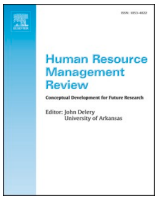
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A meta-analysis of team reflexivity: Antecedents, outcomes, and boundary conditions

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ABSTRACT

In this meta-analysis, we assess the performance benefits of team reflexivity. Drawing on the teams-as-information-processors perspective, we provide evidence that team reflexivity facilitates team performance, yet we also find that these benefits depend on key team design contingencies, namely team size and team tenure. In addition, we examine how team leaders can make their team more reflexive. Our study shows that leaders who support team members' active participation in group discussion and decision-making set the stage for greater reflexivity and then greater performance by fostering the emergence of team psychological safety. We also provide a comprehensive review of the research on team reflexivity by examining the strength of relationships in its nomological network. Overall, this meta-analysis challenges certain assumptions about reflexivity and opens new avenues for research to further understand its role in the effectiveness of teams.

1. Introduction

The increasing challenges faced by today's work teams, such as greater task complexity, enhanced responsibilities, and a surge in technical knowledge, require that they take time to reflect on and adapt their goals and work processes (Harvey, Bresman, Edmondson, & Pisano, 2022). Otherwise, teams may fall prey to confirmation bias and make decisions based on preconceived notions rather than objective analysis of all available information. They may also struggle with miscommunication or misinterpretation, information overload, information hoarding, and groupthink (Schippers & Rus, 2021). As a potential "antidote" to such team information processing failures (Schippers, Edmondson, & West, 2014), team reflexivity plays a central role in team performance (Aubé, Francoeur, Sponem, & Séguin, 2021; *Harvey & Green, 2022). When team members openly and critically discuss how well they are doing things, they help their team thrive by facilitating the integration of dissenting viewpoints (De Dreu, 2002), developing a shared understanding of the tasks at hand (Konradt, Schippers, Garbers, & Steenfatt, 2015), and correcting and preventing errors (Schippers, Homan, & Van Knippenberg, 2013).

However, several studies have shown mixed results, indicating inconclusive or even negative associations between team reflexivity and team performance (Breugst, Preller, Patzelt, & Shepherd, 2018; De Dreu, 2002; Hirst & Mann, 2004; Ji & Yan, 2020). These findings challenge the perceived value of team reflexivity. Scholars, such as Moreland and McMinn (2010), advise caution and call for more extensive research before fully endorsing reflexivity, especially considering the time and energy it demands from team members.

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Considering the pivotal role of reflexivity in team learning, as outlined by Harvey, Cromwell, Johnson, and Edmondson (2023), it becomes crucial to deepen our evidence-based understanding of its potential to enhance team performance. Equally important is identifying its boundary conditions to fully comprehend its effectiveness.

A prominent perspective that provides insight into how and when reflexivity leads to greater performance is the teams-as-information-processors perspective (De Dreu, Nijstad, & Van Knippenberg, 2008; Hinsz, Tindale, & Vollrath, 1997). It posits that task accomplishment is a function of a team's ability to use and combine members' contributions, such as knowledge and viewpoints (Hoever, Zhou, & et van Knippenberg, 2018), and that reflexivity is central to this (Groulx, Johnson, & Harvey, 2023). In addition to expecting reflexivity to strengthen team performance, we also expect team size and team tenure to be critical team design factors that modulates this relationship (Hackman, 1987; Harvey et al., 2022). Team size, or the number of members, significantly influences communication dynamics (Hoegl, 2005). In larger teams, subgroup formation can limit some members' contributions (Carton & Cummings, 2012; Okuyama, Wagner, & Bijnen, 2014), affecting the effectiveness of reflexivity. Team tenure also poses a dilemma. While long-standing members possess valuable knowledge about team tasks and procedures (Schmidt, Hunter, & Outerbridge, 1986), their established routines may reduce the likelihood of reflexivity inducing significant change (Gersick & Hackman, 1990), potentially limiting its performance benefits. Therefore, examining these team design factors may help to better understand the effectiveness of team reflexivity.

Given the anticipated performance implications of team reflexivity, there is also a need to understand what makes some teams more reflexive than others. This is crucial because teams often fail to self-reflect, even when their actions prove to be dysfunctional (Edmondson, 2002). Reflecting on their activities can be risky for many team members, who may face potential rejection or criticism for bringing up contentious issues or problems. Accordingly, team research generally shows that psychological safety—the "shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking" (Edmondson, 1999, p.350)—is essential for team reflexivity (Frazier, Fainshmidt, Klinger, Pezeshkan, & Vracheva, 2017). In psychologically safe environments, team members are more likely to express alternative arguments and suggest better ways of working together (Schippers, West, & Edmondson, 2017). When team members know that their contributions will be respected, they are also more likely to challenge others' ideas and perspectives (Hu, Erdogan, Jiang, Bauer, & Liu, 2017).

However, neither psychological safety nor reflexivity emerge automatically in teams (Cronin, Weingart, & Todorova, 2011). Instead, their development partly depends on contextual factors (Marks, Mathieu, & Zaccaro, 2001), among which the role of team leaders is key (*Harvey & Green, 2022; Harvey, Leblanc, & Cronin, 2019; Leblanc, Rousseau, & Harvey, 2022). Due to their higher status (Morgeson, DeRue, & Karam, 2010), team leaders can reduce the risks of speaking up. Their actions tend to be scrutinized and interpreted by team members as signals about what is expected and accepted with regard to team functioning (Tyler & Lind, 1992). Simple actions, such as responding to member criticism or addressing team shortcomings, can convey a leader's priorities and shape future team interactions.

We propose that team leaders who encourage active participation in team discussions and decisions create the conditions for increased reflexivity and, consequently, superior team performance by enhancing psychological safety. This bottom-up approach to leadership aims to minimize power differences within the team, provide opportunities for members to express themselves, and/or value their input (*Edmondson, 2003; Edmondson & Harvey, 2017; Owens, Johnson, & Mitchell, 2013). These leaders stress that voicing opinions and concerns is key to the team's success and that each member can contribute to the team's improvement through their unique insights and expertise. Conversely, we argue that leaders who adopt a directive approach may limit reflexivity in teams because it signals a preference for compliance and conformity.

Employing meta-analytic techniques, we tested each of the proposed relationships. Our findings, which support our theoretical framework, significantly advance the understanding of team reflexivity. Previous meta-analyses either lumped various team learning behaviors (including reflexivity) into a broad, single category (e.g., Koeslag-Kreunen, Van den Bossche, Hoven, Van der Klink, & Gijselaers, 2018; Marlow & Lacerenza, 2024; Wiese, Burke, Tang, Hernandez, & Howell, 2022) or overlooked team performance as a potential outcome (e.g., Byron, Keem, Darden, Shalley, & Zhou, 2023). Our work differs from these meta-analyses by considering only behaviors consistent with West's (2000) definition of team reflexivity to assess its specific performance benefits. Recent work by Harvey et al. (2022) suggests that different types of team learning behaviors support different types of organizational capabilities and are influenced by different team design factors. It thus makes sense to focus on a specific construct instead of taking an umbrella approach. By targeting team reflexivity, our meta-analysis can make a strong theoretical contribution regarding this specific team learning behavior's antecedents and outcomes, and the mechanism through which leaders can influence performance by heightening it. Moreover, clear boundary conditions under which this operates can be identified, which is crucial for applying findings in varied contexts. Specific insights into a particular construct enable the development of tailored interventions and strategies, which HR practitioners and leaders can apply more effectively in team settings.

Besides, our meta-analytic approach goes beyond traditional empirical studies, allowing us to scrutinize how research design and sample characteristics contribute to systematic variations in effect sizes (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004). Consequently, we explore various categorical features to gain a more complete understanding of the contingencies surrounding team reflexivity. The utilization of meta-analysis in our research is particularly valuable as it provides a comprehensive, evidence-based resolution to longstanding scientific debates, offering a more definitive understanding of the impact of team reflexivity.

We also address the calls to elucidate the role of team leadership as an antecedent to team reflexivity (Schippers et al., 2017). In our study, we examine a serial mediation model that places team reflexivity at the core, functioning as a vital mechanism through which team leadership, followed by team psychological safety, translates into enhanced team performance. Specifically, we expand upon prior research demonstrating that team leaders who encourage active participation in discussions and decision-making establish the contextual groundwork for increased reflexivity (Edmondson, 2002; *Edmondson, 2003; Edmondson & Harvey, 2017; Nembhard &

Edmondson, 2006). Through this approach, we reinforce the theory that team psychological safety should be a primary focus for leaders aiming to elevate their team's reflexivity and performance levels.

2. Theory and hypotheses

Team reflexivity is commonly defined as "the extent to which group members overtly reflect upon, and communicate about the group's objectives, strategies (e.g., decision making) and processes (e.g., communication), and adapt them to current or anticipated circumstances" (West, 2000, p. 296). Depicted as an iterative process, team reflexivity consists of three interrelated subprocesses: reflection, planning, and adaptation. However, the relationship between these subprocesses has rarely been examined (for an exception, see Wiedow & Konradt, 2011). Indeed, most research conceptualizes team reflexivity as a unidimensional construct that focuses on reflection (*Harvey & Green, 2022; Lyubovnikova, Legood, Turner, & Mamakouka, 2017; Schippers et al., 2013), which primarily includes intra-team information-seeking and information-evaluating activities (Konradt et al., 2015). Team reflexivity is arguably very similar to Edmondson's (1999) conceptualization of team learning, which is conceived as "an ongoing process of reflection and action, characterized by asking questions, seeking feedback, experimenting, reflecting on results, and discussing errors or unexpected outcomes of actions" (p. 353). Despite the use of different terms, we consider these two constructs to be equivalent because they both place team reflection at the center of team adaptation and team performance improvement.

