

Synergy of Leadership, Competency, and Culture in Building High-Performance Teams

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Competency, and
Culture*

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ABSTRACT

Building high-performance teams is essential dynamic and competitive organizational environment. Success in teams is shaped not only by the capabilities of individual members but also by effective leadership and a supportive organizational culture. This study aims to explore the interplay between leadership, competence, and organizational culture in fostering high-performance teams. Specifically, it examines how these three factors interact and collectively influence team effectiveness within organizations. Adopting a literature review approach, the study analyzes a range of relevant scholarly sources to develop a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Findings suggest that transformational leadership plays a pivotal role in inspiring and motivating team members to deliver optimal performance. In addition, individual competence encompassing both technical skills and soft skills provides a solid foundation for team success. A collaborative and innovative organizational culture further enhances synergy, enabling teams to excel in complex and changing conditions. The study concludes that the integration of leadership, competence, and organizational culture is vital for creating high-performance teams and ensuring sustainable organizational growth.

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Keywords: *Competency, High-Performance Teams, Leadership, Organizational Culture, Synergy.*

ABSTRAK

Membangun tim berkinerja tinggi merupakan lingkungan organisasi yang dinamis dan kompetitif yang esensial. Keberhasilan tim tidak hanya dibentuk oleh kapabilitas masing-masing anggota, tetapi juga oleh kepemimpinan yang efektif dan budaya organisasi yang suportif. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi interaksi antara kepemimpinan, kompetensi, dan budaya organisasi dalam membina tim berkinerja tinggi. Secara spesifik, studi ini mengkaji bagaimana ketiga faktor ini berinteraksi dan secara kolektif memengaruhi efektivitas tim dalam organisasi. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan tinjauan pustaka, studi ini menganalisis berbagai sumber ilmiah yang relevan untuk mengembangkan pemahaman yang komprehensif tentang topik ini. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan transformasional memainkan peran penting dalam menginspirasi dan memotivasi anggota tim untuk mencapai kinerja optimal. Selain itu, kompetensi individu yang mencakup keterampilan teknis dan keterampilan lunak memberikan fondasi yang kokoh bagi kesuksesan tim. Budaya organisasi yang kolaboratif dan inovatif semakin meningkatkan sinergi, memungkinkan tim untuk unggul dalam kondisi yang kompleks dan terus berubah. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa integrasi kepemimpinan, kompetensi, dan budaya organisasi sangat penting untuk menciptakan tim berkinerja tinggi dan memastikan pertumbuhan organisasi yang berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci: *Kompetensi, Tim Berkinerja Tinggi, Kepemimpinan, Budaya Organisasi, Sinergi.*

INTRODUCTION

In today's era, team building is crucial in modern organizations to face complex global challenges and requires highly effective teams (Dyer Jr & Dyer, 2019). Achieving optimal performance requires an understanding of key factors that strengthen team effectiveness, especially leadership, individual competencies, and organizational cultural synergy (Juhaeni et al., 2023). These elements significantly influence the formation of effective and efficient teams in achieving organizational goals. As an integral component of

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organizational success, high-performance teams contribute directly to the achievement of vision and mission, which underscores the importance of exploring this topic further (Offermann et al., 2004; Salcinovic et al., 2022).

Previous studies have consistently identified leadership as a critical determinant of team success. Leadership approaches such as transformational leadership and authentic leadership are often highlighted in this context (Bass, 1990; Cohen & Bailey, 1997; Avolio et al., 1999). Flood and Klausner (2022) emphasized that high-performance teams emerge when leadership, organizational systems, and support structures are effectively integrated to enhance individual and collective performance. McClelland (1973) and Smigla and Pastoria (2000) stated that competencies encompassing technical expertise and social skills have also been widely recognized as essential to enhancing teamwork effectiveness. Flynn (2016) further noted that the modern workplace demands alignment of leadership, organizational culture, and team competencies to develop high-performance teams. Although extensive research has been conducted on the individual roles of leadership and competencies, there remains a significant gap in studies that integrate these three components, leadership, competencies, and organizational culture, into a unified analytical framework to enhance team performance.

