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Interaction and Performance in Groups

What's it about?

(Social Psychology pp. 396–438)

When other people watch what we do, this impacts our performance. If we are highly trained at something, or it is a really simple task, our performance will often improve. On difficult or new tasks, our performance will be more likely to suffer. This is called **social facilitation**, and is caused by arousal, either from people judging us, or from people who are simply distracting us. This effect has been reproduced in many settings, like the workplace and crowded environments. In busy cities, its effect seems to be reduced by cognitive and social factors, such as a sense of control.

Members of face-to-face groups share both **task interdependence** and **social interdependence**. *Primary groups* demand more social interdependence, while *secondary groups require* more task interdependence.

Group socialization consists of the stages of *investigation*, *socialization*, and *maintenance*, while group development usually entails Tuckman's stages of *forming*, *storming*, *norming*, *performing*, and *adjourning*. Tasks can be grouped into *additive*, *disjunctive*, *conjunctive*, and *complex tasks*. Groups perform better at some tasks, but worse at other tasks than individuals do. **Social loafing** and poor coordination are reasons for performance reduction.

Effective **leadership** enhances task performance and maintains social interdependence, but is dependent on the situation. Communication is essential for high productivity and morale, and is changing as a result of technology.

Chapter topics

- The mere presence of others: The effects of minimal interdependence *(SP pp. 397–401)*
- Performance in face-to-face groups: Interaction and interdependence *(SP pp. 402–435)*

SOCIAL FACILITATION: EFFECTS OF MINIMAL INTERDEPENDENCE

Ask yourself

- Did you ever fail at something you could do before, simply because someone was watching over your shoulder?
- Which tasks would you perform better with other people present, and which would suffer?
- When you are starting to learn something new, what is the effect of someone watching?

What you need to know

SOCIAL FACILITATION: IMPROVEMENT AND IMPAIRMENT *(SP pp. 397–401)*

- Evaluation apprehension
- Evaluation apprehension in the workplace: Monitoring and job performance
- Distraction

SOCIAL FACILITATION: IMPROVEMENT AND IMPAIRMENT
(SP pp. 397–401)
Explaining social facilitation
The mere presence of others can improve performance of simple well-learned tasks (*dominant responses*), but can interfere with the performance of complicated, difficult, or new tasks (*nondominant responses*). This effect is called **social facilitation**.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY: Social facilitation [see ch11-RA-01.doc]

Weblink: More about social facilitation
www.spring.org.uk/2009/06/social-facilitation-how-and-when-audiences-improve-performance.php

In 1965, Robert Zajonc [DOI:10.1126/science.149.3681.269] claimed that social facilitation is caused by elevated arousal. His theory was supported by most subsequent research, which pointed to two underlying causes: evaluation apprehension and distraction.

Evaluation apprehension

When others are in a position to judge us, this produces *evaluation apprehension* (Rosenberg, 1969), which changes our performance as predicted by social facilitation. Nonjudging spectators do not cause such an effect.

Evaluation apprehension in the workplace: Monitoring and job performance

In the workplace, employees are often monitored in a variety of ways. When employees know about this, social facilitation increases the productivity of highly skilled workers, but decreases the productivity of relatively unskilled workers (Aiello & Kolb, 1995 [DOI:10.1037/0021-9010.80.3.339]).

Distraction

When others are present, they distract us from the task at hand, again influencing performance according to social facilitation. In these cases, arousal seems to stem from the difficulty of performing a task while reacting to others. This effect has also been demonstrated in nonhuman species.

Crowding, the packing of many people into a space, causes arousal. This arousal can reduce contentment, increase aggression, and raise blood pressure. Its effects are again the same as predicted by social facilitation.

So what does this mean?

When other people watch what we do, this impacts our performance. If we are highly trained at something, or it is a really simple task, our performance will often improve. On difficult or new tasks, our performance will be more likely to suffer. This is called **social facilitation**, and is caused by arousal, either from people judging us, or from people who

are simply distracting us. This effect has been reproduced in many settings, like the workplace and crowded environments.