2.1. Team reflexivity and team performance

Rooted in the foundational work of Hinsz et al. (1997), the teams-as-information-processors perspective provides a useful lens for understanding why team reflexivity contributes to team performance. Fundamentally, this theoretical perspective posits that team performance relies on the team's ability to engage in multiple information-processing activities (e.g., acquiring, utilizing, stocking, and retrieving information). Although these activities arise from individual team members' own cognitive processes, they are considered team-level phenomena because they occur in the context team members' interacting with other members and their task environment (Ickes & Gonzalez, 1994; Wilson, Goodman, & Cronin, 2007). As suggested by Hinsz et al. (1997), information-processing in teams "involves the degree to which information, ideas, or cognitive processes are shared, and are being shared, among the group members and how this sharing of information affects both individual- and group-level outcomes" (p.43).

Just like individuals, teams can fail to process information effectively (Janis, 1982; Larson, Christensen, Abbott, & Franz, 1996; Stasser & Titus, 1985). In fact, research shows that member biases, such as the base-rate fallacy (Nagao, Tindale, Hinsz, & Davis, 1985) and escalation of commitment (Whyte, 1993), tend to be amplified in team settings due to poor communication among members (Hinsz et al., 1997). Unless teams use appropriate de-biasing techniques, their superiority over individuals in processing information is compromised. Building on these theoretical insights, Schippers et al. (2014) argue that reflexivity sets the stage for improved performance by helping teams process information more effectively. In particular, it can counteract three categories of team information processing failures: (a) a failure to search and share relevant information, (b) a failure to elaborate and derive implications from information, and (c) a failure to update or alter prior conclusions.

Although teams have access to a wider range of information than individuals (Edmondson & Harvey, 2018; Hollenbeck et al., 1995), numerous experiments suggest that they rely primarily on shared information when making decisions (Stasser, 1999; Stasser and Titus, 1985). Failure to search for relevant information or to discuss privately held information can deprive teams of meaningful ideas and perspectives. Whether these failures are caused by low levels of motivation (Schippers et al., 2014) or strong pressures to conform to team norms (Janis, 1982; Schippers & Rus, 2021), they can severely impact team performance, for example, by perpetuating dysfunctional work processes or reducing a team's ability to solve complex problems (Brodbeck, Kerschreiter, Mojzisch, & Schulz-Hardt, 2007; Hart, 1991). Team reflexivity can be used as a means to broaden the focus of team members. For example, those that prioritize critical discussion over consensus produce higher quality decisions, primarily because their members place a higher value on unshared information (Postmes, Spears, & Cihangir, 2001). When team members discuss the causes of lower-than-expected levels of performance, they may also quickly realize that the common pool of knowledge is no longer up to the task. In this case, the motivation of team members to consider new perspectives and to share ideas that they may have been reluctant to discuss in the past is likely to increase.

Searching and sharing relevant information does not guarantee that teams will elaborate and draw implications from that information. In fact, new information is often overlooked (Stasser & Titus, 1985) because team members tend to stick to their original preferences and decisions (Edmondson & Harvey, 2017). Of course, teams that fail to integrate diverse ideas and perspectives are unlikely to achieve a complete understanding of the tasks at hand (Homan, Van Knippenberg, Van Kleef, & De Dreu, 2007), thereby compromising the quality of team decisions (Kooij-de Bode, van Knippenberg, & van Ginkel, 2008). According to van Ginkel, Tindale, and van Knippenberg (2009), team reflexivity helps team members to recognize the need to integrate the unique knowledge of others into joint solutions. Specifically, they show that reflexivity makes divergences in task representations more salient and encourages members to reconcile them. Similarly, Schippers et al. (2014) suggest that reflexivity motivates members to weigh available information more carefully, for example, through the use of data and falsifiable statements.

However, even when teams overcome these pitfalls, they may fail to revise and update their conclusions. Especially for teams operating in turbulent environments, the failure to correct erroneous assumptions can lead to a sharp decline in performance (Schippers & Rus, 2021). Sometimes, teams become so accustomed to certain routines that they continue to perform them almost automatically despite critical changes in their environment (Gersick & Hackman, 1990). They may even refuse to pay attention to negative feedback (Staw, 1981) or consider better alternatives (Schippers & Rus, 2021). Interestingly, research again highlights the

benefits of team reflexivity. In a study of operational teams, Zellmer-Bruhn (2003) shows that interruptive events can trigger changes in the way the teams perform. Specifically, brief interruptions in activity are seen as opportunities to reflect on how the team is functioning and then to improve work processes. Drawing on research on de-escalation of commitment, Schippers et al. (2014) also suggest that holding teams accountable for the way they make decisions – as opposed to holding them accountable for the outcomes they achieve – allows for thoughtful examination of information and continuous reassessment of the teams' conclusions.

In sum, to the extent that reflexivity reduces the vulnerability of teams to errors in information processing, we expect that it will positively contribute to their performance. This leads us to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. *Team reflexivity is positively related to team performance.*

2.2. Moderators of the team reflexivity-team performance relationship

Despite strong theoretical arguments and a large body of empirical evidence pointing to the performance benefits of team reflexivity, we also expect this relationship to depend on a number of conditions. While reflexivity may be crucial for reducing the occurrence of various team failures, such deep information-processing activities may also come at a cost – they may be time- and energy-consuming and should therefore be used strategically (Harvey et al., 2022; Schippers, West, & Dawson, 2015). This is evidenced by research showing that reflexivity drives performance only when teams have more room for improvement (Schippers et al., 2013) or face changing demands (Aubé et al., 2021). Advancing this line of research is essential to gain a deeper understanding of the circumstances under which team reflexivity materializes into improved team performance. In this meta-analysis, we focus on two substantive contingencies that are drawn from classic team design scholarship: team size and team tenure.

2.2.1. Team size

One of the very first elements that comes to mind when thinking about teams is their size (Harvey et al., 2022). For many scholars, the sheer number of members on a team is synonymous with cognitive capability (Haleblian & Finkelstein, 1993; Hill, 1982). Indeed, large teams tend to have a wider range of informational resources at their disposal (Gallupe et al., 1992), giving them an advantage over small teams when it comes to accomplishing complex tasks (Wuchty, Jones, & Uzzi, 2007). However, although they bring additional resources to the group, each additional member makes team communication more demanding (Campion, Papper, & Medsker, 1996). As teams grow, it becomes increasingly difficult to pay attention to each members' contributions (Yuan & Van Knippenberg, 2022), let alone ensure a common view on some key elements of team functioning (Curral, Forrester, Dawson, & West, 2001). The multiplication of communication channels also creates the conditions for a few members to hijack team discussions (Bray, Kerr and Atkin, 1978), which can further reduce the motivation of others to share their unique knowledge (Stasser, Taylor, & Hanna, 1989). Moreover, because large teams tend to break into subgroups (Shaw, 2004), this can lead to heterogeneous cognitive representations, or "representational gaps", that may prevent one subgroup from interpreting and evaluating information from other subgroups (Cronin & Weingart, 2007; Edmondson & Harvey, 2018).

Given the aforementioned barriers to effective information processing in large teams, we expect team reflexivity to be particularly important as team size increases. Under this condition, reflexivity gives members the opportunity to learn about each others' views and to ensure that everyone is on the same page. Moreover, reflecting on important team issues not only allows members to recognize the existence of subgroups, but it can also spark cross-boundary exchanges and help bridge subgroups' differing perspectives (Edmondson & Harvey, 2018). Conversely, we suggest that small teams have less need to be reflexive because their members can more easily share information with each other and achieve a shared understanding of the team's task and procedures (Schmutz, Lei, Eppich, & Manser, 2018). In such settings, team reflexivity might be perceived as superfluous or even counterproductive, potentially leading to diminished motivation among team members (Moreland & McMinn, 2010). In addition, because monitoring team dynamics is generally easier in small teams (Yuan & Van Knippenberg, 2022), there is less need for deliberate reflexivity. Taken together, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 2. *Team size increases the positive relationship between team reflexivity and team performance.*

2.2.2. Team tenure

Team tenure, or the average amount of time that team members spent on the team, is considered a key team design factor that is likely to influence team performance (Harvey et al., 2022; Kozlowski, Gully, Nason, & Smith, 1999). On the one hand, teams that have worked together for a long time tend to seek comfort by creating strong routines (Gersick & Hackman, 1990) and dismissing external sources of information (Katz, 1982). As a result, when they do reflect on problems, they are more likely to do so at a surface level (Schippers et al., 2014; West, 2000), which reduces their ability to perform to their full potential (Otte, Konradt, Garbers, & Schippers, 2017). On the other hand, a classic argument for longer team tenure is that teams benefit from the knowledge and skills accumulated by experienced members (Becker, 1962). Over time, team members become familiar with a range of team tasks and more attuned to the conditions that facilitate or hinder their completion (Gonzalez-Mulé et al., 2020). To the extent that long-term members are more aware of what has worked or not worked in their team before and why, they are better equipped than newcomers to understand most performance issues (Hass, 2006). Equally important, more experienced members have a better understanding of the ins and outs of each team role (Edmondson & Harvey, 2018), either because they have worked closely with role holders in the past or because they have taken on those roles themselves (Mumford, Van Iddekinge, Morgeson, & Campion, 2008).