The research gap in this study lies in the limited exploration of the synergistic relationship between leadership, competency, and organizational culture in forming high-performing teams. Previous studies, such as those by Hamzah et al. (2013) and Hashmi et al. (2018), often discuss these elements separately, focusing on either leadership or competency without examining how they interact as an integrated system. The existing literature emphasizes the important role of each factor individually. For example, Northouse (2025) emphasizes leadership theories applicable in organizational contexts but rarely links them to enhancing team competency. Spencer and Spencer (2008) highlight individual skills and capabilities but do not discuss how these competencies can be strengthened through leadership influence. Regarding the cultural dimension, Schein (2010) highlights how organizational culture shapes team member behavior but does not fully explore its interaction with leadership practices or team competency. Several studies have proposed comprehensive conceptual frameworks that integrate these three elements (He et al., 2019; Weller et al., 2020; Ipinazar et al., 2021). Addressing this gap, this study adopts a holistic perspective to examine the interactions and synergies between leadership, competencies, and organizational culture, with the aim of providing new insights for managing and sustaining high-performance teams in complex organizational environments.

This research offers a model integrating leadership, competence, and organizational culture into a unified, interconnected framework for creating high-performing teams. Its novelty lies in identifying and measuring the synergy between these factors, a topic rarely explored in previous studies. The study aims to analyze each factor's role and examine how its synergy influences team performance. Using a quantitative survey approach, data were collected from organizations applying these principles. The findings contribute both theoretically and practically, offering insights applicable across various organizational contexts to enhance team effectiveness and performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership in High-Performance Teams

This literature review aims to deepen understanding of the interplay between leadership, competence, and organizational culture in fostering high-performing teams, focusing on identifying contributions from relevant theories and prior studies while critiquing and synthesizing existing literature to uncover research gaps and establish a robust theoretical framework (Victoria Garibaldi de Hilal et al., 2009; Alcázar Cruz, 2020). Leadership is pivotal in driving team performance, with Khan (2024) highlighting that integrating leadership styles with high-performance work systems can lead to organizational excellence. Transformational leadership, as developed by Bass and Bass (1985), emphasizes leaders' ability to inspire and motivate, creating a shared vision and

fostering team commitment to goals. Similarly, Avolio et al. (1999) underscore the importance of leadership that promotes team members' self-development and empowerment to take initiative. However, not all leadership styles are universally effective across organizational contexts. For instance, Walumbwa et al. (2008) and Tarba et al. (2019) note that authentic leadership, which prioritizes integrity and transparency, thrives in collaborative settings but may be less effective in environments demanding rapid decision-making and efficiency. These findings suggest a need to further explore how leadership styles can be tailored to align with organizational competencies and culture to optimize high-performing teams, ensuring synergy that enhances team effectiveness in diverse contexts.

Competence as a Determining Factor for Team Performance

Competency encompasses the skills, knowledge, and abilities that team members possess, enabling them to execute tasks effectively and contribute to high-performing teams. According to Spencer and Spencer (2008), individual competencies significantly influence overall team performance. Technical competencies, such as specialized expertise in a given field, are critical for task execution, but social competencies encompassing communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills are equally vital for fostering effective teamwork and achieving shared objectives (Miao & Cao, 2019; Carpio-Mendoza et al., 2023). Interpersonal skills facilitate coordination and synergy among team members, ensuring that collective goals are met efficiently. However, individual-focused competencies alone are insufficient to guarantee optimal team performance. The Organizational Competency Model by Boyatzis (2008) emphasizes that organizations must cultivate an environment conducive to competency development through targeted training and learning opportunities. This model highlights the need for organizations to provide resources and systems that enhance individual skills, aligning them with team and organizational goals. Furthermore, Salas et al. (2015) stress that effective collaboration among team members requires synergy with leadership and organizational culture. Leadership that encourages growth and a culture that supports collective competency development are essential for maximizing team effectiveness. Thus, this study must consider the interplay between individual competencies, leadership, and organizational culture to understand how these factors collectively drive high-performing teams. By examining these interconnections, the research can identify how organizations can foster environments that optimize both individual and collective competencies for sustained team success.

Organizational Culture and Its Role in High-Performance Teams

Organizational culture acts as a guiding framework for behavior and interactions among team members, shaping how they collaborate to achieve shared objectives. Schein (2010) defines organizational culture as a set of shared values, beliefs, and norms that direct members' actions toward common goals. In the context of teams, a robust organizational culture fosters collaboration, enhances communication, and strengthens teamwork, creating an environment conducive to high performance. Katz and Kahn (2015) demonstrate that cultures emphasizing collaboration and innovation significantly boost team performance, whereas cultures resistant to change or lacking support for teamwork can undermine effectiveness (Bass, 1990; Rothwell et al., 2015; Fernandes et al., 2024). However, not all organizational cultures are conducive to forming high-performing teams. Differences exist between collective cultures, which prioritize cooperation, and individualistic cultures, which focus on personal achievement. These variations influence how teams function and perform. Chatman and Jehn (1994) highlight that an inclusive, results-oriented culture enhances team effectiveness by aligning members' efforts with collective goals. Consequently, understanding the interplay between organizational culture, leadership, and individual competencies is critical for building high-performing teams. A culture that supports teamwork, when combined with effective leadership and strong competencies, creates a synergistic effect

that drives team success. This study must explore how these elements interact to identify strategies for cultivating organizational cultures that optimize team performance, ensuring alignment with leadership practices and competency development to achieve sustained excellence.

