

## **Team 20 Project Proposal**

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Our team chose the movie **Gridiron Gang (2006)** for our project, which can be found online at Netflix.com. The main goal of our project is to apply Organizational Behaviour (OB) concepts to conflicts identified in the plot and discuss potential solutions to the problems based on our analysis. This group proposal consists of three main parts. First, we provide a short movie description with an identification of a major OB issue. Second, we propose alternative courses of action, discussed through OB concepts, as well as justification for relevance. Lastly, we describe how we intend to structure our analysis and proceed with our project.

Gridiron Gang is about how a juvenile detention facility worker creates a football program to help resolve behavioural problems amongst teenage criminals. The movie shows the formation of the sports team and how the team transitions from being dysfunctional to being a cohesive group that works together. We see the program transform its participants into capable players who respect each other and learn how to be part of an organization, and as a result lift themselves out of gang violence and poverty.

A specific turning point in the movie is the first game where we get a chance to see how the team works together outside of practice. During this game, things start to go downhill quickly and in return the coach starts to respond in a negative way. His tone changes from motivational to overly critical and mean. As expected, this creates tension amongst the team members and

eventually they end up losing. After the game, the team is in low spirits and most of the members are tempted to quit football entirely. The goal of the team was to create higher self-esteem amongst its members and since this was not accomplished, the facility management threatened to shut down the program. However, this changes when we see one of the boys, Junior, leading the team through practice drills. Junior explains how everyone is “tired of being losers” and finds new motivation to work hard and win. The coach then begins to understand that he needs to care more about the individuals than he does results. This is a large turning point in the movie where all the players find the motivation to work together, bringing home a win as a collective unit, and improving their own lives.

This film presents a rich scenario for the analysis of Organizational Behaviour concepts. The characters in this story and their relations with each other provide many opportunities to discuss problems that arise in the team. On an individual level, the MARS model can be applied to gain insight into the behaviours of each character at different stages of the movie. Motivation is a clear point of discussion, with certain players lacking belief in the team and themselves at various points. Herzberg’s model, that describes motivation as a product of ability and opportunity ( $M = A \times O$ ), helps to understand these individual struggles. For example, certain players do not have the ability to succeed during the first game as they have only just started playing. We can see the importance of role clarity as the team improves when players become

more certain of expectations, leading to better coordination and increased motivation. Gridiron Gang also demonstrates the effect of situational factors on individual behaviour through both the harsh realities of the players' lives and the previous lack of support from the prison institution itself.

Aside from the explicit analysis of individual behaviours, the film also presents issues relating to leadership. The character of the coach can be analyzed through the lens of leadership theories to explain many of the various positive and negative organizational outcomes in the movie. The Transformational Leadership Perspective is extremely applicable in these analyses, as the coach's primary goal is to create positive change in the lives of his players. His ability to communicate his vision and build team commitment changes significantly throughout the plot and can be used as a predictor of the team's success. Additionally, his personal attributes clearly affect the team's cohesion as is displayed by his outburst during the first game.

In the final submission of our project, we intend to list the facts of the movie in a chronological and unbiased way. Providing an in-depth analysis of the team dynamics prior to and following the identified situation, we will discuss our inferences and perspectives on the events, what the main problems appear to be, possible root causes, and provide a brainstorm of solutions. Following that, we will decide on and argue for what our team recommends as a course of action and how it might play out. Finally, we will summarize what OB concepts we

believe are supported or refuted by the plot and discuss how this assignment has impacted our learning as individuals.

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Sources:

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