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# Gender diversity and team performance under time pressure: The role of team withdrawal and information elaboration

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## Summary

Findings in the extant literature are mixed concerning when and how gender diversity benefits team performance. We develop and test a model that posits that gender-diverse teams outperform gender-homogeneous teams when perceived time pressure is low, whereas the opposite is the case when perceived time pressure is high. Drawing on the categorization-elaboration model (CEM; van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004), we begin with the assumption that information elaboration is the process whereby gender diversity fosters positive effects on team performance. However, also in line with the CEM, we argue that this process can be disrupted by adverse team dynamics. Specifically, we argue that as time pressure increases, higher gender diversity leads to more team withdrawal, which, in turn, moderates the positive indirect effect of gender diversity on team performance via information elaboration such that this effect becomes weaker as team withdrawal increases. In an experimental study of 142 four-person teams, we found support for this model that explains why perceived time pressure affects the performance of gender-diverse teams more negatively than that of gender-homogeneous teams. Our study sheds new light on when and how gender diversity can become either an asset or a liability for team performance.

## KEYWORDS

gender diversity, information elaboration, perceived time pressure, team performance, team withdrawal

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Scholars have argued that diversity constitutes a potential for enhanced team performance (e.g., Jackson & Joshi, 2011; van Knippenberg & Mell, 2016). This view is often cited in conjunction with the fairness perspective on diversity (Agars & Kottke, 2004) to argue that organizations should promote diversity and assemble more diverse teams. At the same time, however, research suggests that diversity also entails a negative potential and may undermine team performance (van Knippenberg & Mell, 2016; Williams &

O'Reilly, 1998). Hence, diversity has been called a “double-edged sword” (e.g., van Dijk et al., 2012) in that it may constitute either an asset or a liability, depending upon whether diverse teams unlock the positive or the negative potential that heterogeneity entails. Despite much progress in the past two decades, our understanding of when the former outweighs the latter is still incomplete (Guillaume et al., 2017; van Knippenberg & Mell, 2016).

A theoretical perspective that explains the “double-edged sword”-nature of team diversity is the categorization-elaboration model (CEM; van Knippenberg et al., 2004). In a nutshell, the CEM

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posits that diversity can benefit team performance through information elaboration—that is, the active use of the broader range of ideas, perspectives, knowledge, and experience that diversity affords. However, adverse team dynamics such as relational conflict can impede information elaboration and thus hamper team performance. One of the most important points of the CEM is that the multifaceted effects of diversity are contingent on moderating variables (van Knippenberg et al., 2004). According to the CEM, there is no generalizable main effect of team diversity on team performance (an assumption that has been supported by several meta-analyses; e.g., Joshi & Roh, 2009; van Dijk et al., 2012), and diversity does not automatically engender either adverse team dynamics or information elaboration. Most prior research informed by the CEM has placed a strong emphasis on moderators of the diversity-information elaboration link (e.g., Hoever et al., 2012; Nederveen Pieterse et al., 2013). We argue, however, that a fuller investigation of the main ideas of the CEM and the view of team diversity as a “double-edged sword” necessitates that manifestations of the negative potential of diversity and moderators of the team diversity-adverse team dynamics link also need to be addressed.

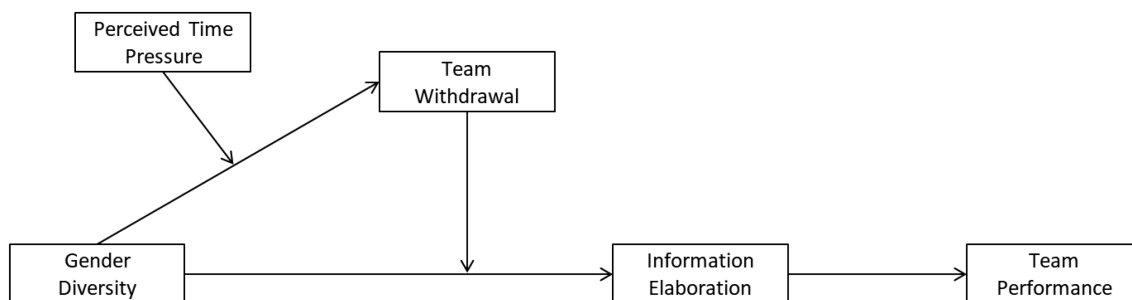
Our research therefore examines two variables thus far neglected in the diversity literature—team withdrawal and perceived time pressure—that broaden our understanding of the team diversity–team performance association through the CEM lens. In line with the CEM, we begin by positing that diversity engenders positive effects on team performance via information elaboration. We then turn to how this realization of the positive potential of diversity can be undermined by adverse team dynamics. Although much previous research on diversity has focused on team conflict as an example of adverse team dynamics (e.g., Nishii, 2013), we argue that there are other important manifestations of dysfunctional team processes. Specifically, we examine team withdrawal—that is, team members turning quiet, disengaging, and no longer contributing to team discussions (e.g., Woolum et al., 2017). Aside from engaging in manifest conflict, team withdrawal is another way in which team members may react. Team withdrawal could be regarded as a more passive, quiet form of exhibiting discontent that teams can resort to as an alternative to the more active, noisy option of engaging in open conflict.

We argue that in diverse teams, team withdrawal increases as perceived time pressure rises. Even though scholars have argued that time pressure is one of the variables that should be included in every team performance model (e.g., Salas et al., 2005), researchers have

not yet examined whether time pressure (i.e., the perception that there is less than adequate time to finish tasks and meet demands; e.g., Cooper et al., 2001; Mohammed et al., 2009) plays a role in unlocking either the positive or the negative potential of diversity. We consider this to be a lamentable omission, given that prior theorizing suggests that perceived time pressure could have a particularly negative effect on diverse teams. Specifically, Kruglanski et al. (2006) have argued that time pressure fosters a behavioral syndrome called *group-centrism*, which includes a reliance on stereotypical thinking, in-group favoritism, pressures to opinion conformity, and a rejection of diversity and perspectives that deviate from the majority. These are the types of biases and adverse team processes that, according to the CEM, prevent diverse teams from leveraging their positive potential through information elaboration (van Knippenberg & van Ginkel, 2010). We integrate this work by Kruglanski et al. (2006; also see Kruglanski, 2004; Kruglanski et al., 2002) with the CEM and contend that time pressure harms diverse teams more than homogeneous teams.

In a nutshell, our model, depicted in Figure 1, posits that perceived time pressure moderates the association between team diversity and team withdrawal and that team withdrawal, in turn, undermines information elaboration and thus impedes the realization of the positive potential that diversity entails. While the CEM applies to all types of diversity and the arguments we present in developing our model may in large part also pertain to other diversity attributes, we will argue that our model is particularly germane to gender diversity.

