



Factors Influencing Team Performance: A Case Study of Teachers in Three Vocational Colleges in Weifang, Shandong Province, China

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Abstract

Background and Aims: With the development of today's social economy and China's economy and society, the status of vocational education in China is getting higher and higher, but at the same time, the requirements for teachers are gradually increasing. The purpose of this study was to clarify cooperation, reward, trust team cohesion, and team performance and to investigate the factors influencing team performance.

Material and Method: The questionnaires were distributed to 325 teachers from three vocational colleges in Weifang, Shandong Province, China, who participated in the questionnaire. Statistical analysis includes descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis.

Results: The findings revealed that cooperation, team cohesion, reward, and trust exert positive influences on teachers' team performance.

Conclusion: Based on these results, the study recommends implementing measures such as fostering team cooperation, strengthening team cohesion, providing reasonable rewards, and instilling full trust to effectively enhance teacher team performance within the context of production-education integration.

Keywords: Cooperation; Reward and Trust; Team Cohesion; Team Performance

Introduction

With the deepening of economic globalization, China's economy has entered a critical period of transformation and upgrading modern industries such as the digital industry and manufacturing industries are in urgent need of a large number of professionals with professional knowledge and skills. Vocational education is getting more and more attention in China. Vocational education in Shandong Province is a province with relatively concentrated vocational education resources in China. Under the background of the integration of production and education, the performance of teachers' teams in vocational education colleges in Shandong Province has become an important factor for colleges to improve teaching quality and meet the employment needs of students, as well as an important basis for influencing the development of vocational colleges in Shandong Province. This paper studies three years of Shandong vocational education college teacher team performance mainly faced with several problems. By interviewing the sub-dean in the college, there are some problems in these colleges as follows: One is the problem of cooperation among teachers. Some team cooperation is not coordinated, which leads to the decline of vocational education teaching quality. Second, the team cohesion is not strong, resulting in no unified understanding of team members. Third, there are unscientific rewards for teachers, and some teachers feel that career development is more difficult. Fourth, the lack of sufficient communication and trust between team leaders and team members affects performance improvement.

Objectives

There are two main objectives of this study:

1. To clarify cooperation, reward, and trust team cohesion, and team performance
2. To investigate the factors influencing team performance



Literature review

Cooperation

Cooperation is one of the important factors that affect team performance, especially in teacher teams. Establishing good cooperation channels and platforms is of key significance to improving team performance. Hu et al (2023) emphasized the application of cooperation in performance appraisal systems in their study. They pointed out that teachers are a group with a higher level of knowledge and that good communication is more conducive to improving team performance than other professional groups. Therefore, it is crucial to establish good cooperation channels and platforms among the teacher team. Hargreaves, (2019) pointed out in the study that to enhance information transmission and promote cooperation, teacher teams can take a series of measures. First, establish effective communication channels, including regular team meetings, emails, and instant messaging tools, to ensure the timely delivery and sharing of information. Second, encourage active interaction and collaboration among teachers. Team-building activities, professional seminars, and mutual learning groups can be organized to promote communication and cooperation among members. Rabin, (2020) mentioned in the study that good cooperation also requires cultivating team members' awareness of the integration of personal behaviors. Each member of the teacher team should understand the impact of individual actions on the performance of the entire team and take proactive actions to promote the development of the overall team. This can be accomplished by establishing shared team goals and values and creating a culture that supports teamwork.

Team cohesion

Team cohesion refers to the degree of close connection and cooperation among team members, as well as their commitment and sense of belonging to the team's common goals. It is one of the important factors affecting team performance. Research shows that team cohesion has a positive impact on team performance. A study conducted by Grossman et al. (2022) found a direct correlation between team cohesion and performance and success. Team cohesion can promote cooperation efficiency and teamwork among team members, ensuring that each member understands their role and is committed to achieving common team goals. Empirical research by Braun et al., (2020) further verified the positive relationship between team cohesion and performance. They found that teams with higher levels of cohesion performed better at task completion, innovation, and problem-solving. This suggests that increased team cohesion is necessary for teams striving for high performance. Additionally, (Kao, 2019) pointed out that team cohesion is not only a theoretical foundation but also a practical catalyst for improving team performance in various environments. He emphasized the importance of trust, cooperation, and shared values among team members as factors that contribute to team cohesion. In the vocational school teacher team, team cohesion also plays a key role. Teachers, as team leaders, bear important responsibilities in building team cohesion. Their leadership style and abilities have an important impact on team performance (Acton & Foti, 2020). A teacher with a positive leadership style can establish a good team atmosphere, and promote information sharing and good communication among team members (Appelbaum et al., 2020). Therefore, team cohesion has an important impact on team performance.