Teams with more longer-tenure members are arguably well-positioned to reap the benefits of reflexivity. Drawing on their knowledge of the task at hand, long-term members can focus the team's attention on the most pressing issues, whether by pointing out

the flaws in the team's outputs, detailing the likely consequences of ongoing actions, or sharing lessons learned from their own past experiences (Groulx et al., 2023). Moreover, because long-serving members have a better understanding of the unique expertise that comes with each team role (Edmondson & Harvey, 2018), they can solicit insights from teammates who are more likely to provide useful opinions and perspectives (Bachrach et al., 2019; Bunderson, 2003). In doing so, they ensure that important information is available to all members and can be used in ways that maximize the performance benefits of reflexivity. When team tenure is short, members may lack the experience to assess the discrepancies in team performance and then determine what information needs to be shared (Chen, Bamberger, Song, & Vashdi, 2018). Because the development of well-defined team roles takes time (Kozlowski et al., 1999), teams with shorter tenure may not know who to rely on to process different knowledge domains (Wegner, 1987). As a result, their members may quickly become overwhelmed by the amount and variety of information that is shared during reflexive discussions (Moreland, 1999), further limiting the team's ability to integrate this information into common solutions. In summary, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3. *Team tenure increases the positive relationship between team reflexivity and team performance.*

2.3. Team psychological safety, team reflexivity, and team performance

Much of the academic conversation about team reflexivity revolves around the shared beliefs that team members hold about the team task or the team itself that influence team reflexivity—so-called team emergent states. Emerging early after team formation and evolving over time through team members' interactions (Cronin et al., 2011; Harvey, Leblanc, & Cronin, 2019), team emergent states are core components of most models of team reflexivity (Edmondson, 1999; Schippers et al., 2017). According to Marks et al. (2001), these collective constructs can be categorized as either affective, cognitive, or motivational, in that they can influence team reflexivity by shaping members' feelings and emotions (e.g., team cohesion; Wong, 2004), guiding information-processing activities (e.g., team mental models; Konradt et al., 2015), or directing, enhancing, and regulating team efforts toward task accomplishment (e.g., team potency; Ortega, Sánchez-Manzanares, Gil, & Rico, 2013).

Team psychological safety is an affective state that is by far the most common team emergent state studied in relation to team reflexivity. The concept of psychological safety was introduced by Schein and Bennis (1965), who argued that it is an essential condition for change. According to them, people who feel safe are more open to learning new behaviors in response to changing organizational challenges, even if it means going through trial and error. Many years later, Kahn (1990) took psychological safety research one step further by showing that individuals who feel psychologically safe are more engaged at work. Through qualitative studies, he described psychological safety as "a sense of being able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career" (p. 708). This notion of feeling safe to take interpersonal risks is central to Edmondson's (1999) conceptualization of team psychological safety. Unlike other scholars before her, however, she suggested that psychological safety is better understood as a team-level phenomenon that reflects team members' shared belief that they can speak up relatively freely. This view of psychological safety as a collective belief has been supported by a number of studies reporting that teams vary significantly in their perceptions of interpersonal risks (e.g., Edmondson, 2002; *Edmondson, 2003; *Harvey, Johnson, Roloff, & Edmondson, 2019).

The emphasis on team psychological safety in research on team reflexivity is self-evident, as this team learning process involves challenging prevailing assumptions and suggesting better ways of doing things. As we might expect, initiating reflexive discussions in teams can be risky – it can cause teammates to become defensive or even culminate in a strong backlash (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). In order to point out deficiencies in team functioning or raise sensitive issues, team members must feel confident that they will not be judged or criticized for doing so. In psychologically safe teams, members are less concerned about reputational risk and more willing to speak their minds in the service of team performance (Edmondson & Harvey, 2017). Since Edmondson's (1999) foundational work, the positive impact of team psychological safety on team reflexivity and ultimately team performance has been demonstrated in a variety of settings, including research-oriented teams (Chen, Zhang, Zhang, & Xu, 2016), Six Sigma project teams (Arumugam, Antony, & Kumar, 2013), nursing teams (Ortega, Van den Bossche, Sánchez-Manzanares, Rico, & Gil, 2014), and teams working in service firms (Brueller & Carmeli, 2011). In line with previous findings and existing theory, we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4. *Team psychological safety is positively related to team reflexivity.*

Hypothesis 5. *Team reflexivity mediates the positive relationship between team psychological safety and team performance, such that more psychologically safe teams will achieve better performance because of heightened reflexivity.*

2.4. Cultivating a psychologically safe environment for team reflexivity: the role of team leadership

The role of team leaders in creating the conditions for reflexivity is crucial (Carmeli, Tishler, & Edmondson, 2012; Edmondson & Harvey, 2017; Schippers, Den Hartog, Koopman, & Van Knippenberg, 2008). Because they tend to develop an overview of their team's internal dynamics (Morgeson et al., 2010), leaders are well positioned to recognize the need for psychological safety and then act on this collective belief to ensure each members' engagement in team reflexivity (Harvey, Leblanc, & Cronin, 2019; Zaccaro, Rittman, & Marks, 2001). This view of team leadership is consistent with functional leadership theory (Hackman & Walton, 1986) in that it reflects the role of leaders "to do, or get done, whatever is not being adequately handled for group needs" (McGrath, 1962, p. 5). Put another way, functional leadership theory depicts leaders as *completers* whose responsibility is to "observe which functions are not being performed by a segment of the group and enable this part to accomplish them" (Schutz, 1961, p. 61). Leadership in teams can thus be conceptualized as a problem-solving process that focuses on meeting critical team needs (e.g., psychological safety) with the goal of

improving team functioning (e.g., reflexivity) and, ultimately, team effectiveness (e.g., performance).

Research provides valuable insights into the behaviors that team leaders can use to address the need for psychological safety in teams. Research has shown that affective states such as team psychological safety can emerged more strongly with change-oriented or transformational leadership (Ortega et al., 2014; Zhou & Pan, 2015), servant leadership (*Schaubroeck, Lam, & Peng, 2011), and ethical leadership (Tu, Lu, Choi, & Guo, 2019), and accumulating evidence suggests that team leaders should prioritize encouraging member participation in team discussions and decisions (Edmondson, 1996, 2002; Edmondson & Harvey, 2017; Hirak, Peng, Carmeli, & Schaubroeck, 2012). A notable dimension of this leadership function is the mitigation of power imbalances within the team (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). This is essential because individuals with less power face a high risk of retaliation if they speak up or raise operational deficiencies, often leading them to choose self-censorship as a safer option (Estrada, Brown, & Lee, 1995). The positive impact of such leadership on psychological safety is illustrated in a study of cardiac surgery teams in which some surgeons – who wield considerable power – acknowledge their own fallibility and elevated the status of nurses and perfusionists by clearly recognizing their roles as equally important to the team's success (*Edmondson, 2003).

Participation-supportive leadership also includes providing opportunities for team members to suggest improvements in team functioning and to voice their concerns. Doing so can take many forms, such as initiating meetings to discuss the team's progress (Edmondson, 1999), giving team members enough time to share their ideas (Veltrop, Bezemer, Nicholson, & Pugliese, 2021), and encouraging them to come to them when problems arise (Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, & Ziv, 2010). In this way, team leaders signal that interpersonal risk-taking is an important facet of teamwork and that members' input is both expected and welcomed.

Another dimension of this leadership function is to value and show appreciation for members' ideas and suggestions. For example, team leaders accomplish this when they publicly highlight the strengths of others and express a desire to learn from them (Hu et al., 2017; Owens et al., 2013). Similarly, Edmondson and Harvey (2017) found that leaders support psychological safety when they openly acknowledge the diverse viewpoints of team members as assets rather than challenges, and when they remain highly attentive to their individual thoughts and ideas. In doing so, they communicate the importance and uniqueness of each member's expertise and help them feel safe to speak up in the service of improved team performance. In line with the above, our next hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 6. *Participation-supportive leadership is positively related to team psychological safety.*

Hypothesis 7. *Team psychological safety mediates the positive relationship between participation-supportive leadership and team reflexivity, such that more participation-supportive leadership will increase reflexivity because of heightened shared beliefs of psychological safety.*

2.5. A serial mediation model

Combining our mediation hypotheses, we propose a serial mediation model that is consistent with the theoretical ordering of variables that underpins the classic I-M-O framework of team effectiveness (Ilgen, Hollenbeck, Johnson, & Jundt, 2005; Marks et al., 2001). This model posits that leadership serves as a team input that can influence mediators such as team states, including team members' feelings and motivations, and team processes, including interactions between team members and the task environment. Together, team states and team processes can transform team inputs into outputs, such as team effectiveness. We suggest that by fostering psychological safety in teams, team leaders create the affective conditions for greater reflexivity between team members and subsequently improved team performance. Accordingly, we first argued that team reflexivity mediates the positive relationship between team psychological safety and team performance (Hypothesis 5). Then, we anticipated that team leaders who support members' active participation in team discussions and decisions indirectly enhance team reflexivity by facilitating the emergence of team psychological safety (Hypothesis 7). Taken together, we formulate the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 8. *Team psychological safety and then team reflexivity mediate the positive relationship between participation-supportive leadership and team performance. As such, more participation-supportive leadership will facilitate team performance because of heightened shared beliefs of psychological safety and then enhanced reflexivity.*

3. Method

3.1. Literature search

To identify all relevant studies, we used several search strategies. First, we searched for published and unpublished manuscripts in PsycINFO, Business Source Premier, Google Scholar, ABI/INFORM (ProQuest), and Web of Science. This database search was conducted through May 2022 by using keywords based on our core constructs: *team* or *group* combined with *reflexivity, reflection, learning, empowering leadership, participative leadership, leader humility, humble leadership, coaching, inclusive leadership, leader inclusion, psychological safety,* and *safety climate*. Second, we reviewed the reference lists of key recent articles and meta-analyses to ensure that we did not miss any relevant studies (e.g., Frazier et al., 2017; Harvey et al., 2022; Kelemen, Matthews, Matthews, & Henry, 2023; Koeslag-Kreunen et al., 2018; Konradt, Otte, Schippers, & Steenfatt, 2016; Lee, Willis, & Tian, 2018; Schippers et al., 2014; Wiese et al., 2022). Third, to minimize publication bias, we requested unpublished data by contacting researchers who presented communications at conferences organized by the *Academy of Management,* the *European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology* (EAWOP), the *Interdisciplinary Network for Group Research* (INGRoup), and the *Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology* (SIOP) over the past 15 years. Of the 56 authors we contacted, 9 provided the requested data.

