

Turkish People's Perception of the Relationship between Task Visibility, Leadership Style and Social Loafing

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to investigate Turkish people's perception of the relationship between perceived task visibility, leadership style and social loafing. Data was collected from 264 employees working in various companies in private sector in Turkey. The results of the study revealed that the employees' perception of task visibility and leadership style are effective on social loafing. If an employee believes that his/her task is visible or noticeable by others or leader he/she avoids social loafing behavior or exhibit less social loafing behavior. In the same way if an employee is in constant interaction with his/her manager, she/he does not show or show less social loafing behavior. Also employees who trust, admire and respect their manager does not exhibit social loafing behavior. In addition, employees who are encouraged and guided by their leader in accordance with the targets and who will be rewarded for his efforts do not show social loafing but make efforts to reach common goals.*

Keywords: Leadership Style, Social Loafing, Task Visibility, Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership

I. INTRODUCTION

Leaders and their leadership skills are of great importance in the working environment of companies, because they play a very important role in giving a future direction to the firm and guiding the employees. Although employees have responsibilities in terms of productivity and performance while doing their work, this situation is not sustainable. Leaders help to sustain the productivity and performance of their employees through control mechanisms and incentive methods. Task awareness and the concept of task visibility are also important issues. The companies face different problems in the processes in which task awareness is lacking. One of them is social loafing. Social loafing can be a serious problem in work settings where group work is sometimes unavoidable. In this respect, it is important to be aware of the factors that increase and decrease social loafing. Social loafing is seen in situations where an individual's effort within the group is unclear and difficult to identify. But in the cases that employees find their work interesting and important, believe that their personal effort is observed and his/her contributions will have a meaningful effect on the final performance of the work and when work is done in a small and interconnected group social loafing decreases.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Social Loafing

The term, social loafing, was first used in 1979 by Latane, Williams and Harkins. They considered this phenomenon as social illness. Social Loafing is the tendency of the individual to decrease his/her effort in a group work when compared to other colleagues who fulfill the same task (Williams and Karau, 1991, Latane et al., 1979). When individuals either consciously or subconsciously think that they are not noticeable in a group, they might show a tendency to hide out and thus make less effort (Liden et al., 2004). Sometimes the difficulty of evaluating individual performance in a group may lead people to show this behavior (Hogg and Vaughan, 2005). Group productivity

decreases when the size of a group increases (Forsyth, 2011). According to the studies of Harkins and Petty (1982) difficult and challenging tasks decrease social loafing behavior of individuals in a group. According to the studies of Zaccaro (1984) and Latane et al. (1979) group interaction, task involvement and task visibility have a positive impact on eliminating social loafing behavior. Motivational factors (Chang et al., 2020) task interdependency, task visibility, distributive justice, and procedural justice (Liden et al., 2004; Yildiz and Elibol, 2021) can be counted as individual-level antecedents of social loafing. For group-level antecedents of social loafing, group size, group cohesiveness, scope of the task and perceived coworking loafing are mentioned (Aggarwal and O'Brien, 2008; Liden et al., 2004). Difficulty of analyzing all individual-level and group-level antecedents of social loafing in a single study led us to examine the effect of perceived task visibility which is mostly mentioned antecedent of social loafing in the literature (George, 1992; Liden et al., 2004, Himmetoğlu et al., 2018).

2.2 Task Visibility

Task visibility is a belief that workers' efforts are noticed by supervisors (Kidwell and Bennett 1993). Kerr and Bruun (1983) claim that a worker may easily fall into a feeling that his/her efforts are worthless. George (1992) argues that low task visibility can cause a person to believe that he/she is invisible so his/her efforts will be not be identified by the supervisor and consequently, his/her social loafing behavior will also go unnoticed. Task visibility is high in individual and partial tasks since they are detected easily but in a group work, the task visibility tends to be low due to the difficulty of detecting an individual's effort and output (Jones, 1984; Karau and Williams 1991). If the task is not visible to the manager, the individual can show social loafing behavior. Therefore social loafing behavior in the groups can be eliminated if the individual considers his/her effort or contribution is measurable and assessable (Doğan, Bozkurt & Demir, 2012).

