

Investigating Social Loafing Among Athletes in Task-Oriented and Ego-Oriented Environments

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Abstract: the purpose of the present study is to investigate the social loafing among female athletes of track and field and basketball in task oriented and ego oriented environments.

the current study is an applied research and semi experimental research. The participants are the top female athletes who volunteered in track and field and basketball and have been chosen considering the entrance criterion of the research. 24 of the participants (12 basketball players and 12 runners) were aged from 18 to 25.

the results indicated that there is a significant relationship between social loafing in the task-oriented and ego-oriented environments. According to the mean differences, the athletes regardless of their field, had a better performance in ego-centered environment rather than the task-oriented one.

the results pointed out the participants had more performance in a task-oriented environment rather than an ego-oriented one. The kind of environment was more significant rather than the kind of sport in social loafing. Therefore, regardless of the sports fields, there need to be some consideration in order to create a more applicable environment where the team morals and team association in a way to do the activities, have a high priority and results in reducing the ego-orientation.

Keywords: social loafing, female athletes, track and field, basketball, task-oriented environment, ego-oriented environment.

1. Introduction

Consistence with the frequency of groups in human lives and the existence of many fundamental life duties in groups, it is important to state what is practical and decreasing to provide motivation, individual efforts to group, and team duties (Karau and Wilhau, 2020). Although, commonly believed that team work is inspiring in order to maximize the potential to work harder and be more motivated, many studies have shown there are often less efforts for team responsibilities rather than individual ones (Karau and Williams, 1993). This demotivation and lack of effort while working in teams rather than individual or cooperative ones, is known as social loafing (Rutte, 2003).

Whereas the team work in sports points out the collaboration and interaction among athletes in a team, it is obvious that the individual's skills are not equally consistent with the team performance. It is increasingly revealing that gathering groups' professionals do not guarantee the team success (Halldorsson, Thorlindsson, and Katovich, 2017). Accordingly, social loafing is in evidence of sports. However, it is expected that social loafing has less prevalence among professional athletes but in line with the more risks, taking social loafing' consequences should be taken more seriously within this level (Høigaard et al, 2015). This effort reduction among team or group environments (which is expected to be the maxims of individual effort) might cause damaging consequences on group performance. Literally, team members trust their teammates' extreme attempts in order to reach the team goals. Whereas, there are extortionate costs exclusively establishing the best players and the athletes have to respond to their coaches, proponents, and audiences by their performance. Social loafing can highly cause problems and progressively weaken team success in a competition (Hardy, 1990). As stated by the social loafing theory, this phenomena might bring about a negative among team members and can harm their relationship, eventually terminating the group association (Shepperd, 2001). There is noticeable evidence such as Latane et al (1979), Howigard et al (2006), (2010), De Backer et al (2015), Karau and Wilhau (2020), to support the relationship and the negative impacts of social loafing and team performance in a way that damaging process and team performance can lead in reducing demonstration. Social loafing has been

considered as an inconsistent social act even as a kind of social disease (Hardy, 1990, page 305). Understanding the factors influencing the social loafing in sports is believed to be a fundamental research in applied psychological sports which the main purpose of the researchers and the specialists is to find ways in maximizing the sports performance whether in individual or team levels (Vsartstra, 2012). One of the effective ways in this context is the performance environment, if the environment is a motivational task-oriented one, it creates the motivation of functioning by individual dominance, promotion aspiration, achieving higher abilities in order to responsibility accomplishment. Success and failure is defined intellectually as the athletes' self-referenced conscious. But when it comes to athletes' judgments of success and failure contrasting their components' performance, the ego-oriented environment will be considered. Consequently, showing others your higher abilities promotes the motivation to function (Lochbaum, Kallinen and Kontinen, 2017). Accordingly, these environmental methods might affect differently in increasing and decrising social loafing. Social loafing can occur in any sport but it can be different including contrasting situations. in more than 130 experimental studies, individual motivation among groups, it seems that social loafing is a significant phenomenon although it can be reduced, remove or even reverse it in specific circumstances (Karau and Wilhau, 2020).

