Social Loafing: A Review of the Literature

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Social loafing is a phenomenon that has been discussed and researched since 1913. Though it has been long examined, recent technological developments offer ample opportunity for further study. This paper summarizes its long history of research and offers several propositions for future research.

INTRODUCTION

In 1913 a phenomenon was found that, at the time, did not receive sufficient attention. Maximilien Ringelmann, a French agricultural engineer, observed that when a group of people collectively pulled on a rope, the output was less than when group members individually pulled on the rope (Kravitz and Martin, 1986; Ringelmann, 1913). The results of this finding were not considered further until 1974 when Ingham, Levinger, Graves, and Peckham recreated the experiment. The term "social loafing" was coined for the discovery that participants working in groups exert less effort than participants working individually. It was described as having a detrimental effect on individuals and the institutions associated with them (Latane, Williams, & Harkins, 1979). From there, the research evolved into five distinct categories: 1) establishing the existence of social loafing in both physical and cognitive group projects, 2) causes and deterrents of social loafing, 3) partner adaptation to group member social loafing (such as the "Sucker Effect"), 4) social loafing as a positive mechanism, and finally 5) social loafing in modern technology.

ESTABLISHING SOCIAL LOAFING EXISTS

The origins of social loafing begin with "The Ringelmann Effect," which describes the tendency for individuals to lower their productivity when in a group (Ringlemann, 1913); Ingham, Levinger, Graves and Peckham relabeled this effect "social loafing" when they were successful in demonstrating individual effort declines in a curvilinear fashion when people work as a group or only believe they are working in a group (Ingham, Levinger, Graves, & Peckham, 1974). Social loafing literature blossomed as these findings gave way to more questions: is the problem coordination and not motivation? Since the experiment involved groups created for the experiment, would established groups have the same results? What exactly causes social loafing? Is it because group dynamics allow an individual the ability to "hide in the crowd"? Does social loafing only exist in physical activities? Or does it also happen when groups are performing cognitive tasks? These questions paved the way for much more research over the years.

Social loafing had already been established in physical tasks, but would the same results be found in cognitive group tasks? In 1977, Petty, Harkings, Williams, and Latane conducted a study to demonstrate cognitive tasks were just as susceptible to social loafing as physical tasks. The experiment was divided into three groups. The first group of students was asked to edit a poem, believing they were solely responsible for the task. The second group consisted of a group of four, and the third group believed they were in a group of sixteen. The results support that social loafing does occur in cognitive tasks (Petty, Harkings, Williams, & Latane, 1977). The study was limited, however, in that no rewards were offered to the students for doing a good job and no individual feedback was given, which gave way to the question: would having rewards and feedback help prevent social loafing from occurring?

Five years after the landmark Ingham et al. (1974) study, Latane, Williams, and Harkins replicated the experiment with cheering and clapping. This research contributed two important advances: they demonstrated Ringelmann's results were replicable, and because of the simplistic nature of yelling and clapping, they also made clear that the results of decreased efforts were not simply because of coordination problems between group members or difficulty of the task. Support of the effect only led to more questions: when and why does social loafing take place? Because groups are such a huge part of everyone's life, what can be done to prevent it from happening? Realizing the far-reaching implications of these findings, they famously came to the conclusion that social loafing is "a kind of social disease… it has negative consequences for individuals, social institutions, and societies" (Latane et al., 1979, p.831). Although the researchers described social loafing in such harsh terms, they did mention in their discussion that people may have decided to loaf in groups because they wanted to save their energy for times when they would need to work as an individual, and would be able to earn rewards (Harkins, Latane, & Williams, 1980). This adaptive look at social loafing was not fully explored until thirty years later.

