

expected within work groups. Finally, norms that create awareness of, and help regulate, emotions are critical to groups' effectiveness.¹¹

Group Cohesion

The "interpersonal glue" that makes the members of a group stick together is **group cohesion**. Group cohesion can enhance job satisfaction for members and improve organizational productivity.¹² Highly cohesive groups can control and manage their membership better than work groups low in cohesion. In one study of 381 banking teams in Hong Kong and the United States, increased job complexity and task autonomy led to increased group cohesiveness, which translated into better performance.¹³ In addition to performance, highly cohesive groups are strongly motivated to maintain good, close relationships among the members. In a study in three Korean companies, work groups were more cohesive and exhibited more organizational citizenship behaviors when the group's values were better aligned with those of the organization.¹⁴ We examine group cohesion in further detail, along with factors leading to high levels of it, when discussing the common characteristics of well-developed groups.

Social Loafing

Social loafing occurs when one or more group members rely on the efforts of other group members and fail to contribute their own time, effort, thoughts, or other resources to a group.¹⁵ This may create a drag on the group's efforts and achievements. Some scholars argue that, from the individual's standpoint, social loafing, or free riding, is rational behavior in response to an experience of inequity or when individual efforts are hard to observe. However, it shortchanges the group, which loses potentially valuable resources possessed by individual members.¹⁶

A number of methods for countering social loafing exist, such as having identifiable individual contributions to the group product and member self-evaluation systems. For example, if each group member is responsible for a specific input to the group, everyone will notice a member's failure to contribute. If members must formally evaluate their contributions to the group, they are less likely to loaf.

Loss of Individuality

Social loafing may be detrimental to group achievement, but it does not have the potentially explosive effects of **loss of individuality**. Loss of individuality, or deindividuation, is a social process in which individual group members lose self-awareness and its accompanying sense of accountability, inhibition, and responsibility for individual behavior.¹⁷

When individuality is lost, people may engage in morally reprehensible acts and violent behavior as committed members of their group or organization. For example, loss of individuality was one of several contributing factors in the violent and aggressive acts that led to the riot that destroyed sections of Los Angeles following the Rodney King verdict in the early 1990s. Loss of individuality is not always negative or destructive, however. The loosening of normal ego control mechanisms in the individual may lead to prosocial behavior and heroic acts in dangerous situations.¹⁸ A group that successfully matures may not encounter problems with loss of individuality.

group cohesion

The "interpersonal glue" that makes members of a group stick together.

social loafing

The failure of a group member to contribute personal time, effort, thoughts, or other resources to the group.

loss of individuality

A social process in which individual group members lose self-awareness and its accompanying sense of accountability, inhibition, and responsibility for individual behavior.