With this research, we make two major contributions to the literature. First, we answer calls for a greater consideration of temporal aspects in studying teams in general (e.g., Maruping et al., 2015; Mohammed et al., 2009) and team diversity in particular (van Knippenberg et al., 2004). We develop theory to argue that perceived time pressure affects gender-diverse and gender-homogeneous teams differentially in that it has particularly detrimental effects on diverse teams. We show that time pressure promotes the negative and thereby diminishes the positive effects of diversity. Second, whereas most prior research informed by the CEM has focused on moderators of the diversity–information elaboration link (e.g., Hoever et al., 2012; Nederveen Pieterse et al., 2013), we offer a model that addresses both explanatory processes specified by the CEM, information elaboration (via which the positive potential of diversity may be realized)



**FIGURE 1** Hypothesized model

and adverse team processes (via which the negative potential of diversity may become unlocked). In so doing, we provide a more holistic test of the CEM by also investigating thus far neglected dynamics that explain the possible negative effects of diversity. In this regard, we argue that team withdrawal is an important manifestation of disagreements and/or dissatisfaction in teams that complements and extends the existing literature on what processes may undermine information elaboration and thus prevent teams from leveraging the positive potential that diversity affords. Together, these contributions enrich our understanding of the performance implications of current trends to make teams more gender diverse and at the same time demand that these units often work under high degrees of time pressure. Our findings reveal a potential dilemma: Although gender diversity and time pressure are two phenomena that increasingly characterize work in modern organizations, they may constitute a combination that entails the risk of suboptimal team performance.

## 2 | THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

### 2.1 | Gender diversity, information elaboration, and team performance

The CEM (van Knippenberg et al., 2004) argues that basically the same dynamics apply to all types of diversity. In essence, it states that heterogeneity can engender positive effects on team performance via information elaboration, but that this process can be impeded by dysfunctional team dynamics. As a result, many of the arguments we develop below may also be extended to various forms of diversity. However, our focus in this study lies on gender diversity. Gender diversity—that is, the distribution of differences among the members of a unit in regard to the common attribute gender (Harrison & Klein, 2007)—pertains to differences concerning a particularly salient social category that is “universally relevant” (Nishii, 2013, p. 1755) in virtually all contexts and countries and plays a major role in societal and organizational efforts to make workplaces more fair and inclusive. Many organizations are currently making major efforts at promoting gender diversity at all levels, and consulting firms are enthusiastically touting the benefits of assembling gender-diverse teams (e.g., McKinsey, 2020). While these actions are commendable from a fairness perspective, it is important to bear in mind that several meta-analyses have revealed that the average relationship between gender diversity and team performance is near zero (e.g., Joshi & Roh, 2009; Schneid et al., 2015; van Dijk et al., 2012). Given its link to tenacious status differentials, gender has been argued to be a particularly relevant diversity attribute with respect to team conflict (Nishii, 2013). It is therefore imperative for researchers and practitioners alike to gain a better understanding of the performance implications of promoting team gender diversity and of when and how gender diversity benefits, rather than impedes team performance.

Despite many similarities, there are some potentially team process-relevant differences between men and women with respect to cognitive as well as social and personality variables

(e.g., Hyde, 2005). Whatever the reason for these differences may be, according to the information/decision-making perspective (van Knippenberg et al., 2004), these differences entail a positive potential in that they broaden a team's range of experiential backgrounds, network ties, cognitive styles, and problem-solving approaches (Schneid et al., 2015; van Knippenberg et al., 2004). For example, gender differences in interests and corresponding differences in knowledge in different domains (e.g., Ackerman et al., 2001) can expand the overall knowledge base of diverse teams, in comparison to homogeneous teams, and help diverse teams generate a larger number of ideas and options to draw on. Ideally, teams are able to translate this greater information richness into better decisions and solutions (Harrison & Klein, 2007). This process could be aided by, for example, gender differences in extraversion (Feingold, 1994) that promote complementary fit such that different team members fill different team needs, which benefits team dynamics through role differentiation (Humphrey et al., 2007); by gender differences in tendencies to offer praise and elaborate on other person's comments as well as differences in the willingness to voice criticisms (Leaper & Smith, 2004), which could help to balance team interactions; and by gender differences in tendencies to compete versus cooperate (e.g., Croson & Gneezy, 2009), which could help teams to reconcile requirements for speed and accuracy, respectively, in task completion (Beersma et al., 2003).

Such gender differences are particularly likely to benefit teams on complex tasks, which are the focus of the present research. One important example of complex tasks are conjunctive, hidden profile tasks—such as the work performed by interdisciplinary or cross-functional teams—where contributions from all team members possessing unique information are required. Similarly, on tasks that require team members to reconcile the interests of different stakeholders (e.g., their employer and their customers) and the attendant different objectives (e.g., revenues and customer satisfaction), gender diversity could potentially prove beneficial. For example, gender differences in moral reasoning (Jaffee & Hyde, 2000) could increase the chances that different viewpoints and interests are considered when completing the task. In a similar vein, gender differences in risk preferences (e.g., Croson & Gneezy, 2009) could help ensure that teams strike a sensible balance between taking too much and too little risk. Indirect support for these assumptions can be gleaned, for example, from studies that show a positive relationship between corporate boardroom gender diversity and firm performance (Conyon & He, 2017; Reguera-Alvarado et al., 2017).

Hence, we argue that gender diversity entails a positive potential for team performance. In line with the CEM, however, we propose that the realization of this potential is by no means guaranteed. To benefit from team diversity, teams need to actively engage in eliciting, sharing, discussing, vetting, and integrating the ideas and insights of their members. It is only through this process of information elaboration that teams can leverage the positive potential that diversity affords (van Knippenberg et al., 2004). In support of this assumption, numerous studies have confirmed the positive mediating role of information elaboration in the team diversity–team performance link

(e.g., Hoever et al., 2012; Hoever et al., 2018; Homan et al., 2008; Kearney et al., 2009; Nederveen Pieterse et al., 2013). Consequently, information elaboration can now be regarded as the established construct via which diversity engenders positive effects on team performance (e.g., Homan et al., 2020). We therefore posit:

**Hypothesis 1.** Gender diversity has a positive indirect effect on team performance via information elaboration.

## 2.2 | The moderating effect of perceived time pressure on the association between gender diversity and team withdrawal

The CEM (van Knippenberg et al., 2004) takes a balanced approach by proposing that to understand the overall effects of diversity, not only the potential positive effects (through information elaboration) but also the potential negative effects (through adverse team processes) need to be considered. Thus far, however, most of the research on moderators has focused on variables that help to realize the positive potential of diversity via information elaboration (Guillaume et al., 2017; Nishii, 2013; van Knippenberg & van Ginkel, 2010). For example, scholars have investigated the positive influence of leadership (e.g., Kearney & Gebert, 2009), personality (e.g., Homan et al., 2008; Kearney et al., 2009), and diversity beliefs, mindsets, and climates (e.g., van Knippenberg et al., 2013). By contrast, there has been less interest in examining moderators that may pose a threat to diverse teams and make them underperform. While fully acknowledging the importance of examining the “bright side” of diversity, in line with the CEM, we argue that a deeper understanding of the effects of gender heterogeneity also requires an investigation of factors that may unlock the negative potential of diversity by undermining information elaboration. If diversity truly is a “double-edged sword,” then both sides need to be explored. Hence, our model introduces two variables into the diversity literature that together illustrate how gender diverse teams may fail to realize their full performance potential.