Reward

Rewards play an important role in influencing team performance. Research by Sidhu & Nizam (2020) shows that rewards, including financial incentives and non-financial incentives, have become a necessary component for effective management of employee performance. This conclusion is consistent with other research on organizations. Rewards can take many forms (Francise et al., 2020). These include basic salary increases, performance bonuses, coupons, allowances, recognitions, cash incentives, promotions, team incentives, retirement benefits, and other benefits. This diversity of reward forms recognizes the different preferences and motivations of employees, allowing organizations to tailor their reward systems to ensure a comprehensive approach that is aligned with employee needs. (Meslec et al., 2020) pointed out in terms of team performance that rewards can have a multifaceted impact. First, rewards can enhance employees' motivation and enthusiasm, motivating them to work hard toward the team's goals. Reward forms such as performance bonuses and promotions can provide clear goals and reward mechanisms to motivate



employees to pursue excellence. In addition, non-financial rewards such as recognition and team incentives can enhance employees' sense of belonging and teamwork, and promote the improvement of team performance. However, (Noorazem et al., 2021) the design and implementation of reward systems requires attention to some key factors. First, rewards should be aligned with the goals of team performance to ensure that rewards truly motivate employees to work toward the overall goals of the team. Secondly, rewards should be fair and feasible to avoid causing internal inequality and dissatisfaction. In addition, rewards should be timely and fully reflect employees' contributions to maintain the effectiveness of incentives. Therefore, rewards are also an important factor affecting team performance.

Trust

Trust plays an important role in team performance. Organizational success often relies on trusting relationships among employees because trust helps create an environment conducive to goal acceptance. Building trust is a gradual process, but it is also faced with the challenge of vulnerability, making restoring trust a complex task. Research shows that trust plays an important role in leadership. Leaders achieve the expectations of ethical leadership by building trusting relationships and prioritizing employees' best interests and organizational goals (Fitria, 2018). Trust can be defined as a willingness to be vulnerable while also recognizing the leader's authority (DeJong et al., 2016). Trust plays an important role in driving teamwork, influencing team success, and predicting organizational performance. Research shows that trust drives teamwork by recognizing the capabilities of leaders and team members, thereby influencing organizational success and performance (Grossman & Feitosa, 2018). Trust plays an important role in driving teamwork, influencing team success, and predicting organizational performance. In research on team performance, trust is conceptualized as a vulnerability that forms a dyadic relationship. This means that the establishment of trust requires time and effort and is susceptible to interference and destruction by external factors. Therefore, there is a need to consider the fragility of trust when studying team performance and explore the factors that influence the establishment and maintenance of trust. Therefore, trust is also an important factor affecting team performance.

Cooperation & Team Performance

Measuring how effectively team members work together, team cohesion ensures each member understands their role, leverages their strengths, and is committed to overall team goals. Rewards can positively impact team performance in different ways. First, material motivation is a common form of reward, including salary, allowances, bonuses, etc. These material rewards can meet the economic needs of team members and make them feel that their efforts are reasonably rewarded, thus enhancing their work motivation and commitment (Chang & Zhang, 2020). At the same time, spiritual motivation is also an important factor affecting team performance. Spiritual motivation refers to stimulating work motivation and enthusiasm by satisfying an individual's inner needs such as self-realization, sense of accomplishment, and sense of identity. Team members will feel a spiritual reward when they are recognized, appreciated, and respected by the organization and leaders, thereby being more engaged in work and producing better performance (Malek & Haon, 2020). However, to achieve effective rewards To promote team performance, a fair and scientific reward mechanism is crucial. Team members need to feel that reward distribution is fair and consistent with their contribution and effort. If rewards are distributed unfairly, it may cause internal dissatisfaction and conflict, thereby weakening the team's cohesion and performance (Delfgaauw & Dur, 2021). Therefore, rewards are also one of the important factors affecting team performance.

