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There is no I in “Team”: Learning from Team Success and Failure for Retail Performance Improvement

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Published Online: 24 Jul 2023 | <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMPROC.2023.11180abstract>

Abstract

Learning from individual experiences has been described as an important predictor of organizational performance. In contrast, little is known about how prior success and failure experiences at the team-level impact performance and whether goal accomplishment moderates the learning process. In this study, we investigate 573 dispatcher-driver teams that work together in delivering groceries to retail stores. We analyse daily-level data for 13,246 deliveries during a period of four months. We find support for the argument that prior team success increases current delivery performance while performance declines with increasing number of failures. We also show that teams learn from failures when service-level goals in the prior period have been accomplished. In contrast, success-based learning is reinforced when goals in the most recent period are accomplished. These findings illuminate the conditions under which teams can be enabled to learn from prior successes and failures. For supply chain managers, the study informs how feedback about goal accomplishment for different time periods can boost learning rates.





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