According to the CEM (van Knippenberg et al., 2004), the greatest threat to information elaboration in diverse teams stems from adverse team processes (van Knippenberg et al., 2004). By far the most frequently studied of these processes is team conflict, especially relationship conflict (e.g., Jehn et al., 1999; Lee et al., 2018; Nishii, 2013; Pelled et al., 1999; Polzer et al., 2002). Relationship conflicts are disagreements at an interpersonal level that diminish trust, cohesion, satisfaction, commitment, and identification (de Wit et al., 2012). Prior research has assumed that such disagreements often lead team members to engage in open conflict. We argue, however, that it is also possible that team members who disagree and become discontented may refrain from openly voicing their dissent and grievances and instead opt to psychologically withdraw—that is, to turn quiet, withhold effort, disengage, and no longer participate in and contribute to team discussions.

The literature generally distinguishes between two types of withdrawal—physical withdrawal (e.g., absenteeism, lateness, and

early departure), which pertains to individuals being physically absent, and psychological withdrawal, which pertains to individuals being physically present, but withdrawn from the task and from team interactions (e.g., Podsakoff et al., 2007). Although psychological withdrawal has been studied extensively at the individual level in regard to other organizational behavior topics (e.g., Phillips, 2001; Shaffer et al., 2001; Woolum et al., 2017), somewhat surprisingly, it has not yet been thoroughly investigated at the team level more generally (for an exception, see Pearsall et al., 2009) and the team diversity literature specifically. This is surprising given the diversity literature's strong emphasis on conflict as the main manifestation of adverse team processes (Nishii, 2013). While engaging in conflict can be considered as an active “fight” response to disagreements and/or frustrations, psychological withdrawal could be construed as a more passive “flight” response. Pearsall et al. (2009) have shown that team withdrawal correlates negatively with a team's engagement in problem-solving coping, and Carver and Connor-Smith (2010) have labeled withdrawal as a form of disengagement coping (as opposed to engagement coping). Withdrawal enables team members to reduce stress by psychologically distancing themselves and avoiding involvement in team interactions (Connor-Smith & Flachsbart, 2007; Pearsall et al., 2009; Weick & Roberts, 1993). We argue that team withdrawal—that is, a state in which team members reduce their effort, no longer actively participate, and refrain from contributing to team discussions—like relationship conflict, can undermine the process of reaping benefits from diversity through information elaboration. Importantly, we propose that the association between gender diversity and team withdrawal is contingent on perceived time pressure. In moderating this association, we submit that time pressure is a variable that can unlock the negative potential of gender diversity—via team withdrawal—and thus prevent the realization of the positive potential of heterogeneity via information elaboration.

The role of temporal aspects in determining whether there will be a preponderance of positive or negative effects in diverse teams is still unclear. Virtually all of the prior research on the role of time as a moderator of diversity–outcome relationships has examined the impact of the passage of time (i.e., team tenure or team longevity). This research has yielded remarkably mixed findings, with some work suggesting that the effects of demographic diversity become less negative and/or more positive over time (e.g., Harrison et al., 1998, 2002), whereas others have found that demographic diversity is more beneficial in short-term, rather than long-term teams (e.g., Joshi & Roh, 2009; Stahl et al., 2010). Time pressure is a different temporal aspect that, we argue, should be studied in its own right because prior work suggests that it engenders effects that are highly pertinent to interactions in diverse teams (e.g., Kruglanski et al., 2002, 2006). Whereas research on the effects of time pressure on teams in general is mixed (e.g., Driskell et al., 1999; Maruping et al., 2015; Pearsall et al., 2009), we argue that time pressure affects diverse and homogeneous teams differentially.

When perceived time pressure is low, we expect a negative association between gender diversity and team withdrawal. In other words, under low time pressure, we expect homogeneous teams to

exhibit higher levels of team withdrawal than diverse teams. The range of different ideas and perspectives is likely to be more restricted in homogeneous teams. Right from the start of the interaction, the members of homogeneous teams may perceive similarities between their own ideas and those of the other team members. As this perception becomes reinforced in the course of the team discussion, team members may increasingly believe that their own contributions are not particularly unique or essential. Moreover, compared to diverse teams, the point at which all relevant information has been discussed is likely to be reached sooner in homogeneous units. From that point on, there is likely to be repetition and redundancy in member contributions, which is bound to become all the more obvious to team members the less urgency there is to complete the task. As a result, team members may perceive themselves as dispensable, which increases the likelihood that they will withhold effort (Kidwell & Bennett, 1993; Price et al., 2006). Not having anything unique to offer decreases motivation and can be experienced as frustrating and disappointing, thus promoting withdrawal (Kerr & Bruun, 1983). Importantly, team withdrawal is not a state of shared contentment resulting from task completion. It is a state in which team members become passive and no longer contribute to team discussions. We argue that in homogeneous teams, this is most likely due to the frustrations and diminished motivation that result from feeling dispensable (Kerr & Bruun, 1983).

Gender-diverse teams, by contrast, will need more time to share and discuss their greater range of ideas and perspectives. Low time pressure enables teams to process the higher number of unique views, insights, and suggestions in a deliberate and systematic fashion. Hence, compared to homogeneous teams, diverse teams should be less likely to experience team withdrawal under low perceived time pressure because the more time-consuming processing of different proposals and viewing matters from different angles will keep them engaged longer.

We expect this negative association between gender diversity and team withdrawal to turn increasingly positive as perceived time pressure rises. We argue that under high time pressure, gender-diverse teams will experience withdrawal to a higher extent than gender-homogeneous teams. Time pressure enhances the need to reach closure and quickly find definitive answers and solutions and to avoid confusion and ambiguity (e.g., Kruglanski, 2004). In teams, these cognitive tendencies tend to be exacerbated and manifested in a dysfunctional team process called *group-centrism* (Kruglanski et al., 2006), which entails a general preference for homogeneous and self-resembling over diverse teams. Group-centrism consists of a pattern of behaviors that includes pressures to opinion conformity and suppression of dissent. Such teams undergo a closing of the group mind (e.g., Kruglanski et al., 2002, 2006; Kruglanski & Webster, 1996) and are no longer open to divergent, alternative views. This behavioral syndrome can set in motion an increasingly negative spiral of in-group favoritism—that is, preferential treatment of others who are similar to oneself (Kruglanski et al., 2006)—an increased stereotyping of interaction partners (Kruglanski & Webster, 1996) and an outright rejection of diversity (Kruglanski et al., 2006).

All of this is more likely to harm diverse, rather than homogeneous teams, because the presence of gender differences provides a basis for viewing members of the opposite gender in stereotypical ways. Gender has frequently been cited as a diversity attribute that may prompt biased interactions with dissimilar others (e.g., Seong et al., 2015; Wegge et al., 2008), and measurable inequality and status differences are still associated with gender (Joshi et al., 2015; Nishii, 2013). Gender-based stereotypes and biases may be suppressed and lie dormant most of the time (Devine, 1989; Devine et al., 2002). Under certain circumstances, however, they are prone to become activated and influence behavior. These circumstances include being busy, overwhelmed, distracted, and unable or unwilling to expend the necessary cognitive energy to override negative stereotypes (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003; Devine, 1989; Greenwald et al., 2003). Time pressure can trigger or compound all of these conditions. Moreover, negative stereotypes have a greater influence on people's behavior when there appears to be some external justification for viewing and treating members of demographic outgroups less favorably (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003; Duguid & Thomas-Hunt, 2015). The pressure to finish tasks and meet deadlines and the discontent over what one may perceive as unwarranted, deviant perspectives on the part of demographic out-group members may serve as such a justification.

