

A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL LOAFING AMONG POST-GRADUATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

By

Miss CF Smith	26246262	0824596159 cammy.smith87@gmail.com
Home department:	Human Resources Management	
Supervisor:	Prof. H. Brand	
Supervisor's e-mail address:	Hein.brand@up.ac.za	
Telephone Supervisor:	Number	0124203433

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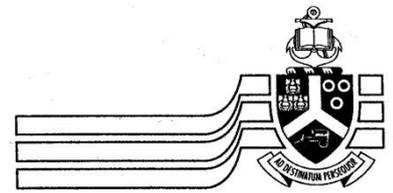
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Study Leader:

Prof. H. Brand

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to explore the perceptions of social loafing held by post-graduate university students within a group work context. The study aimed to advance understanding of how such perceptions can impact group work endeavours. Specifically, the key tenets that guided the study were whether or not the participants had experienced the phenomenon of social loafing through the duration of their university careers; how prevalent it was; how the encounter had shaped their views on group work; how it impacted their motivational levels; whether they had personally engaged in social loafing or not; as well as how they dealt with social loafers within their groups.

This purely qualitative study employed a phenomenological lens in deriving exploratory information from a purposive sample (eight post-graduate students enrolled in the University of Pretoria's Human Resource Management Department).

The findings from the research illustrate that the whole sample had experienced social loafing within a group work context. What differed, were the subjective interpretations of the phenomenon held by the students. Students were readily able to provide specific examples and instances where they had been exposed to loafing by a peer or where they, themselves, had loafed. Students' applied various mechanisms to deal with loafers within their work groups, namely, direct confrontation; eliminating perceived loafers from in-group selection from the onset; peer review or evaluations/appraisals; as well complete conflict avoidance through no action at all.

The presence of a loafer created feelings of frustration amongst most of the students. The phenomenon itself was more likely to occur when there was a lack of incentive or evaluation, disinterest in the topic or limited knowledge of the work content. Further, the larger the group size, the greater the likelihood of a loafer being present. From these findings it is evident that social loafing is common and leaves a lasting impression on those that have been exposed or engaged in the phenomenon.

Recommendations include: the optimal size for a group work task be ideally set at 4 to 5 people; group work activities should have clearly defined goals and objectives; clear means of evaluation must exist to ensure that each group member's contribution can be appraised;

prior exposure to the content of the task is important and group work should not take place before modular assessment; lecturers need to take on an active role in mitigating against loafing; realistic time frames for group task completion must be present; and increased focus on educating students on how to be constructive group members should be considered as part of a best practice group work approach.

Key Words: Social Loafing; Group Work; Group Dynamics; Free rider effect; Qualitative study; Phenomenology; Post-graduate students; Perception; Peer evaluation; Motivation; Learning.

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1	12
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	12
1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM	13
1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY	14
1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	15
1.4 ACADEMIC VALUE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY	16
1.5 DELIMITATIONS	17
1.6 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS	18
CHAPTER 2	19
LITERATURE REVIEW	19
2.1 DEFINING A WORK GROUP	20
2.2 FORMATION OF GROUPS	20
2.2.1. Model of Group Development.....	21
2.2.2. Punctuated Equilibrium Model.....	23
2.3 RATIONALE FOR UTILISING GROUP WORK IN EDUCATION	24
2.4 THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL LOAFING	25
2.4.1. Factors relating to the incidence of Social Loafing	27
2.5 COOPERATIVE LEARNING	40
2.6. MOTIVATION AS A CONSIDERATION FOR SOCIAL LOAFING	43
2.6.1 Self Determination Theory.....	44
2.6.2. Cognitive Evaluation Theory.....	44
2.6.3. Expectancy-Value Theory	45
2.6.4. Need Theory.....	46
2.6.5. Equity-Value Theory.....	47
2.6.6. Conclusion to motivational theories and social loafing	48
2.7 CONCLUSION	49
CHAPTER 3	50
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	50
3.1. A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH	50
3.1.1. Characteristics of the broad research design: Qualitative Research	51
3.1.2. Phenomenology as a Paradigm for Qualitative Research	51