The level of visibility for any task depends on the extent to which the work conditions and environment allow the individual's performance to be observed and evaluated. Therefore; task visibility is high when individuals work alone and their output is easily monitored. In contrast, when individuals work as a group and tasks are not clear task visibility is low. (Simms & Nichols, 2014).

2.3 Leadership Style

Leadership is influencing people towards a decided common goal (Armandi et al., 2003). The leaders of the modern era are striving to create a vision and to convince those around them, they are also obliged to fulfill the requirements of the environment. (Yiğit, 2002). Transactional Leaders are work-oriented people they define rules, standards and their expectations clearly to their subordinates and explain the rewards they will receive if goals are met (Yavuz & Tokmak 2009). When goals are met, the leader supports their employees and ensures the success, but in cases expectations are not met, leader takes part to eliminate the factors that cause failure (Ersoydan & Karakelle, 2014). They also correct errors of the employees and monitor them for gaining success (Bass, 1985; Bass, 1990). Transformational leaders are the ones who share their vision with subordinates, encourage them intellectually and give high concern to their individual differences (Yammarino & Bass, 1990). They motivate their subordinates by higher ideals and moral values (Tracey & Hinkin, 1998). This type of leaders create confidence, harvest trust, loyalty, admiration, and respect among their followers and transform them into followers (employees) who concern the achievement and growth (Church & Waclawski, 1996; Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1994). It will not be wrong to say that most important function of the leader is to observe the job related attitudes and behavior of his followers in the workplace. Employees' concentration on work or their tendency to hide out should not be overlooked.

The conceptual model for this research is as follows.

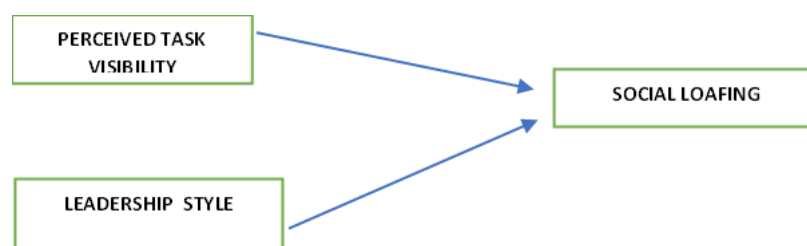


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1. Measures

For Socialloafing . 13 itemsocialloafingscaleofLiden et al. (2004)wasusedwhoadded 3moreitemstothe10-itemoriginalscaledevelopedby George (1992).

For PerceivedTaskVisibility 6 itemperceivedtaskvisibilityscaledevelopedby George (1992) wasusedwhichmeasuresemployees' perception of how muchtheirworkandeffortsarerealizedbytheirmanagers.

For leadershipStyle 20 item Transformational Leadership Scale and 16 item Transactional Leadership Scale was used. Transformational and Transactional Leadership Scale was developed by Bass (1985) as Multifactorial Leadership Scale (MLQ).In our study we used the scales that Yavuz (2008) used in his research where the validity and reliability of the scales in Turkish were tested

3.2. Sample

Participants are 264 employees working in various companies in privatesector in Turkey Demographic profile of the sample is: 52.9% of the participants are married and 47.1% are single. 54.8% of the participants have bachelor degree 26.4% have masters degree and 18.9% are high school graduates. 51.9% of the participants are working with their current manager between 1-5 years, 15.5% between 6-10 years and 8.6 % between 11-15 years and 3.1% are working with their current manager more than 15 years.