However, diverse teams can only tap their full performance potential if members refrain from viewing one another in stereotypical and biased ways, as this would likely impede the thorough utilization of different perspectives and ideas (van Knippenberg et al., 2004). As the members of gender diverse teams become aware of group-centrism problems in their team interactions—and the resulting lack of progress on the team task—they are likely to become dissatisfied, to which they may react by withdrawing. We therefore expect that, under high perceived time pressure, diverse teams are more likely to exhibit team withdrawal than homogeneous teams. The latter are bound to be harmed less by the effects of time pressure such as group-centrism because their (negative) potential to view one another in stereotypical and biased ways is more restricted to begin with. Consequently, in their team interactions, they are less likely to experience the discontent that may lead them to withdrawal. For them, perceived time pressure may even be beneficial in that it creates a positive sense of urgency that prevents members from disengaging prematurely. In sum, we therefore posit:

**Hypothesis 2.** Perceived time pressure moderates the effect of gender diversity on team withdrawal such that this effect is negative when perceived time pressure is low, but becomes increasingly positive as perceived time pressure rises.

## 2.3 | The links among gender diversity, team withdrawal, information elaboration, and team performance

Thus far, we have proposed that gender diversity has a positive effect on team performance via information elaboration and that

time pressure moderates the relation between gender diversity and team withdrawal. In connecting these two lines of reasoning within our model, we now further submit that team withdrawal, in turn, moderates the indirect effect of gender diversity on team performance via information elaboration such that this positive effect becomes weaker as team withdrawal increases. This logic is in line with the CEM (van Knippenberg et al., 2004), which also proposes that adverse social categorization effects precede information elaboration in the sense that these negative effects engendered by diversity moderate the relation between diversity and information elaboration.

When team withdrawal is low, diverse teams remain engaged in team discussions and participate in sharing, evaluating, and integrating different views and ideas. Under these conditions, diverse teams are thus most likely to be able to translate their broader range of perspectives into constructive information elaboration that ultimately results in higher levels of team performance on complex tasks. By contrast, even if team withdrawal is low, homogeneous teams are at a disadvantage compared to diverse teams in that they are bound to have a more restricted range of perspectives and ideas to draw on. Whereas discussions in diverse teams are more likely to be marked by sharing unique insights and viewing the task from different angles, discussions in homogeneous teams are bound to focus more on shared information and be characterized by repetitiveness and redundancy (e.g., van Knippenberg et al., 2004; van Knippenberg & van Ginkel, 2010). In other words, when team withdrawal is low, diverse teams are more likely to exhibit higher levels of information elaboration than homogeneous teams because they can draw on a larger pool of task-relevant ideas, knowledge, and insights to exchange, discuss, and integrate (van Knippenberg et al., 2004). Hence, we argue that when team withdrawal is low, gender diversity will be positively related to information elaboration, which in turn fosters team performance.

As team withdrawal rises, however, we expect the positive effect of gender diversity on team performance via information elaboration to become increasingly weaker. The potential advantage of diverse over homogeneous teams lies in their broader pool of unique, non-redundant perspectives. In order for diverse teams to leverage this potential, their members must remain engaged and share the information only they possess. The more teams resort to withdrawal, the more this unique information is withheld and the positive potential of their diversity remains locked. In comparison to diverse teams, homogeneous teams are less likely to be harmed by team withdrawal because there tends to be greater redundancy in perspectives and ideas. Thus, team withdrawal in homogeneous team has a less detrimental effect on information elaboration and, in turn, team performance. We therefore posit:

**Hypothesis 3.** Team withdrawal moderates the positive indirect effect of gender diversity on team performance via information elaboration such that this positive effect becomes weaker as team withdrawal increases.

## 3 | METHOD

### 3.1 | Participants and design

To test our hypotheses, we conducted an experiment in the experimental laboratory of a large German university. In a between-subjects design, participants were randomly assigned to 145 four-person teams. All participants granted permission for audio and video recording of their team interactions. Due to technical problems with the recording, three of the teams had to be excluded from our final sample, which thus included 142 teams, with 71 gender-diverse teams consisting of two women and two men and 71 gender-homogeneous teams, 36 of which consisted of four women and 35 of which comprised four men. The participants in our final sample were 568 students (282 males; 296 females) from different fields of study (most notably business administration, economics, humanities, and natural sciences). The mean age was 24.82 years (*s.d.* = 7.13). Each participant received 8 euros as basic compensation for participation plus the opportunity to receive a team performance-contingent bonus of up to 45 euros. We offered this monetary incentive to enhance the team members' motivation to attain high levels of team performance. Teams were randomly assigned to the experimental conditions—that is, to the high or the low time pressure condition. We thus used a  $2 \times 2$  experimental design (gender diverse vs. gender homogeneous and high vs. low time pressure).

The complete experimental session, which was conducted in German, lasted 90 min in the non-time pressure condition and 75 min in the time pressure condition. After receiving general instructions on both the procedures in the session and their attainable compensation, the teams started with a warm-up exercise, the Winter Survival Task (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). This task was intended to afford team members the opportunity to become acquainted with one another, familiarize themselves with the laboratory setting, and instigate team interactions before moving on to the actual experimental task. After having completed the experimental task, which is explained in the next section, the participants individually completed the questionnaire described below on tablet computers. Subsequently, participants were debriefed and received their compensation based on their team's performance.

### 3.2 | Experimental task

A distributive information decision task previously used by van Knippenberg et al. (2010) and based on the architectural design firm task (Palmer & Thompson, 1998) served as our experimental task. Participants were told that they were an expert team working for an architectural design firm. Together, they had to design a house based on client specifications and with a limited budget. The team was informed that their objective was to maximize revenue for their architectural design firm. Given that the design of the house involved various potential options and customer's preferences to be considered, the instructions also included information about the cost of the

various available options as well as the revenues for the architectural design firm if a particular option was selected by the team. Moreover, certain combinations of options enabled the team to ensure extra revenue for the firm. Since identifying those combinations necessitated combining information from different expert roles within the team, this distributed information setup constituted an ideal scenario within which heterogeneity could potentially benefit teams via information elaboration (van Knippenberg et al., 2004). Only through exchanging, discussing, and integrating information shared by different team members could teams attain high levels of performance. Informational diversity was thus a constant in our experiment, whereas gender diversity was a variable (with two levels: gender diversity and gender homogeneity).

Before they began working on the experimental task, participants received a folder containing both general information about the task that was shared among the team members and unique, specific information pertaining to their respective expert role. In all conditions, participants had 10 min to read the materials and were not permitted to talk or otherwise interact with their team members during this time. Subsequently, the teams worked on their task until they either reached a consensus on what proposal they would offer their client or their allotted time ran out. The teams then filled out a form provided to them on which they were to enter the options they had chosen along with the associated prices and revenues. With very few exceptions, the teams made use of the complete time they had been allotted.