PERFORMANCE IN FACE-TO-FACE GROUPS: INTERACTION AND INTERDEPENDENCE

Ask yourself

- What kind of phases does a group normally go through?
- What makes some groups more effective than others?
- What does it take to be a good leader?

What you need to know

HOW GROUPS CHANGE: STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT *(SP pp. 403–411)*
• Group socialization: Mutual evaluation by members and groups • Group development: Coming together, falling apart • Time and group development • Being pushed out of groups: Rejection and ostracism
GETTING THE JOB DONE: GROUP PERFORMANCE *(SP pp. 411–425)*
• Forms of task interdependence • Gains and losses in group performance • Losses from decreased motivation: Social loafing • Social loafing in the classroom • Losses from poor coordination • Poor coordination in the workplace • Processes that affect performance: Group communication • Technology and communication • Processes that affect performance: Emotions and mood in groups • Cures for group performance losses
LEADERSHIP AND POWER *(SP pp. 425–435)*
• What do leaders do? • Leadership effectiveness: Person or situation? • Coaching leadership in youth sports

- Who becomes leader?
- Stereotypes and leadership
- Putting the group first: Transformational leadership
- The dark side of leadership
- Power

Face-to-face groups such as family, organizations, teams, and others, are highly interdependent.

These groups are **socially interdependent** because they need each other in order to feel part of a group, and to experience positive emotions such as respect, caring, and social identity.

They are also **task interdependent** because material outcomes depend on their cooperation.

Depending on their goals, groups demand different amounts of social or task interdependence.

Primary or intimacy groups, such as families and close friends, demand more social interdependence, while *secondary groups*, such as organizations and teams, demand more task interdependence.

Managing both forms of interdependence is difficult, but is necessary to achieve both mastery goals (high productivity) and connectedness goals (positive relationships).

HOW GROUPS CHANGE: STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT
(SP pp. 403–411)

All groups go through different stages while trying to maximize task and social interdependence.

This process consists of changing relationships between members and the group, in order for the group to get the job done.

Group socialization: Mutual evaluation by members and groups

Group socialization is a term used to describe the social changes a group goes through with individuals joining and leaving it (Moreland & Levine, 1988).

This process of mutual evaluation and commitment goes through the following stages:

- The stage of *investigation*, in which groups seek members who will be useful to the group, and individuals look for groups that will satisfy their mastery and connectedness needs, unless groups are created by outside forces.
- Entry into the group triggers the *socialization* stage, in which groups and members try to shape each other to achieve their own goals. If this stage is successful, commitment will rise.
- When individuals are fully committed, the group enters the *maintenance* phase. In this phase, the group tries to find a role for members that will maximize their contribution, while members seek to maximize satisfaction. If this phase succeeds, mutual commitment remains high and members are likely to remain in the group. If it does not, members may (have to) leave the group unless corrective efforts are successful.

This group socialization model makes it clear that groups don't just change individuals, but individuals change groups as well.

Group development: Coming together, falling apart

Just as group members go through different stages related to their group, they go through different stages related to each other. Trying to coordinate task interdependence and enhance social interdependence, they may go through some or all of the following stages (Tuckman, 1965 [DOI:10.1037/h0022100]):

- *Forming*. Members try to see what the group stands for, and where other members stand. Members focus on the leader; that is, the member with the highest status, who is expected to state the group's goals.*Storming*. The group tries to shape and negotiate roles, and decides on group goals and how to reach them. Conflicts may arise concerning these goals, but may also involve interpersonal issues. Conflict m*y be red*uced when a majority are able to persuade the rest.

- *Norming*. If ever achieved, this stage involves a sense of unity and security, in which members are highly satisfied with the group, its purpose, and their role in it. Not surprisingly, group commitment is high.

