Journal of Multidisciplinary Cases
ISSN: 2799-0990
Vol : 03 , No. 04 , June- July 2023
http://journal.hmjournals.com/index.php/JMC
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55529/jmc.34.41.49

Investigating Social Loafing in Conducting an Undergraduate Thesis among Student-Researchers in UM Tagum College: A Mixed-Methods Inquiry

Louisse Noreen Tapiz[1*], Opeña Hazel Faith[2], Saclot Jesus Emmanuel[3], Sadane Jehane[4]

[1,2,3,4]Department of Arts and Sciences, University of Mindanao Tagum College Philippines.*

Email: [2]h.opena.124278.tc@umindanao.edu.ph, [3]j.saclot123348.tc@umindanao.edu.ph
[4]j.sadane.123822.tc@umindanao.edu.ph
Corresponding Email: [1]tapiz.louisse@umindanao.edu.ph*

Received: 02 February 2023 **Accepted:** 19 April 2023 **Published:** 02 June 2023

Abstract: ***Social Loafing pertains to the tendency of a person to exert less effort whenever working in groups compared to working alone. A behaviour dubbed as 'social cancer' and can even negatively affect individuals, organizations, and society. There is an apparent lack of studies when it comes to social loafing in the academe. As such, this study was initiated with the following objectives: (1) determine the level of social loafing of student researchers and (2) uncover the lived experiences of student-researchers who encounter social loafing within their groups. The study employed a mixed method, particularly a sequential explanatory design composed of two phases. Phase one involved a quantitative approach wherein a survey was used to collect data from 385 student-researchers. The data showed an overall low level of social loafing among the student-researchers. Phase 2 employed a qualitative approach which selected 14 participants. According to the participants, a sense of regret in group selection was experienced because of their negative experiences with social loafers in their group. Their experience may come across as emotional distress and unfair allocation of tasks. Moreover, participants shared coping strategies with their experience: entertainment immersion, sentiment expression, and establishing agreements. Practical implications as well as future directions were also provided from the study.***

Keywords: Social Loafing, Student-Researchers, Academic Setting, Class Experience.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teamwork has become a very desirable pedagogical approach in higher education today. This has become evident in the pandemic with colleges shifting towards student self-directed learning. Collaborating allows students to become responsible and proactive as they contribute

Copyright The Author(s) 2023.This is an Open Access Article distributed under the CC BY license. (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Journal of Multidisciplinary Cases
ISSN: 2799-0990
Vol : 03 , No. 04 , June- July 2023
http://journal.hmjournals.com/index.php/JMC
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55529/jmc.34.41.49

to the group work process. As such, important skills like critical thinking, social skills, communication, and responsibility are developed [1-2]. Developing aforementioned skills makes it necessary for tertiary academic institutions to foster student teamwork.

Unfortunately, social loafing is an emerging concern in student collaboration. Social loafing refers to the behaviour of people that make less effort when working in a group as compared to working alone. Dubbed as a "disease" that negatively impacts collaboration [3]. Studies show that social loafing has an effect in a group activity. The effort exerted in a group work was greatly lowered [4-5]. Alarmingly, students acknowledged their tendency for social loafing and are even conscious of the effort exerted [6-8].

Group work is popularly used in various fields which even includes the academe [5]. It was even observed that as group work grows in popularity so does the reported rates of social loafing [9]. As such, there is a necessity to conduct the study. The study hoped to contribute to the existing literature on social loafing. More specifically, understanding the phenomenon in a tertiary academic setting because of limited studies in the locality.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study was mixed method by design because it employed quantitative and qualitative approaches. Since the study employed mixed method, it is divided into two phases. Phase 1 being the quantitative aspect while phase 2 as the qualitative aspect.

Phase 1 selected 385 participants as the sample. Having over 300 participants was regarded as a good sample size [10]. A similar observation was also done in studies that employed a quantitative design. [11-13]. based on the result of the Slovins formula. The researchers used an adopted and modified survey questionnaire for gathering the data. The instrument used Ülke's uni-dimensional Social Loafing Measuring Tool. The questionnaire had two components. The first component measured the individual social loafing while the second component measured the group perceived social loafing.