3.2. Inclusion criteria

To be included in this meta-analysis, studies had to meet the following criteria: (a) be empirical and quantitative, (b) use measures of team reflexivity based on referent-shift consensus when completed by team members, (c) be at the team level of analysis and have at least two respondents per team, (d) be conducted in teams composed of working adults or adults of working age, including undergraduate and graduate students, and (e) report sufficient information to calculate effect sizes (i.e., correlations). Conversely, we excluded: (a) conceptual, review, or qualitative studies and (b) studies using samples of sports teams or teams composed of high school students. In addition, we excluded studies on debriefing (e.g., after-action reviews or guided reflexivity). In contrast to team reflexivity, which is intentional and relies on the ability of teams to self-regulate (Konradt et al., 2016; Leblanc et al., 2022; Lyubovnikova et al., 2017; Schippers, West, & Edmondson, 2018), debriefing refers to systematic interventions or techniques that are typically externally initiated and guided by the team leader or a facilitator (Keiser & Arthur, 2021; Lacerenza, Marlow, Tannenbaum, & Salas, 2018; Otte, Konradt, & Oldeweme, 2018; Tannenbaum & Greilich, 2023). While reflexivity is an important aspect of team debriefing, the two constructs remain conceptually distinct, as emphasized by Allen et al. (2018, p. 511), who suggest that "[…] debriefs are intended to induce team reflexivity".

An initial selection was made based on study titles and abstracts. A total of 819 studies were analyzed, many of which were excluded for the following reasons: (a) irrelevant to our topic ($N = 477$), (b) no teams involved or no analyses at the team level ($N = 112$), (c) theoretical or qualitative ($N = 36$), (d) only one respondent per team ($N = 6$), (e) not enough information available to calculate effect sizes ($N = 9$), (f) a dissertation that resulted in an article ($N = 5$), and g) no referent-shift consensus ($N = 2$). Taking all these criteria into account, we obtained a total of 171 independent studies ($N = 13{,}568$ teams).

3.3. Coding procedures

For all studies included in this meta-analysis, the first author and a trained graduate student coded the correlations between our research variables (i.e., team reflexivity, team performance, team leadership, and team psychological safety), the reliability of the measures (i.e., Cronbach's alpha), and the number of teams in each sample. Information on team size, team mean tenure (i.e., how long – in years – team members have been on their current team), study design (i.e., cross-sectional or longitudinal), research setting (field or lab/classroom), team type (i.e., project teams, service or production teams, or management teams), industry (i.e., service, manufacturing, or high technology), information sources (i.e., same or different), performance measures (subjective or objective), and the content of team reflexivity measures were also independently coded by the same two team members. The overall agreement between coders was 94%. Any discrepancies that arose during the coding process were resolved through joint discussion. After coding was completed, the second and third authors each double-checked a random sample of 10 studies and found no discrepancies between their respective coding sheets and those produced by the original coders.

3.3.1. Team reflexivity

Measures of team reflexivity had to be theoretically consistent with West (2000)'s definition of this construct. In addition to well-established measures (e.g., De Jong & Elfring, 2010; Schippers, Den Hartog, & Koopman, 2007), we included measures that referred to team learning as an ongoing process of reflection and action (e.g., Edmondson, 1999), and measures in which at least half of the items referred to reflexive behaviors (e.g., Van der Vegt, Bunderson, & Kuipers, 2010). As a result, we excluded measures of team learning that assessed only behaviors other than reflexivity, such as team knowledge sharing and team information sharing (e.g., Faraj & Sproull, 2000), team construction, team co-construction, and team constructive conflict (e.g., Van den Bossche, Gijselaers, Segers, & Kirschner, 2006), and team boundary spanning (e.g., Ancona & Caldwell, 1992). We conducted further analyses to provide a more fine-grained view. Specifically, we classified the measures as either team reflection (e.g., Konradt & Eckardt, 2016) or team reflexivity (e.g., De Dreu, 2007), which had to include at least one item related to planning and/or adaptation. In addition, we classified measures that explicitly focused on team reflexivity (Hoegl & Parboteeah, 2006) from those that included one or more learning behaviors that are distinct from reflexivity, such as exploring different perspectives (Savelsbergh, Gevers, van der Heijden, & Poell, 2012) or inviting people from outside the team to present information or have discussions (e.g., Edmondson, 1999).

3.3.2. Team performance

Team performance was operationalized primarily in terms of quantity or quality of output, goal attainment, or financial metrics (e.g., profit). We considered measures that reflected team-level outcomes (rather than an aggregation of individual outcomes) and further coded team performance according to two methods: objective (i.e., scores based on quantifiable data) and subjective (i.e., scores based on judgment). In the case of subjective performance, at least half of the items had to capture performance as operationalized above. Accordingly, we did not consider measures of performance that had a majority of items reflecting the quality of teamwork or team creativity or innovation. When studies included more than one type of measure of team performance, we preferred those answered by external sources (e.g., team leaders or customers) over those answered by team members. We also selected the objective measures over the subjective measures to reduce common method variance. For longitudinal studies, we took a conservative approach and reported the correlation between the most distant variables in time.

3.3.3. Team psychological safety

To be included, studies had to conceptualize team psychological safety as a shared belief that interpersonal risks in the team are minimized (Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Frazier et al., 2017). As could be expected, most of the studies we identified used Edmondson's

(1999) measure or some version of it (e.g., Arumugam et al., 2013). Because they capture the essence of team psychological safety as defined above, we also included studies that used Anderson and West's (1994) and Bauer's (2008) measures (e.g., Hirak et al., 2012; Neumann, 2017).

3.3.4. Participation-supportive leadership

We searched for studies that examined bottom-up leadership behaviors that encourage team members to take interpersonal risks by actively participating in team discussions and team decisions. Because we examined the leadership behaviors of formal team leaders, we did not report correlations with variables of shared team leadership (e.g., Pearce & Sims Jr, 2002). We also carefully examined each leadership measure to assess whether some or all of the items captured the essence of the leadership described above. Finally, all studies included in this meta-analysis focused on (a) empowering leadership, (b) participative leadership, (c) humble leadership, (d) team leader coaching, or (e) inclusive leadership.

3.4. Meta-analytic procedures

We followed the psychometric meta-analytic approach proposed by Schmidt and Hunter (2015). This approach, based on the random effects model, accounts for heterogeneity in effect sizes and allows inferences to be made beyond the studies included in our meta-analysis (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004). We weighted each primary study by its sample size and corrected for measurement error in both independent and dependent variables by using internal consistency coefficient values (i.e., Cronbach's alpha). For studies that did not report such values, we used the average of the available reliabilities. Objective measures of team performance were assigned a reliability of 1 assuming perfect reliability. The Pearson correlation coefficient was the metric used to calculate effect sizes. To ensure the independence of effect sizes (Schmidt & Hunter, 2015), each study provided only one correlation for a single effect size calculation. When a study reported more than one correlation for the same relationship, we computed linear composites and calculated the reliability of the composite measures. In addition, when two (or more) studies were based on the same sample, we pooled relevant information across studies and processed them as a single study.

Relationship hypotheses were tested by using 95% confidence intervals (CIs) around the true mean correlation estimates (ρ). A CI that does not include zero indicates that the value of ρ is significantly different from zero ($p < .05$), which would support a relationship hypothesis. With respect to moderating effects, we first assessed the degree of heterogeneity across studies by using the percentage of variance in the correlations explained by artifacts. As a rule of thumb, a value below 75% suggests that the variability in effect sizes could be explained by moderators (Schmidt & Hunter, 2015). In addition, we used the 80% credibility interval (CV). A wide interval, or one that includes zero, indicates that the results of the studies are heterogeneous. To test for moderating effects, we first used the categorical approach of Schmidt and Hunter (2015). Specifically, this approach involved conducting meta-analyses in a priori subsamples that reflected the substantive categories of the variable of interest. We then compared the CIs across categories of moderators. A moderating effect is significant ($p < .05$) if the CIs do not overlap. The categorical approach is preferable when the moderators are divided into clearly discrete categories, which is the case for most of the moderators we examined in this research (i.e., study design, research setting, team type, industry, information sources, performance measures, and content of team reflexivity measures).

We also used meta-regression to examine continuous moderators (i.e., team size and team tenure). Specifically, following the recommendations by Steel and Kammeyer-Mueller (2002), we conducted weighted least squares (WLS) regression analysis, which allows us to determine whether variation in effect sizes is explained by the moderator variables. The WLS approach corrects for sampling error in effect sizes by calculating the inverse variance weight for each effect size. As a result, WLS favors larger sample sizes with greater weightings in comparison to smaller samples (Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, & Rothstein, 2009).

To test our mediation hypotheses, we constructed a meta-analytic correlation matrix that included our own meta-analytic estimates (Viswesvaran & Ones, 1995). Given our specific inclusion criteria, we coded the studies included in Frazier et al.'s (2017) meta-analysis for the relationship between team psychological safety and team performance, resulting in the selection of 17 out of 33 studies. Then, we conducted a random-effect full information meta-analytic structural equation modeling (FIMASEM) with 2000 bootstrapped samples based on harmonic sample size (Yu, Downes, Carter, & O'Boyle, 2016). This approach required incorporating effect size heterogeneity into the analysis by considering the *SD*s associated with the estimated true-score correlations.

Finally, a common concern with any meta-analysis is the publication bias, often referred to as the "file drawer problem" (Rosenthal, 1979). Following Byron et al. (2023), we first attempted to examine the relative magnitude of statistically significant effect sizes (versus non-significant effect sizes) in our meta-analysis. We found that more effect sizes in our analysis were significant (61.4%) than were not statistically significant (38.6%; using a $p < .05$ convention). Second, we examined whether and to what extent effect sizes were correlated with their respective sample sizes. Specifically, we calculated a Pearson correlation coefficient between the 360 effect sizes and their corresponding sample sizes ($r = -0.05$). This near-zero correlation provides no evidence of publication bias. Third, we examined the funnel plots for each of the relationships related to our mediation model, plotting the uncorrected effect size estimates (transformed to Fisher's z) by their standard error. Each of them shows a symmetric distribution of effect sizes, with most studies falling within the 95% and 99% confidence intervals (see Appendix). Overall, these analyses suggest minimal publication bias.

4. Results

Our literature search yielded 79 independent effect sizes between team reflexivity and team performance with a total sample size of 5766 teams. As shown in Table 1, the uncorrected sample size-weighted mean correlation between these constructs was 0.30. After correcting for measurement error in both the predictor and criterion, the effect size estimate was 0.35. Because the 95% confidence

Table 1
Meta-analytic results regarding the categorial moderators of the reflexivity – performance relationship.