3.1.3. Classification of the proposed study’s overall research design52

3.2 SAMPLING53

3.2.1. Unit of Analysis.....53

3.2.2. Sample Method54

3.2.3. Sample Size54

3.3 DATA COLLECTION55

3.3.1. Data Collection Technique and Process55

3.3.2. Data Management.....61

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS62

3.5. THE QUALITY AND RIGOUR OF THE RESEARCH.....65

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....68

3.6.1. Autonomy and Respect for the Dignity of Persons:68

3.6.2. Nonmaleficence:.....68

3.6.3. Informed Consent:.....68

3.6.4. Institutional Permission69

3.6.5. Participants' involvement in research:69

3.6.6. Duties of the Researcher in terms of the interview:69

3.7. Conclusion.....69

CHAPTER470

DATA ANALYSIS70

4.1. Introduction.....70

4.2. The Sample.....70

4.3. Data Analysis71

4.3.1. Summary of Each Participant's Interview75

Participant A:.....75

Participant B.....76

Participant C:.....77

Participant D:78

Participant E:.....79

Participant F:.....80

Participant G:.....81

Participant H:82

4.3.2. Themes from the Interviews	83
4.3. Conclusion.....	105
CHAPTER 5	106
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	106
5.1. Findings:.....	106
5.2. Conclusions and Recommendations	115
LIST OF REFERENCES.....	121

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Draft of data collection instruments

APPENDIX B: Informed consent form

List of Tables

Table 1. Descriptor's of the Broad Research Design

Table 2. Questions used as a guideline during data collection

Table 3. Overview of the demographics of the Research Participants

Table 4. Overview of Findings relating to the Objectives of the study

Table 5. Recommendation 1 to minimise or prevent social loafing

Table 6. Recommendation 2 to minimise or prevent social loafing

Table 7. Recommendation 3 to minimise or prevent social loafing

Table 8. Recommendation 4 to minimise or prevent social loafing

Table 9. Recommendation 5 to minimise or prevent social loafing

Table 10. Recommendation 6 to minimise or prevent social loafing

Table 11. Recommendation 7 to minimise or prevent social loafing

Table 12. Recommendation 8 to minimise or prevent social loafing

List of Figures

Figure 1: Group Development Model by Tuckman

Figure 2: Punctuated Equilibrium Model

Figure 3: Individualism vs. Collectivism Cultures

Figure 4: Belbin's Classification of Group Roles

Figure 5: The Factors Influencing Perception

Figure 6: McClelland's Need Theory

Figure 7: The Data Analysis Process

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

“The benefits of group projects cannot be realised if the group is dysfunctional”.

(Aggarwal & O’Brien, 2008, p 256)

Individuals differ in the ways in which they approach tasks in a group work context which may result in multiple and diverse problems while pursuing desired, pre-determined end goals. Individuals, within a group, who contribute less than their potential capability or less than that of their peers is the leading objection given by students as to why they dislike being given group based assessments (Aggarwal & O’Brien, 2008). These individuals, who appear to contribute less to the overall workload of the group, tend to ride on the efforts of their peers or colleagues.

Max Ringelman (in the 19th Century) investigated how many workers (people, oxen and horses) were necessary to execute a task efficiently. He found that despite the fact that two or more workers will always outperform that of an individual, the group may not be performing at their ultimate capacity (Forsyth, 2010; Johnson & Johnson, 2009). He found that the more people added to a task the total expected output of the combined number of individuals was not achieved (Forsyth, 2010; Baumeister & Bushmen, 2008). Multiple research studies into the phenomena of group work and social loafing have been conducted since and such a topic is as relevant today as it was then. What have not been explored extensively through research is how the individuals comprising these groups perceive their own levels of performance as well as those of their peers and whether such perceptions have an impact on group performance.

