Shared experience has often been demonstrated to correlate positively with performance (Reagans et al., 2005). Having shared past experiences within a team tends to increase successful teamwork. This may be explained by the notion presented by Berman et al. (2002) – that shared experience leads to tacit knowledge. They propose that through working together, team members develop tacit knowledge to construct schemata which allows team members to operate synchronously. Unfortunately, a key setback of this research is that tacit knowledge, by definition, is not observable, and therefore cannot be measured. However, products of tacit knowledge can be observed in particular teamwork scenarios. Such an effect can be applied to the world of football; Grund (2016) analysed a dataset of passes between players over the course of 760 English Premier League matches. His findings demonstrated teams to have a higher passing rate if members had played together before: if two players had played together in the past, they are more likely to pass the ball between each other. Grund therefore concluded that shared experience correlates with traits of higher efficiency and team cohesion. Ruef et al.’s (2003) study of entrepreneurial teams suggests that these traits are a result of a team’s opportunity to develop trust and gain an understanding of strengths and weaknesses within the team.

Understanding the importance of shared experience in a team allows introduction to the key paper by De Vaan et al. (2015). They describe the concept of *structural folding* – the overlap of groups that have differing previous experience within a team. For example, if two football teams merge to create one, there may be some players who have represented both teams, creating an overlap in experience – these players would represent the structural fold. The paper argues that to generate creative success, there should be a variety of past experiences within a team. However, this variety of experience stresses the importance of the structural fold – to channel communication and create common understanding, contributing to success.

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