Variable	*k*	*N*	$\bar{r}$	ρ	SD_ρ	80%CV	95%CI	% var
Team performance	79	5766	0.30	0.35	0.20	0.09, 0.60	0.30, 0.40	28
Study design								
Cross-sectional	62	4836	0.33	0.38	0.18	0.15, 0.62	0.33, 0.44	30
Longitudinal	17	940	0.16	0.18	0.20	−0.08, 0.43	0.06, 0.29	37
Research setting								
Field	60	4501	0.33	0.39	0.18	0.16, 0.62	0.33, 0.44	31
Lab or Classroom	19	1275	0.20	0.22	0.20	−0.04, 0.48	0.11, 0.33	30
Team type								
Projet teams	32	2085	0.27	0.31	0.21	0.05, 0.58	0.23, 0.40	30
Service and production teams	17	1691	0.37	0.43	0.10	0.31, 0.55	0.36, 0.49	53
Management teams	3	213	0.38	0.44	0.07	0.36, 0.53	0.29, 0.60	76
Industry								
Services	18	1616	0.35	0.41	0.11	0.26, 0.55	0.33, 0.48	48
Manufacturing	7	402	0.30	0.35	0.22	0.07, 0.64	0.16, 0.55	29
High-Technologies	8	672	0.37	0.43	0.18	0.20, 0.67	0.29, 0.58	27
Source(s) of information								
Same source	18	1162	0.46	0.57	0.18	0.34, 0.79	0.47, 0.66	33
Different sources	39	2923	0.24	0.28	0.12	0.12, 0.44	0.22, 0.34	52
Type of measure								
Objective team performance	17	1259	0.25	0.27	0.21	0.00, 0.53	0.15, 0.38	25
Subjective team performance	62	4517	0.32	0.38	0.19	0.13, 0.62	0.32, 0.43	30
Reflection only	26	1904	0.27	0.30	0.24	−0.01, 0.61	0.19, 0.40	21
Reflection & planning and/or adaptation	50	3696	0.32	0.38	0.17	0.16, 0.59	0.32, 0.43	36
Reflexivity (explicit)	50	3605	0.27	0.31	0.22	0.03, 0.59	0.24, 0.38	26
Reflexivity (non-explicit)	26	1998	0.36	0.42	0.14	0.25, 0.60	0.35, 0.49	42

k = number of independent studies, *N* = total number of teams, $\bar{r}$ = sample size weighted mean observed correlation, ρ = sample size weighted mean correlation corrected for unreliability in both measures, SD_ρ = standard deviation of ρ, 95%CI_ρ = 95% confidence interval around ρ, % var. = percentage of variance due to artefact.

interval did not include zero, the positive relationship between team reflexivity and team performance was significantly greater than zero at the 0.05 level, providing support for Hypothesis 1.

Next, we determined whether analysis of moderators was justified by assessing the degree of heterogeneity in effect sizes. Because less than 75% of the observed variance in this analysis was accounted for by study artifacts, examining moderators of the relationship between team reflexivity and team performance was warranted. First, a number of categorical moderators were examined. Results showed that the effect size estimate was stronger in cross-sectional studies (ρ = 0.38, $CI_{95\%}$ = 0.33 to 0.44) compared to longitudinal studies (ρ = 0.18, $CI_{95\%}$ = 0.06 to 0.29), as well as in field studies (ρ = 0.39, $CI_{95\%}$ = 0.333 to 0.44) compared to laboratory or classroom studies (ρ = 0.22, $CI_{95\%}$ = 0.11 to 0.325). We also examined the role of common method variance by splitting studies into two groups (i.e., same versus different sources for the team reflexivity and team subjective performance measures). After splitting, team reflexivity was more predictive of team performance when both variables were assessed by the same source (ρ = 0.57, $CI_{95\%}$ = 0.47 to 0.66) than when assessed by different sources (ρ = 0.28, $CI_{95\%}$ = 0.22 to 0.34).

Otherwise, our results indicated that team type and industry did not affect the overall relationship between team reflexivity and team performance. Similarly, although the effect size estimates based on subjective (ρ = 0.38, $CI_{95\%}$ = 0.32 to 0.43) and objective performance (ρ = 0.27, $CI_{95\%}$ = 0.15 to 0.38) were somewhat different, their 95% confidence intervals overlapped. In other words, these results suggest that measures of team performance did not moderate this relationship. Furthermore, we compared effect size estimates based on the content of team reflexivity measures. Specifically, we separated studies that used measures of team reflection (ρ = 0.30, $CI_{95\%}$ = 0.19 to 0.40) from those using measures that combined team reflection with elements of team planning and/or team adaptation (ρ = 0.38, $CI_{95\%}$ = 0.32 to 0.43) and found no significant difference. We also distinguished studies that used explicit measures of team reflexivity (ρ = 0.31, $CI_{95\%}$ = 0.24 to 0.38) from those that, while consistent with West (2000)'s definition, included one or more team learning behaviors that deviated from reflexivity (ρ = 0.42, $CI_{95\%}$ = 0.35 to 0.49). Again, no significant differences was found.

Second, we examined two continuous moderators. The results of WSL regressions are displayed in Table 2. For Hypothesis 2, we predicted that team size would increase the relationship between team reflexivity and team performance. Based on 73 independent studies, team size was positively related to the effect size estimate of team reflexivity on team performance (b = 0.02, SE = 0.002, p < .001). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported. Our next hypothesis was that team tenure would moderate the relationship between team reflexivity and team performance, such that the positive relationship would be stronger in longer tenured teams. Based on 37

Table 2
WLS regression results for continuous moderators.

Variable	*k*	*b*	*SE*	*t*-value	*p*-value	R^2
1. Team size	73	0.02	0.002	23.49	$p < .001$	0.04
2. Team mean tenure	37	0.02	0.002	25.63	$p < .001$	0.03

k = number of independent studies, b = unstandardized estimate, SE = standard error, R^2 variance explained.

independent studies, team tenure was positively related to the effect size estimate of team reflexivity on team performance ($b = 0.02$, $SE = 0.002$, $p < .001$), thereby supporting Hypothesis 3.

Furthermore, we constructed a meta-analytic correlation matrix (see Table 3) and then conducted FIMASEM to test three path models. For the first model, we hypothesized that team reflexivity would mediate the positive relationship between team psychological safety and team performance. As predicted, the results indicate that team psychological safety was positively related to team reflexivity ($b = 0.45$, $p < .001$) and that the indirect effect of team psychological safety on team performance via team reflexivity was positive and significant (indirect effect = 0.14, *BootSE* = 0.02, CI = [0.10, 0.17]). Thus, Hypotheses 4 and 5 are supported. The second model predicted that team psychological safety would mediate the positive relationship between participation-supportive leadership and team reflexivity. Specifically, we found that participation-supportive leadership predicted team psychological safety ($b = 0.51$, $p < .001$) and that the indirect effect of this leadership on team reflexivity through team psychological safety was positive and significant (indirect effect = 0.23, *BootSE* = 0.02, CI = [0.20, 0.26]), supporting Hypotheses 6 and 7. Finally, the third model proposed that team psychological safety and then team reflexivity mediate the positive relationship between participation-supportive leadership and team performance. Consistent with Hypothesis 8, the results indicate that the indirect effect of such leadership on team performance via team psychological safety and then team reflexivity was positive and significant (indirect effect = 0.08, *BootSE* = 0.01, CI = [0.05, 0.09]).

4.1. Supplemental analyses

We conducted additional analyses to provide a comprehensive review of the research on team reflexivity. Tables 4 and 5 present the number of studies (k), total number of teams (N), sample-weighted average correlation ($\bar{r}$), estimated true-score correlation (ρ), standard deviation of ρ (SD_ρ), 95% confidence interval around ρ (95% CI), and percentage of variance due to artefact (% var) for the meta-analytic associations between team reflexivity and team outcomes and with team leadership, team composition, structural characteristics, and team emergent states, respectively.

Regarding the outcome variables, the results indicated that the relationship between team reflexivity and team performance ($\rho = 0.35$, $CI_{95\%} = 0.30$ to 0.40) was inferior to that with team innovation ($\rho = 0.45$, $CI_{95\%} = 0.39$ to 0.50). An even larger difference was observed for team creativity ($\rho = 0.48$, $CI_{95\%} = 0.39$ to 0.57) and especially for team satisfaction ($\rho = 0.55$, $CI_{95\%} = 0.41$ to 0.68). Overall, we find that despite a moderately strong association with performance, the relationship between team reflexivity and other important team outcomes was much stronger, reinforcing the relevance for teams to engage in such learning activities.

Regarding the input variables, the results indicate that leadership focused on encouraging members participation in team discussion and decision-making had a strong positive relationship with team reflexivity ($\rho = 0.49$, $CI_{95\%} = 0.36$ to 0.61). Additional leadership styles were included in supplemental analyses. Transformational leadership ($\rho = 0.52$, $CI_{95\%} = 0.41$ to 0.63) and task-oriented leadership ($\rho = 0.50$, $CI_{95\%} = 0.35$ to 0.65) were also positively associated with team reflexivity.

With respect to team composition, the results were much less robust than the team leadership variables discussed above, particularly for the variables related to team diversity. In fact, with the exception of educational level diversity ($\rho = 0.14$, $CI_{95\%} = 0.05$ to 0.23), team tenure diversity ($\rho = 0.13$, $CI_{95\%} = 0.02$ to 0.24), and team educational level ($\rho = 0.16$, $CI_{95\%} = 0.07$ to 0.24), all other subcategories showed very weak relationships with team reflexivity. However, the relationships were much stronger for team performance goal orientation ($\rho = 0.33$, $CI_{95\%} = 0.19$ to 0.47) and team learning goal orientation ($\rho = 0.43$, $CI_{95\%} = 0.25$ to 0.61).