Nowadays, there are various investigations in the social loafing area internationally, but there is still more investigation needed to be done about this context (Howigard and Omondson, 2007, Howigard et al, 2010, Vartestera, 2012, Simms & Nichols, 2014, Karau and Wilhau, 2020).. In our country there is also less research about social loafing among athletes and it is less concerned in other contexts. Lack of appropriate instruments to assess is one of the limitations encountered in the present research in this way that examining this is just possible throughout self-reported and understood social loafing questionnaires might encounter bias (Howigard et al, 2006, De Backer et al, 2015). As a result, because of the unknowability of many aspects of this phenomena in Iran, and lack of sports' investigations and surveys, we will examine the social loafing consequences among track and field and basketball. Therefore, the researcher will seek the existence of social loafing among the abovementioned fields, what will happen if the

motivational environment is task-oriented or ego-oriented? How will the condition of the social loafing in team sports rather than the individual sports?

2. Materials and Methods

The current study is an applied research and semi experimental and has been approved by the ethical

code of IR.IMAMREZA.REC.1403.001. the participants of this research are the professional and volunteered female athletes among track and field and basketball had chosen purposely considering the research entrance elements (desire to participate, the constant activity in the mentioned field, lack of injuries in hand area). 24 of the participants (12 basketball players and 12 runners) aged from 18 to 25. These are adequate to reach the statistical power of 0.8.

Table 1: the statistical description of demography characteristics

The demography Characteristics	Levels	Frequency	Frequency Percent
Age	18 to 21	18	75
	22 to 25	6	25
Sports record	3 to 6 years	11	45.8
	7 to 10 years	8	33.3
	11 to 14 years	5	20.8

Instruments

In order to gather the needed data, in the first phase the individual information questionnaire of the age, individual and practicing variables information were used. The next step was in line with the runners' record by chronometer and successful free throw in basketball by the AAHPERD test according to the research administrative protocols which briefly discussed the following.

Data Gathering

In accordance with the basketball players, there were 3 teams of 4 athletes. The participants stood in the throwing spot and were prepared for the main throw after 5 practicing throws. They were asked to do 10 free throw each. They did the throws constantly by their own desire. 2 assistants took the balls back after gathering them under the baskets. The third assistant recorded their scores. In the first effort, the athletes were told that their individual scores are not significant but the total scores gathered by the group matters. To ensure the researcher's trustfulness, the names of the participants were not mentioned during the data's record. The participants believed that only team work performance documented not their individual effort. In order not to the exhaustion impacts, all the athletes terminated the first stage and then, the second stage was held.

In the second stage, they were asked to do the same action, concentrate on their throws, and do their best performance with this difference that this time, each individual throws results that were recorded by their names separately. The rating system was based on the AAHPERD institution: the ball pass into the hoop had two points, the ball hit to the upper part of

the hoop and getting out had one point, unless it had zero point. The validity and reliability of the AAHPERD test from the penalty spot was analyzed by Hemayattalab (2007) in a group of 50 participants by 10 penalty throws and the apparent reliability of it was evaluated 0.93 and the validity was 0.84. Furthermore, Movahedi et al (2008), had analyzed this research in a group of 60 individuals, the reliability of it was evaluated 0.95 and its stability was 0.75 by the pre-test and post-test method.

In line with the runners, all the participants began warming up. Continuously, 3 teams were created including 4 runners as the coach distinction (according to the nearest records and the ability and speed comparing). The runners were told it is going to get a recording of the 4*100 clause relay race for each team.

The recording was held in the 400 meters speedway. Each of the runners must pass 100 meters constantly. With the aim of the accuracy of each runners' area, there was no replacement spot and the first runner started to run immediately after the standing whistle in order not to have any difference in the way of starting to run for each athlete. The runners have been told that the ultimate group record, which is the 400 meters record, is significant. After terminating this stage and registering the records, there was a break time to the coach's recommendation as a recovery. In the next step, the runners' records were registered individually in this way that they did the 100 meters sprint and their record registered and their names. 5 assistances helped the process of recording the individual and group points and in both stages (whether individual or relay race), the

participants did not get any performance feedbacks after the recording.

