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ORGANIZATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND PERFORMANCE:
A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND CONTINGENCY FRAMEWORK

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Abstract: Organizational experience is generally expected to have a positive effect on subsequent task performance. However, research over the past two decades has recognized an increasing number of circumstances in which the performance effects of experience are less clear or even negative. Given the inconclusive evidence on the nature of the experience–performance relationship, we conduct a systematic review and synthesize previously unconnected streams of literature on the organizational experience–performance relationship into a contingency framework on how the applicability, accessibility, and adoption of experiential knowledge jointly moderate the commonly assumed positive effect of organizational experience on performance in a focal task. Based on our integrative contingency framework, we identify important gaps in our understanding of these boundary conditions and develop a research agenda to expand our understanding of organizational experience effects on organizational performance.
INTRODUCTION

The organizational experience–performance relationship is central to the organization and management literatures. Organizational experience, typically understood as prior task completions and measured in terms of the cumulative number of such task completions (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011: 1124), is generally assumed to improve performance. The assumption that prior experience with a task makes organizations better at performing the task is a fundamental underpinning of theoretical and empirical work alike (e.g., Huber, 1991; Levinthal & March, 1993; March, 2010). Since the early work on learning curves (Arrow, 1962; Wright, 1936), organizational experience has been theorized to improve subsequent task performance. Several distinct streams of literature advance the notion that organizations benefit from experience. The underlying idea in this work is that organizations learn from their experience and use the experiential knowledge gained to guide future behavior (Levitt & March, 1988), thereby leading to a positive organizational experience–performance relationship.

Despite this field’s prominence, empirical research on the organizational experience–performance relationship has often yielded mixed results, with some studies finding either no relationship or even a negative relationship between organizational experience and subsequent performance in a task (e.g., Haleblian & Finkelstein, 1999; Hayward, 2002; Perkins, 2014). Similarly, learning curves and patterns have been found to vary widely across firms (e.g., Dosi, Grazzi, & Mathew, 2017), which contradicts the prediction of learning curve theory. These findings suggest that important boundary conditions exist for the causal mechanisms that underlie the experience-organizational performance relationship and call for an integrative theoretical framework to explicate the conditions when organizational experience leads to performance improvements and when it does not (Elsbach & van Knippenberg, 2020).

In this paper, we review, synthesize, and critique prior research on the organizational
experience–performance relationship and its boundary conditions (Elsbach & van Knippenberg, 2020). By synthesizing advances in previously largely disconnected streams of literature and drawing on a bibliometric coupling and co-citation analysis (Zupic & Čater, 2015), our review explains the differential performance effects of organizational experience and emphasizes the dimensions that shape the boundary conditions for the relationship (LePine & Wilcox-King, 2010; Makadok, Burton, & Barney, 2018; Suddaby, 2010). Specifically, to provide a novel understanding of the literature, we inductively develop a contingency framework based on the review of the prior literature organizing the literature around three important boundary conditions for the effects of organizational experience, namely, the applicability, accessibility, and adoption of experiential knowledge. We define experiential knowledge as cognizance derived from prior task completions.

Applicability is defined as the degree to which experiential knowledge is pertinent to the focal task (i.e., the task considered from the experience perspective). Organizational experience may create experiential knowledge, but this knowledge may not apply to the focal task and may therefore be of little value to the task at hand or, worse, affect it negatively. Accessibility is defined as the degree to which experiential knowledge is available directly or indirectly to the managers involved in the focal task. For experience to positively influence focal task performance, management needs to be able to access any applicable knowledge gained from experience. Adoption is defined as the degree to which organizational decision makers use experiential knowledge in a focal task. If the organization fails to adopt applicable and accessible insights gained from prior experience in the focal decision, then performance benefits cannot materialize. Our contingency framework integrates the literature around these boundary conditions that determine when organizational experience positively affects subsequent performance and explicates their interaction.

Our review uncovers that positive experience effects cannot be assumed and that the
assessment of boundary conditions is essential to convincingly explain organizational experience effects beyond the original production tasks featured in early learning curve work, which subsequent work on the organizational experience–performance relationship has expanded. Our review also identifies important gaps in our understanding of the organizational experience–performance relationship. Specifically, we point to the importance of future research on the adoption of experiential knowledge, given the dearth of prior research on this important factor. We further emphasize additional gaps in our understanding of the effects of applicability and accessibility. Most importantly, however, our review indicates the importance of future work on the potentially complex patterns of the interactions among the three boundary conditions of the organizational experience–performance relationship. The review also highlights methodological considerations that are important for future research. We believe substantial empirical and theoretical progress in our understanding of the organizational experience–performance relationship can be made by addressing the above issues.

We structure our paper as follows. In the next section, we introduce the organizational experience construct and the research methodology and provide an overview of the key streams of research and the theoretical perspectives that explain when positive performance effects can be expected. Next, we organize and synthesize the research in a contingency framework and use this framework to identify the critical issues and gaps in our understanding. Then, we propose a research agenda to address these issues and advance our understanding of the organizational experience–performance relationship.

**REVIEW METHODOLOGY**

The diverse streams of literature on the organizational experience–performance relationship have not been comprehensively reviewed and integrated. Prior attempts to review the literature on the organizational experience–performance relationship have either been (1) focused reviews or
meta-analyses of particular empirical domains such as acquisitions or market entries (Barkema & Schijven, 2008b; Cao & Posen, 2022) or (2) offered broader reviews and syntheses of the organizational learning literature focusing on searching, creating, retaining, and transferring knowledge (Argote, 2013; Argote, Lee, & Park, 2020; Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011; Argote & Todorova, 2007).

Therefore, to investigate the organizational experience–performance relationship, we conducted a systematic review (e.g., Briner & Denyer, 2012; Rousseau, Manning, & Denyer, 2008) of prior empirical studies that focus on this relationship and the contingencies of this relationship (i.e., we focus on empirical articles that explain organizational performance with experience) and complement the core review with selected theoretical work that explains the relationship. To improve the systematicity of our review, we leveraged the novel framework by Simsek, Fox, and Heavey (2021) that focuses on principles and practices that help secure systematicity in literature reviews like ours, which have the purpose to “develop an integrative research framework… … spanning multiple research streams” (p. 2).

To identify the base sample of empirical studies, we use “experience” and “performance” as our inclusion criteria and exclude from our corpus papers that do not contain a quantitative empirical analysis of the organizational experience–performance relationship.\(^1\) The first step of our literature search using the Clarivate Web of Science resulted in 57 empirical articles with the words “experience” and “performance” in the title of articles published in the focal journals between 1945 and 2021. Given the emergence and rich history of research on the relationship since Wright (1936), our timeframe seeks to include works in the management literature over the past eight decades, limited by the availability of Clarivate Web of Science data from 1945 onwards.

Most of the articles identified by using the inclusion and exclusion criteria focused on the relationship between organizational experience and performance as the key relationship to be studied, but a small fraction of the studies considered experience primarily as a moderator of some other relationship between some other independent variable and performance. However, when the empirical analysis included a main effect of organizational experience on performance, we included the study in the corpus. Then, we eliminated 17 articles that did not contain an empirical analysis of the effect of experience on performance, were studies of individual-level job performance, or had been retracted. Consequently, this first step resulted in 40 articles relevant to the scope of the review that were added to the corpus. We repeated the search by only requiring “experience” and “performance” to be in the abstract, with the search resulting in 596 articles for the same period. These articles were screened with the same criteria and resulted in 156 articles, of which 38 had already been identified in the previous step. The remaining 118 articles were added to the corpus.

\(^1\) We excluded most qualitative studies from the corpus, as they did not test the relationship between organizational experience and performance and therefore fell outside the scope of reviewing the base relationship. However, we included qualitative studies in the discussion of the contingencies and theoretical mechanisms, as they are particularly suitable for enriching our understanding of the underlying processes and for offering valuable insights that complement the findings of quantitative tests of the organizational experience–performance relationship.
In addition to searching for articles in the selected journals, we also used the backward and forward citations of the identified articles to ensure that we did not omit influential high-quality studies occasionally published outside the selected journals. This resulted in 20 additional articles to be added to the corpus. The resulting number of systematically reviewed empirical articles in the corpus was 178.

In addition to the systematic selection of articles, we also read and classified the articles systematically to enable a transparent synthesis of the literature (Briner & Denyer, 2012; Rousseau et al., 2008). The five leftmost columns in Appendix 1 contain the summary information of each of the corpus articles (the remaining four columns are related to the discussion of the inductively derived integrative framework and its implications in sections 4 and 5).

We also used bibliometric analyses, specifically bibliometric coupling and co-citation analysis, to ensure that we did not miss central articles and that our interpretations of the research streams were grounded in the reviewed body of literature (Zupic & Čater, 2015). Whereas bibliometric coupling helped us identify clusters of studies among the corpus articles based on their shared citations, co-citation analysis helped us identify underlying theoretical foundations by highlighting the references that were frequently cited together by our corpus articles. Then, the literature review was used as a basis for inductively deriving an integrative theoretical framework that integrates related theoretical and empirical work (Elsbach & van Knippenberg, 2020; Parmigiani & King, 2019)—a contingency framework that facilitates theoretical contributions (Breslin & Gatrell, 2021; LePine & Wilcox-King, 2010) and directions for future research (Elsbach & van Knippenberg, 2020).

**EXTANT RESEARCH ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL EXPERIENCE-PERFORMANCE RELATIONSHIP**

**The Organizational Experience Construct**
Organizational experience can be understood as prior task completions and is typically measured in terms of the cumulative number of task completions (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011: 1124). Task completion in this definition can range from individual operational tasks, such as assembling a device, to firm-level strategic tasks, such as entering a new market or forming an alliance. In our review, however, we focus specifically on organizational tasks that involve organizational units, such as a team or a business unit, or the organization as a whole. Given the focus of the review on the organizational experience–performance relationship, we exclude individual-level research on individual task completion in organizations (i.e., individual experience in organizations), which is featured centrally in related fields of study, such as psychology and organizational behavior, because such studies focus on different dependent or independent variables and theoretical mechanisms. For instance, the substantive body of work that examines the experience–job performance relationship at the individual level and focuses on individual-level mechanisms such as stress and boredom (e.g., Hunter & Thatcher, 2007; Staats & Gino, 2012), falls outside the scope of our study of the organizational experience–performance relationship.

The definition of organizational experience as task completions distinguishes it from organizational outcomes produced by these task completions, such as knowledge or capabilities. The organizational experience literature typically argues that through organizational learning, the accumulation of experience leads to the creation of experiential knowledge, which is reflected in changes in cognition, skills, routines, capabilities, behavior, or performance (Argote, 2013: 31; Easterby-Smith, Crossan, & Nicolini, 2000). The underlying idea in this research is that organizations learn from performing a task and use the experiential knowledge gained to guide future behavior (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011; Levitt & March, 1988), thereby leading to a positive organizational experience–performance relationship. The fourth column in Appendix 1 classifies the experience measures used in the corpus articles.
The Performance Construct

Much of the research on organizational experience assumes that the number of task completions increases subsequent performance with the task. However, what constitutes performance in this relationship may differ substantially depending on the task at hand. For instance, in the early research on organizational tasks, such as aircraft production, performance reflected organizational productivity or cost measures, for example, capturing the amount of labor required to produce a single aircraft or its unit cost (Argote & Epple, 1990; Wright, 1936). As research has moved to other contexts and strategic tasks, such as alliances or acquisitions that are highly complex, heterogeneous across individual task completions and less frequent (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011; Zollo, 2009), a broader range of performance measures has been employed, including measures related to the perceived performance by markets and investors (e.g., Haleblian & Finkelstein, 1999), financial performance (Zollo & Singh, 2004), task performance (Heimeriks, Schijven, & Gates, 2012), and measures of overall firm performance (e.g., Laamanen & Keil, 2008). The third column in Appendix 1 therefore classifies the performance measures used in the corpus articles.

This proliferation of performance measures is important to understand the results of prior research because research suggests that at least for strategic tasks such as acquisitions, different performance measures may be only weakly correlated or even uncorrelated (Zollo & Meier, 2008). Given that the proliferation of the performance measures coincides with the increased share of mixed results on the organizational experience–performance relationship, careful interpretation is needed to understand whether and when the mixed findings are caused by important boundary conditions or measurement issues. In reviewing the literature on the organizational experience–performance relationship; therefore, it is important to be explicit on the performance measure being used (see also Miller, Washburn, & Glick, 2013).
Research Streams and Changing Tasks and Contexts

Early research on the organizational experience–performance relationship was carried out mostly in manufacturing contexts in the United States focusing on repetitive production tasks (Alchian, 1963; Wright, 1936) and has been subsequently replicated across a large number of products, such as biotech products, medical care products, trucks, semiconductors, electronic components, and chemicals (see Argote, 2013; Argote, Lee, & Park, 2021, for reviews). Although these contexts provided robust evidence for a positive organizational experience–performance relationship in production tasks, they also suggested widely differing learning rates across industries and even in organizations within the same industry (Argote & Epple, 1990; Dutton, Thomas, & Butler, 1984).

Since the early studies on the organizational experience–performance relationship, research on the topic has both increased and diversified to cover a multitude of tasks that range from other repetitive tasks in the organization, such as product development (Fong Boh, Slaughter, & Espinosa, 2007; Gopal, Goyal, Netessine, & Reindorp, 2013), to various strategic tasks, such as acquisitions, alliances, market entries (e.g., Barkema & Schijven, 2008b), and a multitude of other contexts, such as service- and knowledge-intensive industries or not-for-profit contexts (e.g., Argote, 2013; Argote et al., 2021) all around the world. The second column in Appendix 1 that summarizes our corpus articles details the task and context of the studies, and Figure 1 illustrates this evolution and diversification of the focal tasks in the organizational experience–performance literature over time.

***Insert Figure 1 about here***

To ensure a grounded and comprehensive view of the literature, we used bibliometric coupling to map and cluster the body of literature in our corpus of 178 articles that empirically explain the organizational experience–performance relationship. Bibliometric coupling connects
articles based on their shared references and facilitates the identification of connected clusters of articles (Zupic & Čater, 2015). As noted by Zupic and Čater (2015): “Examining the research front of a topic or research field is a task particularly suitable for bibliographical coupling since this method uses reference lists for coupling and does not require the documents to be cited in order to connect them”. We included all the focal articles in the analysis and used the normalized citations and default settings of VOSviewer version 1.6.18 for bibliometric coupling clustering (van Eck & Waltman, 2022). Figure 2 presents a network visualization of the bibliometric coupling analysis that clusters close to one another corpus articles that have shared references.

***Insert Figure 2 about here***

The bibliometric coupling analysis identifies several somewhat distinct clusters of literature and reveals several important insights into the evolution of the literature. First, depicted on the right of Figure 2 with green nodes, there is a stream that focuses on the learning curve in production and the dynamics of learning and forgetting in organizations (Argote, Beckman, & Epple, 1990; Argote & Epple, 1990; Benkard, 2000; Darr, Argote, & Epple, 1995; Sampson, 2005). For instance, Argote and Epple (1990) explicated the learning curve in production as a power function in which the cumulative number of units produced decreases the number of direct working hours required to produce the next unit; they demonstrated how learning curves vary between organizations and argued that organizational forgetting, employee turnover, the transfer of knowledge and economies of scale are key reasons for learning differences across organizations. Argote et al. (1990) identified the depreciation of acquired knowledge, with the implication that the traditional measure of experience, specifically, the cumulative amount of production, overstates the persistence of learning. Darr et al. (1995) found support for depreciating experiential knowledge in the context of service organizations (pizza stores) and found that experiential knowledge was transferred across stores owned by the same franchisee but not across stores owned by different franchisees. Benkard
(2000) found support for organizational forgetting affecting the learning curve in the context of aircraft manufacturing and emphasized the role of product model change in causing setbacks in the learning curve. Sampson (2005) found support for depreciating experiential knowledge in the context of strategic alliances. This stream of work is not only connected in bibliometric terms but also foundational to much subsequent work in other streams. These streams typically orient around specific tasks in which organizational experience–performance is explored and introduce important contingencies to the organizational experience–performance relationship.

Second, a related stream that builds on the foundational learning curve research, is depicted at the upper center of Figure 2 with yellow nodes. This stream focuses on experience–performance relationships in alliances (Anand & Khanna, 2000; Boh, Huang, & Wu, 2020; Gulati, Lavie, & Singh, 2009; Heimeriks & Duysters, 2007; Hoang & Rothaermel, 2005; Hoang & Rothaermel, 2010; Kale, Dyer, & Singh, 2002; Liu & Ravichandran, 2015; Simonin, 1997). Alliances are different from production tasks in that they occur less frequently, involve multiple organizations that may differ in their experience, and often exhibit some task heterogeneity across different task completions. Despite these differences in the task, this work reports mostly on the positive correlations between experience and alliance performance, firm performance, or market perceptions upon alliance announcement, although at times with some mixed results. For instance, in a study of over 2,000 joint ventures and licensing agreements, Anand and Khanna (2000) found learning effects in the form of increasing abnormal stock returns to the announcements of joint ventures but not for licensing contracts, as the focal firm gains experience in managing such ventures. Positive results were reported by Liu and Ravichandran (2015) for related types of alliance experience, especially in the presence of information technology (IT)-enabled knowledge integration capabilities that support sharing and distributing knowledge. Mixed results were reported, for instance, by Hoang and Rothaermel (2005; 2010). One aspect emphasized in this
stream compared to others is the focus on how organizations develop an alliance capability, e.g., by establishing a dedicated alliance function (Kale et al., 2002) or by using different ways to codify their experience (Heimeriks, Bingham, & Laamanen, 2015).

