

# Motivation and De-Motivation in Groups



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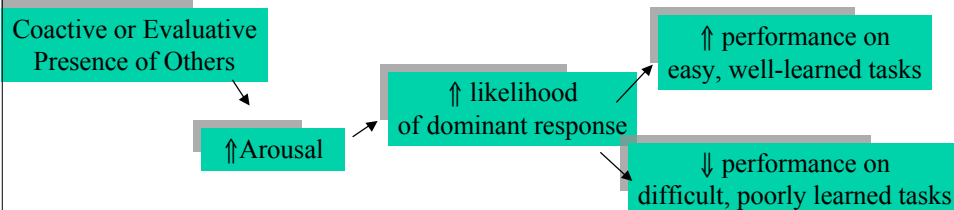
## Overview

- We will focus on two phenomena:
  - Social Facilitation
  - Social Loafing
- These two phenomena are very basic to all group research, and represent two very old traditions of research in social psychology.
- They appear to say the opposite thing, but they can be reconciled.
- Meta-analysis of social loafing research
- Searching for motivation gains on collective tasks.
  - Social compensation


## Social Facilitation

- Triplett (1898): Dynamogenic factors in pacemaking and competition
  - bicyclists go faster when competing;
  - boys reeled a motor contraption faster in the social presence of another competing boy
- followed by many years of inconsistent results ... researchers lost interest
- Zajonc (1965): Social facilitation of dominant responses

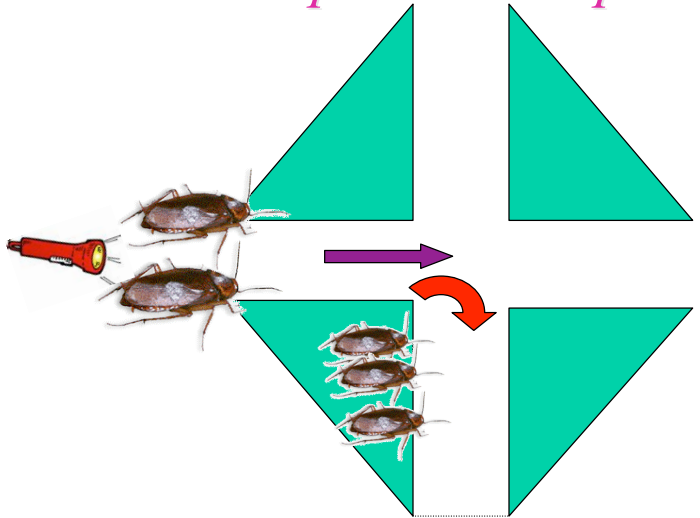
## Social Facilitation



But, why?

- (1) *Comprecence* (Zajonc, 1966) 
- (2) *Evaluation apprehension* (Cottrell, 1968)
- (3) *Distraction-conflict* (Baron & Sanders, 1986)

## *Social Facilitation: The Compresence Explanation*



## *Social Facilitation*

- Evaluation Apprehension
  - Being evaluated is arousing, and the presence of others implies potential evaluation.
  - If you can make such that others are present but clearly can't evaluate, social facilitation should disappear.
- Distraction-Conflict
  - The presence of others is distracting, and being distracted from a task is arousing. Thus, either distraction alone (non-social) should be sufficient to cause so-called "social" facilitation.

# Social Loafing

Trying less hard when working collectively than when working coactively (or individually)

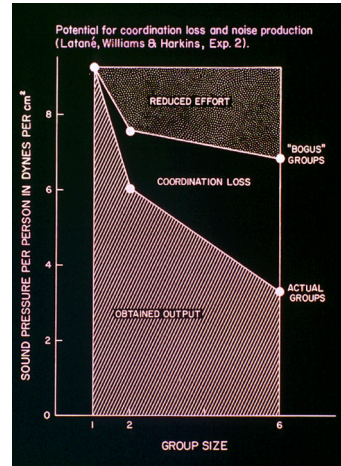


## Ringelmann Effect → Social Loafing

- Historical context
  - Ringelmann (1880)
    - Studying men to understand oxen
  - Steiner (1965)
    - Ringelmann Effect not psychological; it's simply incoordination
  - Ingham, Levinger, Peckham, & Graves (1974)
    - Ringelmann effect is psychological
  - Latané, Williams, & Harkins (1979)
    - Removes final alternative explanation; coin term, "Social Loafing"



# Social Loafing



Latané, Williams, & Harkins (1979)