Team Cohesion & Team Performance

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Trust & Teacher team performance

Trust is one of the important factors affecting team performance. In the field of education, trusting relationships among teachers play a key role in improving team performance. Research shows that teachers' trust in team leaders is closely related to work efficiency, and team leaders' trust in teachers is more conducive to stimulating teachers' enthusiasm and work motivation (Gibson et al., 2019). Teachers' trust in team leaders can facilitate the team's development of a shared understanding and inspire joint efforts to achieve team performance goals. When teachers show trust and respect for team leaders, they are more willing to work with the team and share resources and experiences to achieve educational goals. Teachers' sense of trust can also enhance the spirit of collaboration and cooperation within the team, reduce internal conflicts and disharmony factors, and improve the team's work efficiency and performance level (Çoban et al., 2023). Trust is one of the important factors affecting team performance.

Therefore, in the field of team performance research, cooperation, rewards, cohesion, and trust have always attracted much attention as key factors. Previous research has shown a relationship between these factors and teacher team performance. Collaboration refers to collaboration and mutual support among team members, which promotes knowledge sharing, problem-solving, and increased work efficiency. The existence of a reward system can motivate teachers to put in more effort, improve their work motivation and satisfaction, and thus have a positive impact on team performance. Cohesion refers to the cohesion and unity among team members, which can promote cooperation, communication, and mutual support, and help improve the team's work effectiveness and performance. Trust is a trusting relationship based on mutual understanding and respect. It can promote cooperation and information sharing among team members, thereby improving the performance level of the team.

The research focuses on the influence of cooperation, reward, cohesion, and trust on the team performance factors of teachers, from the previous study, these four factors (cooperation, reward, cohesion, and trust) have a positive correlation with team performance (Strom et al., 2024; Chang & Zhang,2020; Gibson et al., 2019,)thus the research concept was established as follow :



Conceptual Framework

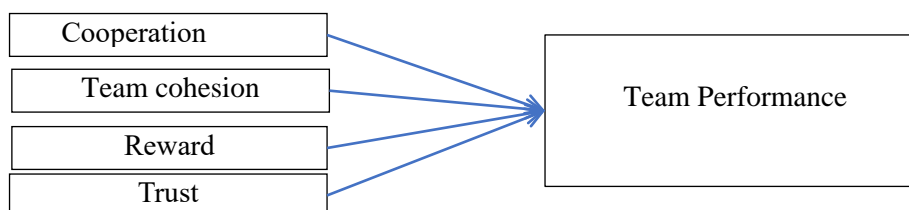


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Hypothesis

This study puts forward four main factors affecting the team performance of professional teachers in Weifang City, Shandong Province: cohesion, reward, trust, and the assumption of the intrinsic mechanism of cooperation and team performance (as shown in the table below).

- H1 Cooperation is positively related to team performance
- H2 Team Cohesion is positively related to team performance
- H3 Reward is positively related to team performance
- H4 Trust is positively related to team performance

Methodology

Population and samples:

There are 2400 teachers in three vocational colleges in Shandong Vocational College Science & Technology, 1100 teachers were in Weifang Vocational College, (Wang&Endrano 2023) and there are 800 teachers in Weifang Nursing Vocational College. (Bowen et al., 2023). A total of 325 teachers were selected to participate in the survey, using the sample size calculation table of Taro Yamane's formula (Yamane, 1973) at a confidence level of 95%, the error level is $\pm 5\%$, which gives a sample size of 325 teachers were selected randomly to participate in the survey.

All teachers have teaching experience and have been on the job for at least 6 months. This study took 181 samples from Shandong Vocational College Science & Technology, 83 teachers were selected from Weifang Vocational College, and there are 61 teachers were selected from Weifang Nursing Vocational College.