We also examined a number of structural characteristics. Among these, team autonomy was particularly conducive to team reflexivity ($\rho = 0.54$, $CI_{95\%} = 0.21$ to 0.86), as was goal interdependence ($\rho = 0.48$, $CI_{95\%} = 0.32$ to 0.64), and organizational support ($\rho = 0.40$, $CI_{95\%} = 0.27$ to 0.54), a variable that includes, among others, resource availability (Bresman, 2010), human resource practices (Hoch & Kozlowski, 2014), and the quality of the physical environment (Schippers et al., 2015). Interestingly, workload is the only variable that was negatively associated with team reflexivity, although this association was not significant.

Finally, in addition to team psychological safety, a number of team emergent states were shown to be strongly related to team reflexivity. The results showed that this was the case for team cohesion ($\rho = 0.55$, $CI_{95\%} = 0.45$ to 0.66) and team trust ($\rho = 0.53$, $CI_{95\%} = 0.45$ to 0.60), and to a lesser extent for team efficacy and team potency ($\rho = 0.45$, $CI_{95\%} = 0.32$ to 0.59).

5. Discussion

Reflexivity has long been considered a key team learning process that enables teams to accomplish very difficult tasks and thrive in turbulent environments (Schippers & Rus, 2021; West, 2000). Recent arguments and evidence have positioned reflexivity as the primary team process facilitating learning over time in teams (Harvey et al., 2023). However, other evidence showed that its influence on team performance is more ambiguous than often assumed (Schippers et al., 2013; Schmutz et al., 2018), suggesting that some teams may benefit more than others from reflexivity. Using meta-analytic procedures, we first sought to answer the fundamental question of

Table 3
Meta-analytic correlation matrix.

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Participation-supportive leadership	–			
2. Team psychological safety	0.51 (9, 655, 0.15)	–		
3. Team reflexivity	0.49 (13, 1098, 0.20)	0.58 (20. 1899, 0.18)	–	
4. Team performance	0.22 (38, 3235, 0.17)	0.24 (17, 1570, 0.24)	0.35 (79, 5776, 0.20)	–

Results are reported as ρ (*k, N, SD*$_\rho$), where ρ = mean true score correlation, *k* = number of independent studies, *N* = cumulative sample size, and *SD*$_\rho$ = standard deviation. The harmonic mean sample size is 1469.

whether reflexivity helps teams achieve higher levels of performance. We then clarified key boundary conditions of this relationship. Drawing on the teams-as-information-processors perspective (Hinsz et al., 1997), we provide evidence for the performance implications of team reflexivity and show that this positive relationship is stronger as team size and team tenure increase. In addition, we found that elements of the research design and sample characteristics moderate the positive influence of team reflexivity on team performance. Second, we sought to clarify why leaders who support team members' active participation in team discussions and decisions foster reflexivity within the team and, subsequently, increase team performance. As expected, results showed that this indirect effect is mediated by team psychological safety. In the following, we discuss the theoretical and the practical contributions of these findings. We also address the limitations of our study and discuss how to advance research on team reflexivity.

5.1. Theoretical contributions

This meta-analysis supports and extends theory on team reflexivity in several ways (West, 1996; Widmer, Schippers, & West, 2009). Most importantly, our findings suggest that reflexivity is beneficial for teams because it leads to better performance over time. This is consistent with Schippers et al.'s (2014) view of reflexivity as an antidote to team-level biases. According to them, teams that reflect on their own goals, strategies, and past performance are less prone to information processing failures because they are more likely to share relevant information, elaborate and draw implications from that information, and revise and update previous conclusions. By counteracting flaws in information processing, reflexivity improves the quality of team decisions and reduces the frequency of team errors and mistakes. Ultimately, this result alone justifies the enthusiasm for team reflexivity and strengthens confidence in its performance implications.

Our meta-analysis also supports the notion that context matters when predicting the effects of team reflexivity. In particular, we echo previous studies suggesting that team characteristics can moderate the effectiveness of information processing activities, including team reflexivity (Chen et al., 2018; Marlow, Lacerenza, Paoletti, Burke, & Salas, 2018; Schmutz et al., 2018; Wang, 2015). With respect to team size, our results show that adding new team members increases the performance benefits of reflexivity. Since large teams are more likely to experience communication problems (Yuan and Van Knippenberg, 2022) and suffer from information processing biases (Kerr, Mac Coun, & Kramer, 1996), reflexivity is more important in this context, as it helps to identify shortcomings and pave the way for improvements. However, we may also suggest that reflexivity serves a dual function by allowing large teams to tap into their broader and likely more diverse pool of cognitive resources (Huckman, Staats, & Upton, 2009). In other words, while reflexivity may prevent or reduce information processing failures caused by team size, it may also be used in large teams to leverage the unique knowledge and perspectives of their many members.

Adopting the teams-as-information-processors lens also provides insight into why team tenure accounts for variability in the magnitude of the relationship between team reflexivity and team performance. As we expected, long-tenured teams are particularly effective at using reflexive activities. Thanks to their deep knowledge of the team's tasks, roles, and work procedures (Lippmann & Aldrich, 2016), highly experienced members are well positioned to use reflexivity more efficiently by quickly identifying areas for improvement and suggesting proven, easy-to-implement adjustments to the team's performance strategies. Interestingly, our results may also suggest that long-term members push the team to reflect at a deeper level when necessary. Compared to newcomers, they can more easily grasp the disruptive nature of change and then sensitize their teammates to the likely consequences of current team dysfunctions. In doing so, they shake up the status quo and encourage less experienced members to take a hard look at the way things are done in the team. Such a conclusion challenges the widespread belief that teams with longer tenure are only superficially reflective because they tend to seek comfort (Katz, 1982; Schippers et al., 2014; West, 2000). Taken together, our findings both support and extend previous findings reported in recent reviews of team learning (e.g. Harvey et al., 2022) and urge the strategic adoption of reflexive behaviors – for example, when team size and team tenure are high – such that the benefits outweigh the costs (Schippers et al., 2013).

We furthered our understanding of the contingencies of team reflexivity by examining the moderating influence of research design and sample characteristics. As noted earlier, the effect size estimates of the relationship between team reflexivity and team performance were significantly higher in (a) cross-sectional versus longitudinal research designs, for (b) single-source versus multiple-source data as well as in (c) field studies compared to laboratory or classroom studies. These findings are similar to those reported in other meta-analyses conducted on team processes (Breuer, Hüffmeier, & Hertel, 2016; Nicolaides et al., 2014) and suggest the presence of common method biases and potential overestimation of correlations (e.g., Podsakoff, Mac Kenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). Moreover, by

Table 4
Meta-analytic results regarding the antecedents of team reflexivity.

Variable	*k*	*N*	$\bar{r}$	ρ	SD_ρ	80%CV	95%CI	% var
Team leadership								
Participation-supportive leadership	13	1098	0.41	0.49	0.20	0.23, 0.74	0.36, 0.61	22
Transformational leadership	9	694	0.46	0.52	0.14	0.35, 0.70	0.41, 0.63	36
Task-oriented leadership	4	320	0.43	0.50	0.11	0.35, 0.65	0.35, 0.65	46
Team composition								
Educational level diversity	4	296	0.13	0.14	0.00	0.14, 0.14	0.05, 0.23	100
Functional or educational background diversity	12	977	0.08	0.09	0.11	−0.06, 0.24	0.00, 0.18	0.52
Team tenure diversity	4	197	0.12	0.13	0.00	0.13, 0.13	0.02, 0.24	100
Age diversity	12	949	0.06	0.06	0.00	0.06, 0.06	0.03, 0.10	100
Gender diversity	13	1111	0.07	0.07	0.00	0.07, 0.07	0.01, 0.13	100
Team educational level	9	687	0.14	0.16	0.00	0.16, 0.16	0.07, 0.24	100
Team familiarity	5	248	0.12	0.14	0.00	0.14, 0.14	0.04, 0.23	100
Team learning goal orientation	5	479	0.35	0.43	0.17	0.21, 0.65	0.25, 0.61	31
Team performance goal orientation	5	479	0.27	0.33	0.10	0.20, 47	0.19, 47	56
Team avoidance goal orientation	5	479	0.05	0.07	0.11	−0.08, 0.21	−0.09, 22	59
Structural characteristics								
Organizational support	9	782	0.32	0.40	0.16	0.19, 0.61	0.27, 0.54	36
Autonomy	3	167	0.43	0.54	0.25	0.21, 0.86	0.21, 0.86	23
Goal interdependence	5	315	0.39	0.48	0.12	0.33, 0.64	0.32, 0.64	55
Task interdependence	9	568	0.25	0.29	0.31	−0.11, 0.69	0.06, 0.52	18
Task complexity	3	268	0.25	0.29	0.00	0.29, 0.29	0.16, 0.41	100
Workload	4	245	−0.08	−0.10	0.23	−0.39, 0.19	−0.37, 0.17	29
Team emergent states								
Team psychological safety	20	1899	0.46	0.58	0.18	0.35, 0.82	0.49, 0.68	25
Team cohesion	6	334	0.44	0.55	0.00	0.55, 0.55	0.45, 0.66	100
Team efficacy & potency	7	572	0.38	0.45	0.14	0.27, 0.63	0.32, 0.59	38
Team trust	9	643	0.44	0.53	0.03	0.48, 0.57	0.45, 0.60	92

k = number of independent studies, N = total number of teams, $\bar{r}$ = sample size weighted mean observed correlation, ρ = sample size weighted mean correlation corrected for unreliability in both measures, SD_ρ = standard deviation of ρ, 95%CI_ρ = 95% confidence interval around ρ, % var. = percentage of variance due to artefact.

demonstrating that methodological choices can lead to substantially different results, this meta-analysis justifies calls for caution when analyzing the findings from team reflexivity studies (Moreland & McMinn, 2010).