### 3.3 | Manipulation of time pressure

In the time pressure condition, we restricted the allotted time such that there was significant time pressure, but still enough time to finish the task. To determine what amount of time would be appropriate in this regard and engender perceptions of high and low time pressure, respectively, we conducted a pre-test of the task with 13 teams. Based on this pretest, we determined that 20 min would constitute an adequate time pressure condition in the actual experiment. By contrast, teams in the low time pressure condition were given 35 min for the task (excluding the time given for reading the materials).

### 3.4 | Measures

We used three different sources for measuring the variables in our research model. First, we drew on objective measures for gender diversity and team performance. Second, we collected self-report measures from each team member to capture perceived time pressure. Third, we videotaped the experimental sessions (with the consent of the participants) and two different sets of trained video coders rated each team on either team withdrawal or information elaboration to minimize common-method variance in the hypothesized mechanism connecting gender diversity with team performance. We used Likert-type items (with a response format ranging from

1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*) for the item-based scales collected from both the participants and the video coders.

#### 3.4.1 | Team performance

We operationalized our dependent variable team performance as the revenues achieved by the teams in the experimental task. The highest possible revenue that teams could achieve was 34.250 euros. As did van Knippenberg et al. (2010), for ease of presentation, we divided revenues by 1.000 for the subsequent statistical analyses. This yields numbers with fewer digits, but does not otherwise affect the findings and tests of hypotheses.

#### 3.4.2 | Gender diversity

For gender diversity, we used a binary variable capturing whether the teams were homogeneous (comprising only female or only male team members) or diverse (comprising two female and two male team members). Homogeneous teams were coded 0, and diverse teams were coded 1. We did not find any significant means differences regarding our main study variables between all-male and all-female teams. We therefore combined these types of teams into one overall category of homogeneous (non-gender-diverse) teams.

#### 3.4.3 | Perceived time pressure

After the experimental task and before receiving feedback on their performance and payment, participants filled out a questionnaire that included a perceived time pressure scale. Using a referent-shift logic (Chan, 1998), this scale contained three Likert-type items adapted from Durham et al. (2000) and Madjar and Oldham (2006): “We were working under excessive time pressure,” “We did not have the time to fully focus on the tasks,” and “Given more time, we could have found better solutions.” The individual-level Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  for this scale was .74. Analogous to previous studies on time pressure in teams (e.g., Maruping et al., 2015), we aggregated the individual-level responses to the team level given the acceptable agreement among the participating team members (median  $r_{wg(i)} = .77$ , ICC[1] = .44, ICC [2] = .76).

#### 3.4.4 | Information elaboration

In the diversity literature, audio–video coding is widely used for the operationalization of information elaboration (e.g., Hoever et al., 2018; van Knippenberg et al., 2010). We followed this common practice and had a team of two trained video coders who were blind to our study’s hypotheses separately analyze each of the 142 experimental sessions. Our approach in training the video coders comprised three steps. First, we defined and explained the constructs for coding

to the coders. This also included the terms used in the individual items and possible exemplar behaviors and additional statements describing the respective behaviors. Second, each coder completed coding one team session while being assisted by the second or third author, to whom the coder explained his or her coding decisions. Third, each coder independently coded a set of three team sessions and subsequently received feedback on the coding from the second or third author. Each coder was trained individually.

Our scale for information elaboration was adapted from scales previously used by Homan et al. (2008) and Kearney and Gebert (2009). For each team, the coders answered the following four items intended to capture information elaboration: “All the information introduced in this team was carefully considered,” “All ideas brought forward in this team were thoroughly processed,” “The team ultimately opted for a solution without discussing other possible solutions (reverse-coded),” and “The team made a decision that was not thoroughly questioned (reverse-coded).” Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for this scale was .89. Since the video coders exhibited high agreement (median  $r_{wg(j)} = .97$ ) and interrater reliability (ICC[1] = .58, ICC[2] = .73), we used the arithmetic mean of their ratings to represent the extent of information elaboration in each team.

### 3.4.5 | Team withdrawal

A team of two raters that was different from the team that rated information elaboration and also blind to our study's hypotheses coded the videos for team withdrawal. The training of the video coders for this variable followed the same procedure described above for training the video coders of information elaboration. To capture team withdrawal, we used a scale with four items based on the description and measurement of psychological withdrawal by Phillips (2001), which we adapted to the context of our study. For each team, the coders answered the following four items: “Some team members withdrew from the work on the task,” “Some team members did not actively participate in the team task,” “Some team members invested less energy in the teamwork than they should have,” and “Some team members reduced their effort in the teamwork.”<sup>1</sup> Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for this scale was .83. The raters exhibited high agreement (median  $r_{wg(j)} = .92$ ) and interrater reliability (ICC[1] = .67, ICC [2] = .80), which justified using the arithmetic mean of their ratings to represent the extent of team withdrawal.

### 3.4.6 | Control variables

Although we manipulated gender diversity in our experimental design, there were still other types of diversity in the teams in our sample. To ensure that our results were not biased by the presence or absence of these other types of diversity, we controlled for age, language, and educational background diversity, respectively. In line with previous studies on age diversity (e.g., Williams, 2016), we used the standard deviation of team members' age to operationalize age diversity. We

followed previous studies on cultural and educational differences in teams (e.g., Kearney et al., 2009) and used Blau's (1977) index of homogeneity to operationalize language diversity (i.e., differences in team members' native language) and educational background diversity (i.e., differences in team members' fields of study). Finally, since we framed team withdrawal as the “flight” response that may manifest in teams, we also controlled for one of the most obvious “fight” responses, namely, relational conflict. The video coders evaluated each team's relational conflict based on a three-item scale by Jehn and Mannix (2001). This scale had a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of .95 and sufficient interrater agreement (median  $r_{wg(j)} = 1.00$ ) and reliability (ICC[1] = .59, ICC[2] = .75) to justify using its arithmetic mean for capturing the extent of relational conflict at the team level. The inclusion or exclusion of control variables can substantially impact study results (Bernherth & Aguinis, 2016). However, controlling for the three other types of team diversity and relational conflict had no noteworthy effect on the results presented below, which underscores the robustness of our findings and lends credence to our claim that our results were driven by our experimental manipulations.

## 4 | RESULTS

The means, standard deviations, and correlations among our study variables are depicted in Table 1. To test whether our manipulation of time pressure was effective, we checked if teams in the time pressure condition perceived higher levels of time pressure than those in the non-time pressure condition. A *t*-test revealed significantly higher ( $t = 6.44, p < .01$ ) perceptions of time pressure in the time pressure condition ( $m = 2.82, s.d. = .66$ ) than in the non-time pressure condition ( $m = 2.11, s.d. = .66$ ), thus supporting the effectiveness of our manipulation.