Table 1. Sample distribution

Colleges name	Population	Samples
Shandong Vocational College Science&Technology	2400	181
Weifang Vocational College	1100	83
Weifang Nursing Vocational College	800	61
Total	4300	325

Instrument Tool :

This study adopts the questionnaire, which consists of two parts. The first part is the personal information of vocational school teachers, including gender, age, teaching experience, income, etc. The second part is the factors that affect the performance of the vocational school teacher team. There are five questions for each of the four factors: cooperation, team cohesion, reward, and trust. In cooperation factors, problems include coordination and communication with colleagues on all issues at work; in team cohesion, team members often cooperate in groups; in reward factors, team members receive monetary rewards when the team achieves goals; in trust factors, team leaders fully trust team members to complete work goals. This research is quantitative, the goal is to analyze the performance of the teacher team in three vocational



schools, analyze the factors that affect the performance of the teacher team in vocational schools, and verify the results of the questionnaire survey. Therefore, this survey used a questionnaire survey to collect data from a sample of three vocational schools. The questionnaire was made according to the basic model of experts and scholars, combined with the actual investigation, and was collected by an online questionnaire. Online survey has the advantages of high flexibility, high timeliness, and small errors. The questionnaire used a five-level Likert scale to measure the responses of each factor in the study. The five-point scale from 1 to 5, from low to high, indicates: 1 = strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3 =, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

Validity test

The acceptability of the coefficient α should be at least 0.7; if it is less than 0.7, the result is unacceptable. Cronbach's Alpha values are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Reliability test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Items
Cooperation	.823	5
Team cohesion	.806	5
Reward	.768	5
Trust	.780	5
Team performance	.956	5

According to the analysis results, According to the statistical data, Cronbach's Alpha of the five-dimensional variables were all greater than 0.7, so the reliability of the questionnaire was high.

Type of Research:

This survey collected data from a sample of three vocational colleges employing questionnaires. The questionnaire was made according to the basic model of experts and scholars, combined with the actual investigation, and the online questionnaire "Questionnaire Star" was used to collect data. An online survey has the advantages of high flexibility, high timeliness, and small errors. The questionnaire used a five-level scale to measure the responses of each factor in the study. The five-point scale from 1 to 5, from low to high, indicates: 1 = strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

Research process:

This study uses a quantitative survey as the main research method, and uses computer software for data analysis, including descriptive statistics and linear regression.

Results

In a teacher team, the performance of the teacher team requires the efforts of every teacher, and cooperation, team cohesion, reward, and trust affect the performance of the teacher team. Through the group characteristics analysis of the questionnaire and model regression analysis, it can be seen that cooperation, team cohesion, reward, and trust have significant positive effects on teacher team performance. The cooperation factor has the greatest influence, followed by the team cohesion, trust, and reward factor.

Sample characteristics

The results showed that the teachers are the most 26-35 years old (39.5%), followed by those below 25 years old (23.9%) and 36-45 years old (22.7%), which is in line with the age composition of university teachers.

The results of data collection in the general information show that the number of lecturers in the college is the largest, which is about 64.6%, while the number of professors is the smallest which is just up to 1.5%, and the title distribution of the surveyed teachers is uneven.

The results of data collection in the general information show that the teaching experience of the surveyed teachers is concentrated in the range of 5-15 years (42.1% and 38.5%), and just a few teachers who teach in the college more than 26 years (5.0%).



The results of data collection show that the income of most teachers surveyed is concentrated in the range of 4001-6000 yuan(48.7%), and the teachers' income who earn more than 8001 yuan are the lowest (15.4%).

Team Performance

Table 3 Average difference and standard deviation report

Variables	Average	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Cooperation	3.8813	.73942	Agree
Team cohesion	3.9064	.70134	Agree
Reward	3.8771	.64845	Agree
Trust	3.8260	.67254	Agree
Team Performance higher	3.7870	.78520	Agree

The results of data collection in the general information show that the average and standard deviation of scores of cooperation, team cohesion, reward, and trust in teacher team performance are analyzed. According to the principle of the five-level frequency range, we can see that the average values of the four variables are all greater than 3.82, indicating that among the factors affecting teacher team performance, cooperation, team cohesion, reward, and trust are all at a high level.