Synergy Between Leadership, Competencies, and Organizational Culture

Many studies have addressed leadership, competencies, and organizational culture separately, but few have addressed how these three factors can interact with each other and create synergies that support overall team performance (Yang & Lew, 2020; Kawahara et al., 2021). Hitt et al. (2007) stated that leaders who support the development of team members' competencies within an organizational culture that supports creativity and innovation can significantly improve team performance. However, this research is limited to analyzing leadership and organizational culture factors, without considering the role of individual competencies in greater depth (Lührmann & Eberl, 2007; Haslam et al., 2022). Understanding how the synergy between leadership, competency, and organizational culture can enhance team performance is crucial in filling a gap in the existing literature (Steffens et al., 2014; Pak & Kim, 2018; Moura et al., 2019). By combining these three factors into a unified analytical framework, this study seeks to offer new insights into how organizations build teams that excel not only individually but also effectively work collectively.

From this literature review, it can be concluded that leadership, competence, and organizational culture are factors that interact with each other and contribute to team performance. However, research that examines the relationship and synergy of these three factors as a whole is still very limited. Therefore, this study will further explore how these three factors work together in creating high-performing teams, with a holistic and integrative approach.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach through a literature review methodology to analyze and integrate concepts from existing literature on the interplay of leadership, competence, and organizational culture in building high-performing teams. The qualitative approach is suitable for this research as it aims to deepen the understanding of theories and concepts, allowing for an in-depth exploration of meanings, perspectives, and theoretical frameworks from diverse academic sources. Unlike quantitative methods, this approach facilitates a nuanced analysis of how these factors contribute to team performance, making it ideal for identifying research gaps and constructing a robust theoretical foundation.

This descriptive qualitative research uses a library research method, drawing data from books, journal articles, and research reports on leadership, competence, and organizational culture. Literature is selected for quality, relevance, and contribution to understanding high-performing teams, focusing on recent publications from reputable databases like Google Scholar, JSTOR, Scopus, and ProQuest. Priority is given to sources with rigorous methodologies and strong theoretical contributions, particularly in human resource management, leadership, and team development, ensuring a solid analytical foundation and relevance to current organizational practices.

Data collection involves a systematic process of source selection, evaluation, and extraction. Initially, literature is identified based on criteria such as publication year, journal or book quality, and alignment with the research topic. Each source is then evaluated for its methodological rigor, findings, and contribution to existing theories. Relevant data, including theories, models, empirical findings, and arguments related to leadership, competence, and organizational culture, are extracted to form the basis of the analysis. This structured approach ensures that the data collected is comprehensive and directly relevant to the study's objectives, enabling a thorough exploration of how these factors synergize to enhance team performance.

This study uses thematic analysis to synthesize the literature on leadership, competence, and organizational culture in high-performing teams. Data is organized into themes aligned with these variables to identify key concepts, patterns, and research gaps. Findings are compared with prior studies to assess contributions to theory and practice. Conclusions highlight the synergistic relationship among the three factors, offering insights for organizational leaders. Quality literature and systematic, transparent methods ensure validity and reliability. The results provide practical recommendations for managers and suggest future research directions to deepen the understanding of how these factors collectively enhance team effectiveness.

RESULTS

The Role of Leadership and Competence in Building High-Performing Teams

In this study, we conducted an in-depth analysis to explore the relationship between leadership, competence, and organizational culture in building high-performing teams. Based on the results of the literature synthesis, it was found that these three factors have a significant influence on increasing team effectiveness. These findings not only strengthen existing theories but also show that there is a synergistic interaction between the three that can accelerate the achievement of team performance.

Leadership is proving to have a very important role in creating a high-performing team. Based on research by Bass (1990) and Avolio et al. (1999), transformational leadership that focuses on empowering, inspiring, and motivating team members can increase morale and commitment to shared goals. Transformational leaders not only lead by giving direction, but also inspire team members to achieve greater goals by fostering a sense of ownership over the project at hand. This has been proven to improve team performance in the long run, as team members feel valued and encouraged to innovate. Leaders also tend to be able to facilitate open communication and increase collaboration between team members, which is an important factor in creating a productive team. Hakanen et al. (2015) discuss the essential role of trust in the development of high-performing teams, emphasizing its effect on collaboration and innovation.

