

Experience as a Double-Edged Sword: The Relationship Between Prior Management Experience and Job Performance

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The inter-firm mobility of managers is a common feature in modern-day employment, yet the understanding of the relationship between prior management experience and performance remains ambiguous in the literature. The received wisdom suggests that prior management experience will have either a positive or a negative influence on performance, highlighting the positive role of novice managers or managers with expertise. In contrast, this study views these perspectives as being complementary, and suggests that a positive and negative effect of experience can operate concurrently with the level of prior management experience. Using a domain-expertise lens, this study finds a curvilinear U-shaped relationship between the level of prior management experience and performance, which implies that both novice and highly experienced managers have a positive effect on performance. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that the curvilinear U-shaped relationship is more pronounced when prior management experience is more closely related to the focal job. The main contribution of this study is to reconcile some of the ambiguity in the literature by providing a nuanced conceptualization of how and why prior management experience impacts performance.

Introduction

Firms increasingly look to hire experienced managers in key areas of their operations due to an enduring sense that prior experience is consequential for job performance (henceforth, performance). The relationship between prior management experience and performance, however, remains a puzzle for scholars and practitioners. Several studies demonstrate that relevant prior experience contributes to better performance by enhancing individuals' human capital in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities (Bailey and Helfat, 2003; McEnrue, 1988). Yet, other researchers highlight cognitive and behavioural challenges that individuals face when transferring prior experience, which leads to a negative effect on performance (Dokko and Jiang, 2017; Hamori and Koyuncu, 2015). A corresponding body of research from practice attests to a negative effect of relevant experience and

illuminates the implications for the hiring and development of managers (Hildebrand, Anterasian and Brugg, 2020; Sengupta, Abdel-Hamid and Van Wassenhove, 2008). Due to these inconsistent theoretical arguments and empirical results, the relationship between prior management experience and performance is not fully understood and necessitates a better conceptualization.

The understanding of the relationship between prior management experience and performance is located in the literature that discusses the portability of job-specific experience across firm boundaries (Bailey and Helfat, 2003; Dokko, Wilk and Rothbard, 2009; Dokko and Jiang, 2017; Ellis, 1965). Whilst research has generally treated the implications of the negative and positive effect of prior job-specific experience on performance as being contradictory, I suggest that both effects could instead be complementary because they may jointly offer a more comprehensive

conceptualization of the influence of prior management experience on performance. To explore this possibility, I draw upon the expertise literature and conceptualize prior management experience in line with Dane's (2010) schema-based notion of domain expertise, defined as deeper levels of domain-specific knowledge acquired through experience. On the basis that expertise is assumed to vary in direct proportion to experience (Graf-Vlachy, Bundy and Hambrick, 2020; Reuber, 1997), Dane (2010) suggests that whilst expertise can grow with the level of domain experience, so can a cognitive inflexibility effect, which operates to increase commitment to individuals' domain-specific knowledge and reduce new learning. As such, the domain-expertise perspective enables the consideration of both a positive and a negative effect of individuals' prior job-specific experience on performance.

Using the domain-expertise lens, I suggest that an inflexibility effect, in terms of the negative effect of prior management experience on performance, will become particularly pronounced up to some threshold of prior management experience. The core argument is that such managers are most likely to rely on their experience when moving to another job because of their belief in their expertise, which is problematic because these managers still require further learning to master the management role (Haleblian and Finkelstein, 1999; Sengupta, Abdel-Hamid and Van Wassenhove, 2008). However, the expertise effect, in terms of the positive effect of prior management experience on performance, is expected to manifest beyond some threshold of prior management experience because of the time it can take to develop expertise (Dane, 2010). Accordingly, I propose that the relationship between prior management experience and performance may not be linear, as much of the literature has assumed, and may instead be curvilinear and U-shaped – initially negative and then positive beyond some threshold of prior management experience.

Furthermore, this study explores the moderating role of the relatedness of managers' prior experience to the focal job, which is an important contingency indicated in the learning transfer and expertise literatures (Dane, 2010; Hamori and Koyuncu, 2015). Findings of this study suggest that managers with higher amounts of closely related prior experience exhibit a more pronounced U-shaped relationship. These

relationships are examined using data on the population of English Premier League football teams (1996–2019), an empirical context that is conducive to validating better the relationship between managers' experience and performance (see 'Data and methods' section). As managers are assessed by the performance of their teams, their job performance is the team's performance.

The contributions of this study are threefold. First, this study contributes to the reconciliation of the theoretical and empirical inconsistency in the literature about the relationship between prior management experience and performance by developing a nuanced theoretical explanation based on Dane's (2010) schema-based notion of domain expertise. In demonstrating that both a positive and a negative effect of prior management experience can accrue concurrently, yet at different rates with the level of experience, this study deepens understanding of how and why prior management experience can enhance/hinder performance (Dokko and Jiang, 2017; Reuber, 1997). Second, and relatedly, the findings enrich Dane's (2010) work by empirically examining the complex interplay between expertise and inflexibility, highlighting important conditions in which one effect dominates the other. Finally, this research offers practical implications by underscoring key considerations in the hiring and development of experienced managers.

The portability of job-specific experience across firm boundaries

The prior experience of individuals is a key criterion used by firms when making appointments because experience is considered to promote better decision-making and performance (Rynes, Orlitzky and Bretz, 1997; Sengupta, Abdel-Hamid and Van Wassenhove, 2008). Firms will typically seek individuals with job-specific experience, whose prior experience is related to the characteristics of the focal job, and expect them to become immediately productive (Bailey and Helfat, 2003; Dokko, Wilk and Rothbard, 2009; Quinones, Ford and Teachout, 1995; Sengupta, Abdel-Hamid and Van Wassenhove, 2008). As a result, there is an increasing expectation that experienced individuals will demonstrate comparable performance and impact from their prior jobs in their current

jobs – an important reason for their employment; however, some scholars demonstrate that such expectations are not easily achieved (Dokko and Jiang, 2017). As a result, there exists a literature that advances a positive or negative linear effect of prior job-specific experience on performance.

The main explanation for the positive effect of prior job-specific experience on performance is increasing levels of human capital in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities in conducting the role (Bailey and Helfat, 2003; Beyer and Hannah, 2002; Dokko and Jiang, 2017; Ener, 2019; McEnrue, 1988; Reuber, 1997; Schmidt, Hunter and Outerbridge, 1986). Research has demonstrated that greater levels of human capital can enhance pattern recognition capabilities (Grégoire, Barr and Shepherd, 2010), decision-making speed (Judge and Miller, 1991), understanding what does not work (Stone, 2001) and hence decision-making effectiveness and job performance (Ener, 2019; Kor, 2003; McDonald, Westphal and Graebner, 2008; Pfeffer and Davis-Blake, 1986; Somaya, Williamson and Lorinkova, 2008). However, the human capital perspective of more experience being universally better for performance is increasingly being challenged (Hamori and Koyuncu, 2015).