CIRCUMSTANCES THAT ENCOURAGE SOCIAL LOAFING AND THOSE THAT DETER IT

Once social loafing studies were replicated, researchers began looking into antecedents and deterrents. Williams, Harkins, and Latane, expanded their cheering experiment with an added variable: if people thought their individual effort was able to be measured, would they have less of a tendency to loaf (Williams, Harkins, & Latane, 1981)? In order to convince participants that their individual efforts would be measured, microphones were attached to each person. The results suggest that the belief their personal efforts are measured does discourage social loafing. In the second experiment they performed, they demonstrated that individual output measurability is important even when someone is working alone. Participants were told their output could not be measured, and even when working alone, the results revealed that participants' productivity decreased; they loafed. So what can be done to discourage social loafing when individual output cannot be measured? All previous research focused on the measurement of output.

Harkins and Petty (1982) set out to discover if making the task more interesting or harder would decrease social loafing. Their data suggest that when people are given a difficult task, they work on it just as hard in a group as they would individually. Additionally, when an individual is given a task that they have much knowledge about, or that they are skilled at, social loafing is reduced (Harkins & Petty, Effects of Task Difficulty and Task Uniqueness on Social Loafing, 1982). They also took a look at another possibility that could reduce social loafing: an individual seeing their contribution as unique. All previous research studies combined the group task, but Harkins and Petty changed that variable and told group members their personal contribution was unique to them. Their experiment demonstrated that individuals are less likely to loaf when they feel the contribution they make is unique, and no other group member can contribute the skills to the task that they can (Harkins & Petty, Effects of Task Difficulty and Task Uniqueness on Social Loafing, 1982). Robbins (1995), however, found that social loafing did occur despite the use of thought-provoking tasks that provided the chance for unique contributions.

Zaccaro (1984) studied the role of task attractiveness in social loafing in an attempt to expand and refine the work by Latane et al. (1979). They found that group interaction, task commitment, and identifiability are possible deterrents of social loafing. They suggest that group cohesiveness (e.g. high

task attraction) creates internal pressures to produce; the interaction of the group helps apply these pressures and identifiable individual effort focuses the application of the pressures to produce. This complex group mechanism works to lower social loafing.

Three years after their 1982 study, Jackson and Williams looked at social loafing and task difficulty in groups and individually, yet again. They hypothesized that difficult tasks led to enhanced performance when working in a group, and simple tasks were better performed alone (Jackson & Williams, Social Loafing on Difficult Tasks: Working Collectively Can Improve Performance, 1985). Based on these results, they suggested that management or group leaders may want to evaluate the difficulty of a task before deciding if it should be completed individually or as a group. In the discussion of the findings, the researchers also mentioned group cohesiveness as a variable that would affect whether an individual would loaf or not and would need further studying. They also stated that social loafing may not be a bad behavior, and in fact may be a good mechanism; a way to reduce stress on an individual when working in a group (Jackson & Williams, Social Loafing on Difficult Tasks: Working Collectively Can Improve Performance, 1985).

Szymanski and Harkins explored whether self-evaluation was enough to curtail social loafing. In 1987 they tested using a social standard, and in 1988 they tested using an objective standard (Harkins & Szymanski, 1988). The results of the social standard experiment showed that self-evaluation to a social standard given to individuals performing a maximizing task (brainstorming) was all the motivation needed in order to motivate an individual not to loaf, both individually as well as with a partner. However because participants were doing the task for the first time, it raised the question of whether an individual's motivation would decrease after they had proven to themselves they could do the task sufficiently (Szymanski & Harkins, 1987). A year later they teamed up once again to ascertain whether an individual's self-evaluation with an objective standard would have the same results as the social standard. In this experiment, they used an optimizing task (pressing a button when they saw a dot flash on a TV screen). The hypothesis was supported; when an individual is given an objective standard, as well as the results of their output, being able to compare the two is enough to motivate an individual. Unlike their previous experiments, they felt that feedback on improved performance motivates performance, even after an individual becomes familiar with the task (Harkins & Szymanski, 1988).