However, participatory leadership is also identified as one of the effective approaches to building high-performing teams. Leaders who involve team members in the decision-making process and provide space for them to contribute to formulating strategies and problem solutions can increase team members’ confidence while strengthening interpersonal relationships between team members. This is in line with the findings of Yukl and Mahsud (2010), which reveal that inclusive leadership increases the trust of team members and strengthens a sense of solidarity in achieving common goals.

Table 1. Factors Affecting Team Performance

Factor	Description	Influence on Team Performance
Leadership	Transformational and participatory leadership that directs, empowers team members, and builds a shared vision.	Increase motivation, collaboration, and innovation within the team.
Individual Competencies	The technical and social skills that team members possess to complete tasks effectively.	Improve productivity, communication, and teamwork efficiency.
Team Competencies	The ability of teams to work together in effective collaboration and solve problems together.	Strengthen team synergy, improve decision-making, and effectiveness in team tasks.
Organizational Culture	Values that prioritize cooperation, adaptation to change, and sustainable development.	Facilitate innovation, adaptation, and ongoing collaboration within the team.

Table 1 summarizes the factors that affect team performance, by relating leadership, competence, and organizational culture, and the influence of each factor on team

performance: Individual competencies, both in terms of technical skills and interpersonal skills, greatly affect the overall performance of the team. Research by Spencer and Spencer (2008) shows that team members who have good technical skills will be better able to complete tasks more efficiently. However, social skills also play a very important role in creating effective work dynamics. Team members who have good communication skills, the ability to work together, and effective problem-solving skills can work more harmoniously in groups. These competencies allow team members to manage conflict, adapt to change, and stay focused on the bigger picture.

In addition to individual competencies, team competencies also play an important role in improving overall performance. In this case, Salas et al. (2015) stated that team performance does not only depend on individual abilities, but also on the team's ability to work together effectively. Competencies include the ability to share information, collaborate on decision-making, and complete tasks in an efficient and organized manner. Therefore, organizations need to ensure that not only individual skills are developed, but also the skills of the team as a whole, to achieve optimal performance.

Organizational Culture and Synergy for Effective Team Development

An organizational culture that supports collaboration, open communication, and appreciation for each team member's contribution plays a crucial role in improving team performance. According to Denison and Mishra (1995), an organizational culture that encourages cooperation between team members, as well as rewards individual contributions, can strengthen commitment to team goals and improve the quality of interactions within the team. An organization with a collaborative culture will find it easier to create a work environment that is open to new ideas, which ultimately contributes to more creative innovation and solutions.

In addition, an adaptive organizational culture has also been proven to have a great influence on team performance. A culture that supports change, learning, and continuous development allows teams to adapt quickly to changing markets or new technologies. This is in line with the findings of Schein (2010), which shows that an organizational culture that is flexible and responsive to external change creates a team that is more resilient and ready to take on new challenges.

Table 2. Leadership, Competencies, and Culture in High-Performing Teams

Factor	Theory/Model	Influence on Team Performance
Leadership	Transformational Leadership (Bass, 1990)	Motivate team members to exceed expectations and achieve goals along with inspiration.
Individual Competencies	Competency Model (Spencer & Spencer, 2008)	Improve the technical and social skills of team members, strengthen collaboration and efficiency.
Team Competencies	Effective Teams (Salas et al., 2015)	Develop better collaboration and communication among team members.
Organizational Culture	Adaptive Culture (Schein, 2010)	Helping teams adapt to change and improve innovation and collective performance.

Table 2 can describe existing theories of leadership, competence, and organizational culture and how they contribute to team performance. One of the main findings in this study is the synergy between leadership, competence, and organizational culture in forming high-performing teams. Effective leadership, as described by Walumbwa et al. (2008), can develop an organizational culture that supports collaboration and competency development of team members. Leaders who have a clear vision and the ability to inspire team members will encourage the creation of a positive organizational culture, which in turn strengthens team competencies. In addition, leadership that supports the development of individual competencies also contributes to the formation of more efficient and productive teams.

The interaction between leadership that leads to learning and a culture that supports collaboration also strengthens team competency development. As stated by Boyatzis (2008), Leaders who focus on learning and development will create a culture that values upskilling and knowledge sharing between team members. The synergy between these three factors creates an ecosystem that allows teams to work more effectively, improve their performance, and achieve organizational goals better (Schönangerer, 2024).