The competing perspective suggests that individuals' prior job-specific experience can create cognitive and behavioural frameworks that are specific to the contexts in which they were developed, which operate as barriers that inhibit the effective transfer of knowledge and learning to new contexts (Dokko, Wilk and Rothbard, 2009; Hamori and Koyuncu, 2015). Greater prior job-specific experience can figure prominently in decision making due to its perceived appropriateness, being easier to locate and apply, and hence lead individuals to draw heavily upon what has worked in their prior jobs in their current jobs (Haleblian and Finkelstein, 1999; Woltz, Gardner and Bell, 2000). Research has highlighted the development of the 'prior knowledge corridor' via job-specific experience (Gruber, MacMillan and Thompson, 2013; Marvel, Wolfe and Kuratko, 2020), which can operate to filter out important information in the current context that is not in accord with individuals' prior experience and narrow their search for new information and learning (Ener, 2019; Hamori and Koyuncu, 2015).

A reduced ability to be reflective about differences between individuals' prior and current

job contexts has also been cited as a contributor to the negative effect of prior job-specific experience on performance (Dokko, Wilk and Rothbard, 2009; Ellis, 1965). Being able to reflect upon prior experience and update knowledge when in a new context is important, because contexts may share surface similarities but can vary considerably in terms of underlying structural features such as processes, norms and culture, meaning that learned knowledge and behaviour may not be useful when applied in another context (Becker, 2005; Haleblian and Finkelstein, 1999; Matsuo, 2019). Indeed, empirical evidence has demonstrated a negative linkage between prior job-specific experience and performance in a range of contexts, such as firm performance of CEOs of large corporations (Hamori and Koyuncu, 2015), mortality rates of cardiac surgeons (Huckman and Pisano, 2006), performance ranking of financial analysts (Groysberg and Lee, 2009; Groysberg, Lee and Nanda, 2008) and performance reviews of call centre operatives (Dokko, Wilk and Rothbard, 2009).

Under the negative perspective, individuals who possess little or no prior job-specific experience should outperform experienced individuals due to a lack of interference of prior experience (Hamori and Koyuncu, 2015; Morrison and Brantner, 1992), a view that is gradually being observed in practice (Hildebrand, Anterasian and Brugg, 2020; Sengupta, Abdel-Hamid and Van Wassenhove, 2008). Such a perspective, however, ignores an established body of scholarship that shows the positive impact of increasing prior job-specific experience on performance. Still, there is little theoretical guidance under the positive perspective concerning the challenges that individuals with lower amounts of prior job-specific experience may face when learning and making decisions in a new job context. There is evidence at the firm level that limited levels of experience can also lead to challenges in the portability of knowledge to other contexts (Haleblian and Finkelstein, 1999). Based on the overview of the key theoretical ideas above, I examine the possibility that both novices and highly experienced managers can be linked with higher levels of performance.

In what follows, I develop argumentation pertaining to the nature of management experience, and how the positive and negative effect of prior management experience on performance can accrue simultaneously yet at different rates with

the level of experience. To do so, I develop a theoretical explanation based on Dane's (2010) schema-based notion of domain expertise to link prior management experience with performance. When jointly considering both effects, I (i) derive a hypothesis of a curvilinear U-shaped relationship between the level of prior management experience and performance and (ii) examine the extent to which this relationship may change depending on the relatedness of prior management experience.

Hypotheses

Managers seek to enhance their performance by drawing upon relevant knowledge, skills and abilities, which stems from the job-specific experience they have accumulated via being a manager (Boeker, 1997; Ener, 2019; Sturman, 2003). The management role can be considered as being job-specific because it entails tasks and activities that can only be experienced when in this post (Hamori and Koyuncu, 2015; Quiñones, Ford and Teachout, 1995). Accordingly, prior job-specific experience, in terms of management experience that the manager obtained before moving to the focal role, is an important antecedent of decision-making and performance (Bailey and Helfat, 2003; McEnrue, 1988; Reuber, 1997).

As the management role is multi-dimensional and acquired through a range of intra-role tasks and activities (Reuber, 1997), managers widen their knowledge bases via tasks and activities that can include, but are certainly not limited to, leading and developing employees, mentoring and resource-allocation decisions (Mintzberg, 1973; Yukl, 1989). Furthermore, management tasks and activities will be conducted through different personnel and circumstances, meaning that learning about ways to conduct the role will accumulate over time (Karaevli and Hall, 2006; McCall, Lombardo and Morrison, 1988). The acquisition of management experience is particularly consequential for performance due to the lower levels of repetition in management roles than roles that entail a narrower range of tasks and activities (Reuber, 1997). Hence, the prior learning of managers is important because it changes their knowledge bases and skills over time, which can have differing influences on performance (Bailey and Helfat, 2003).

Prior management experience and domain expertise

From this base, I build on the expertise literature and conceptualize prior management experience using Dane's (2010) schema-based notion of domain expertise, defined as deeper domain-specific knowledge acquired through experience. Domain knowledge is organized in the form of schemas, which are structures that entail knowledge about concepts, stimuli and attributes, and interrelations between attributes that are associated with a domain (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). As managers accumulate greater management experience via deliberate practice, implicit learning and experiential learning, they develop greater schemas, attributes within those schemas and linkages between those attributes within and across schemas (Dane, 2010; Furr, Cavarretta and Garg, 2012; Schilling *et al.*, 2003). Over time, managers will develop richer and more complex schemas associated with their domains. According to Dane (2010), whilst increasing complexity of individuals' domain schemas via greater domain experience can lead to expertise, it can also develop inflexibility in the way individuals think and behave.

On the basis that inflexibility can arise with 'the acquisition of domain expertise' and not solely at high levels of expertise (Dane, 2010: p. 583), both a positive (i.e. expertise) and negative (i.e. inflexibility) effect of domain expertise on decision-making and performance will accrue as domain experience increases. Research has long demonstrated the positive influence of expertise on decision-making and performance (see Dane, 2010 for a review), where the benefits reflect those highlighted when describing the positive influence of job-specific experience above. In general, however, expertise confers an understanding of cause-effect relationships pertaining to a domain (Chi, Feltovich and Glaser, 1981). Experts can reference prior problems, challenges and situations in an efficient manner to identify and apply appropriate solutions to a current situation (Anderson *et al.*, 1997; Karaevli and Hall, 2006; Reeves and Weisberg, 1994). Overall, those with expertise can draw upon their rich domain schemas to enhance decision-making and performance.