We tested our hypotheses with hierarchical regression analyses (Cohen et al., 2003; Hayes, 2017). The results are shown in Tables 2 and 3. To check for potential multicollinearity, we calculated variance inflation factors (VIFs) for all coefficients in our models (Cohen et al., 2003). All VIFs were below three, indicating that multicollinearity was not a problem in our analyses. To test Hypothesis 1, which predicts a positive indirect effect of gender diversity on team performance via information elaboration, we first tested and confirmed that team performance is predicted by information elaboration (Model 3 of Table 2) and that information elaboration, in turn, is predicted by gender diversity (Model 5). We then used PROCESS (Hayes, 2017) to test for the significance of the indirect effect by calculating bias-corrected confidence intervals with 50,000 bootstrap samples. This analysis revealed that the indirect effect of gender diversity on team performance via information elaboration is significantly positive ( $b = .38, s.e. = .20, t = 1.87, p < .05$ ), which supports Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2 predicts that perceived time pressure moderates the effect of gender diversity on team withdrawal such that this effect is negative when perceived time pressure is low, but becomes increasingly positive as perceived time pressure rises. In line with this

**TABLE 1** Means, standard deviations (s.d.), and correlations<sup>a</sup>

Variables	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Age diversity	5.16	4.68	-								
2. Language diversity	0.25	0.25	-.03	-							
3. Educational background diversity	0.66	0.12	.09	.15 <sup>†</sup>	-						
4. Relational conflict	1.44	0.78	.07	.11	.12	(.95)					
5. Gender diversity	0.50	0.50	.25**	-.08	-.01	-.02	-				
6. Perceived time pressure	2.47	0.75	-.02	.00	.04	.08	.04	(.74)			
7. Team withdrawal	2.43	0.81	.14	.18*	-.02	.10	-.10	-.05	(.83)		
8. Information elaboration	3.63	0.82	-.05	-.10	-.21*	-.36**	.17*	-.34**	-.26**	(.89)	
9. Team performance	30.18	3.49	-.14 <sup>†</sup>	.06	-.08	-.02	-.04	-.41**	-.05	.27**	-

<sup>a</sup>*n* = 142 teams; coefficient alphas are on the diagonal in parentheses.

<sup>†</sup>*p* < .10.

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01, two-tailed tests.

**TABLE 2** Results of hierarchical regression analyses for team performance and information elaboration<sup>a</sup>

Variables	Team performance			Information elaboration			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
<i>Control variables</i>							
Age diversity	-.10 (.06)	-.10 (.07)	-.08 (.06)	.00 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Language diversity	.91 (1.2)	.90 (1.2)	1.02 (1.1)	-.12 (.26)	-.08 (.25)	.04 (.25)	-.05 (.25)
Educational background diversity	-2.16 (2.5)	-2.17 (2.5)	-.70 (2.4)	-1.11* (.54)	-1.09* (.54)	-1.20* (.53)	-1.39** (.51)
Relational conflict	-.04 (.38)	-.04 (.38)	.43 (.39)	-.35** (.08)	-.35** (.08)	-.33** (.08)	-.31** (.08)
<i>Main effects</i>							
Gender diversity (GD)		-.05 (.61)	-.43 (.60)		.29* (.13)	.24 <sup>†</sup> (.13)	.23 <sup>†</sup> (.12)
Information elaboration			1.34** (.39)				
Team withdrawal (TW)						-.22** (.08)	.06 (.12)
<i>Interaction effect</i>							
GD*TW							-.50** (.15)
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.03	.03	.11	.16	.19	.23	.29
Δ <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>		.00	.08**		.03*	.04**	.06**
<i>F</i>	1.00	.80	2.75*	6.48**	6.29**	6.73**	7.67**

<sup>a</sup>*n* = 142 teams; unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

<sup>†</sup>*p* < .10.

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01, two-tailed tests.

hypothesis, the results of Model 4 in Table 3 show a significant interaction effect of gender diversity and perceived time pressure on team withdrawal. This interaction explains 7% of additional variance over and above the controls and the predictor variables. We then plotted the simple slopes at one standard deviation above and below the mean of perceived time pressure, which reveals a pattern in line with our predictions (see Figure 2). To identify the regions of significance of the relationship between gender diversity and team withdrawal contingent on perceived time pressure, we applied the Johnson–Neyman technique (Dawson, 2014; Hayes, 2017). Results showed that the relationship between gender diversity and team withdrawal is significantly negative for values of perceived time pressure lower than 2.38 (i.e., 0.12 s.d. below the scale's mean of 2.47) and significantly

positive for values of perceived time pressure higher than 3.64 (i.e., 1.57 s.d. above the mean). These findings are in line with Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3 predicts that the positive indirect effect of gender diversity on team performance via information elaboration is moderated by team withdrawal such that it becomes weaker as team withdrawal increases. We first tested whether gender diversity and team withdrawal interact in predicting information elaboration. As shown in Model 7 of Table 2, this interaction is significant and explains an additional variance of 6% over and above the controls and the predictor variables. As shown in Figure 3, this interaction is also in line with the predicted pattern. Applying the Johnson–Neyman technique (Dawson, 2014; Hayes, 2017) revealed that the relationship between

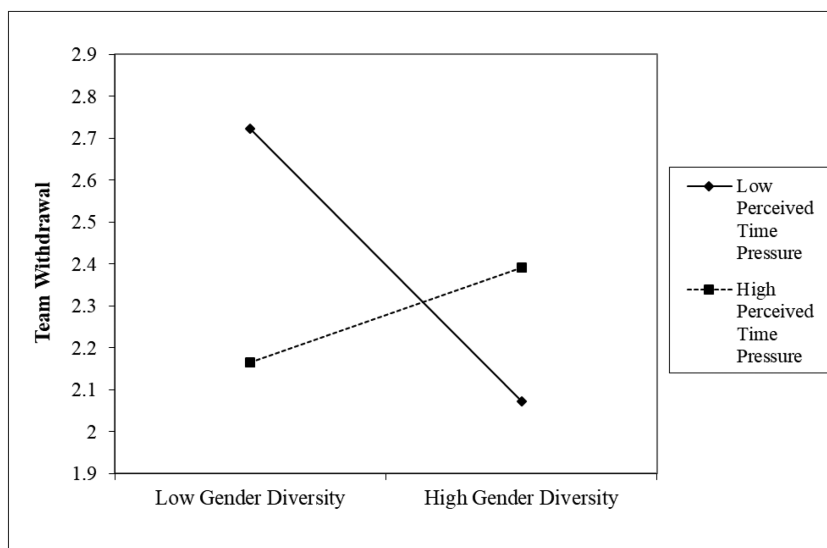
**TABLE 3** Results of hierarchical regression analyses for team withdrawal<sup>a</sup>

Variables	Team withdrawal			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Control variables</i>				
Age diversity	.02 <sup>†</sup> (.01)	.03* (.02)	.03* (.02)	.04* (.01)
Language diversity	.60* (.27)	.57* (.27)	.57* (.27)	.59* (.26)
Educational background diversity	-.49 (.57)	-.50 (.56)	-.49 (.57)	-.51 (.55)
Relational conflict	.08 (.09)	.08 (.09)	.08 (.09)	.07 (.08)
<i>Main effects</i>				
Gender diversity (GD)		-.20 (.14)	-.20 (.14)	-.21 (.13)
Perceived time pressure (TP)			-.05 (.09)	-.37** (.13)
<i>Interaction effect</i>				
GD*TP				.59** (.17)
R <sup>2</sup>	.06	.08	.08	.15
Δ R <sup>2</sup>		.02	.00	.07**
F	2.30 <sup>†</sup>	2.30*	1.97 <sup>†</sup>	3.43**

<sup>a</sup>n = 142 teams; unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

<sup>†</sup>p < .10.

