivation or opportunities. However, it will be difficult to reveal strong relationships for team performance when the three dimensions are not controlled for. Certainly, the interdependence between the three dimensions is likely to vary from organisation to organisation. Likewise, the investigation of team performance by taking each effect of ability, motivation and

opportunity into account is far too complex. Nevertheless, control should be taken before implication about the certain effects on team performance can be made.

By conducting interviews with team managers, a holistic picture of team performance could be created. When looking at team abilities, the majority of factors of the literature review about team performance could be recognised in the interviews, too. However, some concrete factors such as social skills, conflict ability and communication skills are emphasised by the respondents to be important concepts for team ability. So far, concepts such as agreeableness und emotional stability have been used to determine team members' traits that are needed for the achievement of team performance. The interviews refine of what a team need to possess in order to collectively achieve performance.

When talking about team motivation, the interviews show the greatest increase of concepts compared to the literature review. In general, the interviews made clear that motivation plays a major role in relation to team performance, both with regard to factors within the team, as group cohesiveness and components that are externally, such as the role of the team leader. When looking at the previously existing AMO theory on the individual level, intrinsic aspects about motivation have been emphasised to be relevant for individual performance (Blumberg and Pringle, 1982). In contrast, AMO and HR-enhancing practices which have been revealed in relation to organisational performance, the dimension of motivation has been reduced to extrinsic concepts (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Now, when looking at the results of this study, one can see that team motivation encompasses both, the internal team-related as well as extrinsic factors, implying that for team performance both sides need to be taken into account for determining team motivation.

The last dimension covering the opportunities, all concepts identified in the literature review could be detected in the interviews which indicate that team literature has already been focusing on the major external aspect that are required for team performance. However, information and communication as well as the company's culture and history have been added in relation to team opportunities.

As highlighted before, some concepts as leadership and communication have been revealed for more than one dimension. This implies on the one hand, that the dimensions are interrelated with one another and are all equally relevant in relation to team performance. On the other hand, the definition of the dimensions seems to differ from the team level to the individual level. The concepts about individual motivation cover emotional characteristics as job satisfaction, whereas opportunities relate to external factors such as technology and physical condition (Blumberg and Pringle, 1982). However, the results at team level show that motivation does not only depend on intrinsic aspects, but also on external factors that are also part of the third dimension, the opportunities.

7. Conclusion and limitations

Adopting the AMO framework by Blumberg and Pringle (1982), the present study could take the AMO theory to an unexplored level, the team level. A new understanding of abilities, motivation and opportunities could be achieved through the conduction of interviews with team-experienced managers who are in a leadership position. The findings highlight relevant factors that belong to these three dimensions that are relevant in terms of team performance. The team literature benefits from a holistic framework about factors that belong to the three dimensions and encourages considering all three facets when it comes to team performance.

Moreover, this study extends the understanding of the relationship among the AMO factors. Through the identification of cross-dimensional concepts, the definition for team motivation seems to differ in relation to previous models. Thus, for team motivation both internal as well as external aspects are relevant. Additionally, it emphasizes the interaction among all three components and illustrates how important all three elements are in terms of performance. Furthermore, the dependency becomes clear because as soon as one factor is missing, another cannot be present, too. In summary, the interaction among team AMO, which is presented in form of a multiplicative model, represents a holistic relationship to team performance.

This study bears some limitations that should be considered in interpreting the findings. For this research team managers are asked to judge on the team-level about corresponding abilities, motivation and opportunities. This could create a bias of social desirability as team managers want to show their teams in a good light and that their team is the best as they have selected, managed and developed. However, due to the anonymity of the interviews and flexibility due to semi-structured interview questions, targeted questions on positive and negative aspects guarantee that the respondents provide explanations for their statements.

Along with the first limitation, a potential drawback is that for this study only team managers are chosen as interview partners who could cause a one-sided view, missing the representation of a broader picture of team performance. However, it can be assumed that the team leaders have also been operating in the function of a team member before they reached the current position and therefore provide a comprehensive view about assessing relevant team abilities, motivation and opportunities.

The results of this research provide a starting point for future research. The comprehensive framework shows relevant team abilities, motivation and opportunities for team performance that are beneficial for team literature as well as AMO theory which is extended to a new level.

8. Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. A.C. Bos-Nehles and for providing continuous support and feedback during the process and for suggesting such an exciting topic to me. Moreover, I

would also like to thank Prof. Dr. Tanya Bondarouk for joining my project as second supervisor and for providing valuable feedback.