Data Analysis

In the current study, the gathered data was analyzed by the SPSS software version 26 by descriptive and

inferential analysis. The descriptive part included mean, percent, the data charts ... and the inferential part, the variance ANOVA test, independent T-test and one-sample T-test were used.

3. Results

Table 2 indicates the mean and standard deviation of basketball players and runners' performance in both task-oriented and ego-oriented environments.

Table 2: the mean and standard deviation of the participants' performance

Participants' Performance	Mean	Standard Deviation
The basketball players throws in the ego-oriented environment	1.75	0.14
The basketball players throws in the task-oriented environment	1.62	0.18
The runners' record in the ego-oriented environment	13.20	0.49
The runners' record in the task-oriented environment	13.68	0.57

As it is shown in table 2, the highest mean among basketball players was the throws in ego-oriented environment ($x=1.75$, $SD= \pm 0.14$) and among runners the highest mean was the records in the task-oriented environment ($x=13.68$, $SD= \pm 0.57$). Moreover, in this research, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to analyze the normality of basketball players throws and runners records differentiation in both environments where the both levels of significance have reported 0.20 which higher than 0.05 and indicates the normality of basketball players throws and runners records differentiation in both ego-oriented and task-oriented environments.

The findings categories in accordance with the administrative protocol used by the research participants is as follows:

The comparison of basketball players social loafing in both task-oriented and ego-oriented environments: the comparison of female basketball players' social loafing in both task-oriented and ego-oriented environments was analyzed by the two-sample-t-test. Table 2: The results of a three-way analysis of variance with repeated measures for the essential psychological skills variable

Table 3: the two-sample-t-test result

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	T Value	Degree of Freedom	Significance Level (sig)
The basketball players social loafing in the task-oriented and ego-oriented environment	0.12	0.17	2.52	11	0.02

As the table 3 indicates, there is a significant relationship among the female basketball players' social loafing between the task-oriented and ego-oriented environments ($\text{sig} < 0.05$). In line with the differentiation of the basketball players' throws in the ego-oriented environment rather than the task-oriented one, it seems that participants had a better mean performance in ego-oriented environment rather than the task-oriented one. Therefore, the

social loafing in the task-oriented environment is more than the ego-oriented one.

Comparing the runners' social loafing in both ego-oriented and task-oriented environments: hypnotically, the social loafing among female athletes in track and field in both environments of ego-oriented and task-oriented was analyzed by the two-sample-t-test.

Table 4: the results of the two-sample-t-test

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	T Value	Degree of Freedom	Significance Level (sig)
The track and field social loafing in the task-oriented and ego-oriented environment	-0.47	0.47	-3.47	11	0.02

In the light of the table 4, there is a significant relationship between the female athletes of track and field social loafing in both environments of task-oriented and ego-oriented ($\text{sig} < 0.05$). In accordance with the difference of runners' records mean in the ego-oriented environment rather than the task-oriented one, it is assumed that participants had a better performance mean in the ego-oriented environment than the task-oriented one. As a result, the social loafing is more in the task-oriented environment rather than the ego-oriented one.

The comparison of female runners' basketball players social loafing in the task-oriented environment: whereas the information scales are different in both basketball and track and field (the basketball players' throw points and runners' records), the z point was used to compare individual and team status in both sports. So as stated, at first the z point of each fields was calculated, then the single T-test was used to compare both fields in the task-oriented environment.

Table 5: the results of the independent t-test

Social loafing in the ego-oriented environment	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Differences	T Value	Degree of Freedom	Significance Level (sig)	Variance Homogeneity
Social loafing among runners	0	1	0	0	22	1.00	0.68
Social loafing among basketball players	0	1					

The table 5 data reveals that: there is no significant relationship between the social loafing among female runners' rather than female basketball players in the task-oriented environment ($\text{sig} \geq 0.05$).