Dane (2010) highlights the potential for a negative influence of domain expertise by arguing that individuals can become inflexible in certain respects through the acquisition of expertise. As

expertise is accumulated through continual practice and performance, the content and linkages underlying individuals' schemas are likely to be increasingly activated and applied, which leads to stability in schemas and the attributes within them (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). When domain schemas undergo a period of stability, they can become resistant to change over that period. As experienced individuals draw upon their schemas when making decisions, they can become fixated on addressing issues in a particular way and in a habitual manner, even when resolving the issue requires a different approach (Dane, 2010; Dokko, Wilk and Rothbard, 2009). Hence, gradual schema stability can create inflexibility in thought and behaviour, which can reduce new learning and effective decision-making.

The strength of the inflexibility effect, however, can be reduced by factors that create doubt in the linkages that underly individuals' domain schemas, so that their schemas remain malleable (Dane, 2010). One factor is the extent to which the environment that surrounds an individual's domain of expertise requires them to remain open to different ideas, information and options (Eisenhardt, 1989). Such environments, generally located in contexts associated with intense competition and/or rapid change, are characterized by unpredictability and surprise, which require innovation, creativity and improvisation (Bourgeois and Eisenhardt, 1988; Nadkarni and Barr, 2008). As a result, individuals are more able to challenge the cause-effect relationships within their domains with greater experience (Farjoun, 2010). Another factor that can loosen the linkages that underly domain schemas is the extent to which individuals focus attention on tasks/activities in contexts outside of the focal one, via encountering new stimuli that question what they believe to be true and introducing different perspectives on how to utilize their domain-specific knowledge (Berns, 2010; Hargadon, 2006). Overall, these factors can influence the strength of the positive versus negative effect of domain expertise on performance.

Domain expertise and the portability of experience across firm boundaries

I build upon Dane's (2010) ideas of a positive and negative effect of domain expertise on decision-making and performance. Whilst research has acknowledged a dichotomy (novices vs. experts), I

follow scholars who have viewed domain expertise as being a continuum whereby individuals gain more expertise with the level of domain experience (Graf-Vlachy, Bundy and Hambrick, 2020). Accordingly, individuals new to the management role are viewed as being novices, even though they will have accumulated non-management-related experience in prior positions. On the basis that managers will perform well in the extent to which they can learn and make effective decisions in the focal job (Beyer and Hannah, 2002; Dokko, Wilk and Rothbard, 2009), the argumentation below suggests why increasing levels of prior management experience should lead to different decision-making tendencies and performance.

For novice managers, who are likely appointed by firms due to performing well in other non-management yet high-level positions, an absence of management experience can ironically lead to a fluidity in learning and decision-making for two main reasons. First, novice managers are not susceptible to the negative effect of expertise as described above (Becker, 2005; Halebian and Finkelstein, 1999). Second, these managers may enact a more complex representation of their contexts because of the need to learn and demonstrate their potential (Hildebrand, Anterasian and Brugg, 2020; Rerup, 2005). In being novices, such managers will have a capacity to absorb knowledge and information about the tasks and activities associated with being a manager and be more vigilant when making decisions (Bailey and Helfat, 2003; Hambrick and Fukutomi, 1991).

For managers who possess increasing levels of prior management experience up to a threshold, the negative influence of expertise will become increasingly pronounced. Moving to another firm with this level of prior management experience will enhance managers' belief in their expertise, a reflection of relative success in their prior role(s) (Boeker, 1997). Managers are likely to view their appointment as a reward for their expertise, and research has long suggested that rewarded behaviour can lead to behavioural persistence (Dokko, Wilk and Rothbard, 2009; Halebian and Finkelstein, 1999; Thorndike, 1898). Furthermore, experienced managers are likely to be appointed precisely to recast their expertise (Boeker, 1997; Hamori and Koyuncu, 2015). The increasing activation and application of their domain schemas will operate to stabilize the structure of those schemas, meaning that schema updating becomes progressively

challenging (Dane, 2010; Fiske and Taylor, 1991). Accordingly, such managers are expected to exhibit inflexibility in certain respects of thought and behaviour.

Managers who possess increasing levels of prior management experience beyond a threshold will develop greater domain expertise in terms of the management role. It takes time to build extensive, dense and well-organized domain schemas (Dane, 2010; Furr, Cavarretta and Garg, 2012; Schilling *et al.*, 2003). If these domains are characterized by fierce competition and a need for improvisation and creativity, then domain schemas are more conducive to updating over time (Dane, 2010; Hislop *et al.*, 2014; Matsuo, 2015, 2019). Indeed, these managers will have greater exposure to a multitude of scenarios over a longer period, and so will have developed a broader range of interpretations, perspectives and skills of how to conduct the management role (Karaevli and Hall, 2006; McCall, Lombardo and Morrison, 1988). Overall, expertise requires deliberate practice, implicit learning, experiential learning and reflection over time, and there is evidence that it can take up to a decade of experience in a domain to truly develop mastery (Ericsson and Charness, 1994; Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Römer, 1993; Ericsson, Roring and Nandagopal, 2007).

To summarize, novice managers will be able to learn and make effective decisions due to an absence of prior management experience (Haleblian and Finkelstein, 1999; Sengupta, Abdel-Hamid and Van Wassenhove, 2008). When considering the level of experience, these managers can be viewed as performing at some baseline level. As prior management experience increases up to a threshold, the strength of the inflexibility effect will dominate the expertise effect. This is because effective learning and decision-making will be hindered due to managers being heavily reliant on their domain expertise and repeating patterns that provided success in their prior (somewhat limited) experience (Dane, 2010; Haleblian and Finkelstein, 1999; Sengupta, Abdel-Hamid and Van Wassenhove, 2008). The issue is exacerbated due to the speed and enactment of domain schemas (Hildebrand, Anterasian and Brugg, 2020; Rerup, 2005). As experience increases beyond a threshold, however, expertise in the management role will begin to manifest in better decision-making, particularly when greater experience has been accumulated in contexts conducive to schema revision (Dane, 2010). Ac-

cordingly, the strength of the inflexibility effect will reduce as the strength of the expertise effect begins to dominate. Based on this logic, I propose the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a curvilinear U-shaped relationship between the level of prior management experience and performance.

