

On the Malleability and Stability of Ignoring Group-Level Effects

Momme von Sydow

University of Siegen, Siegen, Germany

Niels Braus

University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany

Ulrike Hahn

Birkbeck, University of London, London, London, United Kingdom

Abstract

Co-operation and group-serving behaviour of group members has increasingly been acknowledged as essential to the flourishing of groups in general and the success of teams in organizations or companies in particular. Studying this, however, presupposes dissociating individual-level and group-level effects (involving a Simpsons Paradox). We have started investigating settings where true individual- and group-level effects could be dissociated in a learning paradigm concerned with individuals in changing teams. Our results show that participants often evaluated the overall most effective group-serving team-player much more negatively than all less effective non-interacting workers. This suggested a potential Tragedy of Personnel Selection, when personnel managers, relying on number-based outcomes, tend to ignore even strong and crucial group-level effects of team-players. Here we briefly summarize some findings and present an experiment, where we tried to improve participants ability to dissociate individual- from group-level effects, by explicitly providing them with hypotheses about a team player.