## Social Loafing: In children and across cultures

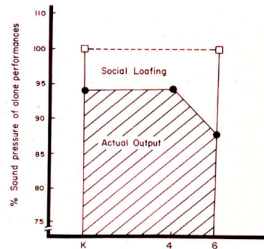
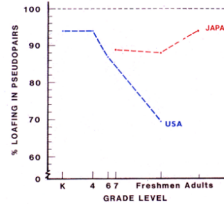
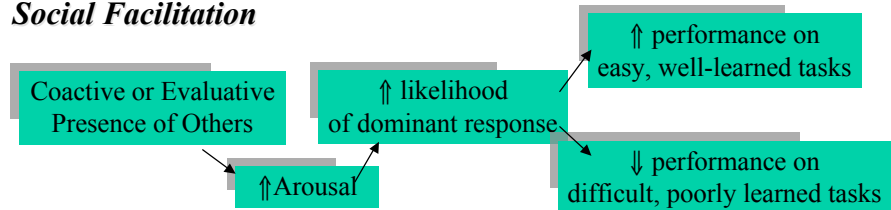


Fig. 1 Amount of loafing for kindergarten, fourth and sixth grade children.

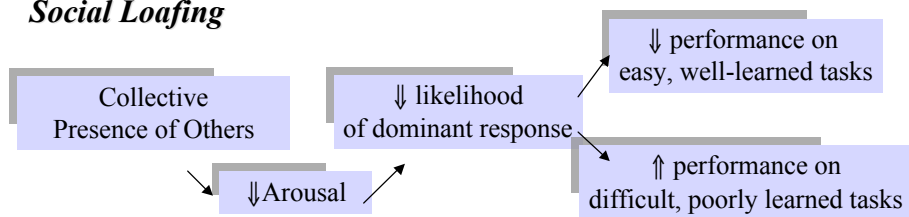


## *Social Facilitation & Social Loafing: Reconciled*

### ***Social Facilitation***



### ***Social Loafing***



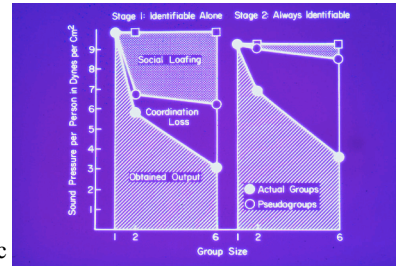
## Meta-analysis of all the studies on Social Loafing

- Karau & Williams (1993)
  - Meta-analysis of 78 social loafing studies
  - Robust effect across tasks, populations
  - Examined factors that predicted strongest social loafing effects
  - Proposed the collective effort model (CEM)



## Moderators of Social Loafing

- **Meta-analysis (Karau & Williams, 1993) revealed that the primary causes of social loafing are:**
  - *evaluation potential*...we loaf more when it's more difficult to evaluate our contributions
  - *task valence*...we loaf more in meaningless tasks
  - *uniqueness of individual inputs*...we loaf more when we believe our contributions are redundant
  - *group size*...more loafing in larger groups
  - *sex and culture*...social loafing effect larger for males and for individualistic cultures
  - *task complexity*...better performance coactively with simple tasks, not with complex tasks
  - ...and two more...



## Today's Focus

- *expectations of co-worker performance*...we loaf more when we expect that our co-workers will be strong contributors
- *group valence & group level comparison standards*...we loaf less in cohesive groups or when our group's outcomes can be compared to outcomes of other groups.

## Social Compensation

- Williams & Karau (1991)
  - Under certain circumstances, individuals will compensate for others on collective tasks; thus working (and trying) harder collectively than coactively.
    - When partners are not expected to contribute sufficiently
    - When the task is meaningful

## Social Compensation Studies

- Study 1: Trust as an individual difference.
- Study 2: Trust, as manipulated by expectations of partner's intention to work hard.
- Study 3: Trust, as manipulated by partner's disclosure of their own ability on the given task.



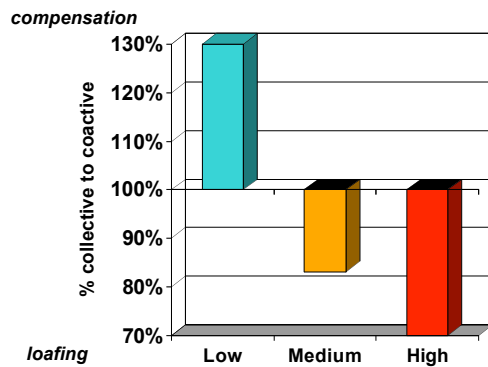
## Study 1: Trust

- If we have high levels of trust in our co-workers, should we be less or more likely to socially loaf?
  - In 1979 (*Psychology Today*), Latané, Harkins, & Williams guessed “less.”
  - In 1991, (*JPSP*), Williams & Karau hypothesized “more.”

