

Perceived Effects of Social Loafing among Interactive Sports Athletes in University of Ibadan

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Abstract

The study examined the perceived effects of social loafing on team Performance among interactive sport athletes in University of Ibadan. Sixty (60) soccer, male athletes respondents drawn from three (3) different Departments namely, KHE (20), LARIS (20), and G & C (20) in the Faculty of Education were used for the study. Standardized instruments of perceived Social Loafing Questionnaire (PSLQ) ($\alpha=.62$), Sports Attitude Inventory (SAI) ($\alpha=.90$ & $.72$) and Potency Measure Scale ($\alpha=.90$) with mean average age for only male athletes = 25.2

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The study examined the perceived effects of social loafing on team Performance among interactive sport athletes in University of Ibadan. Sixty (60) soccer, male athletes respondents drawn from three (3) different Departments namely, KHE (20), LARIS (20), and G & C (20) in the Faculty of Education were used for the study. Standardized instruments of perceived Social Loafing Questionnaire (PSLQ) ($\alpha=.62$), Sports Attitude Inventory (SAI) ($\alpha=.90$ & $.72$) and Potency Measure Scale ($\alpha=.90$) with mean average age for only male athletes = 25.2

years (SD =4.3) was used to test on the effects of perceived social loafing at $P<0.01$ alpha level. The result showed that commitment, motivation and individual ability or effort as a factor of social loafing were significant ($r=.464$, $N=60$, $P<0.01$); ($r=.506$, $N=60$, $P<0.01$); $r= (.378$, $N=60$, $P<0.01$) respectively. These variables were perceived as having effect on team performance. However, the composite effect results of two independent variables (commitment and individual ability or effort) was not significant, while only motivation was reported to be significant on the dependent variable of Team performance.

Key Words:*Social Loafing, Interactive Sport, Athletes*

Most sports activities take place in group settings; even athletes who participate in individual sports, and who are solely responsible for their performance in competitions are usually members of a team (Carron, Hausenblas&Eys, 2005). In team competition, the task must be accomplished by a group of athletes who work together in order to combine individual efforts to create single products, in interactive sports close team-work is required for success (www.athleticinsight.com).

Hoigaard, Fluglestad, Bert, Martens and Boen (2010), while citing Latane (1986), defined social loafing as the reduction in motivation and effort when individuals work collectively, compared with when they work individually, while perceived social loafing is the perception by an athlete or group of athletes that other members of the team are not putting forth as much effort as themselves (Hoigaard, Skjekkeland and Johansen 2003; Hoigaard and Ommundsen 2002; Mulvey and Klein 1998).

Researcher have contended that social loafing may be a function of the individual's desire to economise their efforts when performing in group situations because they can "hide in the crowd" and escape recognition or blame because their individual efforts are not identifiable, (Hardy and Latane 1988; Latane 1986; Haigard and Ingvalden 2006) contend while other factors have also been identified to moderate the magnitude of social loafing effect: a) individuals perceive they are making a unique contribution to the team's effort, or performing a task perceived as difficult, b) individuals perform with friends as opposed to strangers, c) the task involves the performer personally (Bartis, Szymanski and Harkins 1988; Hardy and Latane 1988; Harkins and Petty, 1982). Based on these factors, it can be asserted that social loafing may be restricted to tasks that are seen as unimportant, meaningless, lack in intrinsic motivation or performed by relative strangers in non-competitive contexts

Social loafing has been used within a diverse variety of studies from its impact on sports teams to the effect on groups within huge conglomerates (Patel, 2002). Karau and Williams (1998) developed a unified theory that integrated most of the existing theories and models in what they called "the collective effort model". This model suggests that individual's willingness to exert effort on a team task depends on their expectations of the instrumentality of their efforts in obtaining valuable outcomes. They conducted a meta-analysis of 78 social loafing studies and found social loafing to be moderate in magnitude and generalizable across different tasks and populations.

There is considerable evidence (Karau and Williams, 1995, 1993; Ingham, Levinger, Graves and Peckham, 1974)) to support a negative association between social loafing and team performance (that is the more individuals loaf when working in a team, the worse the performance of their team). Further empirical findings in sports related research on social loafing has shown that lack of identification and evaluation in individual skills seems to be a significant factor in explaining the social loafing effects on team performance (Forsyth, Weinberg and Gould, 1999).

Price and Harrison (2006), Peizon and Donaldson (2005) were also of the opinion that, due to social loafing average output for each individual decreases due to the perception that others in the team are not putting forth as much effort as the individual. Although perception of reduced effort may reflect actual effort. They believe that perceived loafing and reduced effort may not always co-vary. It is also likely that social loafing may occur without other group members being aware of this, or that group members are contributing fully (Hoigaard, Skejkkeland and Joahnsen, 2003). Hoigaard & Ommendsen (2005) reported that researches have shown that the identification of individual effort or contribution in interactive teams has a positive effect on performance, self-evaluation of effort and the opinion of social loafing in the group.