The relatedness of experience is widely cited as being an important contextual factor that can influence managers' decision-making tendencies and performance, and a key factor that can feature prominently in the hiring of (experienced) individuals (Dokko and Jiang, 2017). Relative to the focal job, relatedness of experience can stem from experience obtained in similar-sized teams and firms, and similar competitive contexts such as industries, strategic groups and countries (Hamori and Koyuncu, 2015). The curvilinear U-shaped relationship between the level of prior management experience and performance is expected to be more pronounced for managers with a greater proportion of prior management experience that is closely related to the focal job.

Greater amounts of closely related management experience will amplify the negative (i.e. inflexibility) effect of prior management experience, which operates up to a threshold of experience, because these managers are even more likely to be anchored in their domain expertise (Haleblian and Finkelstein, 1999; Hamori and Koyuncu, 2015). Greater amounts of related experience are likely to loom even larger in the mind of managers when drawing upon their prior experience (Gruber, MacMillan and Thompson, 2013; Marvel, Wolfe and Kuratko, 2020; Shane, 2000), thereby exacerbating the issue of cognitive inflexibility via greater activation and application of domain schemas (Dane, 2010; Rerup, 2005). For example, there is research that demonstrates a negative linkage between CEOs' prior CEO experience obtained from similar-sized firms and from firms in the same industry, and firm performance (Hamori and Koyuncu, 2015).

The positive effect of prior management experience, which operates beyond a threshold of experience, will also be amplified by greater amounts of closely related management experience, because expertise will accumulate quicker in narrower job-specific domains (McDonald, Westphal and Graebner, 2008). Prior experience can become narrower if it accumulates in competitive contexts

(industries, strategic groups and firms) that are very similar to the focal one. Research suggests that expertise can develop faster through repetition of tasks and activities, and familiarity in similar contexts (Haleblian and Finkelstein, 1999; Reuber, 1997). As such, domain schemas and the attributes within them are likely to expand at a faster rate (Dane, 2010). Accordingly, expert decision-making will manifest in a stronger impact on performance.

Managers with lower amounts of closely related management experience are less likely to suffer from cognitive inflexibility because management experience in different contexts enables them to view new stimuli in the focal context in more conditional terms (Dane, 2010). Such managers can doubt features in their schemas and loosen some of the relationships that underly them, leading to some degree of schema revision (Dane, 2010). Further, effective decision-making arises as greater knowledge obtained outside of the focal context enables individuals to modify, and generate new ways of utilizing, their domain expertise (Custódio, Ferreira and Matos, 2019; Hargadon, 2006; Karaevli and Hall, 2006; Mueller *et al.*, 2021). Accordingly, the negative and positive effect of prior management experience on performance will not be as pronounced for managers with lower amounts of closely related experience, and so the curvilinear U-shaped relationship is expected to flatten. Hence:

H2: The curvilinear U-shaped relationship between the level of prior management experience and performance will be more pronounced for managers with higher amounts of closely related prior management experience than managers with lower amounts of closely related prior management experience.

Data and methods

Sample

Data for this study were obtained on the full population of football teams, and their managers, in the English Premier League (EPL) from 1996 to 2019. The dataset is composed of an unbalanced panel of 47 teams across 24 seasons due to promotions and relegations (see Appendix A for an overview of the EPL), with 259 manager spells (non-interim) being observed during this period. As 20 teams

compete in the EPL each season, the unit of analysis is team–season, with the 47 teams yielding 480 team–season combinations. To enable better comparisons across teams, this study observes managers' first year in post to their fifth year, or until exit. Limiting the sample to five post-entry years ensures that all managers are observed in the same period of their tenure and allows sufficient time for managers to draw upon their experience to impact performance. As such, the final sample consisted of 404 team–season observations.

The EPL is a conducive empirical context to study the relationship between prior management experience and performance for the following reasons. First, managers of football teams, defined as the individuals tasked with on-field performance, vary considerably in the amount of prior management experience they possess, leading to a heterogeneity of management experience across teams (see Table 1). As with many industries, it is common for managers without any management experience to be appointed, typically from other high-level positions within their respective team or another team (e.g. previous managers' support team and/or team captain). Managers of football teams have been likened to middle managers in large business organizations who report to the CEO and board, whose performance influences the financial performance of the organization, and are tasked with leading and managing a team of people – in this case players, coaches and medical staff (Schyns, Gilmore and Dietz, 2016). Football managers, therefore, may be viewed as managing a functional area or even a subsidiary within a larger organization.

Second, the bounded nature of the EPL context enables the possibility of controlling for external factors that can influence performance, because all teams face the same external environment (Hughes *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, focusing on a specific domain can ensure that ex-

Table 1. Distribution of prior management experience in the study

Prior management experience (in seasons)	Frequency
0	38
>0 and ≤5	70
>5 and ≤10	53
>10 and ≤15	52
>15 and ≤20	28
>20	18

perience is related (i.e. within a similar occupation, competitive context and/or industry). In the EPL context, appropriate feedback conditions exist via games of football, which are critical for acquiring expertise (Dane, 2010). Third, the performance-oriented hierarchical nature of the EPL, with the threat of relegations, means that the EPL is characterized by intense competition, and underscores the importance of learning, innovation and collaboration (Bolchover and Brady, 2002; Brady, Bolchover and Sturgess, 2008; Bridgewater, 2010). Finally, sports team settings offer comprehensive internal controls due to the availability of objective data. These benefits enable the opportunity to empirically validate better the effect of prior management experience on performance. Table 2 presents the variables, their measures and data sources.

Dependent variable

Team *performance* reflects managers' job performance and was measured as the total number of points achieved at the end of the focal season divided by the total possible points that can be achieved in a season. For example, for a full 38-game season in which a team wins 10 games and ties once – see Appendix A – the performance at the end of that team–season observation will be 27%: $([31/114] * 100)$.

Key independent variables

Prior management experience was measured as the total number of seasons a manager had managed football teams before the focal role. A time-based measure is commonly used to capture the amount of time an individual has spent performing a role (Brockmann and Simmonds, 1997), in this case being a football manager. As it is problematic to directly capture expertise, it is assumed to vary in direct proportion to role experience (Graf-Vlachy, Bundy and Hambrick, 2020). The square of this variable, *prior management experience squared*, was developed in line with the theory proposed in this study.

Prior closely related experience was measured as a binary variable coded 1 if managers' prior management experience is composed of more than 46% EPL management experience, and 0 otherwise. To reflect higher levels of such experience, this value is one standard deviation above the mean value of the proportion of EPL experience of prior management experience.

Control variables

As football managers are assessed on the performance of their teams, I control for important team and individual-level factors that could influence performance.

