

Study shows movement coordination leads to strong sense of togetherness

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When members of a group successfully coordinate their movements with one another, this leads to a stronger sense of togetherness. This was shown by a recent study by the Universities of Würzburg and

Regensburg.

People who feel connected to each other find it easier to coordinate their actions. They therefore perform better in tasks that require good [coordination](#). The new study now shows that the reverse is also true: successful coordination can generate identification.

Psychologists Dr. Anand Krishna (University of Würzburg) and Dr. Felix Götz (University of Regensburg) were able to demonstrate this effect in an experiment. They drew [test subjects](#) into groups of two and had them perform various tasks on the computer. For example, the test subjects had to move a star into a target field using a joystick. One team member could only steer horizontally, while the other could only steer vertically.

In a comparison condition, on the other hand, only one member of each team of two was responsible for controlling the star. In this case, the task did not require any coordination.

"The participants then had to indicate how much they identified with their partner as part of a common group," says Krishna, a postdoctoral researcher at the Chair of Motivation and Emotion. "The rating was higher for the coordination teams than for the comparison groups."

Joint success binds together

The scientists then increased the level of difficulty of the coordination task. The joint efforts therefore led to less success. "We were able to show that only a good joint performance has a positive effect on identification as a group," emphasizes Götz. "In contrast, we were unable to observe this effect after a failure."

The [results](#), which were published in the *British Journal of Social*

Psychology, presumably also apply outside the psychology lab. For example, they suggest that sports such as soccer lead to a stronger identification with the team than athletics, for example. Sprinters and high jumpers are also part of a team. However, when competing, they are on their own and do not have to coordinate with a teammate.

The results also contain an important message for team building: if you want to form employees into a close-knit community, you should not set them tasks that are too difficult. After all, if the joint efforts are unsuccessful, this may even damage [identification](#). However, strictly speaking, the results can only be applied to situations in which the coordination of movements is important, the researchers qualify.

Whether the successful joint execution of a psychological study leads to a stronger sense of togetherness can therefore not be deduced from the data. "But that was definitely the case with us," says Krishna.

More information: Anand Krishna et al, Motor coordination induces social identity—A novel paradigm for the investigation of the group performance-identity link, *British Journal of Social Psychology* (2024). [DOI: 10.1111/bjso.12757](https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12757)

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