Perceived loafing may have the potential to reduce the likelihood of a team's success. In order to attain a maximum output on team performance, both individual and group of athletes are required to be fully committed towards team success (Lafastob and Larson, 2001). Commitment is said to be the extent to which an individual or group is committed to achieving the set goal in a team (Hacker 2005). In the same vein it is also important to note that as there are group motives for sport participation, there are also individual motives and that no two athletes are said to be actually alike in motives, each athlete is remarkably different from the other. Hacker (2005), Faris and Brown (2003) opined that before any serious discussion is fully understood with regards to how a group of athletes can be motivated, a cursory look is required in order to identify the motives of these individuals who have decided to come together for a common goal. They also pointed out that researches have shown that in defining motivation it deals with variables that incite or direct a person towards activity and ultimately towards a specific goal. Rothwell (2004) on the other hand concluded that the answer to social loafing is through the motivation of athletes. Hoigaard and Peters (2009); Hoigaard and Ommundsen (2007); Hoigaard, Tofleland and Ommundsen, 2006; Karau and Williams (1993, 1995) investigated the role of other group dynamic variables in team sports, such as team cohesion, collective efficacy and task motivational climate in relation to propensity of athletes to loaf and have found out that athletes are less likely to loaf under these climates.

According to Forsyth (1999) an untested area in social loafing literature is that which has to do with investigating interactive team sports such as football in relation to the method of approach which is comparing individual and collective efforts. Hoigaard,

Skjekkeland and Johansen (2003) suggested an alternative way of solving the methodological problem in studies of social loafing is to focus on perceived social loafing. Mulvey and Klein (1998) had earlier suggested that perceived loafing and actual loafing may have almost the same effect on athletes. In view of this, Hoigaard and Ommundsen (2007) study can be seen as a typical example of a more recent research which has moved towards interactive sport, where individual input is much harder to measure accurately for example soccer. Mulvey and Klein (1998) believes that it is because of this methodological problem in interactive sport, that researchers have been required to rely on athletes' perception of social loafing apparent in other team members as a proxy for the level of actual social loafing within a team. It is therefore on this premise that the researchers carried out a study on the perceived effect of social loafing in team performance among interactive sports athletes in University of Ibadan.

Method

Participants

The Perceived Social loafing questionnaire (PSLQ), sport Attitude Inventory (SAI) and potency measure scale (PMS) was completed by athletes selected from soccer ($n=60$). These athletes were purposively and conveniently drawn from three (3) different departments (KHE=20, LARIS=20, and G & C = 20) in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan. Participants were 60 male with mean age (25.2 years & $SD=4.3$) as shown in table 1. The premise for choosing those sports group was that they are the most prestigious and popular medal winning sports for most undergraduate and postgraduate sports competition in University of Ibadan.

Measure

Perceived Social Loafing Questionnaire (PSLQ)

The perceived social loafing questionnaire (PSLQ) Hoigaard; Hoigaard and Ommundsen 2007; Hoigaard, Safvenbon2006) ask for athletes perceptions of social loafing behaviours in 'members' of the team" implicitly including the individual answering the statements and thus in part an indication of the perception of their own propensity to loaf. Therefore, to enable athletes quantify their perception of social loafing in their teammates, the perceived social loafing questionnaire was developed and has been shown to be psychometrically valid and reliable in a number of published studies (Hoigaard, Safvenbom and Tonnessen 2006; Hoigaard and Ommundsen 2007; Hoigaard and Peters, 2009; Hoigaard, 2010) The PSLQ contains five statements. A sample item is "The players in my team try to hide behind the others so that they do not have to exert themselves (offer) as much as they are capable of doing". Participants answer these items on a scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A higher score indicates higher perceived social loafing. The cronbach alpha of previous work is .68 while that of this study was .62 which can be regarded as valid and acceptable for this study.

Sports Attitude Inventory

The Sports Attitude Inventory (SAI) which was developed by Willis (1982), relates to competitive behaviours and determining what makes a motive or drives a successful athletes. SAI catered for the two independent variables of motivation with 14- items and individual effort with 9- items respectively. SAI has a Likert-scale ratings of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A sample of questions ask is "I have a very strong desire to be successful.

The cronbach alpha for previous study ranged from .69 to .71 while that of this study ranged from .72 to .90 which can be regarded as valid and acceptable for the study.