- *Performing*. Members cooperate to solve problems, make decisions, and generate output in a climate of open communication and healthy disagreement, while remaining loyal to the group goals.

- *Adjourning*. This is the stage in which the group comes to an end. Groups end because they reach their goals, because they were only meant to exist that long, or because members decide not to be part of the group any more. In this stage, members often come together to evaluate the work done, give mutual feedback, and express their feelings. This stage can have quite an impact if group cohesion was high.

Time and group development

Besides the five stages mentioned above, other effects may occur as a result of the passing of time.

Many groups take a while getting to know each other and making plans, only to find out time has passed without much progress being made. This was dubbed the "mid-life crisis" by Connie Gersick (1989) [DOI:10.2307/256363], because she found it often occurred about halfway through the time given for the group.

Others found that time pressure impacts the way groups approach their tasks. The greater the pressure, the more groups concentrate on task-focused matters and information sharing (Kelly, Jackson, & Hutson-Comeaux, 1997; Kelly & Karau, 1999

[DOI:10.1177/0146167299259002]; Kelly & Loving, 2004 [DOI:10.1016/S0022-1031(03)00094-5]). Although such groups are more productive, their work is often less creative and original (Karau & Kelly, 2004 [DOI:10.1016/0022-1031(92)90045-L]).

Weblink: More about the basic nature of groups and how they develop
www.managementhelp.org/grp_skll/theory/theory.htm

Being pushed out of groups: Rejection and ostracism

Group members may leave groups for a variety of reasons. In some cases, members are pushed out of the group because they are no longer wanted by the other members.

Ostracism is a type of treatment in which people are ignored or excluded from a group.

Research using the Cyberball paradigm (Williams, Cheung, & Choi, 2000 [DOI: 10.1037/0022-3514.79.5.748]) has shown that participants who take part in a virtual ball toss game and watch as two other players toss the ball back and forth without including them experience lower self-esteem, lower levels of belonging, etc. Being ostracized can lead people to regain social connections with others or can lead them to behave aggressively.

Weblink: The Cyberball website
www3.psych.purdue.edu/~willia55/Announce/cyberball.htm

Feeling "out of the loop" in a task group can also lead to negative moods, decreased self-esteem, and lowered feelings of belonging.

CASE STUDY: In the workplace it's better to be harassed than ignored [see ch11-CS-01.doc]

GETTING THE JOB DONE: GROUP PERFORMANCE

(SP pp. 411–425)

Ivan Steiner (1972) claimed that group tasks differ with regard to the required type of interdependence.

Forms of task interdependence

- In *additive* tasks, the potential performance of a group is about equal to the sum of the individual members, so individual effort is important. If coordination fails, the results will not be as good.
- In *disjunctive* tasks, the potential performance of a group is as good as the best performance of one of its members. Education or training, or member selection, can improve group performance. If coordination fails, other members may get in the way of the best performing member.
- In *conjunctive* tasks, the group's performance is as good as its weakest link. If coordination fails, the task will not be finished.
- *Complex* tasks contain subtasks that involve all forms of interdependence. The more complicated the task, the greater the need for planning, but the greater the opportunity to improve group performance compared to individual effort.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY: Task interdependence [see ch11-RA-02.doc]

Gains and losses in group performance

Groups often perform better than individuals could through joint effort, varying skills, and the ability to perform multiple tasks at the same time, rather than one after the other.

This enhanced performance can be witnessed in construction, puzzle solving, and surgical procedures.

Weblink: Teamwork increases pain threshold
www.theguardian.com/science/2009/sep/16/teams-do-better-research-proves

Collective memory is better than individual memory; groups provide more accurate and detailed accounts of events than single participants can.

Frequently, however, working together results in a poorer result than if the same people were to work separately.

People perform better at a brainstorming or memory task when working alone rather than when working as a group; they come up with more ideas that are of better quality in brainstorming sessions, and produce superior information in memory tasks.

