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*Half Full or Half Empty: A Study of the Overall Effects of Optimism & Pessimism on Group Performance*

The purpose of this project was to determine the effects of optimism and pessimism on group performance of a set task. We hypothesized that the optimistic groups would complete the task in 60% of the time required for the pessimistic groups to complete the task.

This experiment involved giving a group a set puzzles task and manipulating the attitude of one member in each group, instructing them to act in either an optimistic, pessimistic, or a neutral fashion. The group performance was measured by the amount of time (seconds) necessary for the group to complete the puzzle task.

The data collected did not support the original hypothesis. The average amount of time taken for the optimistic groups to complete the task was 101% of the time necessary for the pessimistic groups to complete the task. Additionally, the neutral groups performed at 65%-69% of the time required for either the optimistic or the pessimistic groups. Therefore, an optimistic or pessimistic attitude of one group member does not significantly affect the overall performance of the group.

These findings lead us to believe that the overall attitude of the group will override the attitude of a single group member attempting to influence the group, as the uninfluenced groups proved to be the most efficient. These results have the potential to be useful from a classroom or business perspective.