Third, another stream that builds on learning curve research is depicted at the top of Figure 2 with blue nodes. This stream focuses on learning in acquisitions and introduces the idea of learning transfer effects in the organizational experience–performance relationship (Ellis, Reus, Lamont, & Ranft, 2011; Finkelstein & Halebian, 2002; Halebian & Finkelstein, 1999; Hayward, 2002; Kroll, Walters, & Wright, 2008; McDonald, Westphal, & Graebner, 2008). These works explore the experience effects across complex, strategic tasks and report contingencies that influence the positive and negative transfer across these tasks. As a seminal article in this stream of research, Halebian and Finkelstein (1999) found that relatively inexperienced acquirers inappropriately generalized from their initial experience, which led to a negative performance effect at the beginning of the learning curve. With more experience, the performance effect turned positive. They also found that the similarity of prior acquisitions is important for positive performance effects. Other studies contribute to this more nuanced understanding of the applicability of prior experience. For instance, Ellis et al. (2011) built on the same theoretical arguments and identified acquisition size as an important contingency in the applicability of prior experience. Experience from same-size acquisitions was found to have a positive effect. Jointly, work in this stream reports positive, negative, and U-shaped effects of prior experience while mostly relying on market perceptions and firm performance as outcome measures.

A fourth stream, which is depicted on the left of Figure 2 with red nodes, is more diverse in that it covers the experience–performance effects in international contexts and diverse types of economies (Delios & Beamish, 2001; Le & Kroll, 2017; Li & Zhang, 2007; Li, Vertinsky, & Li, 2014; Luo & Peng, 1999; Zhang, Yang, Tang, Au, & Xue, 2013) and the role of experience in
entrepreneurial firms (Cooper, Gimeno-Gascon, & Woo, 1994; Dencker & Gruber, 2015; Hernandez-Carrion, Camarero-Izquierdo, & Gutierrez-Cillan, 2017; Toft-Kehler, Wennberg, & Kim, 2014). For instance, among studies that consider international contexts, Luo and Peng (1999) found that the intensity and diversity of the host country experience of multinational enterprises (MNEs) affected the financial and market performance of the subunits of MNEs in China. Another example of this research in the international domain is the study by Delios and Beamish (2001), which showed a positive effect of host country and governance mode experience on subsequent subsidiary survival ratios. Similarly, Le and Kroll (2017) found that CEOs’ international experience positively affected firm performance. However, some studies in this stream have found mixed results depending on the similarity of the experience to the focal situation. For instance, in a study on foreign banks in the United States, Wu and Salomon (2017) found that host-country experience reduced the likelihood of regulatory sanctions, whereas third-country experience had mixed effects. Jointly, studies in these contexts offer key insights into the role of experience in nonmarket, international, and entrepreneurial contexts and identify the dimensions of experience that impact the organizational experience–performance relationship.

Finally, as a small cluster at the bottom of Figure 2 with purple nodes, a stream of studies has examined the performance effects of preentry experience (e.g., prior experience from other markets) when entering new markets and industries (e.g., Bayus & Agarwal, 2007; Cattani, 2005; Chen, Williams, & Agarwal, 2012; Eggers, Grajek, & Kretschmer, 2020). In this stream on industry evolution, attention has been paid to learning dynamics. For instance, Bayus and Agarwal (2007) found that preentry experience improves survival for early industry entrants, but the effect diminishes for later entrants. Chen et al. (2012) found that the preentry experience of diversifying incumbents allows them to address various impediments to growth, resulting in increasing improvements in growth over time when compared with de novo firms in new industries without
such preentry experience. In addition to dynamism, studies in this stream have examined the effect of different types of experience. For instance, Eggers et al. (2020) show that technological preentry experience is valuable for attracting a high share of early adopters with intensive usage as customers, whereas preentry market experience is positively related to the overall number of customers. Overall, these studies have contributed to an improved understanding of when different kinds of experience are needed in evolving industry contexts.

**Inconsistent Results Across Theories and Contexts**

An important finding that arises from this review is that after the initial work on learning curves, subsequent research has often identified situations where the base relationship between organizational experience and performance is weakened, may not hold, or even may be reversed. With the recognition that a large proportion of the studies in our corpus have found that experience does not always have a homogenous effect on performance, we first classified the studies in our corpus based on the findings reported on the organizational experience–performance relationship (see the fifth column in Appendix 1). The findings show an interesting trend in the reported findings for the main relationship. Specifically, the data show that over time, the share of studies that find support for a positive main effect shifted from initially all studies finding support to more recently, an increasing number of studies not finding support or reporting inconclusive findings (e.g., because of various contingencies). Figure 3 illustrates this development and summarizes the evolution of the literature in terms of whether the empirical studies provide support, offer inconclusive evidence, or reject the positive relationship between organizational experience and performance.

***Insert Figure 3 about here***

**Theoretical Perspectives Underlying Research on the Organizational Experience-Performance Relationship**
To gain further insight into the literature on the organizational experience–performance relationship and the causal mechanisms that affect the relationship, we next examined the theoretical foundations that underlie the corpus of research. To support the analysis of the theoretical foundations of our focal articles, we conducted a co-citation analysis to identify the key references in this body of work and how they are cited in different streams of literature. Co-citation analysis connects articles based on their joint appearance in reference lists (Zupic & Čater, 2015), which was useful for the analysis of the intellectual foundations of the corpus articles: the co-citation analysis enabled us to understand the theoretical perspectives that underlie the focal articles on the organizational experience–performance relationship. Given the sensitivity of the results of the co-citation analysis for specifications (e.g., the threshold number of citations for inclusion), we tested multiple specifications and combined the co-citation analysis with qualitative analysis to identify and cluster and analyze the theoretical foundations underlying our focal articles.

Several theories emerge as central foundations to understand the organizational experience–performance relationship. In particular, organizational learning theories rooted in learning curve models (e.g., Alchian, 1963; Argote & Epple, 1990; Arrow, 1962; Dutton & Thomas, 1984; Dutton et al., 1984; Yelle, 1976) form the origin of research on the performance effects of organizational experience. This research was later complemented by learning transfer theories rooted in the psychology of education (e.g., Bereby-Meyer, Moran, & Unger-Aviram, 2004; Ellis, 1965; Ellis et al., 2011; Finkelstein & Halebian, 2002; Halebian & Finkelstein, 1999; Haskell, 2001; Thorndike & Woodworth, 1901c, 1901b, 1901a), cognitive theories of organizational learning (e.g., Argyris & Schön, 1978; Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Jensen & Szulanski, 2004; Szulanski, 1996; Winter, Szulanski, Ringov, & Jensen, 2012; Zander & Kogut, 1995), and theories of behavioral learning (e.g., Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011; Cyert & March, 1963; Herriott, Levinthal, & March, 1985; Levitt & March, 1988; March & Olsen, 1975). In addition,
various other theories, such as the resource-based view (Barney, 1991) were referred to in some studies.

**Learning curve models.** Learning curve models are founded on work in psychology at the individual level (Thurstone, 1919). The insights from individual learning were subsequently extended to the organizational context, when early organizational studies (Alchian, 1963; Wright, 1936) suggested that organizations also improve their ability to conduct a focal task as they accumulate experience from repetitively engaging in the same task (Argote, 2013; Epple, Argote, & Devadas, 1991). Learning curve theories assume that identical or at least comparable tasks are repetitively conducted by the same actors with little change in the context, small time periods between subsequent task completions, and low to moderate task complexity. This repetition allows organizations to reduce errors and improve not only the efficiency with which subtasks are performed by individual organizational members but also the coordination among organizational members performing the task (e.g., Reagans, Argote, & Brooks, 2005). Although the work on learning curves acknowledges variance in learning rates across organizations, task repetition that originates from increases in cumulative output is presumed to improve performance (e.g., Argote & Epple, 1990). Although these models acknowledge variance between organizations, they generally assume a positive relationship between organizational experience and performance. Despite these seminal contributions, which underline the significant variance in learning rates across organizations, learning curve studies tend to focus on learning curve patterns and are not centered around causal mechanisms underlying these patterns. Insight into such causal mechanisms is highlighted in related yet distinct theories, which will be discussed next.

**Learning transfer theory.** A second theoretical foundation for research on the organizational experience–performance relationship is in the psychology of education, specifically, learning transfer theory. Learning transfer theory suggests that prior experience can positively
affect current task performance only when the current task is structurally similar to the task experienced in the past (Ellis, 1965). The principle of identical elements introduced by Thorndike and Woodworth (Thorndike & Woodworth, 1901c, 1901b, 1901a) further suggests that the similarity of the context within which the task is being performed positively influences the transfer of learning. Transfer theory further suggests that performance-decreasing negative transfer effects may occur when experience is applied from a task that exhibits superficial similarity with a focal task but differs in substance (Perkins & Salomon, 1994).

Despite its origin in individual-level learning, transfer theory has also been extended to the context of organizations. For instance, extant work reports that the performance effects of acquisition experience (Ellis et al., 2011; Finkelstein & Haleblian, 2002) and the experience effects in internationalization (Guillén, 2003; Liu & Maula, 2016; Perkins, 2014) depend on structural similarity. Other work demonstrates that the two dimensions of task similarity and context similarity matter. For instance, research on mergers and acquisitions emphasizes the importance of task similarity to the organizational experience–performance relationship by identifying negative transfer effects between related and unrelated acquisitions (Finkelstein & Haleblian, 2002; Haleblian & Finkelstein, 1999) and between small and large acquisitions (Ellis et al., 2011). Related research on corporate development activities suggests negative transfer effects between acquisitions and other types of corporate development activities, for instance, between acquisitions and alliances (Zollo & Reuer, 2010) or between wholly owned and joint ventures in internationalization (Guillén, 2003). Taken together, learning transfer theory points to the importance of the applicability of experiential knowledge to the focal task.

**Cognitive theories of organizational learning and knowledge.** Another stream of research that informs the organizational experience–performance relationship is rooted in cognitive theories of organizational learning and knowledge (e.g., Eggers & Kaplan, 2009; Gavetti, 2005;
Tripsas & Gavetti, 2000). Central to these theories is the notion that organizations develop experiential knowledge through learning from task repetitions (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Huber, 1991). Acting as interpretation and belief systems (Daft & Weick, 1984; Huber, 1991; Nelson & Winter, 1982), organizations store knowledge in organizational knowledge repositories and subsequently transfer it to the locus of new activities for future task completions to be affected by prior experience. Research that draws on this theoretical foundation has studied, for instance, how organizations codify experiential knowledge and form routines and capabilities as repositories of experiential knowledge (Heimeriks et al., 2012; Zollo & Winter, 2002). Codification helps make tacit knowledge more explicit and accessible for future use. Other studies emphasize the difficulties of knowledge and practice transfer and argue that the conscious replication of prior practice bolsters organizational performance. For instance, in their study of Rank Xerox, Jensen and Szulanski (2007) revealed that template use enhances the effectiveness of knowledge transfer. Similarly, by studying the Mail Boxes Etc. (MBE) franchise system in Israel, Szulanski and Jensen (2006) showed that the replication of practice positively impacts network growth. Other studies have revealed comparable findings—the transfer of experiential knowledge within firms is not automatic, and hence, the automatic accessibility of experiential knowledge cannot be assumed (e.g., Argote & Ingram, 2000; Bresman, Birkinshaw, & Nobel, 1999). Taken together, identifying the important steps of creating, storing, and transferring experiential knowledge, which cognitive learning theories point to, highlights the role of the accessibility of experiential knowledge for the organizational experience–performance relationship.

(Cyert & March, 1963; March & Simon, 1958; Simon, 1947), the Behavioral Theory of the Firm (Cyert & March, 1963) and, in particular, performance feedback theory (Greve, 2003), these studies suggest that organizations change their behavior when they receive negative feedback for their actions (when performance is below an organizational aspiration level) and replicate their behavior when they receive positive feedback. This behavioral pattern explains a gradual improvement in performance and, therefore, a positive organizational experience–performance relationship (Baum, Li, & Usher, 2000).

Research that builds on the Carnegie Tradition further suggests that interpretation (e.g., March, 1994; March & Shapira, 1987) and biases may exist that lead to organizations ignoring past experience either unintentionally due to cognitive biases that arise out of the use of decision heuristics (e.g., Kahneman, 2011) and satisficing behavior (Cyert & March, 1963; Simon, 1955) or intentionally due to organizational power and politics among organizational coalitions (Blackler & McDonald, 2000; Carter, 1971; Contu & Willmott, 2003; Coopey & Burgoyne, 2000; Cyert & March, 1963; Lawrence, Mauws, Dyck, & Kleysen, 2005; Newman, 1985; Pfeffer & Sutton, 1999). In response to performance feedback, managerial interpretations, biases, and decision heuristics may interfere in the organizational experience–performance relationship, e.g., by prioritizing short-run responses to feedback by a political coalition in the organization (Gavetti, Greve, Levinthal, & Ocasio, 2012). Work in this stream indicates that various behavioral learning mechanisms and organizational politics may interfere in the organizational experience–performance relationship. Taken together, these perspectives identify the importance of considering whether and when experiential knowledge is adopted in the focal task.

In summary, prior research points to several factors that appear to saliently modify the organizational experience–performance relationship. Yet in prior work, these factors are often implicit and remain disconnected from one another, developed in separate streams of work. In the
next section, we bring these streams together in an integrative framework of key contingencies in the organizational experience–performance relationship.

**TOWARD A CONTINGENCY FRAMEWORK OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL EXPERIENCE–PERFORMANCE RELATIONSHIP**

To provide a novel understanding of the literature on the organizational experience–performance relationship, in this section, based on our review, we inductively derive a contingency framework (see Figure 4) that organizes past research on factors that may modify the organizational experience–performance relationship. Table 1 elaborates on the conceptual underpinnings of the identified contingency effects on the organizational experience–performance relationship. The goal of this framework is to synthesize and integrate research in a way that provides insights into the theoretical mechanisms affecting the relationship and that identifies gaps in our understanding. To do so, we start by formalizing as our base proposition the positive effect of organizational experience on performance that has been first identified in research on learning curves and has been implicitly or explicitly underlying most of the research on the effects of organizational experience.

*Base proposition 1: Organizational experience with a focal task has a positive effect on the subsequent performance in this focal task.*

***Insert Table 1 and Figure 4 about here***

**Applicability of Experiential Knowledge and the Performance Effects of Organizational Experience**

As suggested from our review (e.g., Figure 3), a broad range of research that covers multiple streams of literature shows that organizational experience does not always lead to increased performance. Emerging from our review and often explained through the learning transfer theory, the first key contingency and explanation of why experience effects may diverge can be
summarized under the heading of applicability of the prior experience. We define *applicability* as the degree to which experiential knowledge is pertinent to the focal task. Organizational experience may create experiential knowledge, but this knowledge may not apply to the focal task and may therefore be of little value to the task at hand or, worse, affect it negatively. Based on our review, learning transfer theory has been used to explain variances in the organizational experience–performance relationship across a range of contexts, including acquisitions (Ellis et al., 2011; Finkelstein & Halebian, 2002) and internationalization (Perkins, 2014). Accordingly, applicability depends on the similarity of the focal task to the prior experience in two dimensions, namely, the similarity of the *task* previously experienced to the current task and the similarity of the *context* within which the experience was accumulated to the current context.

**Inapplicable because of task dissimilarity.** Much of the theorizing on the performance effects of experience assumes that the tasks that an organization engages in are reasonably simple, repetitive, homogeneous, and, therefore, similar. However, many organizational tasks exhibit complexity and heterogeneity and may thus lack the assumed similarity for positive transfer. For instance, an organization may develop strategic sales proposals, but such proposals may differ so much from one another that the transfer of prior experience may inhibit the necessary adaptation (Haas & Hansen, 2005); that is, many complex organizational activities vary in their structural task characteristics, which implies that the knowledge gained from experience with prior activities may not fit the current task at hand despite surface similarity.

Regardless of task heterogeneity, several studies report that organizations are prone to transfer the experience gained, thereby negatively affecting performance in the focal task (Ellis et al., 2011; Finkelstein & Halebian, 2002). For instance, Ellis et al. (2011) showed that experience with small acquisitions has a negative performance effect on large acquisitions, and the authors provide corroborating evidence that the transfer of inapplicable knowledge underlies this effect.
Similarly, Zollo and Reuer (2010) found negative transfer effects among corporate development activities, specifically from alliance experience to acquisitions, unless these alliances are sufficiently similar in structure to subsequent acquisitions (Zollo & Reuer, 2010). Other works further refine these findings, for instance, by identifying additional reasons for negative transfer, such as the causal ambiguity of R&D experience (Ghosh, Martin, Pennings, & Wezel, 2014). Taken together, these results corroborate that task (dis)similarity is an important submechanism that impacts the organizational experience–performance relationship, i.e., task dissimilarity is a key dimension that explains negative experience transfer and therefore may modify the relationship between organizational experience and performance.

**Inapplicable because of context dissimilarity.** Negative experience transfer may also arise due to dissimilarity in the context due to, for instance, the temporal or spatial separation of the contexts; that is, what works at one point in time or in one context does not necessarily work at another point in time or in another context. On the organizational level of analysis, the work on context similarity features in, among others, studies of international business that examine the question of whether experience gained in one country is applicable in another country (Liu & Maula, 2016; Perkins, 2014). Contextual differences that may cause negative transfer effects can arise from different institutional environments or different cultures (e.g., Dikova, Sahib, & van Witteloostuijn, 2010). Inconsistent experience–performance effects for new venture formation are also explained by dissimilarities among industries and geographic locations (Toft-Kehler et al., 2014).