3.3. Findings

This study empirically tests the relationship between leadership style, perceived task visibility and social loafing behaviour. In order to see the factor structure beneath the data, exploratory factor analysis has been performed. Factor analysis results are presented in the tables below:

Table 1

Factor And Reliability Analysis For Social Loafing Scale				
Factor	Questions	Factor Loading	% Of Variance	Cronbach Alpha
SOCIAL LOAFING	S12- Some of my colleagues appear to be working if someone else is doing their work, but they don't do their share.	0,836	52,72%	0,924
	S06- My colleagues assign some responsibilities to other employees.	0,834		
	S07- My colleagues spend less effort to do the job when there are employees other than themselves.	0,83		
	S10-Some of my colleagues behave more loosely if there are other employees to do the job.	0,802		
	S09- Some of my colleagues show less effort than other employees in our team..	0,72		
	S11- Some of my colleagues spend less time helping others if they are able to help.	0,717		
	S04- My colleagues keep their individual goals ahead of group goals.	0,712		
	S08- My colleagues don't do their part.	0,709		
	S01- My colleagues avoid taking responsibility in the distribution of collective tasks.	0,69		
	S13- My colleagues do their best to do a job within a team or group.	0,671		
	S05- My colleagues consistently devote time to non-work related activities during working hours.	0,65		
	S3- If there are others to do the job, my colleagues do the job they want, not the task assigned to them, and concentrate on the part of the job they want.	0,65		
	S02- My colleagues, the task given to them without leaving someone else, the first goal is to do the desired quality and time.	0,56		
KMO and Bartlett's Test				
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.				0,924
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity				Approx. Chi-Square 1871,395
				df 78
				Sig. 0

Table 2

Factor And Reliability Analysis For Task Visibility Scale				
Factor	Questions	Factor Loading	% Of Variance	Cronbach Alpha
VISIBILITY OF EFFORT	T03- It is often difficult for my manager to realize how much I work.	0,754	36,854	0,81
	T05 - It's hard for our manager to realize how hard we work.	0,848		
	T06- It is difficult for my manager to determine how much effort I have made for my job.	0,883		
VISIBILITY OF WORK DONE	T01- My manager is aware of this when a group of staff strives below average.	0,876	34,255	0,752
	T04- My manager notices that one of my group members is loosening the job.	0,775		
	T02 - My manager is aware of the amount of work I do.	0,73		
Total			71,109	
KMO and Bartlett's Test				
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.				0,763
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity				Approx. Chi-Square 550,358
				df 15
				Sig. 0

Table 3

Factor and Reliability Analysis for Multifactorial Leadership Style Scale

Factor	% Of Variance	Cronbach Alpha
RELIABLE , SUPPORTIVE AND REWARDING	41,697	0,971
PASSIVE	13,12	0,877
REACTIVE	6,371	0,728
PROACTIVE	6,017	0,816
Total	67,205	
KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0,945
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	6469,727
	df	496
	Sig.	0

Our research model was revised as the result of the factor and reliability analysis and new dimensions are formed under Perceived Task Visibility and Leadership Style.

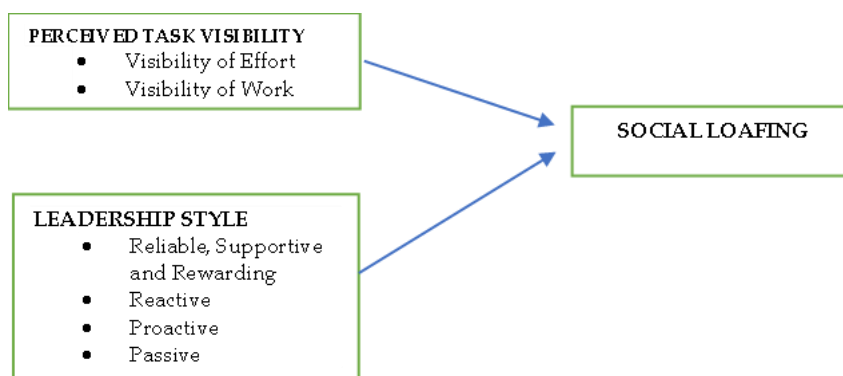


Figure 2. Revised Model of the Research

The hypotheses of the research investigating the effect of perceived task visibility and leadership style on social loafing are tested with regression analyses. Among 7 hypotheses 6 of them were accepted. Table 4 demonstrates the results of analyses.