Phase 2 identified 14 participants who met the inclusion criteria set by the researchers. This complies with the recommended number to achieve saturation of data [14]. A similar practice was observed in other qualitative studies [15-17]. The 14 participants were split into two groups: 7 for In-depth Interview (IDI) and 7 for the Focus group. The researchers made an interview guide which was validated by experts.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSION

3.1 PHASE 1: Quantitative component

The quantitative component of this study presents numerical data. Tables and subheading were used to label relevant segments that are part of the quantitative component. This included the Overall level of Social Loafing and Percentage of Social Loafing Acknowledgement

Copyright The Author(s) 2023.This is an Open Access Article distributed under the CC BY license. (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Journal of Multidisciplinary Cases
ISSN: 2799-0990
Vol : 03 , No. 04 , June- July 2023
http://journal.hmjournals.com/index.php/JMC
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55529/jmc.34.41.49

Overall level of Social Loafing

Table 1 shows the mean scores for both Individual Social Loafing and Group Perceived Social Loafing. Having an overall mean of 2.60 with a descriptive level of low, the overall mean score resulted from the respective mean scores from the two components of the overall Social Loafing. Individual Social loafing garnered a mean score of 2.38 with a descriptive level of low while Group Perceived Social Loafing garnered 2.81 with a descriptive level of Moderate. The results imply that the occurrence of social loafing was less observed.

Table 1. Overall Level of Social Loafing

Indicators	**Mean**	**SD**	**Descriptive Level**
Individual Social Loafing	2.38	.857	Low
Group Perceived Social Loafing	2.81	1.01	Moderate
Overall	**2.60**	**.846**	**Low**

Percentage of Social Loafing Acknowledgement

Table 2 shows percentage of Social Loafing Acknowledgement. The data shows that from the 385 respondents, only 48 students (12.50%) admit that they have practice social loafing, 258 students (67%) deny that they practice social loafing, 79 students (20.50%) (79 students) neither admitted nor denied their practice of social loafing. The results confirm findings in previous studies wherein it was found that individuals recognize their tendency for social loafing [18-19]. They are even aware of the effort they exert to tasks [19]. There are also cases that people are reluctant to admit their social loafing or that they are unconscious of such actions [20-21]. The results imply that there is an admittance to social loafing but there are those who deny social loafing. This means that there are isolated occurrences of students-researchers that have experiences with being grouped with those that social loaf.

Table 2. Percentage of Social Loafing Acknowledgement

	Frequency (N)	**Percentage (%)**
Students who admitted that they social loafed	48	12.50%
Students who denied that they social loafed	258	67%
Students who neither denied nor admitted that they social loafed	79	20.50%

3.2 PHASE 1: Qualitative aspect

The qualitative component of this study presents essential themes and core ideas that were generated from the thematic analysis. Two code categories were generated as the overarching tool for presenting the analyzed data. The code categories are Student-Researcher experience of Social Loafing and Coping mechanism of Student-Researchers in dealing members that practice Social Loafing.

Copyright The Author(s) 2023.This is an Open Access Article distributed under the CC BY license. (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Journal of Multidisciplinary Cases
ISSN: 2799-0990
Vol : 03 , No. 04 , June- July 2023
http://journal.hmjournals.com/index.php/JMC
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55529/jmc.34.41.49

Student-Researcher experience of Social Loafing

Table 3 reveals the results of code category 1 (Student-Researcher experience of Social Loafing). The results detail the experiences of student researchers with members that demonstrate social loafing. Each experience is elaborated in the essential themes: Sense of regret, Emotional distress, and Unfair delegation of workload.

Table 3. Student-Researcher experience of Social Loafing

Code Category 1	Essential Themes	Core Ideas
Student-Researcher experience of Social Loafing	Sense of regret	Realizing that choosing group members out of friendship is terrible. Learning that they have Become a partner with irresponsible individuals. Hoping to transfer to another group or getting the job done single-handedly. Imagining what might have Happened if decisions had been made differently in the past.
	Emotional distress	Feeling frustrated with the slow progress in the group. Sudden burst of tears due to Stress from member's poor behavior. Having considered the thought of dropping out of the research subject. Suffering burnout because of picking up the slack of loafing members.
	Unfair delegation of workload	Encountering members who participate fairly or contributing at a later time. Relying on a single individual to complete the task. Compensating the slack of social loafing members. Compromising own's leisure to assume another member's supposed responsibility.