In addition, I would like to thank all the expert interviewees for taking their time and also participating in times of Corona when physical meetings have been impossible.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my parents from the bottom of my heart, who support me in all matters and made the entire study possible for me. From now on a whole new chapter begins and I am happy to know that I will always have you by my side.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Definition of concepts

| Dimension | Concepts | Short explanation | Sample quote |
|------------|------------------------------|---|--|
| Ability | Collective intelligence | Define a group's general ability to perform multiple tasks (Woolley, Chabris, Pentland, Hashmi and Malone, 2010) | <i>"Teamwork lives from the fact that you can work together and allow other opinions and then continue to work with those other opinions and basic ideas." (Team manager 15)</i> |
| Ability | Team member's traits | Perception of team members roles | <i>"It is vital that the roles of the team are clearly understood. There are very different roles in the project and if everyone has the right understanding of the roles, it helps a lot that the team works well together as a team. " (Team manager 8)</i> |
| Ability | Team cognition | Team cognition defines the way in which relevant team knowledge is mentally expressed and distributed within the team and consequently enables the anticipation and performance of action for its members (DeChurch and Mesmer-Magnus, 2010). | <i>"[...] It can also go completely wrong if opinions or expectations diverge too much. That is such a point that I think can be controlled well if the people who are in the project team know each other well or can assess themselves well enough." (Team manager 14)</i> |
| Ability | Diversity among team members | Diversity in terms of team members' level of experience, age and origin. | <i>"A good mix between experience and innovation is very helpful." (Team manager 13)</i> |
| Ability | Team tenure | Additive team tenure, i.e. having team members who have a high level of skills and knowledge to navigate the team and by having collective team tenure which defines a communal knowledge base through the members' shared experiences and finally team tenure dispersion describing the variety in perspectives and knowledge of the individual team members. (Gonzalez-Mulé, Cockburn, McCormick, Zhao, 2019) | <i>"The ideal mix for a team is that you have a sufficient number of experts who know what to do." (Team manager 10)</i> |
| Ability | Social skills | Respectfulness and team working ability | <i>"A high level of social skills, that the team knows when they can disturb each other and when they can talk to someone and a high level of loyalty and trust, that's always very important." (Team manager 5)</i> |
| Ability | Conflict ability | Ability to resolve differences | <i>"What you need in a team is the ability to accept criticism." (Team manager 18)</i> |
| Ability | Communication skills | Verbal communication | <i>"Members of the team must also have the ability to address problems clearly and at the same time be open enough when certain tasks overwhelm them." (Team manager 14)</i> |
| Motivation | Group cohesiveness | The team sees itself as a unit | <i>"I believe that team member cohesion still plays a crucial role. I think it motivates again when the team stick together and increases performance for themselves and the others." (Team manager 12)</i> |

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Motivation | Interpersonal relationship | Relationship among team members beyond work | <i>"When you not only experience the other team members in their function or at work, but also as a private person and talk about other topics and find a common ground. To give an example, if you find out that someone likes sailing too, then you already have a common theme. I think that changes the way the team is interacting and will contribute to better teamwork." (Team manager 8)</i> |
| Motivation | Equality among team members | Equal treatment of the entire team by the team leader and regardless of the individual positions, the team works in the same way | <i>"Ultimately, the team members are, I'm not talking about the head now, they are on an equal footing. Now regardless of the internal title they have, whether one is a director and the other is a vice president that does not matter at all." (Team manager 13)</i> |
| Motivation | Member's similarity | To have a common ground that is shared by the team | <i>"You need a point where they come together. [...] That can be the goal or project goal, but it could be anything and I think if the team has the common goal, they work on it more effectively and are more passionate about things than when you have five or ten people and everyone has a different attitude towards the work or the customer." (Team manager 1)</i> |

Appendix 2: Interview questions for team managers

1. Can you introduce yourself briefly? - Name - Position - Duration of employment?
2. What does an average working day look like?
3. What is your current team like? - Team size - What are the team's tasks? - What is the atmosphere / engagement like in the team?
4. What role do you play in the team? - Tasks and responsibilities

QUESTIONS FOR TEAM ABILITY:

Q: In your opinion, what are relevant team abilities to achieve the goals you set?

Q: What kind of behaviour do you value of your team members / employees?

Q: What does a team generally need to achieve high performance?

Q: How do you assess whether your team is performing well?

Q: What distinguishes high-performing teams from less-performing teams?

Q: What qualities must team members have to be successful?

Q: In your opinion, how does a team acquire these skills? Are there measures that you consider particularly effective?

Optional questions:

Q: How is the composition of a team decided? Exclusively based on the company's position? Or do you also pay attention to other characteristics?

Q: If you notice differences in performance within different teams, can you determine these by certain characteristics?

Q: What are the concerns of team members when there are conflicts? What do they look like exactly?

QUESTIONS FOR TEAM MOTIVATION:

Q: What motivates the team to perform well?

Q: How do you judge that a team is motivated?

Q: What strategies would you use to motivate your team?

Q: What could increase the willingness to achieve high team performance?

Optional questions:

Q: If self-motivation is lacking, is there a way to awaken it?

Q: Have there ever been discussions in which a team member criticizes the motivation of others?

QUESTIONS FOR TEAM OPPORTUNITY:

Q: In your experience, what must be provided externally in order to work successfully in a team?

Q: What is the organization doing to ensure that teams have sufficient knowledge and skills?

Q: Tell me about a challenging job situation (regarding teamwork) that you had to deal with?

Q: The current situation (Covid-19) brings new challenges, which abilities are most important in the team at the moment? How do you motivate the team in such a situation? What does the organization have to do so that successful teamwork is still possible?

Optional questions:

Q: Can you say what you think is the most important factor (ability, motivation, fact) to achieve successful team performance?

Q: How would you rate the importance of these three factors?

Q: In your opinion, what is the order of the AMO factors when it comes to successful team performance?

Q: Are there other relevant factors (in addition to ability, motivation and opportunity) that are relevant for successful team performance?