George (1992) found in salespeople that task visibility and intrinsic task involvement are negatively associated with social loafing. Some tasks have naturally low visibility; based on her findings, George suggests increasing employees' intrinsic involvement, perhaps through job enrichment (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) and accountability. In 1995, she hypothesized and found that contingent rewards from a supervisor have a negative effect on social loafing and non-contingent rewards have no effect; contingent punishment, however, does not seem to be a deterrent, though non-contingent punishments have a positive effect on social loafing. Based on this finding, George suggests that a supervisor should think twice before reprimanding an employee; the long-term effects of the punishment are not as effective as rewarding for desirable behavior (George, 1995). This research supports Schnake (1991), who found that goal setting is a more effective strategy than punishment in reducing social loafing. In 1998, an interesting hypothesis was proposed: "the degree to which people are motivated to self-validate, e.g. to see themselves as unique as and better than others, makes a difference in collective work contexts" (Charbonnier, Huguet, Brauer, & Monteil, 1998, p. 331-332). The data from the study support the hypothesis. Not only do people that feel they are unique engage in social loafing, but those individuals are also rather reluctant to work in groups in the future. Researchers also found that although gender had been found to affect social loafing in previous studies (males are more likely to loaf than females), gender does not matter as much as one's view of self-uniqueness. This does not mean, necessarily, that people with unique abilities will loaf; in fact, the opposite: if one perceives their abilities to be unique to the group, that individual will actually work harder. The article also touched on how different cultures (individualist-Western cultures) may be more inclined to loaf than other cultures (collectivist-Eastern or oriental cultures) (Karau and Williams, 1993). One major pitfall of this study was that the participants were all undergraduates between the age of 18-22 and the group partners were strangers (Charbonnier et al., 1998). This leads to the questions: would an older group of participants have the same results? Would

already established groups still loaf? More research is also needed to see if the participants were conscious of their loafing, or not.

Fatigue as a cause of social loafing was looked at in 1998. It was proposed that the inclination to engage in social loafing would occur more often when an individual was sleep deprived and fatigued (Hoeksema-van Orden, 1998). They caused fatigue in one of three ways: having individuals work on the task for 25 minutes, for three and a half hours continuously, and for 20 hours in total (even depriving them of sleep) (Hoeksema-van Orden, 1998). The results supported the hypothesis and also suggested that simple tasks were more susceptible to social loafing when fatigued than more complex tasks (just like Williams and Jackson had found in 1985). Two ways suggested to combat this are by giving public feedback to group member's individual contributions, and also by individualizing the task, although individualizing cannot always be implemented in real life. A major problem with the methodology of this study was that only male undergraduates were used, which could have caused the result of the study to not accurately portray what would happen with fatigue and social loafing in the real world.

In 2004 a study was finally done on social loafing in pre-existing groups from two different companies, instead of new groups comprised of student participants, which had been the majority of previous experiments. Liden, Wayne, Jaworski, and Bennett studied social loafing on two different levels: individual and group. On an individual-level they proposed four hypotheses: a person's perception of task interdependence is positively related to social loafing, a person's perception of task visibility is negatively related to social loafing, a person's perception of "fair pay" and the fairness in the distribution of rewards (distributed justice) is negatively related to social loafing, as is a person's perception of fairness in the policies and procedures (procedural justice) used to make the decisions about the "fair pay" and rewards (Liden, Wayne, Jaworski, & Bennett, 2004). The results of the study support that task interdependence is positively related to loafing (supporting Harkins & Petty, 1982; Jones, 1984; Weldon & Gargano, 1988; Williams et al., 1981; and Williamson, 1975), while task visibility and distributed justice are negatively related to loafing (supporting George, 1992; George, 1995; Jones, 1984; Karau & Williams, 1993; and Kidwell & Bennett, 1993). Procedural justice was found to have no impact on an individual's tendency to loaf (supporting George 1995; and Karau & Williams, 1993). On a group-level they proposed three hypotheses: the size of the group has a positive effect on social loafing, group cohesiveness has a negative effect on social loafing, and when an individual perceives a coworker to be loafing, that perception positively affects their propensity to loaf. Results supported two hypotheses; group size is positively related to loafing (supporting Harkins, Latane, & Williams, 1980; Harkins & Petty, 1982; Ingham et al., 1974; Karau & Williams, 1993; Kerr & Bruun, 1981; and Sorkin, Hays & West, 2001), and the more cohesive the group the more it is negatively related to loafing (supporting Karau & Hart, 1998; Karau & Williams, 1997; and Williams & Sommer, 1997). Perceived coworker loafing, however, is negatively related to social loafing, the opposite of the hypothesis (in contradiction to the findings of Mulvey, Bowes-Sperry, & Klein, 1998; Mulvey & Klein, 1998; and Schnake, 1991). The results of the study provided validation to previous experiment's results and also illustrated the complexity of social loafing (Liden et al., 2004).