Copyright The Author(s) 2023.This is an Open Access Article distributed under the CC BY license. (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Journal of Multidisciplinary Cases
ISSN: 2799-0990
Vol : 03 , No. 04 , June- July 2023
http://journal.hmjournals.com/index.php/JMC
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55529/jmc.34.41.49

The participants expressed that having members that demonstrate social loafing caused regrets in group selection. This stems from a variety of negative experience which may range from picking up the slack, feeling negative emotions, and involvement in various conflicts. Initially, students affected by social loafers feel contended with their group but would later regret being grouped with social loafers. The same students would also realize that it would be better to decide rationally instead of friendship. Similarly, studies show that negative sentiments are related with social loafing. It is even the primary source of discontent for students working in groups [22-23].

Participants experienced emotional distress because of being grouped with members that social loaf. Social loafers often exhibit various acts that lead to the distress of their other members. For example, late submission of tasks would lead to other members to pick up the slack. This likely being the contributing factor to stress and burnout. Similarly, studies show that emotions like anger, anxiety and frustration is considered an effect linked with social loafing. [24-25].

Despite delegating the workload to every member, tasks become unevenly distributed because of members that social loaf. There are other members that compensate for those who are not working effectively. Moreover, leisure of the student who compensated is sacrificed. As such, students complain. Complaining is expected because of the reliance of the work to one member. Similar cases were found in other studies wherein students complained with the unequal contribution of work load [26-27].

Coping mechanism of Student-Researchers in dealing members that practice Social Loafing

Table 4 presents the result of code category 2 (Coping mechanism of Student-Researchers in dealing members that practice Social Loafing). Results details the coping mechanisms of student researchers in their encounter with those that social loaf. Each coping mechanism is elaborated into essential themes: Expressing of sentiments, Immersing in entertainment, Establishing of agreements.

Table 4. Coping mechanism of Student-Researchers in dealing members that practice Social Loafing

Code Category 2	Essential Themes	Core Ideas
Coping mechanism of Student-Researchers in dealing members that practice Social Loafing	Expressing of sentiments	Venting out frustrations to friends and family members. Confronting the social loafing members about their way of behaving. Calling out members who do not follow the deadline of tasks.
	Immersing in entertainment	Watching films or dramaseries to divert attention temporarily. Playing games to ease the

Copyright The Author(s) 2023.This is an Open Access Article distributed under the CC BY license. (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Journal of Multidisciplinary Cases
ISSN: 2799-0990
Vol : 03 , No. 04 , June- July 2023
http://journal.hmjournals.com/index.php/JMC
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55529/jmc.34.41.49

		pressure for quite a while. Reading a couple of books to destress.
	Establishing of agreements	Discussing matters whengroup conflict arises Imposing certain disciplinary measures on groupmates who do not do their tasks. Reminding groupmates of their responsibilities and sharing updates on the study's progress

Participants shared that they face different struggles in completing their thesis. One of which is being grouped with those that are considered as social loafers. To deal with social loafers, coping mechanism were employed. Expressing of sentiments is one of the coping mechanisms. Not only are these sentiments shared with trusted people (e.g., family and close friends) but also with those members that social loaf. Venting out their frustration was helpful as it allowed them to experience relief. Studies have shows that venting our frustration is a common coping mechanism with stress [28]. By doing so, emotional support is asked from family and peers [29].

Another Coping mechanism practiced by the participants is immersing in entertainment. As a way to cope, various forms of entertainment may be sough like watching movies, playing games and reading books. This strategy is beneficial as the temporary diversion from negativity recharges the strength of those burdened by stress. Similarly, studies have also shown that entertainment in various sources provide stress relief [30-31].

The third coping mechanism shared by the participants is establishing agreements. The presence of social loafing has detrimental effects in the research undertaking of a group. It is crucial that each member must contribute to minimize stress. By establishing agreements, this facilitates the contribution of social loafers in the group. Studies support that agreements can decrease social loafing by fostering a sense of accountability [32-33]. This even allows students to have a sense of responsibility and make them aware of the consequences [34].

4. CONCLUSION

The study provided a description of social loafing as experienced by students-researchers in the conduct of their undergraduate thesis. It was found that even though social loafing among student-researchers was less observed, there are students who admit to their social loafing. Moreover, there are even students that deny social loaf and there are students who neither deny nor admit their social loafing.