Finally, we draw on the functional perspective of leadership to clarify how and why team leaders help their team thrive through reflexivity. Specifically, our analyses revealed that satisfying the team's need for psychological safety by encouraging members' active participation in team discussions and decisions is conducive to increased reflexivity, and, ultimately, higher levels of team performance. By examining the actions leaders can take to foster a climate of psychological safety and then stimulate reflexive discussions among team members, we shed a light on the complex interface between leadership processes and internal team dynamics (Edmondson & Harvey, 2017; Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2002). This also provides evidence for Morgeson et al.'s (2010) contention that meeting team needs may be a key mechanism by which leader behaviors are translated into specific team processes and outcomes.

5.2. Limitations and future research

Despite its merits, the current study has several limitations that should be noted. First, most of the primary studies used in this meta-analysis are based on a cross-sectional and/or nonexperimental research designs. Although many of them use time-lagged measurements, and correlations between the most distant variables in time are reported in longitudinal studies, we must be cautious before making any causal inferences. For example, after observing that reflexive exchanges improve team performance, team leaders may place greater emphasis on members' active participation in team discussions and decisions and act accordingly. Similarly, high levels of performance may reduce the interpersonal risks associated with engaging in reflexive behaviors, especially if no major errors were made during task execution. Nevertheless, our model is in line with previous empirical research (Edmondson, 1999; Edmondson & Harvey, 2017; Hu et al., 2017) and, most importantly, is consistent with the theoretical ordering of variables underlying the I-M-O framework of team effectiveness (Ilgen et al., 2005; Marks et al., 2001). When all is said and done, aligning with theory remains the cardinal factor for team scholars (e.g., Mathieu & Taylor, 2006). Yet, to increase confidence in our findings, our research hypotheses should be tested using a longitudinal or experimental research design.

In a similar vein, we also recognize that this limitation precludes the adoption of a more dynamic view of team learning. As demonstrated by Harvey et al. (2023), team reflexivity can be iterative, occurring sequentially over multiple performance episodes and

Table 5
Meta-analytic results regarding the consequences of team reflexivity.

Variable	k	N	$\bar{r}$	ρ	SD_ρ	80%CV	95%CI	% var
Team performance	79	5766	0.30	0.35	0.20	0.09, 0.60	0.30, 0.40	28
Team innovation	32	2398	0.37	0.45	0.11	0.30, 0.59	0.39, 0.50	52
Team innovation implementation	14	1016	0.34	0.41	0.12	0.26, 0.57	0.32, 0.51	52
Team creativity	13	1000	0.40	0.48	0.12	0.33, 0.63	0.39, 0.57	48
Team satisfaction	10	590	0.46	0.55	0.18	0.32, 0.77	0.41, 0.68	32

k = number of independent studies, N = total number of teams, $\bar{r}$ = sample size weighted mean observed correlation, ρ = sample size weighted mean correlation corrected for unreliability in both measures, SD_ρ = standard deviation of ρ, 95%CI$_\rho$ = 95% confidence interval around ρ, % var. = percentage of variance due to artefact.

concurrently with other learning activities (e.g., contextual learning or experimental learning) in ways that can either increase or decrease performance. From an even finer-grained perspective, both theory and a growing body of empirical evidence suggest that the subprocesses of team reflexivity unfold serially (Abrantes, Passos, Cunha, & Santos, 2022; Konradt et al., 2015; West, 2000). Therefore, as new longitudinal studies become available, we encourage scholars to consider meta-analytically how the team design factors examined in this research (i.e., team size and team tenure) influence the integration of team reflexivity into different teamwork arrangements and the trajectory of its subprocesses.

Second, some analyses were preliminary because they were based on a relatively small number of studies. This is likely to reduce the precision of effect size estimates due to increased residual sampling error (Schmidt & Hunter, 2015). In particular, given that only a few studies sampled management teams ($k = 3$) as well as teams working in manufacturing ($k = 7$) or high-tech industries ($k = 8$), the results of these null moderating effects should be interpreted with caution. In other words, more research is needed before we can confidently suggest that our findings generalize to different team or industry settings. For example, now that we know that some dimensions of team human capital (i.e., team tenure) increase the effectiveness of team reflexivity, one might wonder whether our findings will hold in manufacturing settings where team members' educational attainment tends to be lower (e.g., assembly line contexts). Several results from supplementary analyses, such as team autonomy ($k = 3$), workload ($k = 4$), and team familiarity ($k = 5$), were also based on a small number of studies. Nevertheless, they can provide valuable insights into possible trends and, more importantly, inform us about relevant areas of research.

Although there was considerable value in distinguishing studies that measured team reflection alone (e.g., Konradt & Eckardt, 2016) from those that combined team reflection with elements of team planning or team adaptation (e.g., Edmondson, 1999), our inability to consider finer conceptualizations of team reflexivity is a third limitation. To date, most studies have attempted to capture the occurrence, amount, or frequency of reflexive behaviors in teams. They have asked team members to assess whether the team modifies its goals in light of changing circumstances (e.g., Carter & West, 1998), spends an adequate amount of time considering the likely consequences of its task activities (e.g., Hoegl & Parboteeah, 2006), or regularly discusses how effectively its members are working together (e.g., Savelsbergh, van der Heijden, & Poell, 2009). Unfortunately, measuring team reflexivity in this way does not adequately capture the nuance, temporality, and behavioral complexity that characterize this learning process (Konradt et al., 2016).

In response, some authors have attempted to refine or propose refinements to the measurement of team reflexivity, whether by distinguishing between reflection on outcomes and reflection on processes (Savelsbergh et al., 2009), or between reflection on social interactions and reflection on task issues (Carter & West, 1998), by considering when reflexivity occurs (i.e., during the transition or action phase; Abrantes et al., 2022), or by examining the temporal focus of reflexive discussions (i.e., future- or present-oriented; Schmutz & Eppich, 2017). Another recent and promising development in the measurement of team reflexivity is a focus on its quality. Early evidence suggests that a dual focus on both the quantity and quality of team reflexivity allows for a more nuanced understanding of its impact on team performance (Otte et al., 2017, 2018). As more research becomes available, we encourage future meta-analyses to further consider the different ways in which team reflexivity is measured, and then to explore their respective effects on performance and contingencies.

Fourth, we were not able to examine the incremental contribution of each of the leadership approaches included in this meta-analysis. This is unfortunate because, despite their similarity in promoting member participation in team discussions and decisions, they are all conceptually distinct to some extent. For example, humble leaders minimize power differences within the team (e.g., by acknowledging their own weaknesses and being teachable) and shine a light on the contributions of others (Owens et al., 2013), whereas coaching-oriented leaders emphasize creating opportunities to discuss team progress and being available for consultation on problems (Edmondson, 1999). In addition, some leadership approaches are more comprehensive than others. This is the case with empowering leadership, which typically includes coaching and/or participative decision making as sub-dimensions (Srivastava, Bartol, & Locke, 2006). Thus, it would be particularly fruitful to determine whether some, if any, of the leadership approaches examined in this meta-analysis predict significant incremental variance in team reflexivity and then team performance via increased team psychological safety.

Our decision to focus on team psychological safety was not surprising. After all, team members need to feel confident that challenging the status quo or disclosing mistakes will not backfire. However, focusing on psychological safety alone is a fifth limitation, as it may provide an incomplete picture of why leaders who promote participation in team discussions and decisions help their team thrive through reflexivity. Not only can emergent states interact in ways that enhance team learning (*Harvey, Johnson, Roloff, &

Edmondson, 2019), but team leaders can simultaneously shape multiple emergent states that are key to team learning (Harvey, Leblanc, & Cronin, 2019). For example, leaders who invite others to share their unique knowledge about a particular way of working may create psychological safety while simultaneously reducing collective efficacy, especially following inaccurate explanations from some team members. However, because psychological safety partially mediates the indirect relationship between these leaders and reflexivity, we cannot rule out the possibility that their influence on reflexivity is mostly direct. Therefore, more research is needed to clarify whether their leadership directly shapes this learning process, or creates the psychological conditions that are conducive to it, or both. One way to do this, as suggested by Harvey et al. (2019), is to examine additional emergent states in combination to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the team learning climate that may translate team leader encouragement to participate in team discussions and decisions into increased team reflexivity.

Finally, we cannot rule out the possibility that the higher findings are due to less research control in the sample studies. As mentioned earlier, we found that estimates of the relationship between team reflexivity and team performance were significantly higher in (a) cross-sectional versus longitudinal research designs, for (b) single-source versus multiple-source data, and (c) field studies versus laboratory or classroom studies. In the latter case, and consistent with our conceptualization of team reflexivity as an informal and proactive learning behavior, we did not include studies in which reflexivity was strictly considered an experimental condition. In order for future meta-analyses of team reflexivity to be based on a larger number of experimental studies, we encourage researchers to consider reflexivity as an outcome of experimental conditions, or to assess the level or quality of reflexivity (e.g., through surveys) as a manipulation check of the experimental condition.

5.3. Practical implications

By confirming the performance benefits of team reflexivity, this meta-analysis makes the implications for practice even more meaningful. In particular, our findings suggest that reflexivity becomes critical as team size and team tenure increase. In large teams, leaders should pay close attention to the information processing failures that are most likely to occur, such as heterogeneous cognitive representations and hijacking of discussions by a few members, and then push for reflexive discussion to address them. For example, while encouraging members to think about these issues by asking questions or sharing personal observations, team leaders could use boundary objects (e.g., drawings or prototypes) to help members build common understanding (Edmondson & Harvey, 2018) and establish norms of participation to ensure that everyone can share their unique knowledge and perspectives (Schippers et al., 2014). For long-standing teams, we recommend that leaders publicly praise the knowledge and expertise accumulated by the most experienced members and listen carefully to what they have to say. In doing so, leaders not only encourage these members to participate more actively in reflexive discussions, but also signal to newcomers how relevant their input can be (Tyler & Lind, 1992).

In addition to intervening directly in the reflexive process of large and long-tenured teams, leaders need to know how to cultivate psychological safety to indirectly influence team members' engagement in reflexive behaviors. This, of course, has implications for leadership training and development (e.g., coaching). In particular, organizations should teach leaders about this emergent state – as well as about other key elements of team functioning, such as team reflexivity – so that they can monitor its fluctuation over time and determine how and when to act accordingly. Consistent with our findings, such learning activities should also focus on mastering leadership styles that involve the active participation of team members in discussions and decisions (e.g., humble, empowering, and inclusive leadership).