According to Ilgen, Mayor and Tower (1994) (cited in Mulvey and Klein, 1998) research has shown that both an individual’s behaviour and attitude are based, in large part, on perceptions of reality that vary as to their congruence with reality itself. It is thus beneficial to investigate and describe the perceptions (regardless of their accuracy) held by individuals within a group work context as these will drive their behaviours and attitudes towards task completion and towards their interactions with their colleagues

(Mulvey & Klein, 1998). This is particularly relevant in both academic and corporate spheres of life. On the academic front Outcomes Based Education dominates and group work forms a fundamental part of such a framework; the ideals of group learning may differ significantly from the reality of group learning and this reality needs to be brought to the attention of our educators so that the obstacles of such learning may be avoided or limited as far as possible.

The primary focus of this study is thus to explore the perceptions, feelings and experiences of students regarding social loafing in a work group context in tertiary level education.

The phenomenon of social loafing refers to when individuals who are working in a group contribute less in terms of effort than they would if they were performing the same task alone (Mulvey & Klein, 1998).

1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Research has shown that social loafing in a work group context is a factor that is seriously hampering the potentially successful outcomes associated with group work (Chidambaram & Tung, 2005). This is a concern as throughout each individual's academic career (from primary school level right through to tertiary level) exposure to work in a group context is the norm. Clearly there are theoretical benefits associated with group work in an academic context which is why it is commonly practiced by the teachers, facilitators, lecturers (educators) who are prescribing it. The challenge lies in how such a style of task completion is viewed by the students completing the tasks and whether the anticipated value of group work is achieved. Social loafing is a phenomenon which can hinder and obstruct the effectiveness of any group working towards a desired end goal.

Factors providing impetus for this study:

The reasons for such a study stem from personal and peer observations and feedback over the duration of tertiary level education, such as:

- The extent to which individuals throughout undergraduate studies passed assignments with good results (which were conducted within groups), they would then perform poorly in examinations, but due to high marks achieved on group work assignments these individuals passed the specific module in question.
- The concern that the theory associated with the assignment topic is not learnt or internalised by all members of a group due to a select few members completing the assignment.
- The inclusion of group presentations, at tertiary level, as a means of evaluating a group's overall assignment. Group presentations are divided into sections, by the group, so that each member of the group may have a chance to present a portion of the content of the assignment (as per the module requirements). These presentations are usually prepared by select members of the group and are then delegated to all members, including those who do not participate in the assignment, due to the fact that as part of the course requirements all group members have to present a portion of the work. The working members learn their sections by heart and merely make use of a few key cards during the presentation itself in order to make the presentation meaningful and an accurate reflection of what has been learnt through the completion of the assignment. The non-participating members read word-for-word from a sheet of paper in front of them, with little attempt at learning the work. This may have a negative impact on the overall group and potential results achieved for all.
- The prevalence of social loafing experienced at a postgraduate level.
- Informal interactions with peers that revealed a general disregard for the credibility of group work due to the perception that certain members' contributions were below standard or non-existent.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate various dynamics within the realm of social loafing and in relation to perceptual matters thereof. Achieving this purpose came about through collecting and analysing information, qualitatively, so as to

discover the extent to which particular individuals functioning within a group setting perceived the levels of social loafing exhibited by others and themselves. The ultimate aim was to assess to what level the impact of such perceptions alter the overall functioning of the group.

In order to elicit a more depth insight into the potential latent purposes and inter- (as well as intra-) connected phenomena at play, a detailed breakdown of research objectives is provided below.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study was guided by the following research objectives:

- To understand the definition of social loafing from a student's perspective.
- To describe how students perceive social loafing within a group work context.
- To describe the perceived prevalence of social loafing from a student's perspective (regularity with which they have encountered social loafing).
- To determine how social loafing has affected group performance based on group work experiences.
- To describe how students dealt with social loafers within their specific groups. In particular, to understand whether they took action in the form of intervention or not.
- To understand the role that students feel lecturers should play in reducing the phenomenon of social loafing.
- To explore whether the intended benefits of group work is filtering through to all the individuals within a group work setting.
- To explore whether social loafing by certain group members impacts on motivational levels of other group members;
- To describe the perception held by students' regarding their own participation in social loafing (if at all).

