

# The Impact of Evaluation on Perception of Cooperation and Competition during Group Decision Making



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## PROBLEM:

- Group work + Cooperation → Higher group performance (Deutsch, 1949; Johnson & Johnson, 1989).
- Group Work + Competition → Impairs group performance through uncomplete information sharing among members (Toma, & Butera, 2009).
- Contradictory Social Practice: Evaluation of group work on the basis of members' contribution.
- Hypothesis: Although group work under cooperation is known to be beneficial for groups, we predict that individual evaluation will elicit perceived competition and reduce perceived cooperation among members.

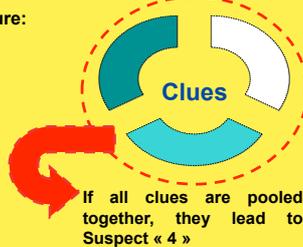
## MATERIAL:

- Task: Groups must solve a car accident mystery.
- Hidden Profile Task was created to study information sharing in groups (Stasser & Stewart, 1992).

### Hidden Profile Task Structure:

Among 4 potential suspects:

- Member « A »'s clues lead to Suspect '1'.
- Member « B »'s clues lead to Suspect '2'.
- Member « C »'s clues lead to Suspect '3'.



## METHOD:

- N = 162 Participants from a Swiss university in 54 groups of 3.
- Age :  $M = 23.59$  yrs,  $SD = 2.13$ .
- Across all different working instructions, groups were informed that members did not have the same information, thus they were asked to work as a group.

→ Cooperation instructions for all groups.

However, specific work instructions (SWI) were also included:

- a)SWI.1 : Groups were also told that they would not be recorded.
- b)SWI.2 : Group work would be recorded (accountability).
- c)SWI.3 : Group work would be recorded (accountability) + individual grade.

## RESULTS:

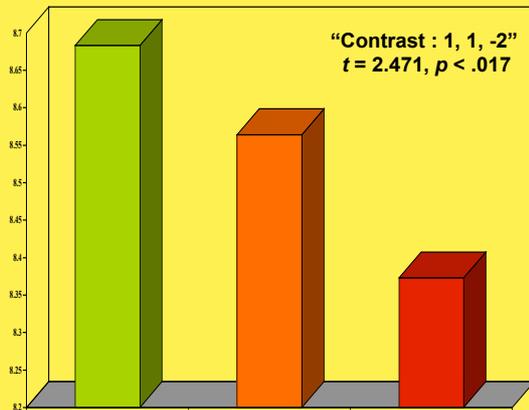


Fig.1 Perceived Cooperation

▪ Items to measure perceived cooperation (Alpha = .74) and perceived competition (Alpha = .7) (Participants answered on a Lickert Scale ranging from 1 « Not All » to 9 « Totally »):

To What extent did you ...

- 1) ... think discussion was important to solve the task?
- 2) ... think sharing information was important to solve the task?
- 3) ... think it was important to work as a group?
- 4) ... think your group worked cooperatively?
- 5) ... think other participants tried to share the information they had?
- 6) ... think that your group tried to maximise communication in order to find the solution?
- 7) ... think that each member participated in the group to find the solution?

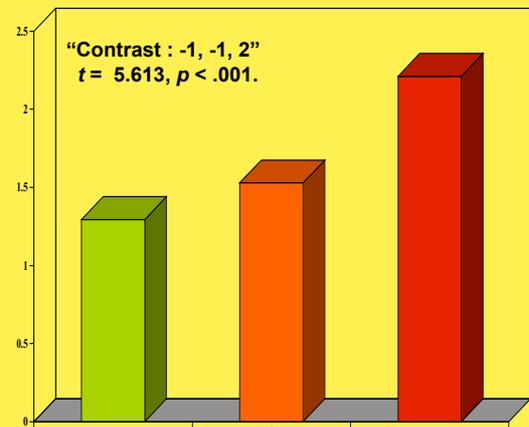


Fig.2 Perceived Competition

To What extent did you ...

- 1) ... perceive a competitive atmosphere in your group?
- 2) ... perceive other participants as rivals?
- 3) ... think others tried to hide information away from you?
- 4) ... try to hide information away from the other participants?



Although ALL groups were instructed to work in cooperation, graded evaluation changed participants' perception of the task in that it lowered the level of perceived cooperation (Fig.1) and raised the level of perceived competition (Fig.2).

## References:

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