Although differences in tasks and contexts suggest reduced benefits or even negative effects, the applicability of organizational experience depends on the specificity of the knowledge being transferred from experience to the focal task. Knowledge generated from experience can be separated into general and specific knowledge (e.g., Gulati et al., 2009). General knowledge is
applicable to a broader set of tasks, whereas specific knowledge is specific to the task instance and the context. For instance, in international business research, Clarke, Tamaschke, and Liesch (2013) distinguished location-bound international experience from nonlocation-bound international experience, with location-bound international experience applying only to a specific country and nonlocation-bound international experience applying to any country. When the task and context similarity are higher, specific knowledge can be applied to the focal task, whereas when the task and context are less similar, only general knowledge can be applied. Taken together, we can formalize the effects of the mechanisms relating to the applicability of experiential knowledge by stating the following summary proposition:

Summary proposition 2: The applicability of experiential knowledge positively moderates the effect of organizational experience on the subsequent performance in the focal task such that for applicable experiential knowledge, the positive effect of experience on performance in the focal task is strengthened, whereas for inapplicable experience, it is weakened and may become negative.²

Accessibility of Experiential Knowledge and the Performance Effects of Organizational Experience

A second key contingency that emerges from our review of the research on the organizational experience–performance relationship and that is often linked to cognitive theories of organizational learning is the accessibility of experience. Accessibility is defined as the degree to which experiential knowledge is available either directly or indirectly to the managers involved in the focal task. For experience to positively influence focal task performance, management needs to be able to access any applicable knowledge gained from experience. Accessibility rests on three

² Applicability, like other constructs in our model, should generally be considered a continuous variable (i.e., a degree of applicability). The dichotomous presentation is used only for illustrative purposes to simplify the interpretation of the interaction effects.
foundations. First, accessibility presupposes that learning from experience occurred when the organization accumulated the experience in the first place. Second, the resulting experiential knowledge needs to be stored until the task is repeated. Finally, experiential knowledge needs to be transferred to the locus of task execution. We argue that each of these foundations is problematic to varying degrees in an organizational context; therefore, the relationship between experience and performance in a focal task is contingent on accessibility.

**Inaccessible because of failing to capture knowledge.** Prior work frequently assumes that engaging in a task automatically leads to learning and the formation of knowledge and organizational routines (Barkema & Schijven, 2008b). However, research on organizational learning (March & Olsen, 1975; Rerup, 2009) suggests that in many real-world situations, the link between organizational actions and learning from these actions may be severed and that learning may be hampered. In particular, when organizational feedback is delayed (e.g., Rahmandad, 2008; Rahmandad, Repenning, & Sterman, 2009) or when a series of actions combine to generate an outcome (e.g., Denrell, Fang, & Levinthal, 2004; Fang, 2012; Fang & Levinthal, 2009), organizations may find it difficult to learn from experience (e.g., Vermeulen, 2018). With the increasing complexity of the task and high causal ambiguity, organizations may find it increasingly difficult to interpret what has worked and what has not worked, which leads to no or to superstitious learning (Levitt & March, 1988; Zollo, 2009).

Given the difficulty of learning from experience, particularly in complex organizational tasks, recent works suggest that organizations may need to engage in deliberate learning efforts to capture knowledge and develop organizational routines from experience (e.g., Zollo & Singh, 2004). By attempting to uncover cause-and-effect relationships, deliberate learning efforts help to capture organizational knowledge from experience, for instance, by codifying insights for subsequent use (Zollo & Winter, 2002), as suggested by the research on acquisitions (Zollo &
Singh, 2004), alliances (Kale & Singh, 2007), and customer relationships (Mayer & Argyres, 2004). Interestingly, depending on the accuracy and relevance of the cause-and-effect relationships codified in stored documents, even deliberate learning may arguably engender superstitious learning (Heimeriks et al., 2012). Jointly informing the organizational experience–performance relationship, these works offer support for the notion that deliberate learning efforts strengthen learning by doing (e.g., Castellaneta, Valentini, & Zollo, 2018; Dosi et al., 2017).

**Inaccessibility because of forgetting.** Like individuals, organizations may forget the experience gained from prior task completions (Argote et al., 1990; Benkard, 2000; Darr et al., 1995; De Holan & Phillips, 2004). Forgetting refers to the decay of experience over time when the experience is not reenacted (Argote et al., 1990) and depends on the frequency of the experience accumulation and the temporality of the focal task relative to this experience (e.g., Zollo & Winter, 2002). When the same person in an organization repeats a task without delay, knowledge and information from the prior experience are readily available from (organizational) memory and therefore easily accessible. However, if the focal task is temporally separated from prior experience, then accessibility is reduced, and experience benefits may be smaller.

Organizational memory is imperfect, and older experience may not be remembered by individuals (Baum & Ingram, 1998; Meschi & Métais, 2013; Walsh & Ungson, 1991). In line with this argument, prior work on alliances suggests that the benefits of alliance experience dissipate quickly (Sampson, 2005). Furthermore, people move in and out of organizations and change positions; therefore, their knowledge may no longer be accessible to the organization, as prior research on employee turnover reports (e.g., Brandon & Hollingshead, 2004; Carley, 1992; Rao & Argote, 2006).

The effects of forgetting may be attenuated by the organization’s efforts to store knowledge. In the context of new product development (e.g., Salvato, 2009), total quality management
practices (Benner & Tushman, 2002), production improvement (Arthur & Huntley, 2005), service management (Nembhard & Tucker, 2011), and strategic decisions (e.g., Chesley & Wenger, 1999), prior work shows that accessibility is affected by efforts to retain and codify prior experience (e.g., Williams, 2007). Codifying reduces forgetting by improving accessibility and enabling the replication of best practices, for instance, when copying prior practices exactly (Szulanski & Jensen, 2006). However, although organizations may find accessibility improved by storing prior experience, such effects may be nonlinear and depend on several other contingencies, e.g., environmental volatility (Romme, Zollo, & Berends, 2010).

**Inaccessibility due to a lack of experiential knowledge transfer.** Accessibility is also affected by a firm’s experiential knowledge transfer capacity, i.e., the extent to which the organizational context supports the transfer of prior experience and the resulting knowledge for subsequent use (e.g., Szulanski, 1996; Winter & Szulanski, 2001). Relevant experiential knowledge may reside in another business division or at a different organizational level and may therefore not be easily accessible when needed. Parts of the organization may be “internally isolated”, which causes their experiential knowledge to effectively be inaccessible (e.g., Monteiro, Arvidsson, & Birkinshaw, 2008). Functioning knowledge networks are needed in multiunit firms to effectively share and transfer experience (Carree, Lokshin, & Belderbos, 2011; Hansen, 2002).

Both formal and informal transfer mechanisms shape a firm’s experiential knowledge transfer capacity and, thus, the accessibility of experiential knowledge. First, to facilitate the transfer of prior experience, organizations use formal mechanisms. For instance, organizations set up dedicated alliance or merger and acquisition (M&A) functions to increase the accessibility of experiential knowledge across the firm (Kale et al., 2002; Trichterborn, Zu Knyphausen-Aufseß, & Schweizer, 2016). Second, experiential knowledge transfer is affected by the degree to which people in the organization “know who knows what”, i.e., the firm’s transactive memory system
Such a collective system operates as an informal transfer mechanism that allows the identification of the locus of experiential knowledge and thereby facilitates its transfer (Argote, 2013; Argote et al., 2021). Prior works reveal that systems that contain information about other people’s skills are performance-enhancing (Carree et al., 2011; Moreland & Myaskovsky, 2000). Consequently, such systems may reduce the downsides that varying loci of learning may impose on the replication of prior tasks.

Taken together, we argue that the accessibility of experiential knowledge is critical for any subsequent performance effects. For organizational experience to positively affect the performance of the focal task, the resulting experiential knowledge must be accessible, requiring that experiential knowledge has been captured from experience, successfully stored in the organization, and transferred to the locus of subsequent task completion. Without these preconditions, organizational experience may even yield negative performance effects. We formalize this moderating effect of the mechanisms relating to the accessibility of experiential knowledge with the following summary proposition:

Summary proposition 3: The accessibility of experiential knowledge positively moderates the effect of organizational experience on the subsequent performance in the focal task such that for accessible experiential knowledge, the positive effect of experience on performance in the focal task is strengthened, whereas for inaccessible experience, it is weakened and may become negative.

Adoption of Experiential Knowledge and the Performance Effects of Organizational Experience

As a third key contingency to the organizational experience–performance relationship emerging from our review, we introduce the notion of the adoption of experiential knowledge, with
the related studies building on several theories, including the behavioral theory of the firm, the attention-based view, and organizational politics (for details, see Table 1). Adoption is defined as the degree to which organizations use experiential knowledge in a focal task. If an organization fails to adopt applicable and accessible knowledge gained from prior experience in the focal task, performance benefits cannot materialize. Additionally, if an organization recognizes that its own experiential knowledge does not suit the current task, then it can avoid negative performance effects by not adopting it. The mechanisms we reviewed regarding applicability and accessibility assume that those involved in the focal task utilize prior experience. In contrast, research relating to the adoption of experiential knowledge points to instances where the organization may not adopt insights from prior experience in the focal task. Not adopting applicable and accessible experience hurts performance (Haleblian & Finkelstein, 1999), but it is well established that organizations often fail to act on their knowledge gained from experience (e.g., Pfeffer & Sutton, 1999). Additionally, organizations may intentionally choose to rely on other types of knowledge, especially if they recognize that their experiential knowledge is limited or inapplicable.

We distinguish three main categories of reasons why mechanisms related to adoption may modify the experience–performance relationship. First, other sources of knowledge (e.g., through vicarious learning from industry peers or outside experts) may be used instead of experiential knowledge, especially when it is recognized that one’s own experiential knowledge is limited or not applicable (e.g., Lawrence, 2020; Posen & Chen, 2013; Tuschke, Sanders, & Hernandez, 2014). Second, the adoption of experiential knowledge may be affected by psychological processes related to information processing and decision making leading to situations where knowledge from prior experience is consciously or unconsciously neglected (Dane & Pratt, 2007; Eggers & Kaplan, 2013; Gavetti, Levinthal, & Ocasio, 2007). Third, the adoption of experiential knowledge may be influenced by sociopolitical structures and the processes that affect information processing and
Nonadoption due to reliance on other sources of knowledge. Organizations may choose not to rely on their experiential knowledge and instead rely on other types of knowledge, in particular, external knowledge gained through vicarious learning, if the experiential knowledge is limited or considered ill-suited for the focal task (e.g., Lawrence, 2020; Posen & Chen, 2013; Tuschke et al., 2014). As an example, a company experienced in small, bolt-on acquisitions may learn from others that engaging in a large acquisition is different. Vicarious learning may stir organizations to ignore (not adopt) their own experiential knowledge when making the first large acquisition (e.g., hiring an external advisor experienced in postmerger integration (PMI) processes of large acquisitions instead of running the PMI process without external help as the organization might have done in some small acquisitions). The choice to rely on external knowledge instead of one’s own experiential knowledge may be intentional, i.e., the result of complex cognitive processes, or unintentional, i.e., an outcome based on imitation, which is primed on observing and mimicking industry peers (Brauer, Mammen, & Luger, 2017; Kim & Miner, 2007). Prior work reveals that companies imitate others through network ties (e.g., Carpenter & Westphal, 2001), board interlocks (e.g., Haunschild, 1993), and external advisors (Kim, Halebian, & Finkelstein, 2011).

Nonadoption due to psychological reasons. Organizations may fail to adopt relevant and available experiential knowledge due to the heuristics that decision makers employ in their decision making. Given bounded rationality and the general limits to individuals’ information processing (Simon, 1947), decision makers often apply decision heuristics that explicitly focus on a subset of information when making complex decisions under time pressure (Gigerenzer & Selten, 1999) and may therefore ignore at least some of the organizational experience (e.g., Denrell, Liu, & Mens, 2017; Eggers & Kaplan, 2013). For instance, Melone (1994) found in an experiment that when
deciding on a potential acquisition, executives with a financial background or role tended to focus on financial aspects and were more likely to ignore prior experience and other strategic determinants of the attractiveness of the proposed acquisition in their reasoning.

Although decision heuristics help economize on scarce cognitive resources in decision making (Bingham, Eisenhardt, & Furr, 2007) and, in many circumstances, operate even better than more extensive information processing (Ehrig & Schmidt, 2021; Gigerenzer, Todd, & Group, 1999), they may introduce a variety of biases. For instance, one heuristic that prior research has identified is the availability heuristic (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973) that argues that decision makers are prone to base their judgment of the probability of an outcome based on the ease with which relevant instances of this outcome come to mind. In the organizational context, for instance, a CEO who has recently experienced a foreign market entry failure is likely to overweigh this outcome during subsequent decision making, irrespective of the overall organizational experience with similar tasks or decisions. Such effects may be particularly strong for narcissistic CEOs, as research on international diversification decisions suggests (Zhu & Chen, 2015). Research on heuristics and cognitive biases also points to the broader role of decision-maker intuition (Calabretta, Gemser, & Wijnberg, 2017; Elbanna, 2006; Khatri & Ng, 2000). Frequently, decision makers may ignore a solution based on organizational experience because of their intuition or “gut feeling” (Calabretta et al., 2017; Elbanna, 2006; Khatri & Ng, 2000). For instance, in a potential international acquisition, although experience from prior acquisitions could suggest significant efficiency synergies, the intuition of executives might warn about potential integration challenges due to political or cultural reasons that a rational analysis of experience might not surface.

Decision makers may similarly fail to adopt relevant experiential knowledge when this knowledge is emotionally charged or when general emotional states affect information processing (Healey & Hodgkinson, 2017). For instance, a decision maker who has experienced a project
failure that left strong negative emotions may disregard the positive experiences of the organization with other similar projects. Recent studies also show that emotions affect decision making in the context of innovation (Vuori & Huy, 2016) and acquisitions (Vuori, Vuori, & Huy, 2018). More generally, research on emotions in decision making suggests that emotional states such as arousal affect information processing and decision making, such as by reducing decision makers’ ability to engage in the deliberate processing of information (George & Dane, 2016; Hodgkinson & Sadler-Smith, 2018).

Finally, the adoption of experiential knowledge may also be shaped by broader psychological states such as a decision maker’s self-image. Research on self-enhancement suggests that decision makers may fail to process performance feedback regarding task completion when such information threatens the decision makers’ self-image and the situation can be reframed (Audia & Brion, 2007; Jordan & Audia, 2012).

**Nonadoption due to sociopolitical reasons.** Sociopolitical structures and processes comprise a third category that affects the adoption of experiential knowledge in organizations. In many instances, group-level decision making tends to reduce cognitive biases stemming from individual-level decision making, for instance, by forcing alternative perspectives to be carefully considered (Nadolska & Barkema, 2014). However, groups differ in their ability to process information, and group structures and dynamics can lead to biases of their own that may lead to the nonadoption of experiential knowledge. One well-known example of reduced learning from experience at the organizational level (Puranam & Maciejovsky, 2017) is the so-called hidden-profiles paradigm (Stasser & Titus, 1985, 2003), where information may be available in partially overlapping chunks to a group of decision makers, but group members rarely share their private nonoverlapping information sufficiently for the optimal solution (i.e., the hidden profile) to emerge because they tend to focus on discussing the shared overlapping information at the expense of the
nonoverlapping private information (e.g., Lu, Yuan, & McLeod, 2012). The reasons for this incomplete use of collective information include the greater prevalence of shared information (Stasser & Titus, 1985), the desire for consensus and social validation (Wittenbaum, Hubbell, & Zuckerman, 1999), the eagerness to stick to one’s initial beliefs, and forgetting (Lightle, Kagel, & Arkes, 2009; Puranam & Maciejovsky, 2017).

More broadly, there are important limits to group-level information processing, and examples abound in which groups do not rely on the experience of their members due to lack of trust (Buyl, Boone, Hendriks, & Matthyssens, 2011; Zheng, 2012) or group structures such as faultlines (e.g., Lau & Murnighan, 2005). For instance, in a well-known case concerning the adoption of relevant experience, Polaroid had an internal team experienced in digital imaging in the 1990s (Tripsas & Gavetti, 2000). However, this team was not integrated well with the firm's senior management, and as a result, senior management failed to adopt the relevant experience, which led to the eventual collapse of the company.

In group decision making, relevant and available experience may also be ignored due to power and politics (Blackler & McDonald, 2000; Carter, 1971; Contu & Willmott, 2003; Coopey & Burgoyne, 2000; Cyert & March, 1963; Ganz, 2018; Haas, 2006; Lawrence et al., 2005; Newman, 1985; Pettigrew, 1973; Pfeffer & Sutton, 1999). Given that organizations consist of groups of individuals with goals and preferences that are rarely fully complementary (Puranam & Maciejovsky, 2017), all decision making is a compromise of incompatible goals (Cyert & March, 1963; March & Simon, 1958). As a result, organizational decision making can be understood as a political process of bargaining to reconcile the conflicting goals among members of the organization (Ganz, 2018; March, 1962). In this context, organizational decisions reflect the experience, goals, and preferences of the dominant coalition and are unlikely to reflect the interests or experience of all members of the firm (Argote & Greve, 2007; Cyert & March, 1963; Zhang &
Greve, 2019). In this process, through the framing of insights, experience becomes a tool used to drive one’s agenda and discredit experiential knowledge that may not be in the interests of the dominant coalition (Kaplan, 2008).

Concerning the adoption of experiential knowledge, this implies that knowledge may be intentionally ignored by members of the dominant coalition when not aligned with their goals and preferences. For instance, case work in this domain has found that external information tends to be valued more highly than internal experience, especially if the external information originates from a high-status source (Menon & Pfeffer, 2003). Similarly, evidence suggests that advice from external consultants may be valued more than the same advice from internal experts (Kim et al., 2011). Although internal experience and knowledge are often more readily available (Cyert & March, 1963; Tversky & Kahneman, 1973), their flaws are generally more scrutinized; therefore, external knowledge may be more valued, especially if the personal incentives of the decision maker favor it (Menon & Pfeffer, 2003).