Much of the previous research focused on the causes of social loafing, but in 2006,
Ferrante, Green, and Forster explored what group leaders could do in order to help prevent social loafing. The researchers examined some social loafing factors that had already been studied; organizational justice and procedural justice. They compared the performance of teams with incentivized leaders (i.e. less social loafing) to the performance of teams without a formal leader. They concluded that teams who have a formal, incentivized leader performed better and loafed less often, than those without formal leaders (Ferrante, Green, & Forster, 2006). Like many studies before, a major pitfall with this study was that student participants were used, 90% male, and all between the ages of 19-24. Another limitation of the study was that social loafing was self-reported, not measured by the team leader's view on team members' social loafing. It was mentioned that future research is needed to address the limitations of the study.

In 2007, Stark, Shaw, and Duffy explored whether or not an individual's preference for group work increased social loafing. Previous research focused on situational influences, rather than attitudes and

individual differences regarding social loafing (e.g. Barua, Sophi-Lee & Whinston, 1995; George, 1992; and George, 1995). They hypothesized that an individual preference for group work is negatively related to social loafing. They also hypothesized that when an individual's winning orientation, "a concern for favorable social comparisons and positive relative positions" (Stark, Shaw, & Duffy, 2007, p. 717) is low the negative relationship between preferences for group work will be stronger. A person with low winning orientation is not concerned with negative social comparisons, and thus would have no motivation to avoid loafing given the opportunity. They additionally hypothesized that when task interdependence is high, even an individual with low winning orientation and a negative outlook on group work is less likely to loaf. As expected, preference for group work is negatively related to loafing, both from self-evaluations and peer-evaluations, as individuals are more willing to highlight their own weaknesses and less willing to highlight the weaknesses of others. The hypothesis about winning orientation and social loafing was only supported in the self-evaluations, not the peer-evaluations. They also found that the negative effects of low preference for group work could be contradicted with a high winning orientation. On the other hand, the task interdependence hypothesis was supported with the peer-evaluations, but not with the self-evaluations. Their findings confirm that social loafing is not only situational, but is also complexly related to a person's psychology, expanding on Liden et al., 2004. As with previous studies, only students were used, limiting the results of the study. There may be a big difference in results when class assignments are given grades, compared to real life work situations. They admitted that their peer-evaluations had several weaknesses, and future researchers should look at ways of improving it. The study also demonstrated that gender is related to social loafing in both self and peer-evaluations, and they recommended these aspects be looked at more carefully in future research.

Doing more research on the impact psychology has on social loafing, Klehe and Anderson attempted to answer a question posed by Williams, Karkins, and Latane in 1981, and was also touched on by Charbonnier, Huguet, Brauer, and Monteil in their study in 1998: does culture have an impact on social loafing? Along with culture, they also studied personality, social, work, and organizational psychology. They used three personality dimensions: conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness. Contrary to their hypotheses, none of the personality traits have any influence on an individual's propensity to loaf in a situation (Klehe & Anderson, 2007). The cultural dimensions of individualism versus collectivism and power distance do affect an individual's tendency to loaf, as hypothesized. People from individualistic cultures are more inclined to loaf, and people from collectivistic cultures have more motivation when working in groups. As hypothesized, individuals with high power distance are more likely to loaf than individuals with lower power distance (Klehe & Anderson, 2007). The relationship between power distance and social loafing is so strong, they recommended more testing to determine if an individualistic culture orientation actually causes loafing, or if power distance alone is enough to predict loafing. There were two major limitations of the experiment. The first was the common problem that only undergraduate students were used. The second was that they used a "paper people" design in order to get an impression if their hypotheses were on the right track or not, and they cannot be sure they would get the same results in real life scenarios.