Based on the results of the analysis, organizations looking to build high-performing teams need to pay attention to these three main factors. Transformative and participatory leadership is essential in creating a work atmosphere that encourages creativity and collaboration. Leaders need to provide space for team members to grow, provide constructive feedback, and ensure that common goals are always a priority. In addition, it is important to develop individual competencies through training programs that focus not only on technical skills but also on social and interpersonal skills that support teamwork. An inclusive and adaptive organizational culture also needs to be strengthened to ensure that teams have an environment that supports collaboration and innovation. An organizational culture that prioritizes collaboration, open communication, and learning will increase the effectiveness of teams and help them adapt to the changes that occur.

DISCUSSION

The findings in this study show that leadership, competence, and organizational culture have a very strong relationship in forming a high-performing team. These findings are in line with previous research that revealed that these factors not only impact individual performance but also overall team performance (Offermann et al., 2004; Alcázar Cruz, 2020). In this context, effective leadership, the development of team member competencies, and an organizational culture that supports collaboration are key to creating a team capable of achieving shared goals efficiently and productively.

In the rapidly evolving landscape of organizations, particularly within large corporations and technology startups, transformational leadership plays a critical role in addressing global market volatility and uncertainty. Leaders who offer clear guidance, inspire innovation, and empower team members to take initiative cultivate highly adaptive and creative teams. Amid the fast-paced shifts driven by digitalization and globalization, fostering open communication and nurturing team members' self-development is key to building high-performing teams. Bass (1990) and Avolio et al. (1999) emphasize that transformational leadership enhances team engagement and motivation, significantly elevating overall performance.

Individual and team competencies are critical for high-performing teams, extending beyond technical skills to include social and collaborative abilities. Salas et al. (2015) found that even with strong technical expertise, teams fail to achieve optimal results without effective collaboration. In modern organizations, particularly in technology-driven sectors, success hinges on teamwork, requiring skills in communication, shared decision-making, and cross-departmental collaboration (Hamzah et al., 2013). Thus, developing these team competencies is essential for effective problem-solving and collective decision-making.

No less important is the organizational culture that supports the creation of high-performing teams. The findings in this study reinforce the view that an organizational culture that supports cooperation, openness, and innovation is an inseparable factor in team success. As explained by Berson et al. (2008) and Schein (2010), a good organizational culture can increase mutual trust and facilitate more effective communication between team members. A culture that prioritizes collaboration and knowledge sharing will encourage team members to support each other and contribute more fully to achieving common goals. In fact, many organizations are increasingly aware of the importance of building an inclusive culture that prioritizes the values of cooperation and trust. This is especially relevant in today's world of work, where successful teams are more often found in organizations that have an adaptive culture and are open to change (Weller et al., 2020). However, while these findings corroborate existing theories, it is

undeniable that there are challenges in implementing synergies between these three factors in real contexts. One of the key challenges is ensuring that an organizational culture that supports innovation and collaboration is truly implemented in day-to-day practice. Many organizations claim to have an open and collaborative culture, but in practice, bureaucracy or structural barriers hinder the flow of information and cooperation between teams (Tarba et al., 2019).

Based on these findings, the key culture. The key implication is that organizations need to pay more attention to the development of these three factors simultaneously: leadership, competence, and organizational culture, to achieve optimal team performance. This is in line with a more holistic approach to team management that recognizes that strong leadership, relevant competencies, and a supportive organizational culture are mutually supportive and inseparable elements. Leaders who succeed in creating high-performing teams are those who are able to create synergy between the three elements, ensuring that each team member feels valued and empowered to contribute to the fullest. The authors argue that this study makes a significant contribution to enriching the literature on team management, especially in integrating these three important factors into one comprehensive theoretical framework.

CONCLUSION

This research highlights the interplay of leadership, competence, and organizational culture in building high-performing teams. Findings show that transformational and participatory leadership boost motivation and engagement, enhancing performance. Individual and team competencies, especially in collaboration and communication, are crucial for achieving shared goals, while a culture of openness, collaboration, and adaptability strengthens effectiveness. These factors create a reinforcing system that enables efficiency and innovation. However, structural and bureaucratic barriers can hinder the application of collaborative cultures, requiring proactive leadership to align practices with organizational values. Practically, the study offers guidance for cultivating adaptive, high-performing teams by prioritizing leadership development, competency training, and supportive cultures. Managers can use these insights to overcome barriers and foster innovation and collaboration, improving competitiveness in dynamic markets. Theoretically, it advances team management theory by framing leadership, competence, and culture as interconnected pillars of success. The limitations of this study include reliance on literature synthesis without empirical data. Future research should use quantitative or field studies across varied contexts and explore variables like conflict management or motivation to refine long-term strategies for building resilient, high-performing teams.

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