Potency Measure Scale

Potency measure scale which was used to cater for the dependent variable of team performance was developed by Guzzo, Yost, Campbell and Shea (1993). This scale is an eight 8-item scale which contains items such as "my teammates has confidence in itself" "My team believes it can become unusually good at producing high-quality work" and "My team expects to have power around here". Potency Measure scale has a ten point Likert- ratings (1=To no extent), (3=To a limited extent), (5=To some extent), (7=To a considerable extent) and (10=To a great extent). This instrument has been used widely and has been found to have acceptable measurement properties (Kirk man & Rosen, 1999). Cronbach alpha of previous studies was .91 and .92, .66 (Jong, Ruyter, and Wetzels 2005). Cronbach alpha for this study was .90 which can be regarded as valid and acceptable for the study.

Procedure

After approval was given by officials and athletes as informed consent to participate, the purpose of the study was explained to the athletes by the authors and research assistants. Then questionnaire was administered individually, to the participants in their various hostels in University of Ibadan. Confidentiality of the responses from these matriculated students was assured prior to data collection.

Analysis

Analysis statistical tools utilized included frequency counts, percentages, means, standard deviation and multiple regression in order to find the composite effect of the independent variables of commitment, motivation, individual effort or ability on dependent variable of team performance.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution and Percent by Sport and Sex

Sport	F	%	Sex	F	%	Mean	SD
Soccer	60	100	Male	60	100	25.2	4.3

In table 1 are frequencies, percentages (soccer, 60) and sex (male with mean age and standard deviation values of the respondents.

H₀₁: There will be no joint effect of independent variables of commitment, motivation and individual ability on Team Performance

Table 2a: Multiple regression analysis of joint effect independent variables on team performance

Model	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	913.652	3	304.551	8.468	.000
Residual	2013.948	56	35.963		
Total	2927.600	59			

R=.559

R²= .312

Adj R²=.275

It was shown in the table above that the joint effect of independent variables of commitment, motivation and individual ability on Team performance was significant (F(3,56)=8.468; R=.559, R²=.312, Adj R²=.275; P<.05). About 31% of the variation was accounted for by the independent variables. The hypothesis stated is hereby rejected

H₀₂: There will be no relative effects of independent variables of commitment, motivation and individual ability on Team performance

Table 2b: Relative effects of independent variables on team performance

Model	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	T	Sig
	β	Std. Error			
(Constant)	7.470	4.994		1.496	.140
Commitment	.506	.280	.276	1.808	.076
Motivation	.256	.0963	.362	2.673	.010
Individual ability	1.678	.177	.001	.009	.992

The result above shows the relative contributions of each of the independent variable on the dependent variables of team performance. As shown in the table commitment and individual ability were not significant on team performance (β=.276, P>.05) and (β=.001, P>.05) respectively, It is shown that only motivation (β=.362, P<.05) was significant on Team Performance

H0₃ There will be no significant relationship between Team Performance and Commitment.

Table 3 Relationship between Team Performance and Commitment

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Team Performance	30.8000	7.0442				
			60	.464	.000	Sig.
Commitment	17.3000	3.8502				

Sig at .01 level

It is shown in the above table that there was significant relationship between Team performance and commitment ($r=.464$, $N=60$, $P<.01$). Null hypothesis is rejected.

H0₄ There will be no significant relationship between Team Performance and Motivation

Table 4 Relationship between Team Performance and Motivation

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Team Performance	30.8000	7.0442				
			60	.506	.000	Sig.
Motivation	56.8333	9.9884				

Sig. at .01 level

It is shown in the above table that there was significant relationship between Motivation ($r=.506$, $N=60$, $p<.01$). Null hypothesis is rejected.

H0₅ There will be no significant relationship between individual ability and Team performance

Table 5 There will be no significant relationship between Team Performance and individual ability

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Team Performance	30.8000	7.0442				
			60	.378	.000	Sig.
Individual	32.900	6.1691				

Sig. at 0.01 level

It is shown in the above table that there was significant relationship between individual ability and Team performance ($r=.378$, $N=60$, $P<.01$). Null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the Perceived effects of social loafing on team performance among interactive sports athletes in University of Ibadan.

Three (3) independent variables of commitment, motivation and individual ability as factors of perceived social loafing were tested and found significant as having effect on team performance among soccer players in the University of Ibadan. This indicates the rejection of the null hypotheses which implies that, the three independent variables contributed to perceive social loafing which in turn have a negative impact on team performance. However, Karau and Williams, (1993, 1995), Mulvey and Klein (1998), Hoigaard, Skjekkland and Johansen (2003), Price & Harrison, (2006) gave empirical evidence to support a negative association between social loafing and team performance, that is, the more individuals loaf when working in a team, the worse the performance of their team. It was therefore suggested that coaches should encourage their athletes with both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

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