Organizational power can allow a CEO or other executives to drive their agenda through engaging in organizational politics, withholding knowledge and information, and ignoring alternative views and experiences, which results in negative performance effects (Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988). Withholding information in group decision making, whether intentionally or unintentionally, as discussed in the previous section, is particularly common when the incentives are not aligned among decision makers (Maciejovsky & Budescu, 2013; Wittenbaum, Hollingshead, & Botero, 2004). Recent empirical research has demonstrated that withholding knowledge and information (Toma & Butera, 2009) and even distorting it (Steinel, Utz, & Koning, 2010) to support one’s own preferred solution is commonplace in group decision making, which suggests that coalition building affects organizational decision making (e.g., Zhang & Greve, 2019).
Taken together, our review suggests that adoption is a necessary condition for benefits from experience to emerge. We formalize the moderating effects of the mechanisms relating to the adoption of experiential knowledge with the following summary proposition:

*Summary proposition 4:* The adoption of experiential knowledge positively moderates the effect of organizational experience on the subsequent performance in the focal task such that adopted experiential knowledge strengthens the relationship between experience and performance in the focal task, while nonadoption makes it insignificant.

**Joint Effects of Applicability, Accessibility, and Adoption of Experiential Knowledge**

Our review suggests that the mechanisms that may modify the effects of organizational experience on subsequent performance in a focal task can be grouped along the three dimensions of the (1) applicability, (2) accessibility, and (3) adoption of experiential knowledge in the focal task. In the four rightmost columns in Appendix 1, we summarized the dimensions that were considered in each of the corpus articles. Although the mechanisms within each of these dimensions have significant implications for the theorizing and empirical research in our field, important considerations are still missing from a full contingency model of experience effects. Enabled by the review of the fragmented literature that helps us understand the literature in new ways, we next discuss how the mechanisms summarized in the three dimensions can interact in nontrivial ways. We then identify three scenarios in which experience might not lead to positive performance effects or could even lead to negative performance effects, and we finally develop three summary propositions that formalize how the joint effects can mitigate these scenarios.

Importantly, the consideration of these joint effects shows how our integration of prior research can help explain the inconsistent findings regarding the effects of experience on performance, i.e., how experience can have different performance effects depending on the combination of these three dimensions. For this purpose, in the next three subsections, we start our
analysis with three explanations of why experience may fail to yield positive effects or even yield negative performance effects and then explicate how a consideration of the joint effects of the three dimensions may lead to different performance outcomes.

**Mitigating the misapplication of experiential knowledge.** Accessing and adopting experiential knowledge that is inapplicable causes a negative experience transfer effect. This happens when the experiential knowledge that the organization has access to and adopts in the focal task originates from another type of activity that is not fully generalizable to the focal task. This may cause negative performance effects, as noted in Summary Proposition 2.

However, although a focus on the applicability of prior experiential knowledge alone would suggest that prior inapplicable experiential knowledge always leads to negative performance effects, as assumed in prior work, the effects of accessibility and adoption shed important light on why inapplicable experiential knowledge does not always lead to negative performance effects. There are two main reasons. First, intentionally deciding to not adopt inapplicable experiential knowledge can prevent negative performance effects. For instance, if decision makers in the focal firm realize that the company has experience with small acquisitions but not large acquisitions, they may decide not to adopt their own experiential knowledge in a major merger and alternatively choose to rely on external advice to execute the deal. Although prior research on negative transfer generally assumed and tested the effects of the accumulation of different types of experience on performance in the focal task, recent research has started to consider the potential for these types of contingencies. For instance, Kim et al. (2011) found that advisor experience is more beneficial to negate acquirers paying high acquisition premiums. Similarly, by studying the negative transfer effect of small acquisition experience on performance in large acquisitions, Ellis et al. (2011) found that this effect was mitigated when large parts of the target’s management were retained, and they argued that management retention reduced the adoption of the (inapplicable) routines of the
acquiring firm. Haleblian and Finkelstein (1999) also noted the possibility of an organization treating each acquisition as unique and thereby avoiding inappropriate generalizations from past experience. Similarly, recent work points to mechanisms such as attentional triangulation (Rerup, 2009) that may help draw attention to inapplicable experiential knowledge. Alternatively, organizations can implement processes, such as debiasing and other higher-order routines to counter the adoption of inapplicable experiential knowledge (e.g., Baer, Heiligtag, & Samandari, 2017; Heimeriks et al., 2012; Lovallo & Sibony, 2010). Reflecting this emerging understanding in the context of post-acquisition integration, Heimeriks et al. (2012) noted that “fruitful integration is, in essence, as much about knowing when not to rely on prior experience as it is about generalizing that experience from one deal to the next.”

Second, by making inapplicable experiential knowledge inaccessible, organizations can prevent negative performance effects. For instance, recognizing that alliance experience is often not applicable to acquisitions (Zollo & Reuer, 2010), keeping the alliance and acquisition groups separate can help companies develop specialized knowledge for each type of activity and avoid mis applications of experiential knowledge (Heimeriks & Schijven, 2015). Additionally, when implementing a new organizational practice, organizations can hire new employees without prior experience to reduce the negative influence of organizational experience with old, inapplicable practices (Lawrence, 2018).

Taken together, the negative performance effect of inapplicable experiential knowledge is not automatic. Instead, it is mitigated when the inapplicable experiential knowledge is not accessible or not adopted. Therefore, we formalize the following summary proposition:

**Summary proposition 5:** The negative performance effect of inapplicable experiential knowledge is mitigated when the experiential knowledge is not accessible or not adopted.

**Mitigating assumed experiential knowledge.** Adoption without sufficient accessibility
(e.g., the imitation of prior actions without sufficient access to experiential knowledge to understand the causal mechanism that underlies the outcome) can lead to superstitious learning (Zollo, 2009). An organization and its decision makers may perceive themselves to have experience and, therefore, may have confidence in their capability to perform the focal task when, in reality, the appropriate experiential knowledge is not accessible to the focal decision maker at the time of the decision. Levitt and March (1988) define superstitious learning as a situation in which “the subjective experience of learning is compelling, but the connections between actions and outcomes are misspecified” (Levitt & March, 1988: 325). As discussed above in Summary Proposition 3, such instances of superstitious learning due to inaccessible experiential knowledge may arise when, e.g., people have moved positions, the experiential knowledge has not been codified or has been inappropriately codified, the knowledge has been forgotten, or the experience has taken place elsewhere in the organization and the organization lacks transfer mechanisms. As a result, the organization perceives itself to have learned from experience when in reality the experiential knowledge is not available.

However, although a focus on the accessibility of experiential knowledge alone would suggest that inaccessible experiential knowledge leads to superstitious learning and negative performance, considering the adoption dimension helps to understand why inaccessible experiential knowledge does not lead to negative performance effects in all instances. When experiential knowledge is not accessible, problems may be prevented when the lack of access is recognized and this assumed experiential knowledge is not adopted. For instance, an organization that realizes it no longer has access to applicable experiential knowledge, e.g., due to key persons having left the firm, can hire advisors or appoint executives with the appropriate experience instead of proceeding under the assumption that it has sufficient experiential knowledge from previously completed similar tasks. In this instance, intentional nonadoption may help to mitigate the potential
negative effects of experience.

Taken together, our contingency model suggests that the negative performance effect of inaccessible experiential knowledge is mitigated by not acting on assumed but inaccessible experiential knowledge. Therefore, we formalize the following summary proposition:

*Summary proposition 6: The negative performance effect of assumed experiential knowledge is mitigated when the experiential knowledge is not adopted.*

**Mitigating ignorance of experiential knowledge.** Applicability and/or accessibility without adoption likely leads to no performance benefits from experience since applicable and/or accessible experiential knowledge is not used in the focal decision or task. As a result, the organization repeats the focal task without relying on experiential knowledge. As discussed above, the lack of adoption of applicable and/or accessible experiential knowledge in the focal task could be either intentional or unintentional. Prior research has shown that both mechanisms, i.e., unintentional nonadoption due to a lack of attention or cognitive biases (Desai, 2010; Tripsas & Gavetti, 2000) and intentional nonadoption, for instance, when a CEO withholds information, may cause negative performance effects (Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988).

Although applicability and accessibility cannot change the effect of nonadoption per se, the likelihood of this scenario occurring can be reduced by developing decision processes that ensure the consideration of applicable and accessible experiential knowledge (e.g., Liu, Vlaev, Fang, Denrell, & Chater, 2017). For instance, an organization may require that in all acquisitions, a corporate M&A function is involved in all decisions or that as part of making investments, an explicit consideration of experience-based rules needs to be demonstrated as part of the investment documentation. To avoid nonadoption, organizations may further engender the use of corporate-wide experiential knowledge through committees that distill the experience when deciding on strategic issues (e.g., Davis & Eisenhardt, 2011). Organizations can also improve their transparency
and develop corporate governance mechanisms (e.g., board vigilance, see, for instance, Kroll et al., 2008) that can help prevent the withholding of information and the nonadoption of experiential knowledge (e.g., Haunschild & Beckman, 1998; McDonald et al., 2008; Tuschke et al., 2014). As this scenario concerns potential positive experience effects not being realized as a consequence of intentional or unintentional ignorance, the mitigation can be generalized as improvements in the organizational decision processes to prevent the unintentional or intentional ignorance of applicable and accessible experiential knowledge. Therefore, we formalize the following summary proposition:

*Summary proposition 7: The negative performance effect of ignored experiential knowledge is prevented by developing decision processes that negate unintentional or intentional ignorance of applicable and accessible experiential knowledge.*

As a further step toward a contingency model, Table 2 summarizes our propositions by considering the three contingencies as dichotomous and presenting the contingency model in a truth table-like format with eight potential combinations and performance effect scenarios. Like any model, this table simplifies reality by illustrating all dimensions as dichotomous to facilitate easier interpretation, while in reality, all the dimensions are likely to be continuaums. From a practical perspective, this table emphasizes the three identified downside scenarios, identifies the ways in which they can be mitigated, and adds to the literature that has examined the dimensions of experience in isolation and omitted the joint effects.

***Insert Table 2 about here***

**FUTURE RESEARCH ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL EXPERIENCE-PERFORMANCE RELATIONSHIP**

In this section, we draw on our integrative contingency framework to present an agenda for future research that revolves around three themes. First, we suggest that the contingency effects of
the applicability, accessibility, and adoption of experiential knowledge on performance in a focal task each offer promising avenues for future research. Second, we believe that studying the joint effects among the different dimensions opens important novel theoretical insights into the experience–performance relationship at the nexus of previously largely disconnected theories. Third, we identify important methodological implications for future empirical research. These future research avenues and potential research questions are summarized in Table 3 and further elaborated on in the following paragraphs.

*** Insert Table 3 about here***

Deepening Research on Applicability, Accessibility, and Adoption

Applicability. As the first boundary condition, we identified applicability, which pertains to the effects of similarity in task and context on the organizational experience–performance relationship. Although earlier work illustrates the impact of task similarity (e.g., Ellis et al., 2011; Zollo & Reuer, 2010) and context similarity (e.g., Liu & Maula, 2016; Perkins, 2014) and studies these dimensions across operational (e.g., Huckman, Staats, & Upton, 2009) and strategic tasks (e.g., Halebian & Finkelstein, 1999), important questions on this contingency remain unaddressed.

First, there is still a limited understanding of how applicability matters across different tasks and contexts. Examining the conditions in which (in)applicable experience transfers across different tasks and contexts is a promising domain for future work. For instance, how and to what degree does experience transfer across tasks such as acquisitions and restructuring? What dimensions of task and context similarity do different situations share, and how does this affect the transfer of experience and its effect on performance? Do applicability concerns also exist in more repetitive tasks, or is this issue mostly delimited to strategic tasks? Second, there is limited insight into the firm characteristics that affect the contingency effect on the organizational experience–performance relationship. Although some work highlights the role of matrix structures on the effect
of alliance experience (Sytch, Wohlgezogen, & Zajac, 2018), little is known about how such firm context variables affect transfer across different tasks. For instance, how does the organizational structure affect how applicability matters to experience transfer? How do other dimensions of context, e.g., the speed of decision making (Hawk, Reuer, & Garofolo, 2021), matter to whether and how experience transfers across different tasks? Also, changes in the environmental context of the firms could affect the applicability of experiential knowledge and should be further studied. For instance, when and how can technological discontinuities and other external changes render experiential knowledge inapplicable?

**Accessibility.** Whether due to forgetting or a lack of transfer, different studies identify how accessibility matters to the organizational experience–performance relationship. Our review underscores that codification and transactive memory systems help retain the content and loci of experiential knowledge, but important questions remain unaddressed, as prior research often links experience directly to behavioral or performance implications. First, future work should explore how the different mechanisms to codify, retain, and transfer experiential knowledge compare and relate to performance. Especially since organizations have different means to store and retain experiential knowledge, examining when and how these retention systems implicate performance could yield additional fruitful insights. For instance, how do different types of retention systems complement or substitute for one another? Under what conditions do codification tools and transactive memory systems affect performance? Second, accessibility may be impacted by various context variables. Therefore, research should address how context matters to the role that accessibility plays in the main relationship. For instance, do retention systems, such as codification and transactive memory systems, matter to similar degrees across different operational and strategic tasks? To what degree do companies differ in optimizing retention systems, and how does this matter? How do different company or industry characteristics influence retention system
effects on the organizational experience–performance relationship?

Adoption. The largest gaps in our understanding regarding the effects of the three contingencies relate to adoption. Prior theorizing on organizational learning has primarily focused on searching, creating, retaining, and transferring knowledge (e.g., Argote, 2013; Argote et al., 2021), thereby at least implicitly assuming knowledge utilization. However, our review suggests that this assumption all too often is not warranted because experiential knowledge may be either consciously or unconsciously ignored; therefore, the benefits of experience may never materialize. Additionally, companies may avoid adopting inapplicable experiential knowledge. For a positive experience effect to occur, experiential knowledge must be applicable, accessible, and adopted by the decision maker in the focal task. Specifically, from our discussion of applicability, accessibility, and adoption, an insight emerges that the applicability and accessibility of experiential knowledge create only the potential for performance effects of organizational experience, whereas adoption is required for performance benefits to realize. This distinction between potential and realized performance benefits is important because applicable and accessible experiential knowledge is frequently not adopted in decision making, a key notion largely ignored by prior literature. We therefore call for research on the adoption of experiential knowledge (e.g., the role of other types of knowledge, cognitive biases, intuition, and organizational politics in strategic decision making) as an important but largely overlooked contingency that affects whether experience positively influences subsequent task performance.

Specifically, recent advances in the research on organizational learning call for more attention to the adoption of experiential knowledge, with new evidence emerging of cognitive biases and organizational politics that affect the adoption of organizational experience in decision making (e.g., Ganz, 2018; Liu et al., 2017; Zhang & Greve, 2019). Research on experiential learning and knowledge has called attention to better understanding interactions with other types
of learning, such as vicarious learning from others (Argote et al., 2021). Prior research on the interactions of different types of learning has often simply considered their substitutive versus complementary roles and frequently focused on the role of experiential knowledge (e.g., absorptive capacity (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990)) facilitating the learning from others (Argote et al., 2021). Based on our review, however, we call attention to developing a more nuanced understanding of when and how organizations with limited or inapplicable experiential knowledge can leverage external learning to mitigate negative transfer problems. Additionally, especially in strategic decisions, intuition is often combined with rational decision making (Calabretta et al., 2017; Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992; Elbanna, 2006; Elbanna & Child, 2007; Khatri & Ng, 2000) and may engender decisions that deviate from those resulting from a direct application of prior experiential knowledge. Decision makers also employ heuristics, which affect their interpretation and adoption of experiential knowledge, but which also evolve based on accumulated experience (Bingham & Eisenhardt, 2011; Bingham, Howell, & Ott, 2019). Therefore, considering the adoption of experiential knowledge in a focal task as part of the contingency model completes the understanding of the performance effects of organizational experience, helps reconcile prior inconsistent findings, and thereby contributes to a more refined theoretical understanding of organizational learning.

There are several additional promising topics that we believe warrant study on the notion of adoption. First, we anticipate that novel insights can be gained from exploring how different types of individual characteristics affect the role that adoption plays in the organizational experience–performance relationship. For instance, how do the functional background and behavioral characteristics of leaders influence the adoption of experiential knowledge? How does mindful versus less mindful behavior (e.g., Levinthal & Rerup, 2006) influence the adoption of experiential knowledge and its effects on performance? Second, equally promising work may
emerge from studying how the context affects whether experiential knowledge is adopted in the execution of subsequent tasks and can affect their performance. Although some insights exist on how context matters (e.g., Bidwell, 2012), the impact of the context on the main relationship is widely overlooked in prior work. For instance, how do processes and structures shape the adoption of experiential knowledge? When and how do other sources of knowledge (e.g., vicarious learning) affect the adoption of experiential knowledge? Under what conditions do political processes interfere with the adoption of experiential knowledge? How does the structure of decision-making boards, such as boards of directors or top management teams, implicate the impact of the adoption of experiential knowledge and its performance consequences? What role does organizational attention play in the adoption of experiential knowledge?

Examining the joint Effects of Applicability, Accessibility, and Adoption

Given the joint effects we highlighted in the previous section, the consideration of applicability, accessibility, or adoption alone is not sufficient—these three dimensions need to be considered simultaneously to fully understand their effects. By implicitly assuming away some of the key mechanisms that underlie the experience–performance relationship and their boundary conditions, most previous research on organizational experience lacks sufficient consideration of such joint effects, that is, it is underspecified. Given that prior research has frequently employed underspecified models, many existing findings on the organizational experience–performance relationship may need to be revisited as they may not replicate with a more complete set of contingencies in the model.

Several questions would seem to be of particular relevance. First, our research suggests that all three contingencies need to be present for positive performance effects to occur. However, we have little understanding of their relative importance, making it interesting for future research to
investigate their relative importance and how it is likely to vary with situational, environmental, and organizational factors. Future research should therefore systematically investigate the circumstances under which the effects of each of the three contingencies are particularly pronounced. Future work may also consider how organizations can learn to manage these contingencies.

Our review also suggests the possibility that the negative performance effects implied by one dimension (e.g., inapplicable experiential knowledge) are mitigated by another dimension (nonadoption); however, we have limited understanding of the causal mechanisms driving such interactions, and future research should build and test theory how mitigation takes place. Studying if and when such compensatory effects occur strikes us as a promising research avenue that warrants future studies. We believe this to be a major opportunity for future work to move toward a more granular and comprehensive theory of organizational learning.

