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# Trends. Group Psychology and War Planning

IBPP Editor
bloomr@erau.edu

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Abstract: This Trends article discusses the importance of group dynamics, group performance, and mood in a war setting.

War almost always brings the formation of temporary working groups engaged in activities such as analysis, planning, evaluation, and problem solving. A recent study by Grawitch et al. (2003) highlights just one of many variables affecting temporary group performance--mood.

Grawitch et al. collected data supporting the hypothesis that positive mood increases creative performance and implementation efficiency, whereas negative mood had no effect. Another supported hypothesis is that a positive and neutral mood creates a stronger task focus, whereas a negative mood creates a stronger relationship focus within the group, but this effect does not influence group performance.

Studies on group dynamics--such as that of Grawitch et al.--are important for attending to phenomena significantly affecting task performance and process beyond the rational, logical, and reasonable. Such phenomena often are personality-based and personality, in turn, is often significant in affecting who is chosen to be in a position facilitating temporary group membership. Besides political support, experience, and intellect, individual personality engaged in collected group dynamics can literally affect decisions of peace and war, life and death. (See Grawitch, M. J., Munz, D. C., & Kramer, T.J. (2003). Effects of member mood states on creative performance in temporary workgroups. Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice, 7, 41–54; Keltner, D., & Haidt, J. (1999). Social functions of emotions at four levels of analysis. Cognition & Emotion, 13, 505-521; Perrott, D. A., & Bodenhausen, G. V. (2002). The way you make me feel: Integral affective influences on interpersonal behavior. Psychological Inquiry, 13, 84-86; Stein, H.F. (2003). Balint, Bion, Volkan, Stein: Small and large group work as fieldwork. Journal of Psychohistory, 30, 263-265.) (Keywords: Group Dynamics, Mood, War.)

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