Weblink: Groupthink: The brainstorming myth
www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/01/30/groupthink?currentPage=all

Groups sometimes display greater biases in judgment or decision-making tasks than individuals do.

These losses in performance are often due to a reduction in motivation, or to poor coordination.

Losses from decreased motivation: Social loafing
Social loafing is the reduction of effort by people working in a group compared to when they work alone.

It occurs in both simple motor tasks and cognitive tasks, such as brainstorming or attention tasks.

Social loafing occurs less in interesting and involving tasks, and in tasks where individual contributions are essential for success.

People are less likely to loaf when the group's performance can be measured against a clear standard, and when members can be sure others are working hard as well.

Strong identification with the group also decreases social loafing, which explains why women and people of interdependent cultures are less likely to loaf.

People sometimes engage in social loafing because they believe that their group is more productive than it actually is, which is known as the "illusion of group productivity" (Paulus, Dzindolet, Poletes, & Camacho, 1993 [DOI:10.1177/0146167293191009]).

Social loafing seems to depend on both task and social interdependence. When social loafing influences either task mastery or connectedness of the group, it declines. In some cases, *social compensation* occurs, in which one member works harder to compensate for other members' weaknesses or lack of ability.

Negative emotions of one member can influence the whole group. In such groups, conflicts can increase, cooperation can decrease, and members may (unjustly) believe task performance to suffer.

CASE STUDY: The Köhler effect: When the weakest link isn't so weak anymore [see ch11-CS-02.doc]

Weblink: When groups are bad for productivity
www.spring.org.uk/2009/05/social-loafing-when-groups-are-bad-for-productivity.php

Social loafing in the classroom
Teachers can decrease social loafing in the classroom by holding students individually accountable for their work.

Weblink: Is it beneficial to study in groups?
www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/news/were-only-human/the-hazards-of-teamwork.html

Losses from poor coordination
Organization is essential to the optimal success of a group. Members need to know what to do, what they and their fellow members are good at, how they influence the group's performance, and who gives the orders.

If any one of these factors is ignored, productivity may suffer as a result of tasks not being done, duplicated efforts, or getting in each other's way.

Even hearing other people speak may distract members from coming up with their own ideas or expressing them.

Poor coordination in the workplace

Poor coordination in groups can have devastating results, such as in flight cockpits and operating rooms.

Lack of coordination, rather than lack of technical skills, seems to be the cause of error in such settings.

Processes that affect performance: Group communication

Communication is the main weapon for groups to achieve high task efficiency while keeping cohesion in mind, which explains why so much time is spent talking about how to do the job.

Effective groups need a balance between task-focused and socioemotional communication in order to be effective, nurturing both task and social interdependence.

Technology and communication

New technologies have considerable influence on the way tasks are completed, and how group members feel when they complete them (Hollingshead, 2004).

Information sharing via video, e-mail, or instant messaging is often very efficient and to the point.

Telephone calls and e-mails are good for completing simple tasks, because they focus on task-relevant features of the interaction.

Computer-mediated group decision making may suffer less from problems like groupthink and biases that emphasize majority views.

Electronically linked groups take longer to reach consensus, and make more unconventional decisions.

High-status members usually dominate face-to-face interactions. When using technological communication, participation among members is more equal, but the difference re-emerges when status cues are displayed on computer software.

Electronic group-related activities promote feelings about the group and its members' place in it.

Despite these advantages of technology, face-to-face communication still has its place.

People who work in groups are happier and more satisfied than those working alone.

Informal discussions in hallways and during coffee breaks are important sources of information.

Face-to-face interaction seems to be essential for trust, commitment, and solidarity to grow among group members.

For complex interpersonal problems, being able to read nonverbal cues is absolutely essential.

Processes that affect performance: Emotions and moods in groups
The emotional ties that form between group members can help them to develop trust and commitment.

Individual moods can affect performance through contagion whereby the mood of one or more members spreads to other group members.