Team quality was measured as the total wage cost of a team in a season divided by the average wage cost for all teams in that season to account for inflation effects (Gerrard and Lockett, 2018). There is a widely held view that teams' wage costs can provide a reliable proxy for team quality, because wage cost is thought to be highly composed of player salaries – in that better players are paid more, which can have a strong influence on performance (Brady, Bolchover and Sturgess, 2008; Desai, Lockett and Paton, 2016; Gerrard and Lockett, 2018).

Team member shared experience was captured because shared experience amongst team members could develop tacit knowledge, which can impact performance (Berman, Down and Hill, 2002; Gerrard and Lockett, 2018). This variable was measured as the total number of months each player had been at the focal team at the end of a team–season multiplied by the number of starting league appearances in that season. An average was then calculated for each team–season observation, which is suitable because the number of players in each team can differ from one season to the next due to player transfers and injuries (Berman, Down and Hill, 2002). Weighting by current league starting appearances is also appropriate because in the EPL context a maximum of three players can be substituted in a game (Gerrard and Lockett, 2018).

Foreign ownership was measured as a binary variable coded 1 if a team was majority owned by foreign (non-UK) investors, and 0 otherwise. Ownership status may promote or hinder firm performance, depending on the level of financial resources invested in a team.

Director of football was measured as a binary variable coded 1 in the presence of a director of football, and 0 otherwise. Research demonstrates that such split-leadership structures can influence firm outcomes (Desai, Lockett and Paton, 2018; Rowe *et al.*, 2005).

Within-season hire was measured as a binary variable coded 1 if the manager was appointed within a competitive season (i.e. between mid-August and mid-May), and 0 otherwise. The

Table 2. Variables, measures and data sources

Variable	Measure	Data sources
Performance	The total number of points achieved at the end of the focal season divided by the total possible points that can be achieved in a season (i.e. $114 = [38 \times 3]$). The proportion is then multiplied by 100.	Rothman's/Sky Sport's annual yearbooks
Team quality	The total wage cost of a team in a season divided by the average wage cost of all teams in that season.	Financial Analysis Made Easy (FAME); Companies House
Team member shared experience	The focal team at the end of a team-season observation multiplied by their number of starting league appearances in that season. An average was then calculated.	Rothman's/Sky Sport's annual yearbooks; www.soccerbase.com
Foreign ownership	Binary variable coded 1 if a team was majority owned by foreign (non-UK) investors, and 0 otherwise.	Financial Analysis Made Easy (FAME); Companies House; Nexis
Director of football	Binary variable coded 1 if a director of football was present at a team, and 0 otherwise. Obtained from media reports by searching for a team's name with 'technical director', 'director of football' and/or 'sporting director'.	Nexis
Within-season hire	Binary variable coded 1 if the manager was appointed during a competitive season (approximately mid-August to mid-May), and 0 otherwise.	www.leaguemanagers.com; www.soccerbase.com
Prior manager tenure	The total number of games the predecessor manager was in post at the focal team.	www.leaguemanagers.com; Rothman's/Sky Sport's annual yearbooks
Experience as player	The total number of teams a manager had played for during their playing career.	www.soccerbase.com; Nexis
Manager reputation	The total number of elite competitions the manager had won before the focal team.	www.transfermarkt.com; www.managerstats.co.uk
External hire	Binary variable coded 1 if the manager was appointed from outside the team, and 0 otherwise.	Nexis
Manager tenure	The total number of seasons a manager has been in place at the team at the end of the prior season.	www.leaguemanagers.com; www.soccerbase.com; Nexis
Prior management experience	The total number of seasons a manager has managed football teams before the focal team.	www.leaguemanagers.com; www.soccerbase.com; Nexis
Prior closely related experience	Binary variable coded 1 if a manager's prior management experience is composed of more than 46% (i.e. mean + 1 SD) of EPL management experience.	www.leaguemanagers.com; www.soccerbase.com; Nexis

timing of appointment could influence performance due to disruptions (Rowe *et al.*, 2005).

Prior manager tenure was measured as the number of games for which the prior manager had been in post. There is evidence that the tenure of the predecessor can influence the decision-making and performance of the current manager and team (Desai, Lockett and Paton, 2018; Karaevli and Zajac, 2013).

Experience as player was measured as the total number of teams a manager had played for during their playing career. Experience of changing environments during managers' pre-management career may influence decision-making and hence performance (Karaevli and Hall, 2006).

Manager reputation was measured as the total number of elite competitions won as a manager before the focal role. Elite competitions comprised league championships, domestic cup competitions and European cup competitions in England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain. Leader reputation could influence social capital and hence performance (Dokko and Jiang, 2017; Ener, 2019).

External hire was measured as a binary variable coded 1 if the manager was appointed from the external labour market, and 0 otherwise. Research suggests that external hires differ in their decision-making tendencies relative to internal hires, which can influence performance (Bailey and Helfat, 2003; Bidwell, 2011).

Manager tenure was measured as the number of seasons a manager has been in post at the team at the end of the prior season, with a tenure value of 0 in the season of entry, which accumulates every season subject to exit. Studies highlight that positional tenure influences individuals' decision-making tendencies and performance (Hambrick and Fukutomi, 1991).

Finally, *season fixed effects* were included in the models to control for season-specific factors that may influence performance.

Estimation

Given the panel data structure of the dataset, evidence suggested that the optimal estimation procedure was to follow a team fixed-effects model, because the Breusch–Pagan and Hausman tests rejected the use of pooled ordinary least squares and random effects models, respectively. This suggests that unobserved individual specific effects are correlated with the predictor variables.

Furthermore, the estimation of the models required consideration of heteroscedasticity (modified Wald test, $p < 0.001$) and first-order autocorrelation (Wooldridge test, $p < 0.001$). Accordingly, models were estimated using a fixed-effects model with robust standard errors that are clustered at the team level.

The empirical approach of this paper also accounts for selection bias that may arise when examining managers' post-entry years. Appointing a new manager may not occur randomly because, for example, poorly performing teams are more likely to replace their managers. To account for this issue, a Heckman selection model was implemented that operates in two stages (Heckman, 1976, 1979). In the first stage, the selection equation was estimated on the full sample ($N = 480$) using a probit model, by regressing whether a team–year observation would experience a manager exit on a range of predictor variables (Wooldridge, 1995). Predictor variables included all those described above, with particular importance on the inclusion of manager tenure, tenure of the predecessor manager and also past performance (Desai, Lockett and Paton, 2018). Given that teams are observed over time, observations were clustered at the team level.