The comparison of female runners' basketball players social loafing in the ego-oriented environment: Similar to the previous one, at first the z point of each field was calculated, then the single T-test was used to compare both fields in the ego-oriented environment.

Table 6: the results of the independent t-test

Social loafing in the ego-oriented environment	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Differences	T Value	Degree of Freedom	Significance Level (sig)	Variance Homogeneity
The runners 'social loafing	0	1	0	0	22	1.00	0.74
The basketball players' social loafing	0	1					

As table 6 shows there is no significant relationship between the social loafing among female runners' rather than female basketball players in the ego-oriented environment ($\text{sig} \geq 0.05$).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to investigate the athletes social loafing in task-oriented and ego-oriented environments. As the results state, in relation with the basketball and track and field female athletes' social loafing in both task-oriented and ego-oriented environments, it is assumed that individuals have a better mean performance in the ego-oriented environment rather than the task-oriented one. This condition is correspondence with the consideration of the individuals' mean performance in both track and field and basketball. The results are consistent with the findings' of De Backer et al, 2015, Jones et al, 2014, Heuzé & Brunel, 2003, Weinberg and Gold 1986, Görgülü, Gökçek, & Eyler, 2022, Høigaard and Ommundsen, 2007, Høigaard et al, 2006 and other researchers that will be stated by details as follows. De Backer et al, 2015, stated in a survey on top female athletes in basketball, volleyball, handball, and soccer that the concrete determination of individual efforts in team sports such as handball and volleyball are more difficult than individual sports. In contrast, the results shows that athletes concentrated more on their own benefits and their teammate's competition rather than their responsibilities in the team and focusing on the general team benefits. On the other hand, Jones et al, 2014, indicates relatively individuals in the ego-

oriented environment have a better performance than the task-oriented one. They revealed on a research about team sports such as basketball, the social loafing shows itself more in the exercising situation rather than the competitive one. In accordance with the athlete's effort in a competition has a direct impact on the team result and performance, and in an exercise, the effort has an indirect effect on the team performance, most of athletes think of their own benefits in the exercising situation and do less as their responsibilities.

Owing to Weinberg and Gold, 1986, stated in the book Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology, that individuals considering their own benefits as the group (that each individual has a responsibility), had less effort and instead, they attempt at least as member of a individual situation. Following this, the social loafing has been considered positive in some situations in a group such as basketball as stated in this book, when a basketball center rebounds and passes a ball out to the guard, but he/she does not follow the ball all the way through the basketball court, the athlete actually rests during the attack situation to make sure of being prepared in the defense situation and this might be appropriate while exhaustion, actually, Bill Russell, the most important center of Boston Celtics generalized this visual strategy to provide the anti-attack chance, and concentrating on his efforts in defending. This kind of social loafing may consider as a social engineering as it includes individual's motivation and action management in group to adapt the needs. On the other hand, Heuzé & Brunel, 2003, expressed

in a survey that social loafing phenomena depends on the motivational elements (for instance Geen, 1991, Hardy, 1990, Sheperd, 1993), the most studies focused on the individual or in group motivational elements which are potential involving social loafing (Lichach and Partington, 1996). As an example, in an individual level, it seems that the progress-oriented element is related to social loafing. Swain, (1996), indicated that people with high egotism (which means they are involved in comparing their social performance with others) and people who are less involved in the task-oriented environment (those who are progressing the self-citation ability), significantly reduced their performance while the individual consequences are not recognized in group. The second thing to consider is to when people are mostly task-oriented and less ego-oriented, their performance is higher among the group. Lichach and Partington, (1996), indicated that when there is high group efficacy derived from members' responsibilities, the social loafing will not appear among groups. In a way that when a participant did a specific action by his/her teammate, the social loafing did not appear. Moreover, Gurgulo, Gugchek and Ayler, 2022, by a research done on runners revealed that the participants' performance in an ego-oriented environment significantly decreased in an individual situation than the group one. Their results supported the hypothesis of when people have an opportunity to express themselves, they will perform better. In case of lack of such an opportunity, the social loafing will happen.