Correlation analysis

Table 4 Correlation analysis

	Cooperation	Team cohesion	Reward	Trust	Teacher team Performance
Cooperation	1	.818**	.793**	.786**	.843**
Team cohesion	.818**	1	.776**	.788**	.820**
Reward	.793**	.776**	1	.773**	.780**
Trust	.786**	.788**	.773**	1	.790**
Teacher team Performance	.843**	.820**	.780**	.790**	1

The results show that the correlation between teacher team performance and cooperation is 0.843, the correlation between team cohesion is 0.820, the correlation between reward is 0.780, and the correlation between trust is 0.790. All factors were significant at $0.000 < 0.05$.

Regression analysis

Table 5 Team Performance Regression Analysis

	Unstandardized B	Coefficient Std Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	-.241	.123		1.959	.000		
Cooperation	.352	.059	.335	5.935	.000	.206	4.853
Team Cohesion	.311	.066	.287	4.713	.000	.176	5.673
Reward	.183	.057	.153	3.210	.000	.289	3.461
Trust	.197	.055	.177	3.599	.000	.270	3.708

$R^2 = .790$ Adjust $R^2 = .788$ $F = 301.709$ $p < 0.000$

The result in Table 5 shows that multicollinearity does not exist among all independent variables because the Tolerance values are more than 0.10 and VIF values are less than 10 (Hair



et al., 2010). The result indicates that the study does not have any multicollinearity problem. The regression was subjected to criticism because the interaction term leads to a multicollinearity problem (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). As a result of the centered mean, VIF and tolerance values were within an acceptable required range. Thus multicollinearity was not a problem in this study.

The collection data of the results shows an R-squared value of 0.790 indicating a variation rate of 79.0 % and all four independent variables can explain the dependent variables. The results of the variance test showed that the F value was 301.709 and the significance was <0.001 ($P \leq 0.05$), indicating that there was a statistical correlation between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

According to the above coefficient results, the regression equation can be obtained as follows:

$$Y = a + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + b_4x_4 + b_5x_5$$

y = teacher team performance

a = constant

b = coefficient

x₁ = cooperation

x₂ = team cohesion

x₃ = reward

x₄ = trust

Teacher team performance = $-0.241 + 0.352 * \text{Cooperation} + 0.311 * \text{team cohesion} + 0.183 * \text{reward} + 0.197 * \text{trust}$

Summary

This chapter uses the test of credibility and validity, relevant analysis, and regression analysis to explore and study the factors affecting the performance of teachers' teams in three vocational colleges in Weifang City, Shandong Province. The analysis results are as follows:

First, there is a strong correlation between cohesion, rewards, trust, cooperation, and the performance of teachers' teams in vocational colleges.

Second, cohesion, reward, trust, and cooperation are positively related to the performance of the teacher team of Shandong Vocational College Science and Technology.

The test results of the theoretical assumptions of this study are shown in Table 6

Table 6 Test results of the theoretical assumptions of this study

assumption	content	results
H1	Cooperation is directly related to team performance	Found
H2	Team Cohesion is positively related to team performance	Found
H3	Reward is positively related to team performance	Found
H4	Trust is positively related to team performance	Found

Conclusion

From research on Factors Influencing Team Performance: A Case Study of Teachers in Three Vocational Colleges in Weifang, Shandong Province, China. The results of the research according to the research objectives can be summarized as follows

1. To clarify cooperation, reward, and trust team cohesion, and team performance.

In a teacher team, the teacher team's performance requires every teacher's effort, and cooperation, team cohesion, reward, and trust affect the performance of the teacher team.

2. To investigate the factors influencing team performance.

Summary of results from sample characteristics analysis and model regression analysis. It can be seen that the cooperation Team collaboration, rewards, and trust have a significant positive effect on teacher team performance. These four factors have different effects on the effectiveness of teacher teams. The results of cooperation are the most important. and the results of the rewards are minimal It shows that for





the vocational education teacher team Teachers place more emphasis on cooperation between team members, team leaders, and team members. High salary and high compensation are secondary.