As identification in Heckman models is enhanced when adding an exclusion restriction (Sartori, 2003), cumulative succession rate in the EPL over the sample period was added. Related research has highlighted that manager turnover decisions in an industry (the EPL in this context) may be driven by mimetic tendencies across firms (teams) rather than being for strategic reasons (Georgakakis and Ruigrok, 2017; Karaevli and Zajac, 2013). As such, the cumulative succession rate at the EPL level could influence manager exits but is not likely to significantly affect team performance. Correlation results demonstrated a strong association with manager exit ($p < 0.001$) but not with performance ($p > 0.10$). Further, this variable was a significant predictor in the first-stage model ($p < 0.05$). In the second stage, the inverse Mills ratio, termed *selection control*, was constructed from the predicted values of the first-stage model and included in the main model.

Empirical findings

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics and the correlation matrix. Table 4 contains

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix^{a,b}

Variables	Mean	SD	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
(1) Performance	43.76	13.51	–													
(2) Team quality	0.95	0.55	0.69	–												
(3) Foreign ownership	0.25	0.43	0.20	0.25	–											
(4) Director of football	0.21	0.39	0.18	0.18	0.27	–										
(5) Within-season hire	0.58	0.47	–0.21	–0.12	–0.10	–0.06	–									
(6) Prior manager tenure	91.88	100.09	0.11	0.04	–0.07	–0.12	–0.10	–								
(7) Experience as player	4.43	2.38	–0.24	–0.23	–0.13	–0.03	0.03	0.01	–							
(8) Manager reputation	1.51	3.12	0.35	0.40	0.16	0.11	–0.18	0.02	–0.13	–						
(9) External hire	0.83	0.35	0.09	0.02	0.09	0.05	–0.16	0.00	0.05	0.19	–					
(10) Team member shared experience	757.84	296.73	0.55	0.47	–0.03	0.09	–0.20	0.22	–0.19	0.21	–0.02	–				
(11) Manager tenure	1.39	1.18	0.02	–0.03	–0.17	–0.14	0.21	0.01	–0.04	–0.08	–0.07	0.07	–			
(12) Prior closely related experience	0.19	0.37	–0.13	–0.05	–0.09	0.02	0.04	0.09	0.19	–0.05	0.15	–0.05	–0.10	–		
(13) Prior management experience	8.21	6.20	0.07	0.03	0.19	0.14	0.03	–0.05	–0.11	0.26	0.31	–0.03	–0.16	0.22	–	
(14) Prior management experience sq.	105.84	134.26	0.05	–0.02	0.16	0.08	0.08	–0.08	–0.14	0.18	0.21	–0.06	–0.12	0.18	0.94	–
(15) Selection control	0.94	0.29	0.26	0.23	–0.37	–0.24	–0.53	0.08	0.06	0.12	0.03	0.41	0.27	–0.34	–0.33	–0.33

^a N = 404.

^b Underlined = p < 0.05.

Table 4. Fixed effects model for prior management experience and performance^{a,b}

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Team quality	11.738 (1.844)	[0.000]	11.873 (1.946)	[0.000]	11.788 (1.985)	[0.000]
Foreign ownership	1.966 (2.173)	[0.371]	1.920 (1.969)	[0.335]	1.914 (1.984)	[0.340]
Director of football	0.530 (1.985)	[0.791]	1.270 (1.977)	[0.524]	1.777 (2.070)	[0.395]
Within-season hire	-1.345 (2.418)	[0.581]	-1.630 (2.305)	[0.483]	-1.640 (2.335)	[0.486]
Prior manager tenure	0.012 (0.005)	[0.017]	0.013 (0.005)	[0.012]	0.014 (0.005)	[0.015]
Experience as player	-0.052 (0.283)	[0.854]	0.075 (0.256)	[0.770]	0.158 (0.263)	[0.552]
Manager reputation	-0.082 (0.238)	[0.731]	0.022 (0.236)	[0.927]	0.018 (0.241)	[0.941]
External hire	2.038 (2.590)	[0.436]	3.792 (2.499)	[0.136]	3.690 (2.438)	[0.137]
Team member shared experience	0.007 (0.002)	[0.002]	0.007 (0.002)	[0.004]	0.007 (0.002)	[0.004]
Manager tenure	0.656 (0.662)	[0.327]	0.553 (0.634)	[0.387]	0.570 (0.638)	[0.376]
Selection control	3.277 (7.855)	[0.679]	3.117 (7.473)	[0.679]	2.921 (7.341)	[0.693]
Prior closely related experience	-3.984 (2.255)	[0.084]	-3.999 (2.044)	[0.057]	4.556 (4.827)	[0.350]
Prior management experience	0.206 (0.104)	[0.054]	-0.918 (0.307)	[0.005]	-0.739 (0.341)	[0.036]
Prior management experience squared			0.052 (0.013)	[0.000]	0.045 (0.015)	[0.006]
Prior management experience × prior closely related experience					-1.790 (0.712)	[0.016]
Prior management experience squared × prior closely related experience					0.069 (0.028)	[0.018]
Constant	18.148 (11.207)	[0.113]	20.021 (10.927)	[0.074]	19.598 (10.981)	[0.081]
Observations	404		404		404	
R ²	0.288		0.328		0.334	
R ² adjusted	0.218		0.260		0.263	

^a Robust standard errors are reported in parentheses and p-values are reported in square brackets (two-tailed tests).

^b Season fixed effects included in all models but not reported.

regression analyses linking prior management experience with performance. In Table 4, model 1 is the control model and models 2 and 3 examine the hypothesized relationships. Furthermore, a variety of additional and robustness analyses were conducted and are presented in Appendix B.

H1 proposed a curvilinear U-shaped relationship between the level of prior management experience and performance. The results from model 2 in Table 4 support this hypothesis as the coefficient for the linear effect of prior management experience is negative and significant ($\beta = -0.918$, $p = 0.005$) and the coefficient for prior manage-

ment experience squared is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.052$, $p = 0.000$). To visualize better the relationship underlying H1, the predicted effects of prior management experience on performance based on model 2 in Table 4 were plotted. Figure 1 demonstrates that performance decreases as the level of prior management experience increases, until reaching a minimum of nine seasons, and beyond this threshold performance increases with the level of experience. This implies that better-performing teams are those led by managers with zero/low and high levels of prior management experience. For example, the results demonstrate that the performance of managers