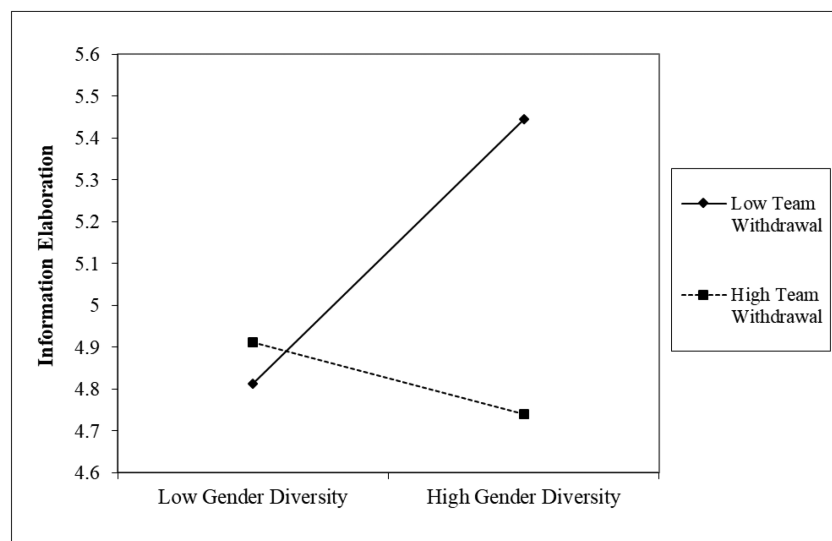
\*p < .05. \*\*p < .01, two-tailed tests.

**FIGURE 2** The moderating effect of perceived time pressure on the relationship between gender diversity and team withdrawal

gender diversity and information elaboration is significantly positive for values of team withdrawal lower than 2.40 (i.e., .04 s.d. below the scale's mean of 2.43) and significantly negative for values of team withdrawal higher than 3.97 (i.e., 1.91 s.d. above the mean). We then tested whether the positive indirect effect of gender diversity on team performance via information elaboration is contingent on team withdrawal. In line with our expectations, results yielded a significant index of moderated mediation ( $-.67$ ,  $s.e. = .29$ ,  $t = -2.31$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Based on 50,000 bootstrap samples calculating bias-corrected confidence intervals (Hayes, 2017), the positive indirect effect of gender diversity on team performance via information elaboration becomes significantly more negative as team withdrawal increases ( $b = -1.08$ ,  $s.e. = .47$ ,  $t = -2.31$ ,  $p < .01$ ). These results support Hypothesis 3.

## 5 | DISCUSSION

Drawing on the CEM (van Knippenberg et al., 2004) and literature that suggests that perceived time pressure could have a particularly negative effect on diverse teams (e.g., Kruglanski et al., 2002, 2006), we examined a model that posits that (1) gender diversity fosters positive effects on team performance via information elaboration, but that (2) perceived time pressure moderates the association between gender diversity and team withdrawal, and that (3) team withdrawal, in turn, moderates the indirect effect of gender diversity on team performance via information elaboration such that this positive effect becomes weaker as team withdrawal increases. In other words, our model proposes that perceived time pressure affects gender-diverse



**FIGURE 3** The moderating effect of team withdrawal on the relationship between gender diversity and information elaboration

teams more negatively than either all-male or all-female gender-homogeneous teams via the adverse team process team withdrawal, which prevents gender-diverse teams from leveraging their positive potential through information elaboration. We found support for this model in an experimental study of 142 four-person teams.

## 5.1 | Theoretical implications

Our research advances the team diversity literature, and specifically the literature on gender diversity, in several important ways. One important contribution is that we provide a fuller test of the main ideas of the CEM (van Knippenberg et al., 2004) than previous studies. Prior empirical research informed by the CEM has primarily explored the conditions under which teams can benefit from diversity through information elaboration (e.g., Hoever et al., 2012; Nederveen Pieterse et al., 2013). However, the CEM argues that diversity not only entails a positive potential (that can be realized via information elaboration) but also a negative potential (that can become unlocked via adverse team processes). Our study addresses both of these parts of the CEM and how they together determine whether the positive or the negative effects of diversity will prevail. We show when and how gender-diverse teams outperform gender-homogeneous teams and when and how the reverse is true. This is important because teams may fail to avail themselves of the potential benefits that diversity affords either because they do not know how to foster the mechanisms that unlock this potential (i.e., information elaboration; van Knippenberg et al., 2004) or because they do not know enough about and therefore inadvertently ignore the conditions and mechanisms that promote negative (side) effects of diversity. The extant literature has identified different ways in which diversity may become an asset (e.g., Hoever et al., 2012; Kearney & Gebert, 2009; Nederveen Pieterse et al., 2013; Nishii, 2013). By contrast, knowledge of when and why diversity can become a liability is less well developed. Given that there is no indication that, on average, gender-diverse teams succeed in

leveraging their positive potential (e.g., Schneid et al., 2015; van Dijk et al., 2012), it is crucial to understand why this is so, and our research offers novel insights in this regard. Our research introduces into the diversity literature two previously neglected variables—time pressure and team withdrawal—that help explain how gender-diverse teams, despite their superior potential, might derail.

Our research also furthers understanding of the interactive effects of gender diversity and perceived time pressure. Findings on the effects of time pressure on teams in general are mixed (Maruping et al., 2015), but our research shows that time pressure affects diverse and homogeneous teams differentially. Specifically, we found more team withdrawal in diverse than in homogeneous teams under time pressure. Team withdrawal, in turn, prevents diverse teams from tapping into the positive potential that diversity entails. This dynamic of undermining a positive potential corresponds to what the stressor literature frames as a hindrance stressor (i.e., a stressor that tends to be appraised as potentially constraining development and achievement; Podsakoff et al., 2007). Thus, in addition to contributing to the team diversity literature, our work also informs the teams literature on stressors in general (e.g., Razinskas & Hoegl, 2020) and time pressure in particular (e.g., Karau & Kelly, 2004).

By adopting a reverse perspective on the statistically symmetrical gender diversity–time pressure interaction, our research shows that the effects of time pressure depend on team composition. This is in line with the attentional focus model (Karau & Kelly, 2004), which suggests that time pressure interacts with structural team variables such as team composition to predict contribution patterns in teams. The assumed benefits of time pressure—which the stressor literature describes as a challenge stressor (i.e., a stressor that tends to be appraised as potentially promoting development and achievement; Podsakoff et al., 2007)—may hence only materialize in teams of a certain composition. Our findings suggest that perceived time pressure may constitute a challenge stressor for gender-homogeneous teams, whereas it may be a hindrance stressor for gender-diverse teams. Razinskas and Hoegl (2020) have shown that the mechanisms via

which team stressors impact team performance resemble those identified in the CEM, which led these authors to call for an integration of the respective literatures on team stressors and team diversity. Our research contributes toward such an integrative view by examining how team diversity interacts with the collective experience of temporal demands.

