

## NEUROPATHOLOGY OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR: INDIVIDUAL ABILITIES IMPACT ON TEAM PRODUCTIVITY

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Many sports enthusiasts believe “the best players make the best team.” Without question, this notion may be true in some instances in sport and exercise settings. However, throughout history, numerous sporting events have produced “upsets” involving team competition (i.e., the “best” team did not win the athletic contest). Therefore, this notion is not true 100 percent of the time. Thus, this manuscript discusses how summing up the abilities of individual members of the team does not accurately describe “successful” group performance. Do individual abilities solely determine group productivity?

Group-individual motor performance can be described as a synergy where group performance should be more than the sum of individual performances. Or group effectiveness is positively related to individual effectiveness; meaning that, the best should team win the contest. However, interaction requirements such as individual characteristics and environmental patterns can influence group structures and patterns which collectively influence performance. For instance, a soccer team may consider a combination of individual physical, technical, tactical and psychological characteristics; competitive experience and mastery in order to perform better as a group. Nevertheless, environmental and situational influences such as opponent preparedness, field condition, weather, and state of equipment are also paramount in evaluating group performance. For instance, during the FIFA world cup in USA 1994, teams from all over the world competed in California, Dallas and seven other venues during summer under extreme humid conditions with temperatures rising above 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Weather conditions became strong determinants of performance, as visiting teams who lost mostly blamed adverse ambient temperatures for their defeat.

According to Steiners model of individual-group performance, the best team does not always win the contest. Steiners also stipulated that actual group productivity is equal to potential productivity minus losses due to faulty process. Potential group productivity depends on its resources and task demands. Process losses fall under coordination losses (ineffective strategies and poor timing), as well as motivational losses (social loafing or less effort). When a group’s available resources meet the task demands, its actual productivity approaches its potential (Gill & Williams, 2008) For example, in soccer where speed, endurance and mental toughness are required for a tournament, the best team would be the team whose preparedness has been measured to be furthest above required standards. On the same lane, when all coordinated losses such as ineffective strategies and lack of cohesion are eliminated and motivational losses or social loafing is ridded off, group performance is enhanced. Thus, no matter how good or talented a group/team is, when process losses override potential productivity, performance may be impaired.

Individual abilities greatly interfere with group performance in both positive and negative ways. The Argentine team during a match against Greece in the 1994 FIFA world cup in USA faced both situations whereby their captain and star player Diego Maradona was expelled from the tournament after testing positive for banned substances. This caused a huge chasm in the team because after haven assisted in defeating Nigeria and scoring a decisive goal against Greece, his absence greatly contributed to their defeat against Bulgaria. As a consequence, argentinians blamed their disqualification from the tournament on the absence of Maradona because their entire system of play was built around his marginal productivity. The other players however, tried to boost motivation using positive affirmations and self-talk by saying “let’s win it for Diego” but it was too late to catch up with the heat of the tournament. Opponents preyed over this impediment to develop their motivation and pounced on the Argentine team, ousting them from the tournament. In this light, the individual abilities of Diego Maradona had a positive influence on the Argentine squad in the first two matches and negative influence on the final two matches of the qualification zone. Furthermore, other factors such as injuries, cards (yellow & red), and discipline can be probed to understand the impact on team productivity.

### References:

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