1.4 ACADEMIC VALUE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

From a theoretical perspective, the potential outcomes of the proposed study would make several noteworthy contributions:

Firstly, other studies regarding the perception of social loafing have been conducted but the research has been pursued from either a quantitative or mixed methods approach (Aggarwal, P & O'Brien, 2008; Chidambaram & Tung, 2005; Tata, 2002; North, Linley & Hargreaves, 2000; Mulvey & Klein, 1998). Few studies involving social loafing have taken on a solely qualitative approach. I believe that this mode of inquiry will prove to be beneficial as it will provide an understanding into how individual's perceive and experience the world from a personal perspective and will thus allow us to explore the phenomena of the perception of social loafing and its impact on motivation from an individual's point of view (Creswell, 2009; Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter 2006). This approach will also grant the researcher the opportunity to gain profound understanding of the categories of information that emerge from the data acquired through the research (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

Secondly, there are not many research studies that explore the perceptions held by students in terms of social loafing in a South African context rather than merely evaluating the existence of social loafing in a work group. This perspective is worthy of research as the South African context is one rich with cultural and language intricacies that will elucidate interesting data.

Thirdly, this study will produce data that is meaningful, specifically in an academic setting, as the individuals who are setting syllabi and coordinating modules at a tertiary level will be able to determine if the students who are meant to be benefiting from such group work are in actual fact doing so.

Fourth, such a study will highlight to educators as to whether the course outcomes of the module are being internalised and achieved by all students registered for that specific module and not just by the select few who are participating and completing group work assignments.

The fifth point of proposed contribution is that this study may serve as a catalyst for academics to possibly change the structure of modules and assignments in order to

better serve their students, as well as to ensure that only those who have mastered the course work outcomes are the individuals who pass.

Lastly, restructuring and changes in organisational design are making work teams a popular means of project completion in the corporate environment. This links with group work which is completed at a tertiary level as individuals learn their work ethic through such task completion which may be carried forward into their respective work environments and it is thus pivotal to understand how the individuals at this level experience group work and how they view the effort of their peers.

In sum this study proposed the following contributions:

- (1) A qualitative investigation of a topic that has been scantily approached;
- (2) Phenomenological examination of social loafing instead of mere acknowledgement of the phenomenon itself;
- (3) Assistance with the setting and coordination of modules and syllabi in the tertiary education context;
- (4) Assisting educators to ascertain the levels to which students internalise learning material through group work;
- (5) This study may illuminate the extent to which persons who have not fully understood their project/course material go on to pass modules. Further it may assist in addressing this issue.

1.5 DELIMITATIONS

This study has a number of delimitations related to the context, constructs and theoretical perspectives of the study.

Firstly, the study only focused on the perceptions held by students of the phenomenon of social loafing in a work group context.

Secondly, the sample population are from the University of Pretoria's Human Resource Management academic department and no other population groups were sampled.

Thirdly, the theoretical perspectives found in the literature review centred upon how groups function within a group work context; social loafing; how group work is likely to

foster group members' engagement in social loafing; and how tertiary institutions use groups in order to prepare students for the world of work within which these phenomena are rife.

Several basic assumptions underlie the research study. As such, it was assumed that:

- The sample interviewed answered candidly (they were not coerced or manipulated and were offered full confidentiality);
- The sample provided rich and descriptive data on the topic;
- The right questions were posed to the sample in terms of achieving the afore-mentioned objectives of this study;
- The right type of data was collected in order to meet with the research objectives;
- The research method utilised was appropriate for the study.

1.6 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Key concepts to be used in this study are social loafing, group and perception. For the purposes of this study these key terms are defined as follows:

Group: a group refers to "two or more individuals in face-to-face interaction, each aware of his or her membership in the group, each aware of others in the group, and each aware of their positive interdependence as they strive to achieve mutual goals" (Johnson & Johnson, 2009, p. 577).

Perception: perception refers to "a selective process which shapes one's awareness of one's reality" (Ungerer & Ngokha, 2006, p. 116).