Furthermore, when selecting team leaders, we encourage human resources professionals to consider the individual characteristics that are most likely to predict the types of leadership examined in this meta-analysis. Indeed, some leaders may be more comfortable or willing to reduce power differences within the team, invite members to voice their concerns, and/or value their input. For example, extant research suggests that leaders lower in power distance are more open to engaging in empowering leadership (Tang, Chen, van Knippenberg, & Yu, 2020), while those with higher levels of self-awareness are more likely to adopt a participative leadership style (Black, 2020). Similarly, Wang, Owens, Li, and Shi (2018) found evidence that leaders who have a growth mindset and are motivated to connect with others tend to behave with humility.

6. Conclusion

Our meta-analysis supports and refines the role of team reflexivity in enhancing team performance, in the sense that this relationship is more pronounced in large and long-standing teams. We also advance the research by showing that team leaders can help their teams thrive through reflexivity by making them safer for interpersonal risk-taking. Moreover, we provide a meaningful synthesis of the previous literature on team reflexivity by examining relationships with a wide range of other antecedents and consequences. In sum, we believe that this meta-analysis can serve as a foundation for future research and hope that it will prompt practitioners and organizations to create the conditions for greater reflexivity in teams.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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Appendix A. Funnel plots

Below are the funnel plots of observed studies for each of the relationships related to our mediation model. Each of them demonstrates a symmetrical distribution of effect sizes, with most studies falling within the 95% and 99% confidence intervals (indicated by the inner and outer dashed lines, respectively). This symmetry suggests minimal publication bias.

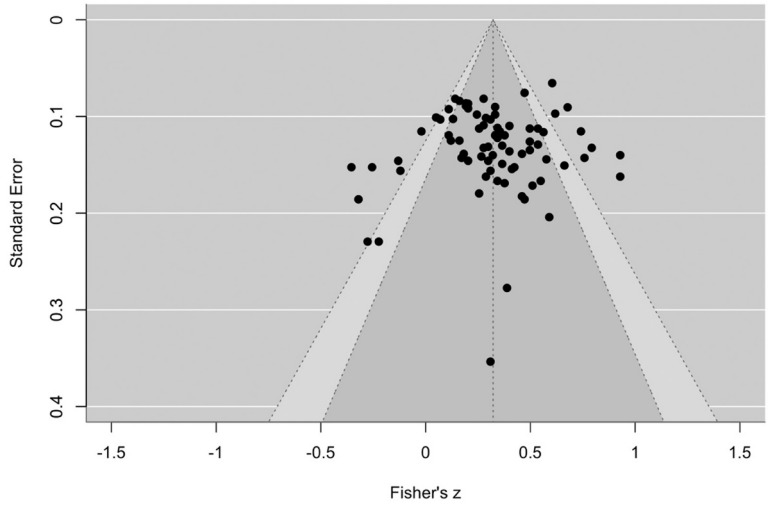


Fig. A1. Funnel plot team reflexivity–team performance.

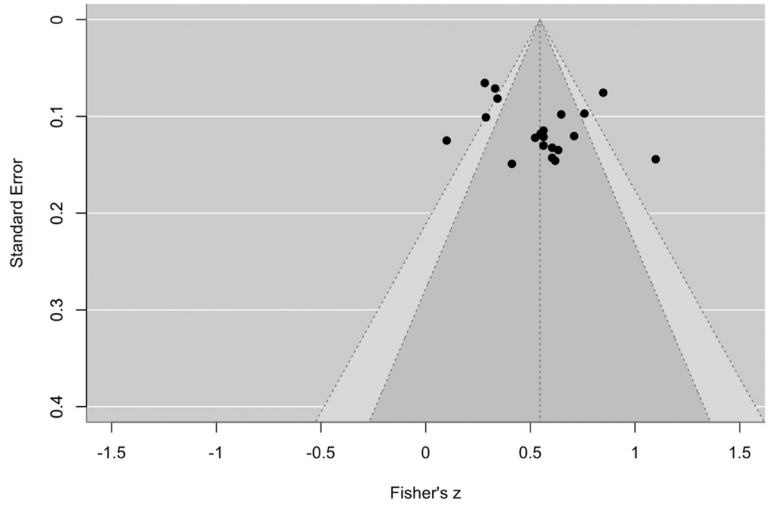


Fig. A2. Funnel plot team psychological safety–team reflexivity.

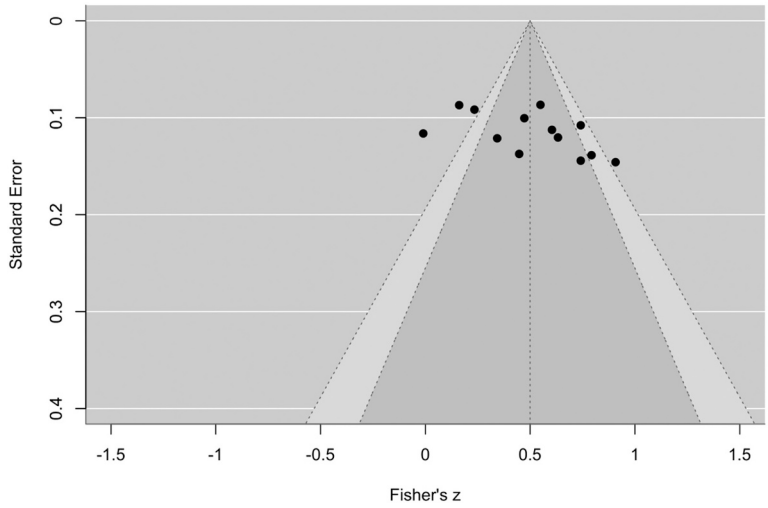


Fig. A3. Funnel plot participation-supportive leadership–team reflexivity.

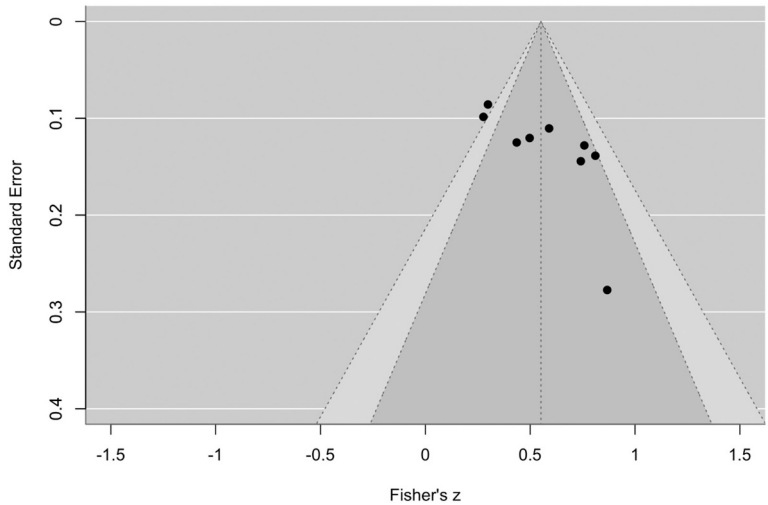


Fig. A4. Funnel plot participation-supportive leadership –team psychological safety.

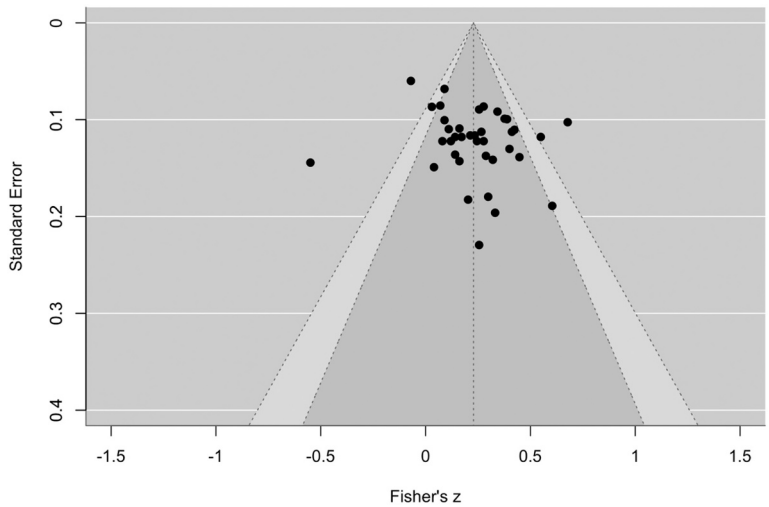


Fig. A5. Funnel plot participation-supportive leadership –team performance.

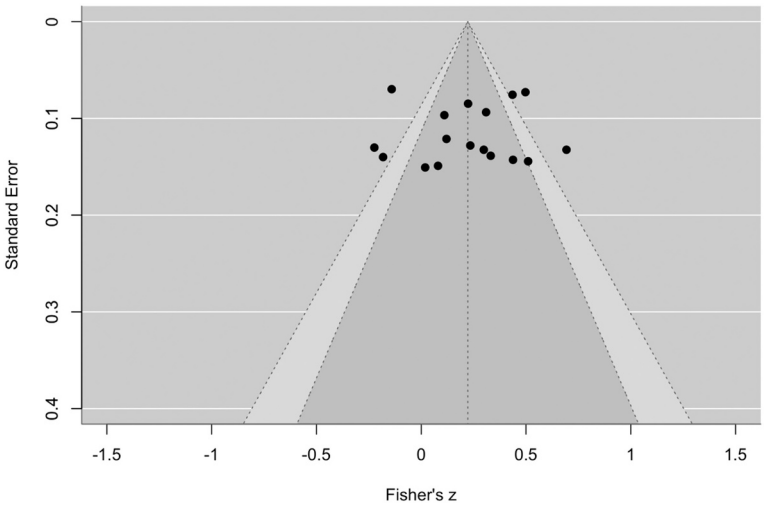


Fig. A6. Funnel plot team psychological safety–team performance.

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