Høigaard and Ommundsen, 2007, pointed out the results of a meaningful relationship between the purpose of ego-oriented and task-oriented progress and the understood social loafing. Furthermore, the task-oriented atmosphere was in line with the social loafing and the team members less effort prediction, and the athletes understanding of the performance atmosphere is positively related with understood social loafing among teammates. These results are consistent with the previous research that was about the individuals' inconsistent motivational responses in a performing atmosphere that the focus of success was on inter personal differentiation and norms standard evaluation (Siferiz et al, 1992, Omonson and Bar-Eli, 1999). Moreover, Simms & Nichols, 2014, did the same research of the university students. The results of the mentioned study showed a correlation between the purpose progress orientation and social loafing. The university students with a specific goal can minimize the social loafing symptoms. Also, this research was investigated by Lidenz et al, 2004 and revealed that social loafing might reduce by effective relationship with the group members about the purpose of the

group. The study of Høigaard et al, 2006, indicated that the task-oriented environment had a significant relationship with individuals' social loafing among the group. It revealed that if this important point comprehended by the athletes and was in accordance with the athletes' perforations, it might lead into increasing internal motivation and decreasing social loafing. The productivity norms are consistent with the reliability motives to perform and high standards of effort. It is logical to assume that these motives and standards will arrange the group members' behaviors in the opposite way of social comparison and at the end, they decrease the social loafing assumption. Woodman, Robertz, and Hardy in 2011 investigated the ego-centered individuals' performance once while the recognition ability was low and once it was high. The results gave a foretaste of the incensement of performance with the higher recognition ability. They were aware of their performance identification. Also, the ego-centered individuals' effort decline was obvious while performing their duties in a way that there was no recognition abilities. The result of the present study suggests that by creating a task-oriented environment equipped by the individuals' performance recognition ability, the possibilities of social loafing would be decreased. Sheepers, 2011, stated that when people are in a task-oriented environment with low responsibility level, the social loafing positive tendencies will be related to the team performance. This means that in contrast with the ego-oriented environment, individuals attempt less. Actually, there is a trilateral correlation among the social loafing tendencies, conscientiousness and agreeableness in team performance prediction. If there is a high level of conscientiousness and satisfaction on the team, the team members will compensate the social loafing and the performance will remain high in the task-oriented environment. In the Høigaard et al research, 2010, it was stated that the members tended to do negligence more while they were in a group and have responsibilities toward the group rather than the times their performance evaluated individually. Moreover, this research presented that whenever the female handball players felt that their responsibility range was clearly identified, they were more satisfied of their role and had less desire to social loafing. The present research approved the Jackson & Schuler, (1985) suggestion which is an introduction of direct satisfaction commitment and predicts the group efforts desires (Ouwkerk, et al, 1999). These results also supports the previous findings of Beauchamp et al, (2005) indicated that the responsibility range was positively related the role satisfaction. Moreover, Beauchamp et al, (2002) reported that when the athletes were uncertain about their responsibility range, they were less able to act correctly as they role performance was interrupted.

No noticing to social loafing's negative impact among groups or even sometimes the positive impacts, according to the stated results, there is differentiation among social loafing in task-oriented environment rather than ego-oriented environment. In line with the harmful results of social loafing on group performance, the above mentioned research suggested points in order to prevent this phenomenon and individuals performance decline in group environment. This is clear that individuals' responsibility range that is eventually in consistent with their satisfaction of group roles, can help increasing efforts and decreasing social loafing. On the other hand, when there is observation on athletes' performance in practicing status, it results in individuals' efforts recognition and less desire to negligence. Moreover, according to the female runners' social loafing and basketball players in two environments of task-oriented and ego-oriented, there is no significant relationship between them. According to the previous literature review, the initial investigations about social loafing was specifically about sports such as relay race and relay swim (Anshel, 1995, Hardy & Crace, 1991, Hardy and latane, 1988, Høigaard and Ommundsen, 2005, Swain, 1996, Williams et al, 1989). Modern research leads into group sports such as soccer, basketball, handball, etc. (including Høigaard and Ommundsen, 2007, Høigaard et al, 2010, De Backer et al, 2014, Vartestra and Don, 2018, Brintsel, 2024). In line with the above mentioned studies, we can state that social loafing reveals in both team sports and individual ones but there is no research about the differentiation of social loafing direct differentiation among group fields. Moreover, considering the previous hypothesis, we state that social loafing of the environment is fundamental rather than the sport' field. The research of Høigaard and Ommundsen, 2007, Woodman, Roberts & Hardy, 2011, Jones et al, 2014, also revealed that the performance environment has significant impact on social loafing. Therefore, out of the sport field, there be considerations about creating a productive environment where team inspiration and association are prioritized to do the responsibilities and decreases egocentrism. Coaches' roles in order to lead and manage such environment is fundamental.