## Rotter’s Interpersonal Trust Scale

- Trust in the sense that
  - you can depend on others;
  - you can rely on others;
  - others keep their word;
  - others don’t cheat.
- Gave scale to 1,085 introductory psychology students
- Selected lowest quintile ( $n = 42$ ); middle quintile ( $n = 41$ ); top quintile ( $n = 43$ ).

## Method & Results

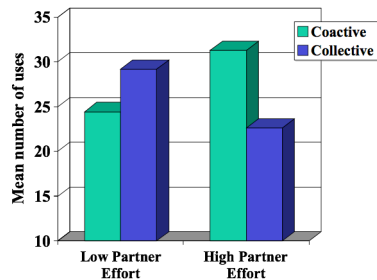


- People worked in groups of 6-8
- Either coactively or collectively
- Results:
  - Low trusters socially compensated
  - Medium trusters socially loafed
  - High trusters socially loafed (big time).

## Study 2: Partner Effort

- Groups of two individuals in 2 X 2 between-S design.
- Task description held constant at highly meaningful (i.e., indicating intelligence).
- Idea generation task; the more the better.
- Worked coactively or collectively.
- Partner (really a confederate) would say,
  - (Low Effort Partner) “This is interesting, but I’m not going to try very hard.”
  - (High Effort Partner) “This is interesting; I’m going to try really hard.”

## Study 2: Partner Effort

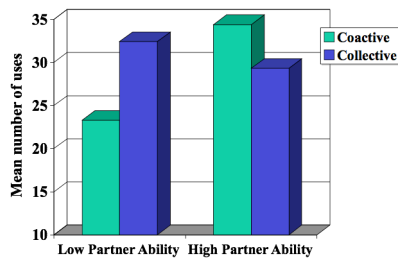


- When we think our partner will try hard, we loaf.
- When we think our partner will NOT try hard, we socially compensate.

## Study 2: Partner Ability

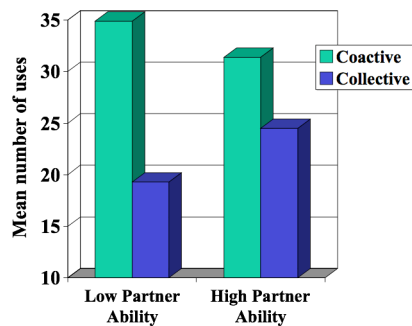
- Groups of two individuals in 2 X 2 X 2 between-S design.
- Task description manipulated:
  - highly meaningful (i.e., indicating intelligence) or
  - low meaningful (i.e., undergrad extra credit project on kitchen utensils).
- Worked coactively or collectively.
- Partner (really a confederate) would say,
  - (Low Effort Ability) “This is interesting, but I’m awful at this sort of thing.”
  - (High Effort Partner) “This is interesting; I’m pretty good at this sort of thing.”

## Study 3: Partner Ability & *High* Task Meaningfulness



- If our partner is highly able, we loaf.
- If our partner is unable to perform well; we socially compensate.

## Study 3: Partner Ability & *Low* Task Meaningfulness



- If our partner is able to perform well; we loaf.
- If our partner is unable to perform well; we loaf.
- Social compensation appears to require that we value the task or the meaning attached to the performance.

## Implications

- Trust isn't always a good thing.
- High trusters may take advantage of others' efforts and contributions, and slack off when the opportunities arise.
- Encouraging individuals to increase their trust in their coworkers (e.g., trust exercises) might actually promote social loafing.

## Cohesiveness, (Not Trust), Reduces Social Loafing

- Karau & Williams (1998)
  - In two studies, for intact groups (friends), social loafing was reduced or eliminated (typing, knife task).
- Karau & Hart (1999):
  - For ad hoc groups who were induced to be more cohesive, social loafing was eliminated (knife task).
- Karau, Markus, & Williams (in preparation)
  - In three studies, for groups whose social identity was made salient (i.e., university affiliation or gender), social loafing was eliminated (knife task, hidden pictures task, radar detection task).

## Conclusions on Trust and Cohesiveness

- There may be some disadvantages for interpersonal trust.
- Trust and cohesiveness may often co-occur; but if separated, trust may incline people to take advantage of others; whereas cohesiveness may obligate us to be reliable.

## Related Topics

- The Kohler Effect - Kerr
- Coaction, Competition, and Collective Effort?
- Free Riding, Commons Dilemmas
- Implications for Donations?