Copyright The Author(s) 2023.This is an Open Access Article distributed under the CC BY license. (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Journal of Multidisciplinary Cases
ISSN: 2799-0990
Vol : 03 , No. 04 , June- July 2023
http://journal.hmjournals.com/index.php/JMC
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55529/jmc.34.41.49

Furthermore, 14 key participants were selected to express their experience and coping mechanism on their encounters with members that social loaf. The essential themes detailed the relevant concepts of each participant. The experience of the participants was encapsulated into 3 themes (Sense of regret, Emotional distress, and Unfair delegation of workload). Likewise, coping mechanisms were also encapsulated into 3 themes (Expressing of sentiments, Immersing in entertainment, Establishing of agreements). This study shows that despite social loafing being less observed, there are potential isolated cases that happen. This was evident in the experiences shared by the participants.

Recommendations

The researchers made recommendations in line with the results. The recommendations are highlighted into key words: Contact, Appraisal and Explore.

1. Making a team Contract is essential to establish regulations that operate within groups. This can discourage social loafing by detailing the disciplinary actions that will be incurred by members who fail to comply with the contract. Regulations in academic undertakings like undergraduate thesis help prevent social loafing practices by penalizing undesirable behaviours.
2. Using Appraisal System can foster a culture that values the completion of minor tasks relevant to the conduct of an undergraduate thesis. This motivates all members to contribute in the completion of tasks.
3. The researchers acknowledge the limitations that can be found in the study. As such, future researchers can Explore research on student social loafing. This will contribute to the existing on researchers relative to social loafing in the academic setting.

5. REFERENCES

1. Tosuntaş, U. B. (2020). Diffusion of responsibility in group work: Social loafing. Journal of Pedagogical Research, 4(3), 344–358. https://doi.org/10.33902/jpr.2020465073
2. Black, G. (2002). Student assessment of virtual teams in an online management course. Journal of Business Administration Online, 1(2). http://jbao.atu.edu/Fall2002/black.pdf
3. Ringelmann, M. (1913). Research on animate sources of power: The work of man. Annales de l'Institut National Agronomique, 12, 1–40.
4. Ying, X., Li, H., Jiang, S., Peng, F., & Lin, Z. (2014). Group Laziness: The Effect of Social Loafing on Group Performance. Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal, 42(3), 465–471. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2014.42.3.465
5. Luo, Z., Marnburg, E., ØGaard, T., & Okumus, F. (2021). Exploring antecedents of social loafing in students' group work: A mixed-methods approach. Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, 28, 100314. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2021.100314
6. Petty, R. E., Harkins, S. G., Williams, K. D., & Latané, B. (1977). The effects of group size on cognitive effort and evaluation. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 3(4), 579–582. https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672770030040

Copyright The Author(s) 2023.This is an Open Access Article distributed under the CC BY license. (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Journal of Multidisciplinary Cases
ISSN: 2799-0990
Vol : 03 , No. 04 , June- July 2023
http://journal.hmjournals.com/index.php/JMC
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55529/jmc.34.41.49

7. Soni, S., & Vijayvargy, L. (2021). Are Two Hands Better than One: An Instructor's Dilemma. Psychology and Education, 58(2), 10860–10870.
8. Vargas, G. N. (2021). Social Loafing, Need for Cognition, And Sense of Inclusion: CorrelationalStudyinWorkTeams.https://www.proquest.com/openview/1bb4b66b6027625f8de96183a0d9fe76/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y
9. Hall, D., & Buzwell, S. (2012). The problem of free-riding in group projects: Looking beyond social loafing as reason for non-contribution. Active Learning in Higher Education, 14(1), 37–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787412467123
10. Mundfrom, D. J., Shaw, D. G., & Ke, T. L. (2005). Minimum sample size recommendationsfor conducting factor analyses. International journal of testing, 5(2), 159-168
11. Nuevo, A. M. (2023). Green Practices amidst COVID-19 Pandemic among Restaurants: Basis for an Enhancement Program. Journal of Social Responsibility, Tourism and Hospitality (JSRTH) ISSN 2799-1016, 3(01), 1-7.
12. Cruda, K. A. V., Dellomes, N. C., Matao, J. A., & Cubillo, J. B. (2023). Assessing Crime Prevention through Government Programs. Journal of Legal Subjects (JLS) ISSN 2815-097X, 3(02), 23-26.
13. Muico, E. J. G., Simene, M., Tagalog, D. M., & Jaban, J. J. (2022). The relationship of online resource use and academic writing of students. Journal of Learning and Educational Policy (JLEP) ISSN: 2799-1121, 2(02), 27-31.
14. Fugard, A. J., & Potts, H. W. (2014). Supporting thinking on sample sizes for thematic analyses: a quantitative tool. doi:1080/13645579.2015.1005453.
15. Cabendario, E. M., Gleyo, S. M., Piolo, M., & Muico, E. J. G. (2023). Social Media as a Supplemental Tool in Blended Learning. Journal of Media, Culture and Communication (JMCC) ISSN: 2799-1245, 3(01), 7-13.
16. Carcueva, C. (2018, October). CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK: PROBING THE PREFERENCES OF ESL LEARNERS. In The 1st International Conference on ELT (CONELT) (Vol. 1, No. 1).
17. Asis, J. M. A. (2022). Managing life behind the bars: A phenomenological inquiry. Managing life behind the bars: A phenomenological inquiry, 114(1), 11-11.
18. Petty, R. E., Harkins, S. G., Williams, K. D., & Latané, B. (1977). The effects of group size on cognitive effort and evaluation. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 3(4), 579–582. https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672770030040
19. Soni, S., & Vijayvargy, L. (2021). Are Two Hands Better than One: An Instructor's Dilemma. Psychology and Education, 58(2), 10860–10870.
20. Charbonnier, E., Huguet, P., Brauer, M., & Monteil, J. M. (1998). Social loafing and self-176 beliefs: People's collective effort depends on the extent to which they distinguish themselves as better than others. Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal, 26(4), 329-340.https://doi.org/info:doi/10.2224/sbp.1998.26.4.329
21. Luo, Z., Marnburg, E., ØGaard, T., & Okumus, F. (2021). Exploring antecedents of social loafing in students' group work: A mixed-methods approach. Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, 28, 100314. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2021.100314