Like Klehe and Anderson's 2007 study, Tan and Tan in 2008 looked at the effects personality has on social loafing. They also studied the relationship between social loafing and organizational citizenship behavior, as well as motives and contextual factors. Their first hypothesis that conscientiousness is negatively related to social loafing was supported. The second hypothesis that organizational citizenship behavior is negatively related to social loafing was also supported. In addition they found that organizational citizenship behavior is positively related to conscientiousness, and felt responsibility relates negatively to social loafing. Their third hypothesis, that "the contextual factors of task visibility, task interdependence, group cohesiveness, and felt responsibility are negatively related to social loafing" (Tan & Tan, 2008, p. 96), however, was not supported. Because most research before this was done on contextual factors (e.g. task visibility Geroge, 1992; Jones, 1984; Latane et al., 1979; task interdependence Liden et al., 2004; Pearce & Gregersen, 1991; Williams & Karau, 1991; and group cohesiveness Karau & Hart, 1998), this study helped show that an individual's personality also plays a part in their social loafing, which can help employers curtail loafing in the work place when they are

recruiting and hiring employees. As in most of the other studies, a major problem with this study was that all participants were undergraduate students in an introductory management class. A strength of this study over others is that it spanned over a semester (three months) and did not study students doing tasks in the lab, but of them working in groups on assignments for the management class outside a laboratory setting.

SUCKER EFFECT AND OTHER PARTNER STUDIES

While some researchers were looking at the contextual and personality factors that caused individuals to engage in social loafing, others were taking a look at the dynamics of social loafing and the effect that it had on partners of the loafer. In 1983, Kerr hypothesized that when one partner engaged in social loafing, their partner would in turn reduce their efforts in the project in order to not be "taken for a sucker." His research uncovered the "sucker effect," and even in some severe cases saw that partners would rather fail at a task than feel like they were being "taken for a sucker." He also found, however, this is not always the case; the effect only appears in partners who have the ability to do the work, but simply do not put all their effort into the job. If someone does not have the ability to do the work, their partner does not feel the need to reduce their own effort in order to match. Additionally, they found that if a partner constantly goes above and beyond in a project, partners are more likely to start to "free ride" because they are still guaranteed the success of the project based on the over achieving partner's efforts. They also discovered that males are more likely to engage in social loafing than females (Kerr, 1983).

In 1985, Jackson and Harkins, further examined people lowering their efforts when they have a partner who is engaging in social loafing. They hypothesized that when an individual thinks their partner is going to loaf, they will lower their own efforts in order to match their partner's, and try to maintain equity in effort. They also found, like Harkins and Petty did in 1982, task difficulty helped eliminate loafing, or by assigning specific tasks to each person (Jackson & Harkins, 1985). Like most other studies, a limitation was that all the participants were not only undergrads, but also were entirely female students in a required Introductory Psychology class.

However, in 1991, Williams and Karau found the opposite effect; when an individual knows that their group members are going to loaf, they step up and shoulder the burden for the loafer, also referred to as social compensation. They found that trust factors moderate social loafing and social compensation. Further, when someone believes their partner is competent and a hard worker, they have more of a tendency to take advantage of that and engage in loafing themselves. And although Jackson and Harkins (1985) found that the reason for a partner's poor performance determines an adjustment of output to keep everyone's work equal, Williams and Karau (1991) found that it does not matter why someone's partner performed poorly, and does not affect a social compensation response. Like others studies, they found that the importance of the task plays a big motivating factor in the effort put forth by participants (Williams & Karau, 1991). They urged more research to see if the compensation effect will remain constant the longer the group works together, or if it will start to decline after several projects and participants grow weary of compensating for a group member expending less effort. Participants of the study were all undergrad introductory psychology students.