Much of the research on applicability, accessibility, and adoption has been quantitative, focusing on the variance effect. A thorough understanding of the processes of how applicability, accessibility, and adoption occur in organizations is therefore largely absent. Important questions have so far been left unanswered. For instance, what are the processes through which accessibility and applicability strengthen one another? What are the processes that lead to the mitigation of negative effects of inapplicability or inaccessibility? Are these processes open to managerial control? We call for such research to enrich the variance perspective with a complementary process perspective.

Another important open area for future work relates to processes available to management to exert agency over the interactions between applicability, accessibility, and adoption of organizational experience. Recent work seems to imply that agency plays a major in organizational experience (Meyer-Doyle, Lee, & Helfat, 2019) and the repetition of experience (Anand et al.,
Yet what is unknown is how variables at different levels interplay to influence the interactions across the applicability, accessibility, and adoption of experience. Therefore, studying how different individual, group, and firm-level factors (Crossan, Lane, & White, 1999) jointly shape the three boundary condition effects appears to be a very promising area for future work. For instance, what managerial processes can interfere in the selection of applicable vicarious experience and similarly in the non-adoption of inapplicable experience? How do processes at multiple levels interact to instigate optimal performance benefits to organizational experience? And equally interesting, what mechanisms interfere to avoid negative benefits to organization experience due to applicability, accessibility, and adoption being poorly monitored?

Finally, the positive and negative interaction between applicability, accessibility, and adoption in shaping the organizational experience–performance effect is likely to be contingent upon organizational context variables. Future research could examine whether the interactions of applicability, accessibility, and adoption will be more pronounced in large, diverse organizations compared to smaller and younger ventures, in which CEOs may be more knowledgeable of all organizational experience and more involved in all organizational decision-making. In addition, future work could examine to what extent organizational structure can shape the interactions among applicability, accessibility, and adoption. For instance, future research could examine whether the mitigation of the negative effects of inapplicable knowledge in centralized organizations (where non-adoption may be reduced) differs from decentralized organizations (where it may be increased). As these examples suggest, the effects of context on the joint effects of applicability, accessibility, and adoption strike us as a particularly rich area for future research.

**Methodological Considerations in Future Research**

Our contingency model also has important implications for methodological considerations in future empirical work. In contrast to prior studies, by identifying the multiple boundary
conditions of experience that must be considered simultaneously when operationalizing the construct, our model demonstrates several key methodological issues pertinent to future work. First, our model underscores the need for increased precision in construct operationalization in research that examines the performance effects of experience. Greater care is needed to define the scope of experience to control whether the experiential knowledge derived from it is applicable to the focal task, including the task type and the context (e.g., the geographic or institutional context) in which the experience has been gained (see, e.g., Perkins, 2014). Similarly, the accessibility of experiential knowledge when performing the focal task should be considered. Issues such as the depreciation of the cumulative stock of experiential knowledge are important to consider in defining the experience variables, as previously noted by Argote et al. (1990) but ignored in many studies on the relationship between organizational experience and performance until recently (Barkema & Schijven, 2008b). Finally, the model explicates that researchers cannot assume that applicable and accessible experiential knowledge is actually adopted; i.e., the consideration and control of attention and incentives might add precision to analyses of the performance effects of experience.

Second, beyond considering the operationalization of experience, the measurement and operationalization of ‘performance’ are paramount in securing consistency and comparable results. Several methodological considerations are key. To begin, we suggest choosing dependent measures that are preferably task-specific rather than firm-level. As prior work acknowledges that task performance does not always correlate with firm performance (Zollo & Meier, 2008), it is important that the outcome measure is congruent with and consequential to the context of the experience measures. Securing such a congruence between measures offers several benefits. It not only helps avoid measurement error by providing a consistent theory-measurement link, but it also fosters replicability and cumulative theory building. Moreover, we recommend the choice of the
dependent variable to be theory motivated. With the abundance of different types of firm performance measures available (e.g., Barney, 2020; Miller et al., 2013; Wibbens & Siggelkow, 2020), the choice of the dependent variable affects the interpretation of findings and contributions. In other words, to significantly advance theory, it is important that findings are presented in light of the specific dependent variable chosen. For instance, instead of interpreting cumulative abnormal returns as acquisition performance, future work would benefit from interpreting specific outcomes considering how these reflect underlying behavioral assumptions of investor reactions to acquisition announcements (Schijven & Hitt, 2012).

Third, to develop a process perspective of how applicability, accessibility, and adoption interact, research may have to move beyond the dominant quantitative research paradigm and move towards carefully conducted longitudinal qualitative research (e.g., Kouamé & Langley, 2018; Langley, 1999, 2007) or mixed methods designs (e.g., Molina-Azorin, Bergh, Corley, & David J. Ketchen, 2017). Given that only a limited number of such qualitative (e.g., Bingham et al., 2007; Davis & Eisenhardt, 2011) or mixed methods studies (e.g., Heimeriks et al., 2012) have been published so far, additional work is needed to yield a more refined processual understanding by relying on single, multi-case, or mixed designs. Such designs have the potential to provide insights that complement current research to shed new light on the mechanisms underlying the insights drawn from quantitative studies in the management literature.

Taken together, these arguments imply that future empirical research on the effects of experience on a wide variety of organizational tasks needs to complement the use of secondary data that has dominated the research in recent years, with carefully crafted surveys or in-depth qualitative research that can better clarify the organizational mechanisms that shape the effects of experience and help to investigate the processes that underlie whether and how experience is applicable, accessible, and adopted in subsequent task completion. Most importantly, our
contingency model suggests that the consideration of applicability, accessibility, or adoption alone is not sufficient—these three dimensions need to be considered simultaneously given their joint effects. Considering these important boundary conditions (Makadok et al., 2018), together with improving causal identification (Anand, Mulotte, & Ren, 2016; Shaver, 2020), is important for a better understanding of the causal effects of organizational experience on performance.

CONCLUSION

Organizational experience is a central construct in explaining performance in a large number of organizational activities. While organizational experience was thought to be performance enhancing in early research, recent research has recognized an increasing number of circumstances in which the performance effects of organizational experience are less clear or even negative. Furthermore, despite the importance of the construct, the literature on the organizational experience–performance relationship has remained fragmented, and we lack a thorough understanding of the conditions under which experience translates into performance benefits for organizations. In this paper, we conducted a systematic review, synthesized previously unconnected streams of literature on the organizational experience–performance relationship, and developed an integrative contingency framework on how the applicability, accessibility, and adoption of experiential knowledge jointly moderate the commonly assumed positive effect of organizational experience on performance in a focal task. Organizing the research in a contingency framework allows us to identify important gaps in our understanding of these boundary conditions, offers novel insights into their interplay, and more broadly clarifies the theoretical boundaries of the organizational experience–performance relationship. This integrative framework also allows us

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3 For instance, many existing studies on the performance effects of experience fail to consider the endogeneity of experience and separate it from ability. If companies self-select to do things at which they are good, then this self-selection will result in increased experience and performance, which could inflate the observed performance effect of experience, unless the research design can disentangle the effects of ability and experience (Anand et al., 2016; Shaver, 2020).
to reconcile the prior mixed findings on the effects of experience by systematically identifying the conditions under which organizational experience is performance-enhancing versus performance-reducing, thereby offering a new way to interpret and advance the fragmented literature. We hope that the review and integration we have provided will spawn a new wave of research on this important construct and its performance implications.
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Thorndike, E. L. & Woodworth, R. S. 1901a. The influence of improvement in one mental function upon the efficiency of other functions. Iii. Functions involving attention, observation and discrimination. Psychological Review, 8: 553-564.


Thorndike, E. L. & Woodworth, R. S. 1901c. The influence of improvement in one mental function upon the efficiency of other functions. (i). Psychological Review, 8: 247-261.


FIGURE 1
Evolution of Focal Tasks in the Organizational Experience-Performance Relationship Literature

Number of articles

- Strategic actions
- Other
- Operational tasks

1936-1994: 5 Strategic, 2 Other, 1 Operational, Total 8
1995-1999: 8 Strategic, 4 Other, 1 Operational, Total 13
2000-2004: 9 Strategic, 4 Other, 1 Operational, Total 14
2005-2009: 11 Strategic, 11 Other, 1 Operational, Total 23
2010-2014: 16 Strategic, 4 Other, 5 Operational, Total 25
2015-2021: 26 Strategic, 17 Other, 5 Operational, Total 48
FIGURE 2
Organizational Experience-Performance Relationship Literature Visualized Based on Shared References

Note: The figure is a citation network visualization of the corpus articles based on bibliometric coupling analysis that clusters close to one another articles that have shared references. The resulting clusters are also highlighted through different colors.
FIGURE 3
Evolution of the Findings on the Organizational Experience-Performance Relationship

[Bar chart showing the evolution of findings from 1936-1994 to 2015-2021, with categories for Not supported, Inconclusive, and Supported.]
FIGURE 4
A Framework of the Organizational Experience-Performance Relationship

Organizational experience → Experiential knowledge → Performance in focal activity

Applicability  Accessibility  Adoption
**TABLE 1:**
Theoretical Mechanisms Underlying the Relationship between Organizational Experience and Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central theoretical perspective(s)</th>
<th>Key concepts</th>
<th>Main mechanisms</th>
<th>Submechanisms</th>
<th>Illustrative empirical studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning curve</td>
<td>Learning by doing</td>
<td>Experiential knowledge</td>
<td>- Learning curve estimation (Dosi et al., 2017; Wright, 1936)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer theory</td>
<td>Transfer effects</td>
<td>Applicability</td>
<td>- Activity size difference (Ellis et al., 2011)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Activity mode difference (Zollo &amp; Reuer, 2010)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Inapplicable because of task dissimilarity: Experience not applicable to the focal task</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Inapplicable because of context dissimilarity: Experience not applicable to the focal context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational learning theory</td>
<td>Frequency, causal ambiguity, articulation, codification, knowledge transfer, transactive memory systems</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>- Insufficient deliberate learning from experience (Zollo &amp; Singh, 2004)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Forgetting due to temporal separation (Argote et al., 1990; Darr et al., 1995; Meschi &amp; Métails, 2013; Sampson, 2005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Forgetting due to individuals moving (Rao &amp; Argote, 2006)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Lack of experience transfer (Hansen, 2002)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral theory of the firm, vicarious learning, attention-based view, cognition, intuition, coalitions and organizational politics, hidden profiles</td>
<td>Vicarious learning, power, politics, coalitions, cognitive biases, attention, hidden profiles</td>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>- Nonadoption due to reliance on external knowledge (e.g., Beauer et al., 2017; Lawrence, 2020; Posen &amp; Chen, 2013; Tuschke et al., 2014), Nonadoption due to reliance on other sources of knowledge: Vicarious learning, imitation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Nonadoption due to psychological reasons: Cognitive biases, intuition, lack of attention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Nonadoption due to sociopolitical reasons: Power, politics, organizational coalitions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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TABLE 2: Joint Effects of Applicability, Accessibility, and Adoption on the Organizational Experience-Performance Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Applicability</th>
<th>Accessibility</th>
<th>Adoption</th>
<th>Experience effect</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Maximal realized experience effect. Applicable experience is accessible and adopted in the focal task, resulting in a maximal realized performance effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Misapplied experiential knowledge. Organization applied experiential knowledge that is not applicable to the focal task, resulting in negative transfer effects. Mitigation strategies:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Deciding to not adopt the inapplicable experiential knowledge (Scenario 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Making inapplicable experiential knowledge inaccessible (Scenario 4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Mitigated misapplied experiential knowledge. Deciding to not adopt the inapplicable experiential knowledge, for instance, by ensuring that decision processes prevent the misapplication of experiential knowledge and by utilizing outside experiential knowledge such as consultants when missing own applicable experiential knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Mitigated misapplied experiential knowledge. Making inapplicable experiential knowledge inaccessible, for instance, by separating inapplicable tasks in the organizational structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Assumed experiential knowledge. Organization perceives experiential knowledge and applies it, with the actor(s) not having sufficient access to it to understand the causal logic between the experience and the outcome, which results in superstitious learning. Mitigation strategy:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Deciding to not adopt the inaccessible experience (Scenario 6).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Mitigated assumed experiential knowledge. Deciding to not adopt the inaccessible experiential knowledge, for instance, by ensuring that decision processes prevent proceeding without accessible experiential knowledge and by utilizing outside experiential knowledge such as consultants when own experience is not accessible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Ignored experiential knowledge. Potential (but not realized) performance effect. Without adoption, the organization performs the focal task as if the experiential knowledge did not exist in the first place. Mitigation strategy:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Developing decision processes that ensure the consideration of applicable and accessible experiential knowledge (Scenario 1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Inexistent experience effect. Focal task performed independent of any potential experiential knowledge with no experience effects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## TABLE 3:
### Summary of Findings and Future Research Directions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Area</th>
<th>Key Finding</th>
<th>Research Implications</th>
<th>Potential Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applicability</strong></td>
<td>The similarity of the task previously experienced to the current task and the similarity of the context within which experience was accumulated are important contingencies for the performance effects of experiential knowledge</td>
<td>Research on the effects of organizational experience on performance needs to take the applicability of the experiential knowledge seriously rather than assume that all experiential knowledge is equally applicable</td>
<td>• Does applicability matter similarly in all tasks (e.g., operational and strategic)? Additionally, to what degree does experience transfer across different strategic tasks, e.g., acquisitions to restructuring? • What dimensions of task and context similarity do different situations share, and how does this affect the transfer of experiential knowledge and its effect on performance? • Do applicability concerns exist in more repetitive tasks? • How do the organizational structure and other organizational context dimensions affect the applicability issues (e.g., vulnerability to negative transfer)? • When and how can technological discontinuities and other external changes render experiential knowledge inapplicable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accessibility</strong></td>
<td>Whether or not the experiential knowledge is accessible when engaging in a task at hand is an important contingency for the performance effects of experiential knowledge</td>
<td>Research on the effects of experience needs to take the storage of experiential knowledge seriously rather than trying to directly go from experience to behavioral or performance implications</td>
<td>• Do different forms of accessibility exert different performance effects? • Under what conditions do different types of knowledge retention systems complement or substitute for one another? For instance, how is the effect of accessible codification tools affected by transactive memory systems? • How does context influence the role that accessibility plays in the organizational experience–performance relationship?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Adoption</strong></td>
<td>To realize the performance effects, experiential knowledge needs to be adopted and combined with the decision makers’ knowledge. This is an often overlooked contingency affecting whether experience positively influences subsequent task performance</td>
<td>Researchers cannot assume that applicable and accessible experience is being adopted in a focal task; i.e., the consideration and control of the factors shaping adoption (e.g., attention or incentives) might add precision to analyses of the performance effects of experience</td>
<td>• What factors alter the adoption of applicable and accessible experiential knowledge in a focal task and its effect on task performance? • What individual characteristics of decision makers shape the adoption of experiential knowledge? • When and how do other sources of knowledge (e.g., vicarious learning) affect the adoption of experiential knowledge? • In what situations do political processes interfere with the adoption of experiential knowledge? • What structures and processes facilitate the adoption of experiential knowledge? • What environmental factors enhance or limit adoption?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Joint effects</strong></td>
<td>The performance effects of organizational experience rest on the applicability, accessibility, and adoption of the experiential knowledge. This results in important joint effects</td>
<td>Given the joint effects, the consideration of applicability, accessibility, or adoption alone is not sufficient—these three dimensions need to be considered simultaneously to fully understand their effects</td>
<td>• What is the relative importance of applicability, accessibility and adoption and under which circumstances are some of them particularly emphasized? • How are the potential negative performance effects implied by one dimension (e.g., inapplicable experiential knowledge) mitigated by another dimension (nonadoption)? • What are the processes through which applicability, accessibility, and adoption interact? • How can organizational leaders influence the interactions between applicability, accessibility, and adoption of organizational experience? • How do organizational size, structure, and other context variables influence the joint effects of applicability, accessibility, and adoption in the organizational experience–performance relationship?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodological considerations</td>
<td>Construct operationalizations: increased precision in the consideration of construct operationalization in research examining the performance effects of experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prior research on the organizational experience-relationship has frequently omitted one or more of the elements or applied weak measures of one or more of the constructs</td>
<td>Greater care is needed to define the scope of experience that is applicable to the focal task, including the task type and the context in which the experience has been gained</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issues related to the accessibility of experiential knowledge, such as the depreciation of the cumulative stock of experience, are important to consider in defining experience variables</td>
<td>New research designs are needed to better understand the contingencies; for instance, adoption is not easy to study with externally collected data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Careful operationalization of performance is important for consistent and comparable results</td>
<td>Qualitative longitudinal research designs may be needed to better understand the processes through which experience influence performance</td>
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- How can we better measure the applicability of the experiential knowledge to the focal task?
- How can we measure the accessibility of experiential knowledge, such as the depreciation of the cumulative stock of experience when defining experience variables?
- How can we measure adoption of experiential knowledge in focal tasks. How could novel research designs leveraging internal organizational data help us make progress in research concerning the adoption of experiential knowledge?
- How to operationalize performance in different studies to ensure consistent and comparable results?
- When and how can qualitative longitudinal research designs facilitate better understanding of the process perspective of how experience influences performance and how applicability, accessibility and adoption interact in the process?
Appendix 1:

Empirical Studies on the Organizational Experience-Performance Relationship

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wright (1936)</td>
<td>Aircraft production in US</td>
<td>Production cost per unit</td>
<td>Cumulative number of units produced</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○ Not applicable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alchian (1963)</td>
<td>Airframe production in US</td>
<td>Production cost per unit</td>
<td>Cumulative number of units produced</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○ Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pfefler and Davis-Blake (1986)</td>
<td>NBA (US) Basketball</td>
<td>Percentage of games won</td>
<td>NBA and ABA experience dummy</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○ Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argote et al. (1990)</td>
<td>Ship building in US</td>
<td>Production speed</td>
<td>Cumulative production</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○ Experience was found to depreciate rapidly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argote and Epple (1990)</td>
<td>Manufacturing in US</td>
<td>Direct labor cost</td>
<td>Cumulative number of units produced</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○ Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuart and Abetti (1990)</td>
<td>New technology ventures in US</td>
<td>Multi-item subjective performance measure of entrepreneurial venture</td>
<td>Cumulative number of previous new ventures</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○ Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epple et al. (1991)</td>
<td>Truck production in US</td>
<td>Labor hours per unit</td>
<td>Cumulative number of units produced</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○ Limitations on intraplant knowledge transfer negatively affected the effect of experience on performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box, Watts, and Hisrich (1994)</td>
<td>Manufacturing entrepreneurs in Texas</td>
<td>Employment growth</td>
<td>Years of entrepreneurial experience</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○ Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruton, Oviatt, and White (1994)</td>
<td>Acquisitions of distressed firms in US</td>
<td>Subjective strategic and financial success measure</td>
<td>Number of acquisitions in previous 4 years</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○ Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooper et al. (1994)</td>
<td>New ventures in US</td>
<td>Likelihood of failure, marginal survival, or growth</td>
<td>Management experience and similar business experience dummies</td>
<td>● ● ○ ○ Similar business experience related to survival and growth, whereas general management experience nonsignificant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McGee and Dowling (1994)</td>
<td>New technical ventures in US</td>
<td>Average sales growth</td>
<td>Years of management’s experience in similar industry, years of experience in technical positions</td>
<td>● ● ○ ○ Technical and industry experience support growth when combined with collaborative relationships that make it more applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennings, Barkema, and Douma (1994)</td>
<td>Expansion projects on Dutch nonfinancial firms</td>
<td>Probability of survival</td>
<td>Multiyear moving average of prior expansion longevity</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○ Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darr et al. (1995)</td>
<td>Production of pizza in US</td>
<td>Production cost per unit</td>
<td>Cumulative number of units produced</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○ Experience was forgotten quickly and transferred within stores owned by the same franchisee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McGee, Dowling, and Megginson (1995)</td>
<td>New technical ventures in US</td>
<td>Average sales growth</td>
<td>Years of management’s marketing, R&amp;D, manufacturing experience</td>
<td>● ● ○ ○ Management experience significant when combined with cooperative relationships that make it applicable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roth (1995)</td>
<td>Midsize international US ventures</td>
<td>Average income growth</td>
<td>CEO functional experience and international experience</td>
<td>● ● ○ ○ Marketing (international) experience hinders (enhances) performance when international interdependence is high given the lower (higher) applicability of the experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barkema, Bell, and Pennings (1996)</td>
<td>Foreign direct investments by public Dutch firms</td>
<td>Probability of survival</td>
<td>Number of expansions since 1966</td>
<td>○ ● ○ ○ Positive effect of host-country cultural region experience but insignificant effect of international acquisition experience on outcome measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makino and Delios (1996)</td>
<td>Asian overseas joint ventures by Japanese firms</td>
<td>Dummy variable for joint venture performance</td>
<td>Cumulative number of years local JV is operational</td>
<td>● ● ○ ○ Host country experience reduces, while joint venture experience increases performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simonin (1997)</td>
<td>Alliances of U.S. public and private firms</td>
<td>ROI and ROA</td>
<td>Seven-point scale variable for different types of alliances</td>
<td>○ ● ● ○ Collaboration experience is conducive to performance only if lessons learned are internalized</td>
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<tr>
<td>Halebian and Finkelstein (1999)</td>
<td>Acquisitions by US firms</td>
<td>Acquisition performance</td>
<td>Cumulative number of acquisitions</td>
<td>Relatedness of experience is positively related, and second acquisitions are negatively related to performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luo (1999)</td>
<td>Foreign-invested enterprises in China</td>
<td>Subjective measure based on ROE, sales growth, competitive position, and asset efficiency</td>
<td>Years of operating in China</td>
<td>The greater the cultural distance of the focal country to China is, the smaller the effect of experience because experience in China does not relate to existing knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luo and Peng (1999)</td>
<td>International expansion of MNEs in China</td>
<td>Subsidiary performance</td>
<td>Number of years operating and mean of four product/market experience areas</td>
<td>Both intensity and diversity of international experience affect the financial and market performance of MNEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beal and Yasai-Ardakani (2000)</td>
<td>Small US manufacturing firms</td>
<td>Firm performance</td>
<td>Number of years of CEO in five functional experience</td>
<td>Industry membership affects firm performance, and although there is no direct experience effect, CEO functional experience affects performance when matched with generic strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benkard (2000)</td>
<td>Aircraft production</td>
<td>Labor hours per unit in US</td>
<td>Cumulative number of units produced</td>
<td>Organizational forgetting negatively affects the effect of experience on performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily, Certo, and Dalton (2000)</td>
<td>Performance of Fortune 500 firms</td>
<td>ROI, ROA, market-to-book ratio</td>
<td>Index of number of international assignments and length of international assignments of CEO</td>
<td>Degree of internationalization moderates the relationship between CEO international experience and corporate performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klepper and Simons (2000)</td>
<td>Innovation and survival in US television receiver industry</td>
<td>Product and process innovations, market share, exit</td>
<td>Years of experience in radio receivers</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant and Schendel (2000)</td>
<td>International JVs of US firms</td>
<td>Cumulative abnormal return to JV announcement</td>
<td>Frequency of participation in JVs</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carpenter, Sanders, and Gregersen (2001)</td>
<td>International S&amp;P 500 companies</td>
<td>Firm performance (i.e., ROA and stock market returns)</td>
<td>CEO and TMT international assignment experience in calendar years</td>
<td>The effect of CEO international assignment experience on performance is strengthened when bundled with TMT experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delios and Beamish (2001)</td>
<td>Foreign expansion by public Japanese nonfinancial firms</td>
<td>Foreign subsidiary survival and profitability</td>
<td>Host country and mode experience</td>
<td>Host country and mode experience increase subsidiary survival ratios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pisano, Bohmer, and Edmondson (2001)</td>
<td>Cardiac surgery at 16 US hospitals</td>
<td>Procedure time reduction</td>
<td>Cumulative volume of prior procedure performed</td>
<td>Experience provides the opportunity to learn, but factors, such as team structures, incentives, use of analytic tools for capturing and analyzing information, may moderate relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schefczyk and Gerpott (2001)</td>
<td>Performance of VC funded firms in Germany</td>
<td>IRR, perceptual measure of return compared to business plan and to industry return, failure</td>
<td>Functional, industry, and management/director experience of managers</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berman, Down, and Hill (2002)</td>
<td>US NBA games</td>
<td>Number of regular season wins; total regular season team assists</td>
<td>Years of experience each player has on team, weighted by minutes played</td>
<td>Experience leads to the formation of tacit knowledge, but too high levels of experience lead to knowledge ossification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadogan, Diamantopoulos, and Siguaw (2002)</td>
<td>Export performance of US firms</td>
<td>Perceptual measure of expert performance</td>
<td>Years of exporting, number of countries exporting to</td>
<td>Breadth of experience supports performance, whereas length of experience is either negative or insignificant</td>
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<td>Carpenter (2002)</td>
<td>Performance of medium to large</td>
<td>ROA</td>
<td>TMT members’ years of experience in international assignments</td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finkelstein and Haleblian</td>
<td>Acquisitions by large US firms</td>
<td>Acquisition performance</td>
<td>First vs. second acquisitions</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hayward (2002)</td>
<td>Acquisitions by US firms</td>
<td>Acquisition performance</td>
<td>Count of acquisitions</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ingram and Simons (2002)</td>
<td>Kibbutz groups in Israel</td>
<td>Profitability of kibbutz</td>
<td>Cumulative labor units used by kibbutz in its history; cumulative labor units of all kibbutzim in federation; cumulative labor units of all kibbutzim outside federation</td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zollo, Reuer, and Singh</td>
<td>Biotechnology alliances of US firms</td>
<td>Perceptual measure of performance of the alliance, based on knowledge accumulation, opportunity creation, objective achievement</td>
<td>Number of prior collaborative agreements; number of collaborations in same technology area; number of agreements with the same partner</td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child and Yan (2003)</td>
<td>International joint ventures</td>
<td>Perceptual measures of objective achievement and JV performance</td>
<td>International JV and investment experience dummies for JV partners</td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td>West and Iansiti (2003)</td>
<td>R&amp;D in US semiconductor industry</td>
<td>Time-adjusted transistor density</td>
<td>Absence of Project experience; research experience dummy based on individual experience in semiconductor research</td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ahearn, Ferris, Hochwarter,</td>
<td>Performance of casework teams in</td>
<td>Permanency rate of foster children</td>
<td>Number of years team member was employed by child welfare agencies; number of supervisory years of team leader</td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hatch and Dyer (2004)</td>
<td>Semiconductor fabrication in US</td>
<td>ROA change</td>
<td>Dummy if prior alliance experience with the target</td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td>Porrini (2004)</td>
<td>Acquisitions in the US</td>
<td>Change in ROA</td>
<td>Number of prior acquisitions</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zollo and Singh (2004)</td>
<td>US bank mergers</td>
<td>Cost per unit produced</td>
<td>Cumulative number of units produced since gain sharing program announced; number of months since gain sharing program announced</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dimov and Shepherd (2005)</td>
<td>Venture capital investments in US</td>
<td>VC investment outcomes (IPOs and bankruptcies)</td>
<td>Industry experience of VC firm partners in different related industries (share of partners having each type)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Considered applicability of different types of experience to focal task. Findings concerning experience variables largely unexpected (insignificant or negative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandi and Grimaldi (2005)</td>
<td>Success of new ventures in Italy</td>
<td>Business idea articulation</td>
<td>Prior experience of working together</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haas and Hansen (2005)</td>
<td>Sales proposals for consulting work in the US</td>
<td>Contracts won</td>
<td>Perceptual measure of team experience</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Codified experiential knowledge reduces likelihood of winning the contract; experienced teams may face opportunity cost in searching and utilizing codified knowledge; adoption of experiential knowledge can bias proposal to be less novel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoang and Rothaermel (2005)</td>
<td>Alliances of large pharmaceutical companies worldwide</td>
<td>Alliance performance</td>
<td>Count of alliances</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Alliance experience with biotechnology partners had a positive effect, with pharmaceutical firms a nonsignificant effect, and with prior partners a negative effect on performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kor and Mahoney (2005)</td>
<td>Marketing and R&amp;D investments in technology-based entrepreneurial US firms</td>
<td>Tobin’s q</td>
<td>Number of years top managers are tenured at particular firm</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Experience of top managers positively moderates on economic returns from R&amp;D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis et al. (2005)</td>
<td>Electronics assembly tasks as a longitudinal group experiment</td>
<td>Number of assembly operations done correctly</td>
<td>Transactive memory system</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Transactive memory system supports learning transfer and generalizability (applicability) of knowledge to other tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reagans et al. (2005)</td>
<td>Joint replacement procedures in a US teaching hospital</td>
<td>Procedure completion time</td>
<td>Cumulative number of procedures by individual, cumulative number of procedures by organization, cumulative experience working together</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Different types of experience all affect overall learning rate. An increase in cumulative individual experience increases individual proficiency. An increase in cumulative organizational experience provides individuals with the opportunity to benefit from knowledge accumulated by others. An increase in cumulative experience working together promotes more effective coordination and teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampson (2005)</td>
<td>Alliances by firms in multiple countries</td>
<td>Firm innovative performance</td>
<td>Logarithm of the cumulative number of alliances</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>The benefits of experience depreciate over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haas (2006)</td>
<td>Financial assistance projects in international development agency</td>
<td>Expert assessment of project quality</td>
<td>Years of work experience at organization averaged per team, other work experience average per team</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Knowledge gathering increases the marginal effect of organizational experience, whereas other work experience reduces it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lapré and Tskiriktsis (2006)</td>
<td>Dissatisfaction in airline services in US</td>
<td>Customer complaints</td>
<td>Cumulative number of flights</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Customer dissatisfaction has initially a positive relationship with dissatisfaction and in the long run a U-shaped relationship with operating experience because requirements grow over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu and Beamish (2006)</td>
<td>Internationalization by Japanese small and medium-sized enterprises</td>
<td>Joint venture performance measured by ‘loss’, ‘break-even’, or ‘gain’</td>
<td>Number of years partner operates in particular host country</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Partner host country experience does not affect profitability but increases exist rates of ventures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macher and Boerner (2006)</td>
<td>US and EU drug development projects</td>
<td>Time needed to complete drug development project</td>
<td>Discounted sum of projects</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Greater specific experience improves development performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller and Eden (2006)</td>
<td>Internationalization and density of activities of US subsidiaries of foreign commercial banks</td>
<td>Foreign subsidiary performance in ROA</td>
<td>Natural log of number of years foreign bank entered local U.S. market</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Market experience is particularly valuable when applied in high local density settings, as these are more likely to be homogeneous, making experience less likely to be essential to performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taylor and Greve (2006)</td>
<td>Individual and team innovations in comic</td>
<td>Collector market value of a comic</td>
<td>Genre experience as the count of all genres creators on a team had worked in; team experience as number of times team had worked together</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Team experience increases average performance; genre and team experience increase performance variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aidis and van Praag (2007)</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship in transition economy</td>
<td>Firm financial performance</td>
<td>Dummy variable for international entrepreneurial experience</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Partial support for younger and higher educated entrepreneurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barkema and Drogendijk (2007)</td>
<td>Internationalization by Dutch public firms into Central and Eastern Europe</td>
<td>Managerial perception of subsidiary performance on sales level, market share, profitability, reputation, and overall performance</td>
<td>Log of total number of foreign subsidiaries</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Partial support for firms with above-average international experience. Similar cultural bloc and local contractual experience positively affect FDI performance; same country experience positively is less beneficial when the firm also has local contractual experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batjargal (2007)</td>
<td>Internet ventures in China</td>
<td>Binary variable for venture survival</td>
<td>Internet industry experience as number of years of working in internet industry; startup experience as binary of founding firms before; Western experience as number of years studying and working in Western developed countries</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Startup experience increases survival; having structural holes and Western experience positively influences firm survival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baum and Dahlin (2007)</td>
<td>US railroads freight accidents</td>
<td>Accident cost per operating mile</td>
<td>Operating miles and number of accidents per million miles</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Operating experience, not accident experience, reduces accident costs; others’ accident experiences reduce accident cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayus and Agarwal (2007)</td>
<td>Product technology strategies in US PC</td>
<td>Firm survival</td>
<td>Preentry experience measured as binary variable with 0 if a startup and 1 if firm is listed as diversifying entrant</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Preentry experience is beneficial for survival in case of early industry entry but diminishes for later entrants. Technical experience by itself and when combined with market experience also increases survival chances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bingham et al. (2007)</td>
<td>Internationalization of entrepreneurial ventures from Singapore, Helsinki, and San Jose</td>
<td>Log of average annual revenue; qualitative and Likert scale scoring</td>
<td>Experience as count of total country entries; time between experiences as count of quarter between entries; similarity of experience by cultural distance</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Cumulative and paced experience do not affect entry performance; however, similar experience and (lower and higher order) heuristics do positively influence country experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaur and Lu (2007)</td>
<td>FDI decision by Japanese foreign subsidiaries</td>
<td>Subsidiary performance coded as binary survival variable</td>
<td>Host country experience as natural log of total number of subsidiary years in each host country</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Host country experience negatively affects subsidiary survival, but effect is weaker for larger ownership positions by parent firms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heimeriks and Duysters (2007)</td>
<td>Alliances by 151 cross-industry firms worldwide</td>
<td>Alliance performance Five-point Likert scale scoring</td>
<td>Alliance experience</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Alliance experience has a positive effect on alliance performance; alliance capability, which includes accessibility- and adoption-related items, mediates the experience-performance relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hsu (2007)</td>
<td>Funding decisions for 149 MIT E-Lab in US</td>
<td>Venture capital funding measured as natural log of premoney valuation and funding via direct VC tie</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial team founding experience measured as count of startups founded</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Founding experience increases likelihood of funding via direct VC tie as well as premoney valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li and Zhang (2007)</td>
<td>New ventures in Chinese high-tech</td>
<td>New venture performance Four-item political networking and five-item functional experience measure</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>The political networking-performance relationship is not moderated by ownership or dysfunctional competition; the functional experience-performance relationship is positively moderated by state-owned ventures and low dysfunctional competition</td>
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<td>Weterings and Koster (2007)</td>
<td>Innovation activities by Dutch software firms</td>
<td>Innovation performance measured as new products or services brought to market in past 3 years</td>
<td>Sector and entrepreneurial experience</td>
<td>○ ● ○ ○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Entrepreneurial experience increases innovation performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barkema and Schijven (2008a)</td>
<td>Acquisitions by 25 Dutch multinationals</td>
<td>Firm performance measured by ROA</td>
<td>Acquisition and restructuring experience measured as count of total activity set</td>
<td>○ ● ○ ○</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Acquisition experience moderates the effect of the number of related acquisitions on firm performance; restructuring experience moderates the effects of restructuring on firm performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huckman and Zinner (2008)</td>