Finally, our research enriches knowledge about the specific manifestations of adverse team processes that prevent gender-diverse teams from unlocking their positive potential via information elaboration. With respect to this negative side of diversity, the CEM (van Knippenberg et al., 2004) offers a broad range of possibilities and lists relational conflict and reduced cohesion, identification, and commitment as outcomes of dysfunctional team processes triggered by social categorization. Whereas much prior research has focused on conflict (e.g., Jehn et al., 1999; Lee et al., 2018; Nishii, 2013; Polzer et al., 2002), we investigate an alternative manifestation of adverse team processes. We regard team withdrawal as an important and overdue addition to the diversity literature because, arguably, team members are just as likely to exhibit “flight” responses to disagreements and dissatisfaction with their team members as they are to engage in “fight” responses (i.e., open conflict).

In newly formed teams, team withdrawal may be even more likely to occur than relational conflict given that such teams tend to start working under politeness norms that prevent members from openly voicing strong criticism and dissent (Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Moreover, the “flight” response (withdrawal) may offer distinct advantages over the “fight” response (conflict) for team members. Whereas the latter may entail the experience of highly negative emotions, detaching oneself from the teamwork may attenuate the displeasure of experiencing such negative emotions (Pearsall et al., 2009). For the team, however, withdrawal is arguably always negative and inferior to a (potentially) more constructive approach such as engaging in task (rather than relational) conflict. Simply put, withdrawal is akin to “taking the easy road” and the “path of least resistance,” with psychological benefits for the individual, but high costs for the team.

## 5.2 | Limitations and future research

This study is subject to several limitations that could serve as starting points for future research. As is the case with any experiment, the external validity and generalizability of our findings need to be ascertained in future studies in the field. We studied newly formed teams, which may differ in some ways from teams that have been working together for longer periods of time. Many teams in the workplace are such newly formed teams that have not been and will not remain together for long. Such teams include most project teams as well as high-reliability teams such as airline crews. However, future research is needed to test whether our findings also hold in teams that have worked together for many months or years. It is possible that “flight” responses (e.g., team withdrawal) are more likely in the early stages of teamwork, whereas “fight” responses become more likely as team longevity increases and as politeness norms get replaced by a

shared understanding of how to voice critique and disagreement. In this regard, further research is also needed to explore how the findings of the present study can be integrated with prior findings regarding the effects of team tenure. Although findings on how team tenure (or team lifespan) affects diverse teams are mixed (e.g., Harrison et al., 1998; Joshi & Roh, 2009), a plausible assumption that has received empirical support in some studies is that the negative effects of demographic diversity diminish over time (Harrison et al., 2002). It is possible, for example, that time pressure can engender a relapse in demographically dissimilar teams such that the relationship quality that had been improving over time returns to lower levels experienced in earlier stages of collaboration. Since our research was conducted with newly formed student teams, we encourage researchers to investigate how, with increasing team tenure, the familiarity and trust that may develop among real-life project team members influence the interactive effects of gender diversity and perceived time pressure.

With respect to future research on team withdrawal, we consider it worthwhile to empirically compare conflict and withdrawal as two possible reactions to disagreeing and/or experiencing dissatisfaction with one's team. We argued above that task conflict may be preferable to both relational conflict and withdrawal. But which of the latter two is worse, and under what conditions? We would expect that, compared to relational conflict, team withdrawal might be easier to remedy and have less adverse effects on team functioning over time. Moreover, future research is needed to examine when individual team members are more inclined to withdraw rather than engage in conflict, and vice versa. Both situational variables (e.g., team size, team tenure, importance of the task, cultural and organizational norms, team leadership, and team dynamics) and person variables (e.g., traits such as agreeableness and extroversion) are likely to play a role in this regard. For example, when signs of group-centrism (i.e., in-group favoritism) are manifested in more implicit ways (e.g., group members making more eye contact with and engaging more with contributions from in-group members, rather than out-group members—i.e., members of the same gender), we would expect more team withdrawal, rather than relational conflict, given that there was no blatant breach of politeness norms. By contrast, when these signs are more explicit (e.g., derogatory comments against out-group members), we would expect more relational conflict, rather than withdrawal.

In this study, we examined one particular type of diversity, gender diversity. Current efforts by many companies and countries to foster gender heterogeneity throughout all organizational levels make this a particular timely topic. Some of the arguments we presented in developing our hypotheses may be specific to gender diversity. However, probably most of our arguments are also likely to apply to other forms of demographic diversity (e.g., with respect to age, culture, or ethnicity). Future research is needed to investigate whether our theoretical arguments and empirical findings also hold in regard to other diversity attributes (although possible adverse effects of time pressure on teams that are diverse in regard to, e.g., nationality or culture may, compared to gender diversity, be attributable to a larger extent to differences in language).

In a similar vein, we conducted our study with students in Germany, and the vast majority of them had a German cultural background. Given that gender roles differ vastly across cultures (Schneid et al., 2015), further research is needed to ascertain the generalizability of our findings to other cultures. We also tested only maximum and minimum levels of gender diversity because our experiment, which already included 142 teams and 568 individuals, was limited in the number of conditions that we were able to examine with adequate statistical power. Therefore, further research is needed to investigate the dynamics in teams that have more than four members and/or are characterized by levels of diversity not considered here (e.g., diverse teams with majority male and majority female compositions).

### 5.3 | Managerial implications and conclusion

Both gender diversity and time pressure are increasing in many, if not most, organizations and entail multiple challenges for organizational members. The present research underscores the importance of the connection between these two issues that leaders and team members need to proactively address in the effort to foster team performance. They need not only be aware of what they can do to facilitate positive effects of gender diversity but also be cognizant of the conditions they must strive to avoid to prevent diverse teams from underperforming. However, neither fully alleviating time pressure nor assembling more gender-homogeneous teams may be realistic or desirable options. Hence, the most sensible step to take would be to raise awareness of the adverse effects that gender-diverse teams are likely to encounter under time pressure and to teach team leaders and team members ways in which they can counteract these negative effects. The threat of heightened team withdrawal under time pressure could be addressed in the diversity management and diversity training programs that an increasing number of organizations have been developing in recent years (e.g., Olsen & Martins, 2012; Rawski & Conroy, 2020).

Moreover, our research shows that managers are well advised to watch for any signs of team withdrawal, the likelihood of whose occurrence is determined by the interaction between gender diversity and perceived time pressure, and to address it immediately, before it undermines information elaboration and harms team performance. This is not only important in diverse teams but also in homogeneous teams, whose members may tend to psychologically withdraw—often prematurely—when time pressure is low. Overall, our research identifies three interrelated aspects that team leaders need to consider in fostering the performance of teams with varying degrees of gender diversity: facilitate information elaboration, monitor teams for signs of withdrawal and take remedial actions if they emerge, and mitigate the potentially destructive effects of time pressure in these efforts.

In conclusion, our work highlights the need to be mindful of the risk that perceived time pressure poses for gender-diverse teams. Providing diversity training programs that address these detrimental

effects of time pressure and teach constructive ways of curtailing and reversing these harmful effects should go a long way toward turning gender diversity into an asset and prevent it from becoming a liability.

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### ENDNOTE

<sup>1</sup> As noted by a reviewer, the first and the last of these withdrawal items suggest a change in team member behavior over the course of the teamwork, whereas the other two items do not. We therefore tested our hypotheses not only with the four-item measure described above but also with a shortened two-item team withdrawal measure that comprised only the first and the last item ( $\alpha = .84$ ). There was no noteworthy difference in results.

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