The Lecture Contains:

- Conceptualizing social loafing

- Experiment illustrating social loafing

- Implications of social loafing

- Explanation for social loafing

- Collective Effort Model

- When is social loafing weakest?

- Reducing social loafing

◀‖ Previous   Next ‖▶

Conceptualizing social loafing

- In additive tasks (or a group task where the final outcome is dependent on more than one person contributing in the task) some persons work hard while others do not. This act of making less than their actual required efforts, and less than the efforts they would have made working alone is known as social loafing.

- One can see the difference between social facilitation and social loafing in terms of individual responsibility for the outcome in case of social facilitation and group's responsibility in case of social loafing.

◀‖Previous   Next ‖▶

Experiment illustrating social loafing

- Latane, Williams, and Harkins (1979) conducted a study on the effect of group size on efforts towards group performance. The participants were made to engage in act of cheering and clapping either alone or in groups of two, four and six people. The outcomes of the study revealed that as the number of people increased in the group, the intensity of noise of cheering and clapping decreased. The study illustrated the phenomenon where in a group, there is a decrease in efforts towards the group task.

Implications of social loafing

- Social loafing has been found prevalent among people of all age and gender. It has also been noted that it may be stronger in Western than in Asian cultures. Furthermore, it has been observed as occurring in both cognitive tasks as well as tasks involving physical efforts.

- There are important implications of social loafing (and finding ways to reduce it) for several groups carrying out significant tasks of social relevance such as sports teams or committees or and groups involved in making important official decisions.

◀ Previous   Next ▶

Explanation for social loafing

- We will consider the following theory or model for explaining social loafing:
    – Social impact theory
    – Collective Effort Model

- Social impact theory: This theory posits that as the number of group members doing a group task increases, each one of them feel less responsible towards the task. Thus, one popular explanation for social loafing given by this theory is diffusion of responsibility.

◀️‖Previous   Next ‖▶️

Collective Effort Model

- The collective model is based on the assumption that the difficulty of being evaluated on an individual basis in a group task is the primary reason for the reduced efforts towards the group task by the group members.

- This comprehensive theory given by Karau and Williams (1993) further explained social loafing with the help of the concepts of expectancy, instrumentality and valence.

  – Expectancy: Group members' belief that working hard would result in better performance

  – Instrumentality: Their belief that a better performance has a high probability to be recognized and rewarded

  – Valence: Their belief that the rewards would be of a kind that they would value and appreciate

- They posited that these are weaker in group situations and that leads to social loafing.

◀▌Previous   Next ▌▶

When is social loafing weakest?

- The outcomes of meta-analysis of several studies of social loafing has pointed out that it is the weakest in the following conditions :

  – Smaller groups
  – Tasks that are intrinsically interesting to group members
  – Work being done with respected others
  – Contribution to group effort being perceived as unique rather than redundant
  – The expectation that their co-worker to perform poorly
  – Cultures that emphasizes that the person's focus should be on one's own efforts rather than the group outcomes.

◀▌▌**Previous**   **Next**▌▌▶

Reducing social loafing

- Efforts can be made to recognize the effort of each participant working towards the group goals.

- The group members can be motivated to gain their commitment towards the group goals.

- The group task may be made to appear significant or valuable for the group members.

- Finally, attempts can be made to strengthen the group cohesiveness.

◀‖ Previous   Next ‖▶