Harcum and Badura in 1991 investigated just how deep social loafing can occur. They hypothesized that loafing will not only occur when an individual is isolated from their partner, but also when an individual just thinks they have a partner while completing a task. Eighty-one introductory psychology course participants were placed in rooms and told they had a partner working with them in the other room to complete a "tapping task and/or a word search task" (Harcum & Badura, 1991, p. 631). Not only did this study demonstrate people loaf while just thinking they have a partner, but because of the set up of the task, it also nullified previous questions about whether social loafing is caused due to lack of coordination with fellow group members (Hardy & Latane, 1986; Latane et al., 1979; and Petty et al., 1977). Eder and Eisenberger (2008) examined the role of perceived organizational support (POS) in coworker withdrawal behavior. In a manufacturing organization, they found that POS eliminates the relation between work group and individual tardiness; when POS is low, work group and individual tardiness is correlated. In a second study, they discovered in a retail sales organization that POS reduces the relation between work

group withdrawal and individual withdrawal. These studies support previous research (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986) who found a negative relationship between absenteeism and POS. Overall, when employees perceive that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being, they are less likely to engage in withdrawal behaviors, even when these behaviors are displayed by their coworkers (Eder & Eisenberger, 2008). While not explicitly mentioning social loafing in the article, social loafers likely engage in withdrawal behaviors such as taking undeserved work breaks, spending time in idle conversations, and neglecting aspects of the job one is obligated to perform (all constructs of the withdrawal measure used it the study). Kidwell and Bennett (1993) suggest that constructs such as shirking, social loafing, or free riding all contain a common thread, the propensity to withhold effort and can be considered one construct.

Hung, Chi, and Lu (2009) looked at social loafing as an antecedent to counterproductive work behaviors. They found that perceived coworker loafing triggers revenge motives towards both the organization and individuals, which in turn triggers still more employees to engage in counterproductive work behaviors. These researchers suggest lowering the possibility for social loafing by communicating the significance of the loafer's jobs or goals (Liden et al., 2004). This study, however, was limited by a small sample size in Taiwan, a collectivistic culture.

UNIQUE STUDIES OF NOTE

Social Loafing as Positive and Adaptive

In the Latane, Williams, and Harkins 1979 study, and in the Jackson and Harkins study in 1985, it was suggested that social loafing might not be entirely bad. But it was not until 2009 that this theory was actually looked at and researched in depth. The study explored social loafing as a way for employees to conserve their energy so that when working individually, they were not completely burned out. Bluhm (2009) proposed that when working in a group, the task was still accomplished to everyone's satisfaction, but individuals did not have to work as hard as they would have if they had been working on the task alone. This enabled them to expend more resources when they are working on an individual project. This also caused an employee less stress and strain when working on a group project, giving them more energy to put forth when working alone. They also proposed that eliminating group work would actually have a negative effect on employees as well as the company because it would lead to increase stress and strain on employees. Although strictly theoretical, his paper encouraged future research on this aspect of social loafing (Bluhm, 2009).

Social Loafing in Technology

Technology in the workplace has changed the dynamic of working in groups. Groups can now be formed with people in different states, as well as from different countries. In 2010, Alnuaimi, Robert, and Maruping took a look at technology-supported teams and social loafing. They hypothesized that there are three primary causes of social loafing: diffusion of responsibility, attribution of blame, and dehumanization (Alnuaimi, Robert, & Maruping, 2010). Their experiment supports all three constructs as antecedents for social loafing. Based on their findings of social loafing in technology-supported teams, they hoped their study would encourage other researchers to look at this more closely, as well as managers of technology-supported teams to take this into consideration and make changes accordingly. The participants of the study were undergrad business students.