Table 4

Hypothesis	Beta	R	t	R Square	f	p	Result
H1. There is a negative relationship between Task Visibility and Social Loafing Behavior	-0,285	0,285	4,781	0,081	22,256	0,000	Accepted
H2. There is a negative relationship between Visibility of Effort and Social Loafing Behaviour	-0,322	0,322	-5,393	0,104	29,087	0,000	Accepted
H3. There is a negative relationship between the Visibility of Work done and Social Loafing Behavior	-0,208	0,208	-3,375	0,043	11,394	0,001	Accepted
H4. There is a negative relationship between Reliable , Supportive and Rewarding Management Style and Social Loafing Behavior	-0,346	0,346	-5,696	0,120	32,441	0,000	Accepted
H5. There is a negative relationship between Proactive Management Style and Social Loafing Behavior	-0,268	0,268	-4,348	0,072	18,909	0,000	Accepted
H6. There is a positive relationship between Reactive Management Style and Social Loafing Behavior	0,126	0,126	1,983	0,016	3,934	0,048	Accepted
H7. There is a significant relationship between Passive Management Style and Social Loafing Behavior	0,118	0,118	1,849	0,014	3,419	0,066	Rejected

In terms of demographic characteristics marital status, age, educational level, income level, position in the company and working time of the respondents have no effect on their social loafing behaviour.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

According to the findings of our study Turkish employees think that if tasks that they do are visible in terms of the effort they show and in terms of the output of their work(work done) social loafing behaviors decrease .In the relevant literature many researchers have also mentioned that when employees' perceive that their tasks are visible their social loafing behaviours decrease (Kerr and Bruun, 1983; George, 1992; Jones, 1984;Karau and Williams, 1993,Himmetoğlu et.al, 2022). George's (1992) also asserted that job performance and motivation of employees would be less in cases of low task visibility.

In terms of the relationship between leadership style and social loafing behavior, Turkish employees think that when their managers are reliable and supportive and behave in a rewarding manner, employees' social loafing behavior decrease. In accordance with this, proactive or reactive management style also leads employees to show less social loafing behavior. But passive-avoiding style of management has no impact on the social loafing behaviour of Turkish employees. Leader- Member Exchange Theory which implies the importance of the dual relationship the leader has with each member (Danserau et.al,1975) is effective to explain this situation. In cases where manager sets rules for the subordinates to make them avoid making mistakes and follow their business performance, employees believe that their tasks and outputs are visible and identifiable by their managers, this motivate them and they consistently show high performance (Harkins and Jackson, 1985).

Expectancy Theory of Vroom (1964) also mentions the linear relationship between reward and performance of an individual and concludes that that individuals who are rewarded for a certain target will tend to increase their performance and therefore they will not show disrespect. Likewise if the employee knows that his / her task and effort on work is visible and will be rewarded he/ she doesn't t show social loafing behavior but concentrates on work (Latham and Pinder, 2005)

Our research findings can also be explained by cultural characteristics of Turkish people. Turkish culture is collectivist and has high power distance (Hofstede et al., 2005). Employees see their managers as ultimate authority who support, reward, guide and encourage them and due to this they may show less social loafing. Also when their task is visible, collectivist nature of Turkish of people may lead them to be more active in teamwork and feel more responsible towards their coworkers.

The data for our research was collected from employees working in different companies in private sector. Further study can be done in a specific sector to make sectoral interpretations. Also in a further study quantitative research can be supported by qualitative research in order to make more interpretations about the findings of the relation between task visibility and social loafing and the relation between leadership style and social loafing.

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