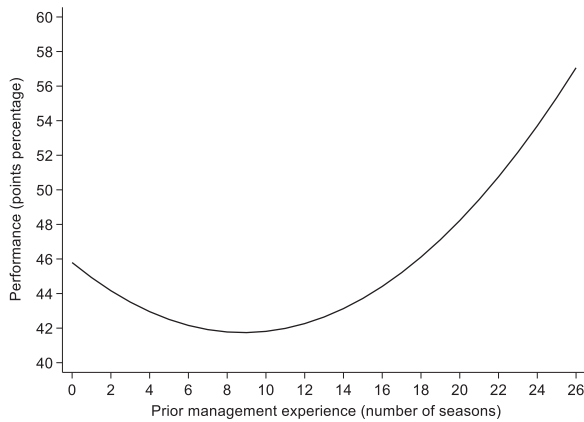


Figure 1. Prior management experience and performance

Table 5. Establishing curvilinear effects^a

	Model 2 in Table 4	
Extreme point	8.831	
Fieller 95% confidence interval for extreme point	5.405; 10.529	
Slopes when prior management experience = 1	-0.814 (-2.888)	[0.003]
Slopes when prior management experience = 24	1.577 (4.692)	[0.000]
U-shape test (H0: monotone or inverse U-shape)	Reject H0 (2.89)	[0.003]

^a t-Statistics in parentheses and p-values in square brackets.

with zero/one and 18 seasons of prior management experience was around four percentage points higher than managers with nine seasons (i.e. moderate) of experience. The substantive implication is that such managers achieve around five more points in a season than managers with moderate levels of experience. Such performance differences can equate to millions (£) in revenue for teams.

Additional tests were conducted to ascertain the strength of the curvilinear U-shaped relationship (Haans, Pieters and He, 2016; Lind and Mehlum, 2010), using model 2 in Table 4 (see Table 5). First, the confidence interval for the turning point was located within the range of the independent variable. The turning point is 8.831 with a 95% confidence interval of 5.405 and 10.529, which is well within the 0–26 range. Second, the slopes at both the lower and higher ends of the data range were statistically significant, demonstrated the proposed signs and were sufficiently steep (see Figure 1). For example, when prior management experience is set at one, the slope is negative and

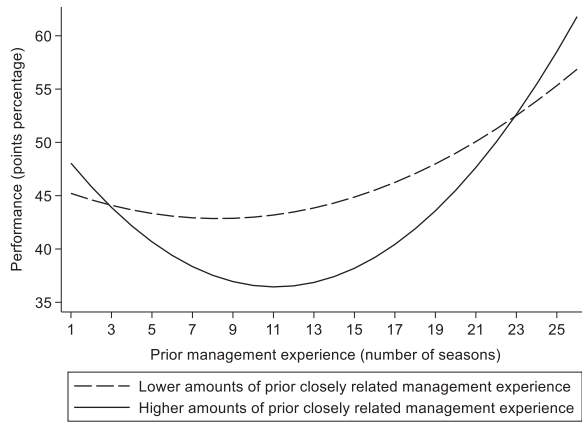


Figure 2. Prior management experience and performance at different amounts of closely related experience

significant (-0.814 , $p = 0.003$), and when set at 24 the slope is positive and significant (1.577 , $p = 0.000$). Third, the addition of a cubic term was not statistically significant and did not improve model fit, which supports the use of the quadratic model. Finally, when the sample was split at the empirically determined turning point, the linear effect of prior management experience was significant in the proposed directions in both samples. These tests offer further support for the curvilinear relationship revealed in this study. Overall, these results provide evidence to support the predictions of H1.

H2 proposed that the curvilinear U-shaped relationship between the level of prior management experience and performance is more pronounced for managers with higher amounts, as compared to lower amounts, of closely related prior management experience. In model 3 of Table 4, the interaction of prior management experience with closely related experience was negative and significant ($\beta = -1.790$, $p = 0.016$), and the interaction of prior management experience squared with closely related experience was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.069$, $p = 0.018$). When the predicted effects underlying H2 were plotted, Figure 2 shows that at lower to moderate levels of prior management experience, the negative effect of experience on performance is steeper at higher amounts of closely related experience. Similarly, from moderate to higher levels of prior management experience, the positive effect of experience on performance is steeper at higher amounts of

closely related experience. Furthermore, Figure 2 demonstrates that both the upward and downward slopes of the U-shaped relationship are not as pronounced (i.e. become flatter) at lower amounts of closely related experience. Overall, these results provide evidence to support the predictions of H2.

Discussion

Using a domain-expertise lens (Dane, 2010), this study seeks to understand better the relationship between prior management experience and performance. Instead of viewing prior management experience as having a positive versus negative effect on performance as the literature suggests, this research demonstrates a curvilinear U-shaped relationship between the level of prior management experience and performance. Findings of the study imply that zero (and low) and higher levels of prior management experience are more beneficial for performance than moderate levels. Furthermore, the results show that the nature of the curvilinear relationship is more pronounced when prior management experience is more related to the focal job and is less pronounced when experience is less related. In doing so, this study contributes to the literature in the following ways.

First, this research contributes to Dane's (2010) schema-based notion that the acquisition of domain expertise can also lead to inflexibility in thought and behaviour. By demonstrating a U-shaped relationship between domain expertise in terms of prior management experience and performance, this study provides empirical support for the idea that expertise and inflexibility operate simultaneously, but they do so at different rates with the level of domain experience. The findings show that the inflexibility effect increasingly dominates the expertise effect for managers with domain experience up to a threshold. This highlights the possibility for domain schemas to exhibit a period of stability as schemas are being increasingly activated and applied, which can slow down effective learning and decision-making in the focal job (Dane, 2010). I suggest that schema stability will be particularly pronounced because of managers' belief in their relatively limited domain expertise (Haleblian and Finkelstein, 1999). In this regard, this study responds to the call to understand better the extent to which the inflexibility effect can arise

among individuals with lower levels of domain experience (Dane, 2010).

Indeed, the dominance of the inflexibility effect up to a threshold of experience is also likely to develop since managers require more learning to enhance their expertise. The findings, however, show that instead of becoming progressively inflexible in ways of thought and behaviour, managers with higher levels of domain expertise perform well when moving to another job context. Indeed, the strength of the expertise effect begins to manifest and dominate the inflexibility effect beyond a threshold of domain experience as managers apply their rich and complex domain schemas. The expertise effect is also enhanced because managers operate and engage in a fiercely competitive context in terms of the EPL and the football industry more broadly, where innovation, collaboration and improvisation are key to performing well (Bolchover and Brady, 2002; Brady, Bolchover and Sturgess, 2008; Bridgewater, 2010). Increasing exposure to such contexts provides individuals with a capacity to question and doubt cause-effect relationships within their domains, which can dampen issues of inflexibility (Dane, 2010).