Weblink: Real world examples of group contagion
www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/publications/observer/2006/february-06/contagious-behavior.html

Perceivers see groups that share emotions (especially happiness) as being more cohesive than groups whose members display different emotions (Magee & Tiedens, 2006).

Cures for group performance losses
Making group membership a positive part of group members' social identity is a successful strategy for reducing loss of motivation and failures of coordination.

Organizations often try to achieve this by pushing forward the set of values, beliefs, understandings, and norms shared by members of the organization, known as the "corporate culture."

Corporate culture makes members feel good, and this social interdependence helps solve some of the problems of task interdependence. It encourages group cohesion, which, as Mullen and Copper (1994) [DOI:10.1037/0033-2909.115.2.210] found, increases group performance.

CASE STUDY: Cures for group performance losses [see ch11-CS-03.doc]

Cohesive groups encourage cooperation:
- Cohesive groups strive for group goals, instead of competing for individual ones.
- One way to promote group goals is by making personal rewards depend on group outcomes.

- This works: Cooperative group members like each other better, and learn more, and companies that emphasize teamwork rather than individual competition have higher performance records.

Cohesive groups follow norms:

- People who feel they belong to a group will try to reach consensus about the group's goals and the strategies necessary to achieve them. Members usually do what a cohesive group decides.
- If a cohesive group has high performance norms, its members will be highly productive. However, if such a group has low performance norms, productivity will suffer.
- If consensus is reached in a cohesive group, members won't spend time discussing the norms.
- Norms aid group coordination, and help reduce motivation loss.

Cohesive groups attract and keep valued members:

- Shared social identity reduces slacking or dropping out of members by boosting liking for the group, satisfaction with belonging, and morale. It can even help people cope with stress.
- Friendships and relationships between members, and higher esteem of in-group members than out-group members, contribute to members staying in the group.
- Social identity can prevent members from leaving, even if rewards are lacking, or when they lose or fail at important tasks.

Weblink: Social loafing at the office and how to prevent it: An infographic
www.mindflash.com/blog/2012/03/how-to-prevent-social-loafing-at-the-office

RESEARCH ACTIVITY: An analysis of team performance [see ch11-RA-03.doc]

LEADERSHIP AND POWER

(SP pp. 425–435)

Leadership can be defined as a process in which one or more group members are allowed to influence and motivate other members to achieve group goals, and is crucial to the attainment of such goals. Leaders may be appointed, elected, or simply emerge from interaction.

What do leaders do?

Task-related leaders focus on decision making and task performance, while relationship-oriented leaders focus on enhancing cohesion and liking among group members.

Both functions are vital to effective groups, and when combined they account for most of what leaders do (Mintzberg, 1980).

Although leader behavior falls into the two earlier mentioned dimensions, one person may well be capable of fulfilling both roles.

Leadership effectiveness: Person or situation?

There's been little success in identifying traits that make a successful leader.

Socioemotional support consistently helps to improve morale, motivation, and job satisfaction.

However, task-focused leader behavior is not as consistently related to improved task performance.

Therefore, group success seems to depend on what kind of leader the situation demands.

Contingency theories of leadership state that to maximize leadership effectiveness, the leader's style should match the type of leadership demanded by the situation; a system called "matching."

Most complex tasks, however, require both leadership styles. Therefore, a good leader may be the one who has the flexibility to adjust the mix of social and task motivation a group requires.

Coaching leadership in youth sports

Coaches who gave positive feedback for good efforts as well as good performance, corrected mistakes with technique instruction, and emphasized fun and personal improvement, had children who enjoyed their athletic experiences and teammates most, and had the highest self-esteem. Their results as coaches did not suffer as a result of this behavior.

Who becomes leader?

Group members who talk a lot tend to be viewed as leaders, although the amount of talk does not reflect actual expertise. Other members assume talking to be a sign of competence or influence.

Members also respond to nonverbal signs of dominance and assertiveness, like draping an arm around the adjacent chair, sitting at the head of a table, or sitting behind the microphone.