Gender in Social Loafing

In studies that have included both males and females as participants, gender seems to play a substantial role in social loafing. In 1983, Kerr found that the male participants of the study were more likely to loaf than the female participants. Karau and Williams (1993) hypothesized that gender played equally a role to social loafing as did culture and individual beliefs about collectivism; their hypothesis was later supported by Kugihara (1999), who showed that females loafed less than males. Stark, Shaw, and Duff (2007) found different levels of loafing between genders in both self and peer-evaluations. Some

studies (Jackson & Harkins, 1985; and Hoeksema-van Orden, 1998) only used one gender or the other, not a mixed bag.

Needs for Additional Research and Propositions

Although Latane, Williams, and Harkins mentioned social loafing possibly being adaptive as far back as 1979, and Jackson and Williams touched on the possibility of it being a positive behavior in 1985, much more research needs to be done to explore social loafing as a positive behavior and an adaptive trait.

> ***Proposition 1:*** *Social loafing is positively related to performance and endurance on later tasks* (Bluhm, 2009)**.** Social compensation allows for each group member to conserve energy for their own individual tasks, while still maintaining solid results of the group task.
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> Although extensive research has been done on social loafing, especially in the area of what encourages it and what deters it, more research is needed due to the changing technological dynamic of work groups. Many global companies are increasingly using technology-supported teams to work on special projects, or even on standard day-to-day activities. Due to the evolving business environment, the different facets of loafing in these specialized groups needs to be studied more extensively. Because Alnuaimi, Robert, and Maruping (2010) found that diffusion of responsibility, attribution of blame, and dehumanization are causes of loafing in technology-supported teams, it seems only natural that the next step is to explore how to prevent this behavior from occurring. Future studies should research the effects of making an individual's contribution to the group identifiable and measurable, making everyone feel their individual work is more "visible" to their managers, and the implementation of self-evaluations.
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> ***Proposition 2:*** *Increasing task measurability in technology-supported teams will have a negative effect on social loafing.* The more a person feels their output is able to be measured by the person in charge, the less they will loaf.
>
> ***Proposition 3:*** *Increasing task visibility in technology-supported teams will have a negative effect on social loafing*. The more an individual feels they are visible to their manager, the less they will loaf.
>
> ***Proposition 5:*** *Self-evaluations have a negative effect on social loafing.* Even self-evaluations are enough to prevent some social loafing from happening.
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> Another interesting avenue of research for technology-supported teams would be to explore teams that only use email and chat to communicate; are they more inclined to loaf than teams that use video conferencing or Skype, which reduces the dehumanization aspect?
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> ***Proposition 6:*** *Using video conferencing and Skype in technology-supported teams will have a negative effect on social loafing.* By being able to see their teammates, individuals will feel more responsibility to do their fair share of the work and be less inclined to loaf.

CONCLUSION

The studies of social loafing have evolved over the years since the research on the subject first became prevalent. First, researchers wanted to prove that the behavior did in fact exist and under what type of activities. Based on the results, they were able to show that the phenomenon did not just happen when groups were performing physical activities, such as rope pulling, that could have been attributed to the group's lack of combined coordination, but also when cheering and clapping, and in cognitive group tasks, such as editing a poem. Once established that social loafing exists, researchers set about finding out what contextual and personality factors contributed to it, as well as what could be done to curtail it. Conditions such as increasing group size (which decreases individual visibility), the degree to which an individual views him or herself as unique compared to their group members, fatigue, and even in some instances, gender, all contributed to individuals partaking in social loafing. In addition, researchers found that being able to identify each individual's contribution to a project, increasing the difficulty of the task,

and even self-evaluation, all led to decreased instances of loafing. While many viewed social loafing as negative and "a kind of social disease" (Latane et al., 1979 p. 831), several researchers suggested a different view of it: social loafing as a positive, adaptive trait. Finally, in 2009, Bluhm proposed several avenues of future research of social loafing in this regard. And last, but not least, as technology evolved and changed the dynamic of teams in global companies, social loafing was studied in technology-supported teams. As expected, technology-supported teams opened a whole new set of problems with regards to social loafing. In this respect, research on social loafing has just begun (see Appendix A for a summary of social loafing research).

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