Similarly, when examining the moderating role of the relatedness of prior experience, the findings support Dane's (2010) argument that operating in settings different from the focal one can engender new perspectives, information and behaviours, which can loosen relationships underlying individuals' domain schemas. As such, individuals can view stimuli in their domain of expertise in more conditional terms. In this study, different contexts reflect obtaining management experience in football leagues that can differ in the quality and quantity of resource and from leagues that are located abroad (Leung *et al.*, 2008; Maddux and Galinsky, 2009). Considering the latter, differences arise through institutional environments, interacting with different cultures, and different modes of operating and responding to stimuli (Ricks, Toyne and Martinez, 1990). Accordingly, the findings highlight that there can be enough intra-domain heterogeneity in terms of how to conduct tasks and activities in the management role, which generates sufficient stimuli so that continual activation of domain schemas is not incited, yet not overly distant as to render the influence of new stimuli redundant and divert attention away from individuals' domain of expertise. In this respect, this

research responds to the call to understand better the degree to which domains must differ to prompt a dampening cognitive inflexibility effect (Dane, 2010).

Second, findings of the study have implications for the literature on the portability of job-specific experience across firm boundaries, which is characterized by the theoretical tension arising from the positive (human capital) versus negative (psychological) perspectives of prior job-specific experience on performance. These findings are indicative of limitations in the human capital explanation, which has long advocated that more knowledge and experience is better for decision-making and performance (Bailey and Helfat, 2003; Becker, 1964). In contrast to research challenging the human capital perspective (Hamori and Koyuncu, 2015), the results also demonstrate the benefits of prior job-specific experience and so this study underscores a more precise weakness. The human capital perspective does not fully consider the negative effect of prior job-specific experience on performance that arises for managers with lower to moderate levels of prior job-specific experience. These managers are in the learning phases of their careers, but will tend to overly rely on their prior experience, which will hinder effective learning, decision-making and hence performance in the focal job.

Whilst researchers have recently begun to explore the 'dark side' of human capital by elaborating on the negative influence of 'knowledge corridors' that can emerge from specific prior experience (Gruber, MacMillan and Thompson, 2013; Marvel, Wolfe and Kuratko, 2020), further development is required to understand how and why a negative effect can arise for individuals with lower to moderate levels of prior experience compared to higher levels. On the issue of knowledge corridors, findings of this study lend support to the idea that such corridors may be enhanced by closely related experience (Gruber, MacMillan and Thompson, 2013; Hamori and Koyuncu, 2015). This issue, however, is more pronounced for individuals who possess lower to moderate levels of prior management experience composed of higher amounts of closely related experience, who are most convinced of the appropriateness of their (limited) prior experience. At higher levels of prior management experience, greater time and reflection in closely related contexts enables managers to understand better how to conduct

the management role in those contexts, resulting in a positive impact on performance (McDonald, Westphal and Graebner, 2008; McEnrue, 1988). Accordingly, these findings can advance understanding of when the negative impact of closely related experience on performance is most potent.

Furthermore, explanations rooted in the psychology literature that centres on institutional and cognitive rigidities (Dokko, Wilk and Rothbard, 2009; Hamori and Koyuncu, 2015) require adjustment to account for the possibility that greater levels of prior job-specific experience can also develop a positive effect on performance. I suggest that Dane's (2010) schema-based notion of domain expertise enables a conceptualization that accommodates a more realistic and longitudinal picture of the continuous and complex nature of prior job-specific experience and its impact on performance. This perspective illuminates the issue of schema stability as a driver of cognitive inflexibility, which can occur at both lower or higher levels of prior experience and depends upon context. Accordingly, the current study emphasizes the importance of moving beyond linear and binary approaches to conceptualizing and measuring prior job-specific experience (see model 1 in Table 4 and Appendix B), which will help to reconcile the equivocality of empirical results in the literature.

Practical implications

The length of prior (i.e. pre-hire) experience of managers is a widely accepted criterion used by practitioners (e.g. HR professionals and hiring committees) when making hiring decisions. Rather than viewing candidates' prior experience in linear terms (e.g. more vs. less experience is good/bad), this study illustrates that varying amounts of prior management experience can lead to different performance outcomes. Practitioners should be mindful of managers who possess lower to moderate levels of prior management experience (i.e. approaching nine seasons, or 327 games in the EPL context), especially when much of this experience is closely related to the focal job. These managers have not yet accumulated enough experience to attain some level of mastery of the management role, but are likely to rely heavily on their prior experience, which can slow down learning and effective decision-making in the focal job. It should be emphasized that this study does not seek to undermine the quality of managers with

lower to moderate levels of prior management experience who have likely shown their potential in prior job(s), and nor does it seek to deter practitioners from appointing such managers.

Rather, this study strives to highlight that managers possessing lower to moderate amounts of prior management experience may require additional support and socialization into the organization to demonstrate their quality (Beyer and Hannah, 2002; Dokko and Jiang, 2017). Whilst socialization of newcomers should be common practice at firms, practitioners may consider developing customized socialization practices to determine the extent to which such managers wish to draw upon their experience and evaluate whether managers should modify their approach when conducting the management role. Socialization practices may entail opportunities to build intra-firm relationships and initiatives that develop a supportive environment (Klein, Polin and Leigh Sutton, 2015). This can operate to alleviate pressure from these managers so that they can think more freely in their new environments, enabling them to unlearn specificities associated with their prior experience and learn better about their current contexts (Becker and Bish, 2021; Dokko and Jiang, 2017). Overall, such initiatives should enable managers to demonstrate better the potential they have shown in their previous role(s).

Limitations and future research

A plausible concern is whether the theory and findings of this study generalize to other business settings. Considering the core elements of the theoretical ideas relate to experience and learning, ideas of this study should be generalizable to contexts of general management, especially in settings where the mobility of managers is prevalent. With regard to future research, researchers could explore factors that enhance/reduce managers' propensity to draw upon their expertise. For example, challenges facing managers can differ across teams and firms, which may influence their decision-making and performance, because more challenging jobs could increase the tendency for managers to rely on their domain schemas (Dane, 2010; Hambrick, Finkelstein and Mooney, 2005). Overall, researchers are encouraged to develop the theory proposed in this study by establishing further boundary conditions, examining various dimensions of managers' experience and performance, and determining

generalizability by using different samples and contexts.

Conclusion

This study suggests that managers' prior management experience can act as a double-edged sword for job performance. Specifically, the accumulation of prior management experience can be detrimental up to a threshold, after which the expertise benefits of increasing levels of experience outweigh the costs of cognitive inflexibility. The central contribution is to offer a theoretical explanation based on Dane's (2010) schema-based notion of domain expertise that considers the dynamic interplay of the positive and negative effect of prior management experience on performance over time. In highlighting schema stability as the underlying driver for when one effect can dominate the other, and key contextual factors that influence schema stability, this research can advance understanding for both theory and practice.

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Supporting Information

Additional supporting information may be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of the article.

Online Appendix