Groups prefer leaders who embody the stereotypes, norms, or attributes typical for the group, and will view them as more effective.

Another way to be deemed effective is through performing typical leader behaviors, such as emphasizing goals, and telling members what's expected of them. In addition, group leaders who are close to the typical position on issues are also rated as more effective.

Group members prefer and perform better for elected leaders who embody the group's norms and goals, compared to appointed leaders who do not. Not surprisingly, the former are very effective leaders.

Stereotypes and leadership

Common stereotypes influence leadership.

Group members who are male, taller, or older tend to be treated as leaders.

Regardless of gender, people who look masculine are judged to be more competent leaders.

Even when reminded of the possible effects of these stereotypes, people choose masculine-looking people as leaders, and rate them as more effective.

The expectation that males make good leaders may serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy, explaining why the majority of the leaders in the world are male.

Only when tasks require extensive social interaction do groups turn to women.

Stereotypes also prevent ethnic minorities attaining leadership positions, which leads to under-representation in many types of business and government organizations.

There are three related questions on this issue:

(1) Who holds the group together?
- Women are much more effective than men at creating connectedness and cohesion.
- Groups and their members are happier when their boss is a woman.
- Women leaders show more concern for morale, and encourage members to participate in decision-making.

(2) Who gets the job done?

- Women are just as effective as men with regard to mastery and task performance.
- Women are slightly better leaders in business, educational, and government organizations, while men are slightly better leaders in the military.

(3) Who do people believe make good leaders?

- Despite these objective measures, people regard male leaders as more effective than female leaders who behave in exactly the same way. This is probably caused by gender stereotypes.

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Weblink: Gender stereotypes of leaders
www.catalyst.org/uploads/stereotypes_flyer.pdf

Putting the group first: Transformational leadership

Charismatic or *transformational leaders* inspire extreme devotion and emotional identification by their followers, causing such leaders to have profound effects on their followers (Weber, 1921/1946).

Such leaders can help followers reach their goals, or even redefine them, refocusing group members' individual and personal goals to serve the community or the group.

Followers pursue collective goals that go beyond self-interest, and are willing to make personal sacrifices for the collective good.

Transformational leaders are self-confident, determined, skilled, and inspiring communicators.

They take clear stands, focusing on commitment to goals, expressing optimistic visions of the future, and doubting old beliefs, and are very caring toward their group members.

These leaders can bring about social organizational change when successful.

Transformational leaders nurture cohesion among group members, and urge them to adopt the group's goals. Group members look beyond themselves and take on the group's goals, removing potential coordination and motivation losses.

Because of this, transformational leaders are very effective, although the effect is greater in times of uncertainty and change.

The dark side of leadership
When leaders are bad, not only capital, but lives can be lost.

Bad leaders can cause task motivation to disappear, and may cause group members to want to undermine their agenda and the group's goals.

Charismatic leaders can use their extraordinary influence over their followers in both positive as well as destructive ways.

Weblink: More about the dark side of leadership
www.govleaders.org/education_for_leadership2.htm

Power

Power is the ability to provide or withhold rewards or punishments from others

People can be made to feel more powerful by imagining times in the past in which they have had power, or even by assuming "power poses."

So what does this mean?

Members of face-to-face groups share both **task interdependence** and **social interdependence**. *Primary groups* demand more social interdependence, while *secondary groups* require more task interdependence. Group socialization consists of the stages of *investigation, socialization*, and *maintenance*, while group development usually entails Tuckman's stages of *forming*, *storming*, *norming*, *performing*, and *adjourning*. Tasks can be grouped into *additive*, *disjunctive*, *conjunctive*, and *complex* tasks. Groups perform better at some tasks, but worse at others. **Social loafing** and poor coordination are reasons for performance reduction. Effective **leadership** enhances task performance and maintains social interdependence, but is dependent on the situation.