Copyright The Author(s) 2023.This is an Open Access Article distributed under the CC BY license. (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Journal of Multidisciplinary Cases
ISSN: 2799-0990
Vol : 03 , No. 04 , June- July 2023
http://journal.hmjournals.com/index.php/JMC
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55529/jmc.34.41.49

22. Singh, S., Wang, H., & Zhu, M. (2018). Perceptions of Social Loafing During the Process of Group Development. SSRN Electronic Journal. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3161269
23. Williams, D. L., Beard, J. D., & Rymer, J. (1991). Team projects: Achieving their full potential. Journal of Marketing Education, 13, 45–53.
24. Zhu, M. (2013). Perception of social loafing, Conflict, and Emotion in the process of group development. SSRN. https://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/11299/160008
25. Behfar, K. J., Mannix, E. A., Peterson, R. S., & Trochim, W. M. (2011). Conflict in Small Groups: The Meaning and Consequences of Process Conflict. Small Group Research, 42(2), 127–176. https://doi.org/10.1177/1046496410389194
26. Hall, D., & Buzwell, S. (2012). The problem of free-riding in group projects: Looking beyond social loafing as reason for non-contribution. Active Learning in Higher Education, 14(1), 37–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787412467123
27. Shimazoe, J., & Aldrich, H. (2010). Group work can be gratifying: Understanding and overcoming resistance to cooperative learning. College Teaching, 58(2), 52– 57.
28. Kumar, C. S., & Parashar, N. (2015). Death anxiety, coping and spirituality among cancer patients. Indian Journal of Positive Psychology, 6(3), 291.
29. Apker, J. (2022). College student accounts of coping and social support during COVID-19 impacted learning. Communication Quarterly, 70(3), 296-316.
30. Lee, U., Lee, J., Ko, M., Lee, C., Kim, Y., Yang, S., Yatani, K., Gweon, G., Chung, K. M., & Song, J. (2014). Hooked on smartphones. Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, 2327–2336. https://doi.org/10.1145/2556288.2557366
31. Prestin, A., & Nabi, R. (2020). Media prescriptions: Exploring the therapeutic effects of entertainment media on stress relief, illness symptoms, and goal attainment. Journal of Communication, 70(2), 145-170.
32. Linabary, J. (2021). Confronting and Preventing Social Loafing. Small Group Communication.
33. Chang, Y., & Brickman, P. (2018). When Group Work Doesn't Work: Insights from Students. CBE—Life Sciences Education, 17(3), ar52. https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.17-09-0199
34. Samarakoon, U., Imbulpitiya, A., & Manathunga, K. (2021). Say No to Free Riding: Student Perspective on Mechanisms to Reduce Social Loafing in Group Projects. In CSEDU (1) (pp. 198-206).

Copyright The Author(s) 2023.This is an Open Access Article distributed under the CC BY license. (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)