Research Suggestions

In accordance with the results, it is suggested that the coaches guide the individuals to concentrate on personal dominance and higher ability achievement to do their duties in the group by motivating them in the task-oriented environment. An environment that individuals not just compete each other but also to improve their performance rather than before to reduce social loafing in a more productive environment.

There should be some plans in order to creating teams and improving cooperation quality and coherence among athletes by the coaches. Considering a positive team culture that are more tented to play their role as a group member in a task-oriented environment.

While the surveys showed, as there is less investigation about social loafing among athletes in our country, it is suggested to investigate about the social loafing status among other sports fields why more national investigations will assist enhancing team performances.

More samples, will have the more generalization capability. Therefore, it is recommended to examine this field among more participants.

The limitations that international studies faced in this field are lack of instruments in order to examine the precise social loafing factor among groups. The questionnaire will not be an appropriate instrument to evaluate social loafing as individuals do not tend to express negative self-reporting. Consequently, it is recommended to use a more adequate instrument in order to estimate this variable.

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بررسی بی‌اعتنایی اجتماعی در بین ورزشکاران در محیط‌های وظیفه‌محور و خودمحور

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چکیده: هدف از پژوهش حاضر بررسی انزجار اجتماعی در بین بانوان ورزشکار دوومیدانی و بسکتبال در محیط‌های تکلیف‌مدار و خودمحور است.

پژوهش حاضر از نوع تحقیقات کاربردی و نیمه تجربی می‌باشد. شرکت‌کنندگان، ورزشکاران زن برتر داوطلب در رشته‌های دوومیدانی و بسکتبال هستند و با توجه به معیار ورود به پژوهش انتخاب شده‌اند. ۲۴ نفر از شرکت‌کنندگان (۱۲ بسکتبالیست و ۱۲ دوندۀ) ۱۸ تا ۲۵ سال داشتند.

نتایج حاکی از آن است که بین طفره رفتن اجتماعی در محیط‌های وظیفه‌محور و خودمحور رابطه معناداری وجود دارد. با توجه به تفاوت میانگین‌ها، ورزشکاران صرف‌نظر از رشته‌شان، در محیط‌های خودمحور به جای تکلیف‌محور عملکرد بهتری داشتند.

نتایج نشان داد که شرکت‌کنندگان در یک محیط وظیفه‌محور به جای خودمحوری عملکرد بیشتری داشتند. نوع محیط به جای نوع ورزش در لفافه اجتماعی اهمیت بیشتری داشت. بنابراین صرف نظر از رشته‌های ورزشی، برای ایجاد محیطی کاربردی‌تر که اخلاق تیمی و انجمن تیمی به نحوی برای انجام فعالیت‌ها، اولویت بالایی داشته باشد و در کاهش منیت‌گرایی نتیجه داشته باشد، باید توجه داشت.

واژه‌های کلیدی: لوف اجتماعی، ورزشکاران زن، دوومیدانی، بسکتبال، محیط وظیفه‌مدار، محیط منیت‌مدار.

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این نماد به معنای مجوز استفاده از اثر با دو شرط است یکی استناد به نویسنده و دیگری استفاده برای مقاصد غیرتجاری.