Social loafing: social loafing refers to a reduction of effort when individuals work within a group context compared with when they work independently (Murphy, Wayne, Liden & Berrin, 2011; Liden, Wayne, Jaworski & Bennett, 2004; Swartz, de la Rey & Duncan, 2004; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Bordens & Horowitz, 2002; Comer, 1995; Karau & Williams, 1993). (Also See section 2.4)

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

"Although the scientific investigations of group work are but a few years old, I don't hesitate to predict that group work - that is, the handling of human beings not as isolated individuals, but in the social settings of groups - will soon be one of the most important theoretical and practical fields... There is no hope for creating a better world without a deeper scientific insight into the... essentials of group life"

(Kurt Lewin, 1943)

This statement made by Lewin is as true today as it was in 1943 and groups are an important function of our existence as we encounter them in multiple aspects of our daily lives. Some of these groups include our family, social networks, sports teams, task forces, educational groups as well as those in business and industry (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Sheppard & Taylor, 1999; Karau & Williams, 1993).

Living in the 21st century requires organisations to compete on a global platform and geographical boundaries are no longer the determinants of where organisations may operate. The world of work is thus changing continuously and at a rapid rate. For any business or organisation (especially in a developing nation like South Africa) to be successful they need to align their systems, structures, processes, practices and people with this change. This is confirmed by Grobler, Warnich, Carrell, Elbert and Hatfield (2006) who state that globalisation puts heightened pressure on both South African employees as well as management in meeting the challenges presented by foreign competition.

Such a paradigm shift in the way organisations and their stakeholders (internal and external) think and operate is thus necessary and inevitable if they are to compete on a global scale. In conjunction with this, organisations have put greater emphasis on teamwork and on instituting flatter organisational structures.

Of particular relevance for this literature study is the educational focus on group work. The above global changes in business and organisational structures is intricately

linked with the role played by tertiary institutions in preparing, particularly business students, for working in these organisations with flatter hierarchies and thus a greater dependence on group work. Tertiary institutions provide students with the skills, competencies and knowledge necessary to enter the working world. This world is increasingly placing emphasis on team work in order to function more efficiently and effectively in the emerging global marketplace as well as to create a sustainable competitive advantage. Group work is thus an important inclusion in the modules completed by students while completing their tertiary studies.

A challenge that exists within these groups, at both tertiary and organisational levels, is that of members not contributing to their full potential and rather relying on others to execute the majority of the group allocated tasks. One such phenomenon is known as social loafing.

The focus of this literature review will be on work groups in tertiary institutions and in organisational settings as well as how the phenomenon of social loafing occurs within these contexts.

2.1 DEFINING A WORK GROUP

A work group may be defined as a small or large number of individuals who work or contribute towards a (usually) pre-defined outcome (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Baron et. al., 2003; Robbins & Judge, 2007). In particular, group members usually assume certain roles and take on unique responsibilities such that the patchwork of collective efforts may come about to present outcomes greater than the sum of their members' respective abilities or efforts. The period of time that the group spends together and the leadership structure are factors that differ between groups.

2.2 FORMATION OF GROUPS

Individuals who make up the members of a work group need to have specific knowledge and skill to work through the stages of group formation in order to complete

specific projects or tasks. This is not a linear process and the group may be working through multiple stages simultaneously, they may skip certain stages or may even regress to previous stages of the model when challenges arise (Bergh & Theron, 2006; Burdett, 2003).

Various theories on group formation are investigated below.

2.2.1. Model of Group Development

The group development model by Bruce Tuckman, illustrated in Figure 1, is made up of the following five stages of group development:

Stage 1: Forming

This stage deals with the formation of the group. The members come together and find out about one another. This stage is characterised by apprehension and anxiety as one's roles and responsibilities within the group are unclear and there is uncertainty surrounding what behaviours are considered acceptable by the rest of the group (Miller, 2003; Bergh & Theron, 2006). In addition to these feelings, group members are also excited by the prospect of being part of the group and this stage is complete when members internalise that they are part of this group. It should also be mentioned that during this formation stage very little is achieved in terms of content as the members are preoccupied with one another.

Stage 2: Storming

This stage deals with intra-group conflict particularly surrounding the question of who will lead the group (Miller, 2003; Bergh & Theron, 2006). Competition and defensiveness rule during this stage of the model as members respond emotionally to task demands. Members expend much energy on arguing and questioning opinions of other members, power struggles and resisting the activities at hand (Miller, 2003; