**Abstract**—The purpose of this conceptual paper is to broaden the understanding of the three negative member (bad apple) behaviors put forth by Felps, Mitchell and Byington—withholding of effort, interpersonal deviance and negative affect. The impact of these negative member behaviors on other team members, the factors that moderate these relationships and ways to control this bad apple effect are presented with supporting evidence from a few empirical works done in the last five years. A review of previous empirical findings indicate that perceived co-worker loafing clearly leads to counterproductive work behavior towards co-workers and interpersonal deviants affect the task cohesion of the group. However, presence of affectively negative individuals is empirically proven to improve the group performance, especially when the group task is related to creativity or information processing.

**Keywords**—bad apples, loafing, deviance, negative affect, group performance.

I. INTRODUCTION

Organizations resort to teams and groups to a great extent to create value through efficiencies and synergies. Members of diverse origins, knowledge, qualification and emotions are brought together and are expected to achieve the collective goals of the group. However, not all members bring about positive impact on the performance or output. Negative members, or ‘bad apples’ have significant impact on the team members and in some cases, have the potential to have serious detrimental effects on the overall team performance. Hence it is essential to gain better understanding of the various types and levels of impact, bad apples can have on other team members and how this in turn influences performance.

The article by Felps, Mitchell and Byington [1] gives an integrated model of ‘how, when and why’ the behaviors of one negative member can have damaging effects on group performance. Withholding of effort, interpersonal deviance and negative affect are identified as the three main negative team member behaviors. Initially, the team members realize this behavior and take some corrective actions to control these negative member behaviors. However, if it is not feasible to control or transform the bad apple in a peaceful manner, the other team members resort to defensive mechanisms. Evidently, this leads to negative impact on overall performance, wellbeing and viability of the group. Thus [1] suggests that the low group performance can be linked to the presence of bad apples. However the model fails to link negative member behaviors to specific defensive behaviors and shortfalls in group processes. The focus of this review is to isolate the three negative member behaviors and study how each of them affect the other team members and their overall effect on group performance.

II. WITHHOLDING OF EFFORT

Social loafing is the deliberate withholding of effort by a member in the hope that other group members will compensate. The teammates, when they realize this behavior, try to transform the bad apple through motivational intervention [1]. If it proves ineffective, the team members resort to defensive behaviors, such as revenge, denial, exploding, etc... Reference [2] argues that this type of counterproductive work behavior is not spontaneous, but is a result of a sequence of cognitive stages. They explain this behavior using the cognitive stage model developed by [3]. When the individual notices a discrepancy between the expected behavior and the actual behavior of a co-worker (in this case, loafing or withdrawal of effort), a sense of injustice arises. The individual then tries to attribute the blame to either the organization or the specific co-worker (refer fig. 1). In the first case, it leads to counterproductive work behavior towards the organization (CWB-O, such as work sabotage, work avoidance, etc...) whereas the latter leads to counterproductive work behavior towards the individual (CWB-I, such as gossip, abuse, threat towards others, etc...). Reference [2] indicates that revenge motive plays the role of a cognitive mediator in this perceived co-worker loafing and CWB relationship.

**Fig. 1 Cognitive Stage Model and perceived coworker loafing**

Consistent with the model proposed by [1], the research conducted by [2] indicates that interpersonal antecedents are more likely to lead to CWB-I than to CWB-O. However, [2]
establishes that revenge motive is the mediator and it clarifies how and why perceived co-worker loafing leads to CWB. Reference [1] lists revenge motive, exploding, distraction and withdrawal as defensive behaviors, whereas [2] specifies that revenge is the underlying motive which is expressed by exploding, distraction or de-identification. They also suggest a two prong method to avoid CWB. First, organizations should make the jobs more meaningful to employees, so that there are fewer tendencies towards loafing. Second, organizations should evaluate prospective employees on revenge seeking behavior (refer fig.2).

Fig. 2 Perceived coworker loafing

III. INTERPERSONAL DEVIANTS
Deviance is defined as those employee behaviors that “diverge from work norms and have negative implications for other co-workers, group or the organization as a whole” [4]. Group cohesion (overall attraction or the bond among the group members) is the primary characteristic that is affected by the presence of an interpersonal deviant. The detrimental impact can be either on task cohesion or social cohesion or both. However the detrimental effect is not the same across groups and depends on the self-typicality of members.

The team members differ in their perceptions of self-typicality. In other words, each team member perceives a different degree of similarity between the self and the group. High self-typicality members tend to protect the interests and image of the group [4]. The influence of the deviant will be moderated by this overall perceived self-typicality of the group. Task cohesion will be adversely affected in the presence of interpersonal deviants, as most members will resort to defensive behavior (refer fig. 3). Moreover, similar effect will be present for social cohesion, especially in groups with low self-typicality members [4]. The results indicate that the presence of deviant is less threatening to their social identity. These individuals place higher value on distinctiveness and find the deviants socially attractive [4].

A. Individual and Group Affective States
When the collective tendencies of the members are higher, it is highly likely for them to share their affective states with the overall group. On the other hand, the degree to which these states are absorbed by other members depends on their level of susceptibility [6]. Thus, a network of affective states is formed within a group over a period of time. Susceptibility to others’ emotions is defined as “an individual difference that

IV. DETERRING NEGATIVE MEMBER BEHAVIOR
The discussions clearly indicate that withholding of effort and interpersonal deviants have a negative impact on group performance. Controlling this negative member behavior is of prime importance to ensure efficient group outcomes. An empirical study by [5] analyses whether the threat of social exclusion could eliminate or reduce the bad apple effect. The model suggested by [5] also indicates that “the group performance is affected due to the ‘minimal reciprocity rule’ – members strive to contribute at or slightly above the level of the person making the lowest contribution”. Their experiments reveal that the threat of social exclusion reduces the bad apple effect as long as the majority of the members are not bad apples. However when the majority of the group (3 out of 5 in this case) are bad apples, there is significant decline in the level of cooperation in the group.

It is evident that withholding of effort and interpersonal deviance can be controlled by introducing a threat of social exclusion. However, for the threat to be effective the cost of exclusion should be substantial and the bad apple should believe that the group could easily monitor his/her behavior [5] (refer fig. 4).

Fig. 4 Deterring loafing and interpersonal deviants

V. NEGATIVE AFFECT
Negative affect and the other two negative member behaviors are treated as having similar effects by [1]. They emphasize that irrespective of the type of bad apple behavior, it is spread across the group through ‘spillover’ and ‘aggregation’. However, [5] indicate that it is relatively simpler to identify loafing and deviance. Once the discrepancy is observed, the other team members exhibit similar behaviors [1]. However, negative affect is about moods, emotions and attitudes, and may not have significant impact on other team members. Hence significant evidence is required to ascertain the spillover effect in the case of negative affect.

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influences the extent to which emotional stimuli elicit an emotional expression characteristic of the eliciting emotion” [6]. High levels of susceptibility readily make a member absorb the negative affect state of another.

Similar results are obtained by [7] and [8] indicating that negative affect can be spread to the entire group from a single negatively affective individual. Reference [8] presents evidence indicating that negative group affective tone moderates the performance of dysfunctional groups whereas [7] suggests that group negative affect may have detrimental effects on analytical tasks. However a number of recent studies indicate that negative affect might be beneficial to a group, especially when the group tasks involve creativity and information sharing [9], [10], [11] (refer fig. 5).

**B. Creativity and Information Sharing**

At the individual level, positive mood has been found to induce creativity [12], [13]. However, this may not hold at the group level. Reference [9] provided empirical evidence and established the link between positive group affective tone (PGAT) and creativity. Trust has been found to moderate the relationship, i.e., at high levels of trust, PGAT was found to restrain creativity. Under conditions of low trust within the group, NGAT (negative group affective tone) was found to facilitate increased levels of creativity. It is evident that the member behavior is influenced by group centrism, i.e., a tendency to avoid violation of group consensus and confrontations under high levels of trust [9] (refer fig. 6).

**VI. SUMMARY AND FURTHER RESEARCH**

As suggested by [1], withholding of effort and interpersonal deviance are found to have detrimental effects on other group members and affect the group performance. However, negative affect is found to benefit groups whose tasks involve creativity, idea generation and decision making.

In the case of negative affect, further research can be undertaken to identify a higher order construct/attribute which can explain susceptibility and negative trait affect in individuals. This construct can then be effectively applied in selection and training processes for groups which require creativity and information sharing.

Future research work can be conducted to identify any specific group tasks that might benefit from having interpersonal deviants or loafers within the group. Reference [5] indicates that the threat of exclusion will have positive impact on group’s productivity, irrespective of the negative behavior (loafer or deviance), given the majority of group’s members are not bad apples. Further research can be conducted to weight the performance of two sets of groups – with and without bad apples, in the presence of a credible threat of social exclusion. If the groups with bad apples outperform the other, then it is a clear indication that loafers
and deviants can enhance outcome, given the presence of a threat of exclusion.

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REFERENCES