<td>Investigative sites in biopharmaceutical clinical trials in US</td>
<td>Operational performance of an investigative site (% of enrollment goal achieved and enrollment per study coordinator)</td>
<td>Cumulative number of trials completed by the investigator, study coordinator, and the site as a whole.</td>
<td>○ ● ○ ○</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Study coordinator experience had a positive effect on percent of goals achieved; but investigator and organizational experience were not significant. None of them affected enrollment per study coordinator FTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kroll et al. (2008)</td>
<td>Acquisitions of publicly listed firms in US</td>
<td>CARs to acquisition announcements</td>
<td>CEO’s experience, outside directors’ acquisition experience</td>
<td>○ ● ○ ○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Target industry experience increases outside board member experience effect on announcement returns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laamanen and Keil (2008)</td>
<td>Acquisitions among U.S. public firms</td>
<td>CARs to acquisition announcements</td>
<td>Count of number of acquisitions prior to window of observation</td>
<td>○ ○ ○ ○</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Acquisition experience positively moderates effects of acquisition rate and variability on performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lavie and Miller (2008)</td>
<td>Alliance portfolios of US-based software firms from 1990 to 2001</td>
<td>Firm financial performance (ROA)</td>
<td>Cumulative number of alliances of the firm with foreign partners until the preceding year.</td>
<td>○ ● ○ ○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Insignificant main effect but positive moderation effect with alliance portfolio internationalization. Specific kind of experience (foreign partnering experience) relevant for a specific task (international alliance portfolio management)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDonald et al. (2008)</td>
<td>Acquisitions by US firms</td>
<td>CARs to acquisition announcements</td>
<td>Count of outside director experience</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Outside director acquisition experience is particularly performance-enhancing when the firm’s board is independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salomon and Martin (2008)</td>
<td>Technology implementation in global semiconductor industry</td>
<td>Time-to-build a new plant in months from announcement to full capacity date</td>
<td>Count of previously built production facilities for domestic and foreign activity</td>
<td>○ ● ○ ○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Firm domestic experience reduces time-to-build subsequent facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dokko, Wilk, and Rothbard (2009)</td>
<td>Call centers of major US property and insurance firms</td>
<td>Annual performance review ratings</td>
<td>Prior related work experience</td>
<td>● ● ● ○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Task-related knowledge and skill mediate between prior work experience and performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gulati et al. (2009)</td>
<td>Alliances by US firms</td>
<td>CARs to alliance announcements</td>
<td>Cumulative number of joint ventures and the cumulative number of JVs with a specific partner</td>
<td>○ ● ○ ○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Only partner-specific experience increases CARs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hmieleski and Baron (2009)</td>
<td>New US ventures</td>
<td>Venture performance measured in sales and employment growth</td>
<td>The number of previous ventures founded</td>
<td>○ ○ ○ ●</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Negative main effect of experience, but positive interaction effect with entrepreneurial optimism. Experience had greater positive effect for less optimistic entrepreneurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huckman et al. (2009)</td>
<td>Indian software services</td>
<td>Operational team performance</td>
<td>Average role experience in years; sum of the number of times pairing of team members work together</td>
<td>○ ● ● ○</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Conventional experience measure is not, but role experience within team is positively associated with team performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kim, Kim, and Miner (2009)</td>
<td>US commercial banking</td>
<td>Unobserved hazard rate of failure of banks</td>
<td>Five-time measure for success and recovery experience</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Success and recovery experience individually and jointly increase useful learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiplilov (2009)</td>
<td>M&amp;A advising in UK investment banks</td>
<td>Market share of investment banks</td>
<td>Number of deals scoped per sector</td>
<td>● ● ● ○</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Wide-scope experience enhances performance in open networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yang, Narayanan, and Zahra (2009)</td>
<td>Corporate venture capital investments by US public firms</td>
<td>Binary variable for financial performance 1 if portfolio company went IPO; innovation performance by new patents</td>
<td>Number of CVC investments prior to focal investment; ratio for experience diversity across different industries and stages</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>CVC experience increases innovation performance; industry diversity enhances financial returns; acquisitive experience, which is experience borrowed from others, improves CVC outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zollo (2009)</td>
<td>Acquisitions in US commercial banking industry</td>
<td>CARs to acquisition announcements</td>
<td>Count of acquisitions completed prior to focal deal</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Acquisition experience improves performance; codification and experience heterogeneity reduces the negative effect of past success on performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elfenbein, Hamilton, and Zenger (2010)</td>
<td>Self-employment decisions by US entrepreneurs</td>
<td>Binary variable for being self-employed; performance as a log of annualized pay, business incorporation, and the number of direct reports</td>
<td>Count of commercial and R&amp;D activities by individual</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Prior experience in small firms improves performance in early stages of entrepreneurship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoang and Rothaermel (2010)</td>
<td>Biotech R&amp;D projects by large pharmaceutical companies worldwide</td>
<td>Hazard rate of drug approval; Project termination</td>
<td>Lagged cumulative number of R&amp;D projects; % of licensing and manufacturing agreements within biotech field</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>External exploration reduces and external exploitation experience increases R&amp;D project outcomes; internal exploration experience increases the last main effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu, Wright, Filatotev, Dai, and Lu (2010)</td>
<td>Firms’ innovation performance in high-tech SMEs in China</td>
<td>Number of patents owned by firms</td>
<td>A dummy variable for entrepreneurs’ work experience in an MNE</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Specific type of experience (MNE experience) facilitates innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madsen and Desai (2010)</td>
<td>Satellite launches worldwide</td>
<td>Failed satellite launches</td>
<td>Counts of focal firm’s and others’ success, failure experiences</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Organizations learn more effectively from successes than from failures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schilke and Goerzen (2010)</td>
<td>German firms’ business units’ R&amp;D alliance portfolios</td>
<td>Alliance portfolio performance, as performance satisfaction and perceived goal fulfillment</td>
<td>Log of the number of prior agreements of their business units with R&amp;D alliance partners within the past 5 years</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Alliance capability mediates the positive effect of alliance experience on performance; direct effect of experience insignificant when alliance capability included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zarutskie (2010)</td>
<td>First time venture capital funds in US</td>
<td>The fraction of a fund’s portfolio companies that exit either via an IPO or an acquisition</td>
<td>Experience of VC partners in startups, VC, finance, and engineering</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Task-specific experience (i.e., VC or startup experience) positively related to VC exit performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zollo and Reuer (2010)</td>
<td>Acquisitions and alliances in US commercial banking industry</td>
<td>Postacquisition performance</td>
<td>Counts of acquisitions and alliances</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Alliance experience is not transferable to acquisitions unless the deals are structured very similarly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balasubraman nian (2011)</td>
<td>New plant ventures by US manufacturing firms</td>
<td>Plant-level productivity as the logged difference between plant output and expenditure on materials</td>
<td>Log of prior cumulative output of the new plant venture</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Ability to learn from experience increases outcome variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bercovitz and Feldman (2011)</td>
<td>Team invention disclosures at two prominent US universities</td>
<td>Disclosure as binary variable for inventions yielding one or more patents; licensing outcomes as dummy for licenses signed</td>
<td>Count of two or more permanent team members joint disclosure</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Core team experience positively influences patent, licensing, and royalty received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buyl et al. (2011)</td>
<td>Firm performance of 33 Dutch and Belgian IT firms</td>
<td>Firm financial performance as return on sales (ROS)</td>
<td>CEO’s experience with other TMT members</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>CEO shared experience with TMT members helps leverage diverse knowledge of TMT members by improved accessibility and trust that encourages its adoption</td>
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<td>Combs, Ketchen, Ireland, and Webb (2011)</td>
<td>All publicly listed US restaurant firms in 1994</td>
<td>Firm performance as ROA and earnings per share (EPS)</td>
<td>Average of the number of years that top managers had been affiliated with their firm</td>
<td>● ● ○ ○</td>
<td>Top management team had a positive experience on firm performance, with such experience being particularly applicable to firms using franchising.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conti and Gaule (2011)</td>
<td>European and US technology transfer offices (TTOs)</td>
<td>Log of licenses and license income</td>
<td>Staff experience measured as the age of the TTO; director and staff experience in industry (min. 5 years)</td>
<td>● ● ○ ○</td>
<td>Industry experience of TTO staff contributes to positive licensing and license outcome when controlling for the overall experience (TTO age)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ellis et al. (2011)</td>
<td>Domestic acquisitions in US and Canadian</td>
<td>Postacquisition performance as ROA change</td>
<td>The logarithm of the cumulative number of acquisitions</td>
<td>● ● ○ ○</td>
<td>Large acquisition experience has a positive effect, and small acquisition experience has a negative effect on performance in large acquisitions</td>
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<td>Nembhard and Tucker (2011)</td>
<td>Hospital neonatal intensive care unit activity in US and Canadian</td>
<td>Workgroup performance measured by patient mortality</td>
<td>Cumulative patient volume during three-year collaborative period</td>
<td>○ ● ● ○</td>
<td>Both experiential and deliberate learning positively impacts patient mortality after two years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wennberg, Wiklund, and Wright (2011)</td>
<td>University and corporate spinoffs in Swedish knowledge-intensive sectors</td>
<td>Firm sales and employee growth and survival</td>
<td>Mean number of prior years of entrepreneurial and industry experience in the entrepreneurial team</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial and industry experience valuable both for university and corporate spinoffs but even more critical for university spinoffs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acquaah (2012)</td>
<td>Firm performance in Ghana</td>
<td>Firm performance (i.e., growth in productivity, sales, profits, ROA, and ROS)</td>
<td>Average number of years of top management tenure</td>
<td>○ ● ○ ○</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chen et al. (2012)</td>
<td>Performance of de novo and diversifying entrants in new industries; US telecommunication industry</td>
<td>Annual growth of the firm’s subscribers, firm exit</td>
<td>Diversifying entrant tenure as the years in operation in the wireless telecommunications</td>
<td>○ ○ ○ ○</td>
<td>Diversifying entrants suffer a smaller penalty as they transition to incumbency, suggesting that the advantages of preentry experience grow over time</td>
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<td>Eesley and Roberts (2012)</td>
<td>New venture performance by MIT alumni entrepreneurs</td>
<td>Venture performance measured by revenues</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial experience as the number of firms founded by the entrepreneur, industry familiarity as number of prior ventures of entrepreneur in the same industry, and technical familiarity as novelty of the venture’s technology</td>
<td>● ● ○ ○</td>
<td>Experience is particularly important for ventures in a familiar context, beneficial in familiar technologies, but not useful for disruptive ventures</td>
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<td>Ganotakis and Love (2012)</td>
<td>Technology-based firms in the UK</td>
<td>Export intensity and firm performance as sales per employee</td>
<td>General, commercial, managerial, technical, and sector experience of founding teams</td>
<td>○ ● ○ ○</td>
<td>General experience increases export intensity; commercial and managerial experience facilitate productivity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gruber, MacMillan, and Thompson (2012)</td>
<td>Opportunity identification of new VC-backed firms in Germany</td>
<td>Number of market opportunities identified before entry</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial experience as number of team members that had founded a firm; management, marketing, and technological experience based on average score of team on a questionnaire</td>
<td>● ● ○ ○</td>
<td>Management and entrepreneurial experience increase the number of opportunities identified, whereas technological and marketing experience reduce it. In addition, the interactions of technological and entrepreneurial experience and marketing and entrepreneurial experience increase the number of opportunities identified.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heimeriks, Schijven, and Gates (2012)</td>
<td>Acquisitions by members of The Conference Board</td>
<td>Acquisition performance as degree to which, according to the firm’s own evaluation criteria, the integration of the focal acquisition was judged to have successfully realized synergies projected</td>
<td>Number of acquisitions; codified experience</td>
<td>○ ● ● ●</td>
<td>Acquisition experience does not impact acquisition integration performance. However, codified experience does impact performance. Risk management practices mediate between codification and performance suggesting that flexibility in adopting applicable experience in codified tools is performance enhancing</td>
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<td>Macher and Boerner (2012)</td>
<td>Drug development from US firms</td>
<td>Calendar time between IND and NDA submission with FDA</td>
<td>Therapeutic area experience based on cumulative number of successful projects plus number of successful projects at a given time discounted by age; general experience over all therapeutic areas</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○</td>
<td>Experience is an important determinant of technological development performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zheng (2012)</td>
<td>Startups in China</td>
<td>New venture performance measured as a scale of sales, employee and market share growth</td>
<td>Prior shared experience of the founding team (share of founders worked together at least a year), prior founding and working experience, and ongoing shared experience</td>
<td>○ ● ● ○</td>
<td>Total working experience and prior and ongoing shared experience have a positive effect, whereas prior founding experience is insignificant. Transaction memory system mediates the experience effects with highest performance effect with high task similarity and intrateam trust</td>
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<td>Meschi and Métais (2013)</td>
<td>Acquisitions of US firms by French acquirers</td>
<td>Acquisition failure measured as divestment</td>
<td>Number of acquisitions of the French firm; age discounted experience; time between acquisition and prior experience</td>
<td>○ ○ ● ○</td>
<td>Experience is not significantly related to acquisition failure, with the exception of medium-term experience (experience from deals 3-4 years earlier) that reduces failure. Forgetting affects acquisition experience. Organizations need time to consolidate learning from acquisitions</td>
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<td>Parker (2013)</td>
<td>Entrepreneurs in US</td>
<td>Log of average business profits per hour</td>
<td>Number of entrepreneurial spells</td>
<td>○ ● ● ○</td>
<td>Past success has a positive effect on performance, but the effect decreases to nonexistent over time: entrepreneurial knowledge is depreciated. Entrepreneurs who start a new venture in a different industry benefit similarly from their entrepreneurial experience</td>
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<td>Posen and Chen (2013)</td>
<td>US commercial bank performance</td>
<td>Reduction in cost relative to cost frontier</td>
<td>Cumulative number of quarters a bank has competed in the market</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ●</td>
<td>Experiential learning and vicarious learning are interdependent. Organizations in more knowledge-rich contexts learn more rapidly from their own experience</td>
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<td>Stan and Vermeulen (2013)</td>
<td>Performance of UK fertility clinics</td>
<td>Success rate of fertility treatments</td>
<td>Cumulative number of patients</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○</td>
<td>Dealing with more difficult cases enhances learning from experience</td>
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<td>Vashdi, Bamberger, and Erez (2013)</td>
<td>Surgical teams in a large, public health care center in Israel</td>
<td>Relative duration of operations and the number of adverse events</td>
<td>Aggregated team level experience in postaction debriefings following operations; shared experience as number of prior operations with at least two team members</td>
<td>○ ○ ● ○</td>
<td>Action team learning (postoperation debriefings) is negatively related to relative duration and negatively (positively) related to the number of adverse effects in operations of low/medium-level complexity</td>
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<td>Vural, Dahlander, and George (2013)</td>
<td>Inventions of human embryonic stem cell (hESC) research worldwide</td>
<td>Impact of patented inventions measured as cumulative forward citations to individual patents</td>
<td>Generalized experience as the cumulative number of times team members have previously worked together on other domains; team experience in patenting in the hESC domain; generalized publication experience.</td>
<td>○ ● ● ○</td>
<td>Team experience in hESC domain is positively related to impact; generalized publication experience has a negative relationship; generalized patenting experience has a positive interaction effect, with the number of divisions (i.e., generalized experience facilitates impact from interdepartmental collaboration)</td>
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<td>Wu (2013)</td>
<td>Diversification in the US medical device industry</td>
<td>New product introductions measured as FDA approvals in firm-market-year</td>
<td>Total capabilities measured as a cumulative count of a firm’s internally developed premarket approvals (PMA), with a 15% annual depreciation</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○</td>
<td>The benefits of preentry experience depreciate over time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zhang et al. (2013)</td>
<td>Chinese new ventures</td>
<td>Subjective dummy variable for past year profitability</td>
<td>Total number of new venture experience and number of full-time paid years of work</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○</td>
<td>Prior work experience moderates the effects of formal and informal business planning on new venture performance</td>
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<td>Cassar (2014)</td>
<td>New ventures in US</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial forecast performance</td>
<td>The logarithm of years of industry work experience and the logarithm of the number of prior startups founded</td>
<td>● ● ○ ○</td>
<td>Industry experience improved and entrepreneurial experience decreased entrepreneurial forecast performance</td>
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<td>Ghosh et al. (2014)</td>
<td>Inventions (US patents) in photographic imaging industry</td>
<td>Patent impact as number of forward citations 6 years postgrant</td>
<td>Number of previous patents featuring exact same patent classes as focal patent</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Recombination experience reduces chances of negative transfer in innovation projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khaanna, Jones, and Boivie (2014)</td>
<td>Board members of Fortune 1000 members</td>
<td>Firm performance as return on equity (ROE)</td>
<td>Board TMT experience measured as aggregated sum of years board members had served as top executives</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Positive direct effect of board TMT experience. Information processing demands in other board appointments was predicted to decrease but found to increase the board TMT experience effect on performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li et al. (2014)</td>
<td>Cross-border venture capital investments worldwide</td>
<td>Dummy variable for venture going public or being acquired</td>
<td>Normalized amount of foreign investment by VC in past 5 years and normalized total number of VC funded ventures</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Direct effects of experience controlled with mixed results. Venture capital broad and host country experience moderate cultural and institutional distinct effects on performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love, Roper, and Valter (2014)</td>
<td>External innovation collaboration by manufacturing plants in Ireland</td>
<td>Innovation output measured as plant sales from new products and total sales from new products</td>
<td>Experience in innovative linkages with other firms (breadth)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Prior experience (breadth) of innovation linkages facilitates the performance benefits of broad current innovation linkages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulotte (2014)</td>
<td>New product introductions worldwide</td>
<td>Performance of internal development, joint development, and licensing</td>
<td>Experience in same mode product introductions</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Experience effects are strongest for internal development that allows for understanding of cause-effect relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadolska and Barkema (2014)</td>
<td>Acquisitions by public Dutch companies</td>
<td>Dissolution rate of acquisitions</td>
<td>Top management team’s mean number of acquisitions</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Experience effects are most positive when the TMT team has diverse experience that is argued to reduce negative transfer effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neville, Orser, Riding, and Jung (2014)</td>
