

Social loafing essay



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Social loafing is defined as “ an explanation for productivity losses in groups is the tendency for individual effort to decrease when people work in groups rather than individually” (George, 1992, p. 191). Having this definition in mind, social loafing clearly defies the idea that there is strength in number because social loafers are less motivated to work when there are more people that they need to collaborate with. According to Robert S. Feldman (2008), a social psychologist, social loafing occurs for several reasons.

First, individuals have this perception that the other people or members in a group are less motivated or less skillful as compared to them. Because of this, it leads them to reduce their own output in terms of not working harder as they used to because they already have this belief that other members of the group is also not exerting that much effort. Second, social loafing could also take place when the members of a group choose less ambitious goals.

Some participants of a group tend to choose goals that are not that ambitious because they believe that it will be easier to achieve as compared with bolder objectives especially if a team is working for it. However, establishing lower goals also entails less effort because people will not be motivated to work hard because they have this assumption that it can easily be attained (Feldman, 2008). Third, social loafing also happens because individuals feel that their efforts will not be properly recognized in a group.

Social loafers think that their work is not closely linked to the probable results of a project or activity if it is done in a group setting as compared when it is accomplished individually wherein their efforts are clearly evident (Gillies and Ashman, 2003). Theoretical View Point The Social Impact Theory

explains that individuals can be perceived as sources or targets of social influence. In cases when people work together, the instructions or demands of an outside source like their boss to work hard is segregated among numerous targets.

Because of this, the social impact is reduced because the outside source is diffused to accommodate the targets, which entails lesser effort from the target because the social influence is not that strong (Turner, 2001). In connection to this, the Arousal Reduction Theory is established to accompany the view of the Social Impact Theory. The proponents of this theory proposed that the presence of co-actors increases arousal. However, social loafing compares people on collective task rather than coactive task.

As a result, the presence of coworkers in a group is actually “drive reducing” because these people are regarded as cotargets of an outside source of social influence (Turner, 2001). Theoretical perspectives regarding social loafing also include the concept of evaluation just like in the Evaluation Potential Theory. The points of view that are identified with this theory suggest that social loafing takes place because working in groups usually makes the inputs of each member very difficult to identify and evaluate.

Being the case, a group member can “hide in the crowd” but he or she will not be blamed for the poor performance of the group. On the other hand, group members can also feel “lost in the crown” because they cannot receive a fair share of credit even if they have exerted more effort because it is regarded as a group performance (Turner, 2001). Lastly, the proposition of

these two theories tends to focus on the self-worth of an individual when it comes to social loafing.

Dispensability of Effort Theory proposes that individuals give less effort when working in groups because they think that their contribution is not needed for the team to do well. On the other hand, the Self-Efficacy Theory suggests that people work the hardest when they see high levels of self-efficacy that a job or activity can give them and they also expect that their efforts will be evaluated (Turner, 2001). Personal Experiences Working within a group is not always an easy task especially if the performance of the whole organization is based on collective output rather than individual efforts.

This is quite observable even in a school setting wherein some professors give group activities. There are cases wherein the level of intelligence and skills of the students tend to vary. As a result, some members of the group will do more than others, while some will simply slack off. In the same manner, social loafing is also very much observable in the workplace. This is quite evident in jobs that are focused on sales and marketing. Most of the time, the employees are segregated in teams wherein they have to compete with each other in terms of sales performance.

In this kind of environment, some of the team members will not exert much effort because they think that their active co-workers will just do all the work and they can simply ride with the advantageous results that it will bring. Social loafing is also applicable in the family especially with those household that tends to work together with chores. There are instances when more than two family members are assigned to do a particular task.

As such, some members of the household will do very minimal amount of work as he or she believes that the other members will accomplish the work even without him or her exerting that much effort. In almost every organization, teamwork or working in groups is a practice that is implemented. The mere fact that it is regarded as an organization means that it is composed of people who work together in order to accomplish the various tasks that are involved in their mode of operation. In this sense, working together plays an important role in the success of the organization.

However, there are related problems that involve the lack of participation of individuals who are working within in a group. This is exemplified by the tendency of some individuals to result to " social loafing". Being the case, it is important that social loafing is given due importance. As the discussions above show, it is essential that the definition, causes, theoretical point of views, and personal experiences are studied and analyzed in order to acquire the necessary information about social loafing and aid in thinking of ways on how to address it.