After the above analysis, to promote the performance of the teacher team of China Vocational College, this article puts forward the following suggestions: 1. Strengthen team cohesion, clarify common goals, and establish effective communication channels; 2. Set up a reward mechanism, consider the needs and values of teachers, provide development opportunities and training based on performance and success incentives, and establish teamwork and competition mechanisms; 3. Build team trust, establish clear communication channels, respect the contributions of each teacher, and establish common goals, transparency, and integrity; 4. Promote the development of teamwork, information sharing, mutual respect, and establishment of effective team structure and role allocation.

Discussion

From the summary of the research results, it can be seen that in a teacher team, the teacher team's performance requires every teacher's effort, and cooperation, team cohesion, reward, and trust affect the performance of the teacher team This is consistent with the findings of their study (Levin & Moreland, 1990) that team members, if any, are aware of the importance of team collaboration. It will be an important factor affecting the team's performance and through the group characteristics analysis of the questionnaire and model regression analysis, it can be seen that cooperation, team cohesion, reward, and trust have significant positive effects on teacher team performance. In addition, a summary of the research results found that the four factors have impacts on the performance of teacher teams. The effect of cooperation is the most significant, and the effect of reward is the least which is consistent with the research results from Pain & Harwood (2009) show that motivation is the primary factor that promotes team performance. The teacher team should build a good channel and platform for cooperation. Hu et al (2023) believe that the application of cooperation in the performance appraisal system should be emphasized. This paper holds that compared with other professional groups, teachers belong to the group with a higher knowledge level, so good communication is more beneficial to the improvement of team performance. It is necessary to strengthen information transmission, actively guide informal communication, enhance member interaction, and cultivate the awareness of individual behavioral integration of members. The external form is complex, the environment is changeable, and it is difficult to rely on a single individual alone, and it is difficult to get things done. The emergence of the teamwork mode enables team members to work together and move forward, making up for the shortcomings of the operation mode of individual work. This is also the reason why the performance needs to rely more and more on team cooperation to complete the work goal. Efficient gathering of resources, mining of information, and strong integration ability will promote the sustainable and healthy development of the team. Therefore, team managers, should pay attention to the construction of the team as a whole, build an information-sharing mechanism, encourage team members to communicate frequently, cultivate the concept of cooperation, enhance interaction and emotions, and regularly carry out quality development and team building activities in their spare time outside work to promote member exchanges and promote the team spirit.

The team needs to maintain a high level of cohesion only studied the positive and negative effects of cohesion and did not put forward specific measures on how to maintain cohesion. In this paper, two aspects should be done to maintain the cohesion of teacher teams: on the one hand, informal communication should be actively guided. Informal communication can relieve pressure, enhance feelings, and promote interpersonal relations. It is necessary for teachers' team managers to properly guide informal communication, connect information transmission channels, enhance teachers' mutual understanding, and improve their relationships through informal contact. In addition, it is necessary to cultivate a cooperative culture, enhance the sense of belonging, advocate common ideals, beliefs, and values, and enhance teachers' identification with the team. In this way, the code of conduct and value orientation will make the team tend to the same goal. When managers carry out work, they should allocate tasks reasonably and encourage teachers to cooperate in the division of labor, so that every teacher can take every step of action. I will also





consider the possible results of my behavior toward others, be empathetic, and put myself to others. While completing my tasks, I will also help others to achieve their tasks. In the whole process, I will understand each other and help together to improve the integration ability of team behaviors and promote the improvement of team performance.

When studying trust and reward, Eagle and McNees (2023) overemphasized the importance of material incentives, arguing that it is necessary to increase the material rewards of teacher teams to promote performance improvement in the context of the integration of production and education. This paper holds that material reward is as important as spiritual reward for teachers. In many cases, spiritual reward is more important than material reward for teachers. As a group with higher knowledge levels and quality cultivation, teachers' pursuit of occupation is greater than that of material. Teachers generally have good moral qualities, professional ethics of cultivating students' growth, and common value pursuit of helping students become talented, and pay more attention to the recognition and affirmation of others. This requires a good balance between reward and trust, and on the premise of ensuring their deserved rewards, increase the spiritual reward for teachers and give them full trust, to encourage teachers to make more contributions to team performance.

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