<td>Canadian SMEs</td>
<td>Firm performance measured as growth in revenues, profits, employment, and salary mass</td>
<td>Owners with more than 10 years of experience</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Owner experience positively related to firm performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perkins (2014)</td>
<td>Foreign investments in Brazil by firms from 18 countries</td>
<td>Survival in the target market</td>
<td>International entries</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Experience from market entries in similar countries has a positive effect, and experience in different markets has a negative effect on performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundaramurthy, Pukthuanthong, and Kor (2014)</td>
<td>IPOs of US biotechnology firms</td>
<td>IPO underpricing</td>
<td>Board members’ cumulative public company board experience is measured as the average number of public company boards on which the directors served; CEO public company board experience</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>When both the CEO and directors have public company board experience, they can better share their experience, leading to improved IPO performance. When board members are stretched thin because of other current board appointments, the IPO performance decreases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toft-Kehler et al. (2014)</td>
<td>Serial entrepreneurship in Sweden</td>
<td>Venture performance</td>
<td>Number of prior ventures founded</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Contextual dissimilarity reduces the performance effects of experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basu and Datta (2015)</td>
<td>Cross-border acquisitions by US service industry firms</td>
<td>BHAR returns</td>
<td>Number of cross-border acquisitions in same industry; number of cross-border acquisitions in the same region</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Cultural similarity increases the effect of industry experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Castellaneta and Zollo (2015)</td>
<td>Private equity investments in 77 countries</td>
<td>Internal rate of return on investments</td>
<td>Number of prior exited investments</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Attention (activity load) and experience interact with experience to reduce the negative effect of activity load on performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chung, Park, Lee, and Kim (2015)</td>
<td>Foreign subsidiaries of Korean MNEs</td>
<td>Subsidiary performance measured as ROA</td>
<td>MNE international experience measured as a sum of operating years of all subsidiaries</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>MNE international experience positively related to subsidiary performance, especially when high export orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dencker and Gruber (2015)</td>
<td>Startups in Germany</td>
<td>Start-up performance in sales revenue</td>
<td>Five-point Likert scale for managerial experience; degree of matching industry experience</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Direct effects of experience controlled with mixed results. Managerial experience positively moderates the risk-performance relationship</td>
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<td>Desai (2015)</td>
<td>Surgical procedures in Californian hospitals</td>
<td>Risk-adjusted mortality rate</td>
<td>Number of CABG surgeries, number of acute-care patient days, number of outpatient surgeries</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○</td>
<td>Cumulative experience reduces the risk-adjusted mortality rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grus and Nason (2015)</td>
<td>Family household businesses in slums in India</td>
<td>Family household business performance measured as sales</td>
<td>Family household shared business experience</td>
<td>○ ○ ○ ○</td>
<td>Family household shared business experience has a curvilinear (inverted U-shaped) relationship with business performance</td>
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<td>Heimeriks et al. (2015)</td>
<td>Alliances of high-technology firms worldwide</td>
<td>Alliance portfolio performance measured as the percentage of alliances in which the goals were realized</td>
<td>Strategic alliance experience as the number of prior strategic alliances</td>
<td>○ ○ ● ○</td>
<td>The main effect of alliance experience on performance was insignificant. However, the codification of alliance experience in guidelines for partner selection and termination phases (but not for partner management phases) had a positive effect</td>
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<td>Hmieleski, Carr, and Baron (2015)</td>
<td>Startups in the United States</td>
<td>Firm performance as revenue and employee growth</td>
<td>CEO industry experience and entrepreneurial experience</td>
<td>○ ● ○ ○</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial experience beneficial in dynamic environments but not in stable environments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liu and Ravichandra (2015)</td>
<td>Alliances by US firms</td>
<td>Abnormal stock market returns following alliance announcements</td>
<td>Number of prior alliances</td>
<td>○ ● ○ ○</td>
<td>Type-based related alliance acquisition has a positive performance effect, which is strengthened by IT enablement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tausig and Delios (2015)</td>
<td>Performance of private equity firms in emerging economies</td>
<td>Cumulative annual rate of return on investment</td>
<td>Dummy for PE firm local experience through investments in the host country</td>
<td>○ ● ○ ○</td>
<td>Local experience improves investment performance but less so when there is strong contract enforcement and developed stock and credit markets</td>
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<td>Anand et al. (2016)</td>
<td>Aircraft projects worldwide</td>
<td>Cumulative unit sales</td>
<td>Prior experience using a particular mode</td>
<td>○ ● ○ ○</td>
<td>Mode experience has a positive performance effect, which disappears when endogeneity is controlled</td>
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<td>Jacqmin and Lefebvre (2016)</td>
<td>European higher-education ministers</td>
<td>Higher education performance measured by a sumrank variable from the Shanghai ranking</td>
<td>Experience of the responsible minister in tertiary education, electoral activities, and private sector, ministers' tenure at the job</td>
<td>○ ● ○ ○</td>
<td>Experience of the responsible minister in tertiary education, in private sector, and tenure at the job had a positive effect, whereas electoral experience was insignificant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leonconi (2016)</td>
<td>Innovative behavior of European firms</td>
<td>Abandoned innovative activities dummy</td>
<td>Log of R&amp;D expenditure</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○</td>
<td>The likelihood of an abandoned R&amp;D project decreases with a higher R&amp;D expenditure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lungeanu and Zajac (2016)</td>
<td>Companies attempting IPOs in the United States</td>
<td>IPO success</td>
<td>VC success history; founder start-up VC experience</td>
<td>○ ● ○ ○</td>
<td>VC success history and founder start-up VC experience were not significantly related to IPO success. However, investment stage fit and time-horizon fit had a positive interaction effect with VC success history</td>
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<td>Mannor, Shamisie, and Conlon (2016)</td>
<td>Hollywood film producers</td>
<td>Financial performance measured as the box office revenue from the U.S. release films</td>
<td>Producer experience as a count of previous films the producers working on a focal film had cumulatively produced</td>
<td>● ○ ○ ○</td>
<td>Insignificant main effect of producer experience, but positive interaction effect with the availability of fungible resources (e.g., financial and brand resources)</td>
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<td>Zheng, Devaughn, and Zellmer-Bruhn (2016)</td>
<td>Founding of commercial banks in the United States</td>
<td>Bank performance as ROA</td>
<td>Preentry experience extensiveness as a mean shared experience prior entry in years</td>
<td>● ● ○ ○</td>
<td>Positive main effect for prior shared experience, but task environment mismatch decreases the benefits of the experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zhu and Shen (2016)</td>
<td>Outside CEO successions of Fortune 500 companies</td>
<td>CEO turnover (whether the new CEO was replaced within 3 years) and postsuccession ROA</td>
<td>CEOs prior experience as a CEO; CEOs experience of diverse boards</td>
<td>● ● ○ ○</td>
<td>The direct effect of CEO’s past experience not significant, but increase in board diversity experience compared to prior experience increased turnover and decreased ROA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brauer et al. (2017)</td>
<td>Sell-offs by European public firms</td>
<td>Average ratio firm operating income 3 years postsell-off</td>
<td>Number of general, related and different industry sell-offs</td>
<td>● ● ○ ○</td>
<td>Sell-off experience moderates the activity-performance relationship. Sell-off experience moderates the activity-performance relationship. Direct effects of experience controlled with positive results</td>
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<td>Chen, Kor, Mahoney, and Tan (2017)</td>
<td>US wireless communications industry</td>
<td>Postentry performance as the natural log of the total number of new added cell phone service subscribers</td>
<td>Average number of years in and outside focal industry; number of directors with board and managerial experience</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Postentry firm-specific board experience of directors positively impacts postentry growth at a diminishing rate plateauing approximately in 6.6 years; preentry experience has a negative effect. Intraindustry managerial experience positively affects venture growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dosi et al. (2017)</td>
<td>Manufacturing products in India</td>
<td>Production cost per unit</td>
<td>Cumulative number of units produced</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hernandez-Carrion et al. (2017)</td>
<td>Spanish small businesses</td>
<td>Economic performance as market results (market share, positioning, sales) and innovation results (new products and new ventures)</td>
<td>Number of years entrepreneurs working in industry</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>When the entrepreneur’s experience in the sector is greater, the influences of social capital resources and the institutional networks on economic performance are greater</td>
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<tr>
<td>Huang, Zhu, and Brass (2017)</td>
<td>Cross-border acquisitions in global IT industry</td>
<td>Acquisition performance as a 3-year change in Tobin’s Q</td>
<td>Acquisition experience as the number of prior acquisitions in the target’s country</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Negative direct effect of acquisition experience; However, interaction effect with acquirer-target country power distance so that if power distance value is higher in the target country, experience mitigates its negative effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humphery-Jenner, Saunter, and Suchard (2017)</td>
<td>Cross-border M&amp;A deals by acquirers from 37 countries</td>
<td>Acquisition performance as CAR and one-year EBIT change</td>
<td>Sponsoring PE backers’ prior deals in the host country</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Insignificant main effect of PE sponsor experience on acquisition performance. However, there is a positive interaction effect, with experience having benefits in weak target country information environments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Le and Kroll (2017)</td>
<td>US S&amp;P industrial and mid-cap index companies</td>
<td>Lagged total returns to shareholders</td>
<td>Number of years CEO resided and worked overseas</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>CEO international experience positively affects firm performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wu and Salomon (2017)</td>
<td>Foreign banks in US</td>
<td>Regulatory sanctions received</td>
<td>Host country experience (years) and third country experience (number of countries in which operations)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Host country experience reduced the likelihood of regulatory sanctions, but third country experience had mixed effects (helped with risk regulations but not with local regulations)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lawrence (2018)</td>
<td>Implementation of new organizational practice in the stores of a large US retail chain</td>
<td>Weekly count of errors</td>
<td>Number of weeks of experience in implementing the new practice</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Share of employees experienced in old practice is negatively related to immediate performance in the new practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mata and Alves (2018)</td>
<td>New companies in Portugal</td>
<td>Survival of new firms in years</td>
<td>Founder’s preentry local labor market experience as a logarithm of years</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Local labor market preentry experience does not have a significant effect on survival of firms founded by natives but has a positive effect for immigrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milosevic (2018)</td>
<td>VC investments in France</td>
<td>Exit performance of portfolio companies; log of the size of the next VC fund</td>
<td>Experience as a proportion of VC partners having worked as researchers, founded a company, prior VC experience, investment banking experience, public sector experience</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Research, entrepreneurial, VC and investment banking experience facilitate exits but have mixed effects with fundraising. Public experience facilitates raising institutional funds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symeonidou and Nicolaou (2018)</td>
<td>R&amp;D active startups in US</td>
<td>Startup performance as a logarithm of change in sales; sales growth relative to rivals, and profits</td>
<td>Founder startup experience as a log of prior ventures started by the founders; industry experience as a dummy if founders had experience from the same industry; work experience as a log of years.</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Founder startup-experience was positively related to performance; work and industry experience not significant. Startup experience also has a positive interaction effect, with a high focus on innovation and high investment in human capital.</td>
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<td>Eggers and Suh (2019)</td>
<td>New product development in US mutual fund companies</td>
<td>Organizational performance as net cash inflows into all funds offered</td>
<td>Count of new mutual fund domain experience</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>New domain experience moderates the positive feedback-performance relationship</td>
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<td>Boh et al. (2020)</td>
<td>Innovation performance of public Taiwanese electronics firms</td>
<td>Innovation performance as the number of patents granted in U.S. and as forward citations</td>
<td>Number of subindustries invested in by all shareholders of same investor type</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Breadth of investment experience of corporate investors and family investors positively and negatively affect innovation performance, respectively</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bruneel, Clarysse, Bobelyn, and Wright (2020)</td>
<td>VC-backed academic spin-offs in the UK</td>
<td>Exit performance (IPO or successful trade sale exit)</td>
<td>Founding team prior market experience (experience in target industry) and prior technology experience (PhD in focal technology)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Direct effects of market experience and technology experience not significant, but market experience has a positive interaction effect with technology search alliances</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cefis, Marsili, and Rigamonti (2020)</td>
<td>Domestic acquisitions in the Netherlands</td>
<td>Postacquisition innovative performance as sales from new/improved products and services</td>
<td>Acquirer’s acquisition experience as a logarithm of the total number of prior acquisitions</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Acquisition experience has a curvilinear inverted U-shaped relationship with innovative performance. Acquisition experience moderates the curvilinear inverted U-shaped relationship between target relatedness and innovative performance, enabling higher performance with lower target relatedness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eggers et al. (2020)</td>
<td>Market entry in the global 2G wireless industry</td>
<td>Operating performance</td>
<td>Dummy variables for domestic and technology experience</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Preentry technology and market experience have different effects: technological preentry experience is valuable for attracting a high-share of early adopters with intensive usage as customers, whereas preentry market experience is positively related to the overall number of customers</td>
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<td>Fahrenkopf, Guo, and Argote (2020)</td>
<td>Personnel mobility as a group lab experiment in US</td>
<td>Count of ships made by each group in postmove work periods</td>
<td>Number by which products increased from first to second postmove work period</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Specialist experience is less beneficial to group performance than generalist experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khursheed, Mohamed, Schwienbacher, and Wang (2020)</td>
<td>Syndication of VC investments by Asian VC firms</td>
<td>Successful exit</td>
<td>Cumulative number of investments syndicated with foreign, Asian, or Western VC firms</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>VCs that syndicated with foreign VCs have more successful exits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lawrence (2020)</td>
<td>New restocking practice in US retail chain</td>
<td>Errors in stock restocking</td>
<td>Past week errors, average employee experience, supervisor experience</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Replicate unit’s performance is positively affected by template unit’s performance. Focal unit shifts attention from experiential learning to vicarious template leaning when own performance is weaker</td>
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<td>Musaji, Schulze, and De Castro (2020)</td>
<td>Opening of new money transfer franchises by a global remittances firm</td>
<td>Daily transaction volume of franchisees</td>
<td>Cumulative number of franchisees awarded in a country group</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>An inverted U-shaped relationship. A fast pace limits opportunities to analyze and learn from experience</td>
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<td>Seo, Kang, and Song (2020)</td>
<td>Cross-border innovation teams of 25 pharmaceutical MNEs</td>
<td>Impact and novelty of innovations (patent forward and backward citations)</td>
<td>Sum of patenting experience; repeated collaboration</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Experience effect contingent on type of experience and measure. Geographic diversity of team affects group learning, which is mitigated by shared experience. Positive effect of sum of experience on novelty but not on impact; negative effect of repeated collaboration on novelty and positive on innovation</td>
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<td>Xie, Feng, and Hu (2020)</td>
<td>New internet ventures in China</td>
<td>Nev venture performance measured as ROA</td>
<td>Mean time team venture team members had worked together; powerholders founding experience</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Experience effects contingent on power hierarchy: high-shared team experience beneficial when low power-hierarchy, and powerholders prior founding experience beneficial when high power hierarchy</td>
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<td>Denoo, and Janakiraman (2020)</td>
<td>Young, technology-based firms in the UK</td>
<td>Firm survival and customer portfolio growth</td>
<td>The sum of TMT industry experience in years; firm age in years</td>
<td>Firm operating experience (age) mitigates the negative effect of key customer dependence on survival but reduces the effect on customer portfolio growth. TMT industry experience helped surviving firms with high dependence grow faster</td>
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<td>Zhao, Ishihara, and Jennings (2020)</td>
<td>Market entry in the US video console industry</td>
<td>Timing of entry measured by number of 6-month periods prior to entry; entrant performance measured by logged inflation-adjusted lifetime sales per game</td>
<td>Relevant experience as the sum of all games released by focal publisher with core features of a new marketplace over the past three years</td>
<td>Relevant experience is positively associated with early market entry</td>
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<td>Bavafa and Jónasson (2021)</td>
<td>Paramedics at the London Ambulance Service</td>
<td>Variance in task completion time</td>
<td>Cumulative experience as number of dispatches</td>
<td>Experience reduces the variance in completion time in addition to shortening the time</td>
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<td>Bettinazzi and Zollo (2021)</td>
<td>4619 corporate acquisitions by 504 US firms</td>
<td>Change in Tobin’s Q</td>
<td>The number of acquisitions the firm completed in the five years preceding the focal acquisition</td>
<td>Positive effect at intermediate levels of attention to primary stakeholders. Attention to primary stakeholders affects experiential learning and application of experiential knowledge. Similarity of experience is also a boundary condition</td>
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<td>Chen, Wang, Cui, and Li (2021)</td>
<td>iOS App producers in US market</td>
<td>New product performance measured by logged monthly active users</td>
<td>Experience base measured by entropy index capturing the extent of product portfolio diversity by the number of app categories and relative importance</td>
<td>Experience base positively correlates with new product performance</td>
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<td>Criaco, Naldi, and Zahra (2021)</td>
<td>International market entry of Swedish new ventures</td>
<td>Time to first foreign entry; operating profit per employee; export sales divided by total sales</td>
<td>Founders’ prior shared experience in working for a business with foreign sales; founders’ independent, shared domestic, and shared industry experience</td>
<td>Prior shared experience shortens the time to foreign entry but does not directly affect performance of internationalization. In dynamic industries, prior experiential knowledge can become obsolete</td>
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<td>Dutt and Lawrence (2021)</td>
<td>Toxic waste reduction in US manufacturing facilities</td>
<td>Change in waste</td>
<td>Log of cumulative waste emitted</td>
<td>Increased experience in one task (waste management of one chemical) improves the performance in a related task (waste management of other chemicals)</td>
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<td>O'Sullivan, Zolotoy, and Fan (2021)</td>
<td>Corporate social performance in Fortune 500 firms</td>
<td>Corporate social performance</td>
<td>Dummy variable for disaster event in county when CEO was between 5 and 15 years old</td>
<td>CEO early life disaster experience positively affects corporate social performance</td>
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Note: The five leftmost columns of the table contain summary information of each of the corpus articles discussed in section 3. The remaining four columns are related to the discussion of the resulting integrative framework and its implications in sections 4 and 5. For the experience–performance relationship, ● indicates a supported relationship, ○ indicates partial support (e.g., contingent support), and ○ indicates a lack of support. For applicability, accessibility, and adoption of experiential knowledge, ● and ○ indicate whether these contingencies have in some way been considered in the study.

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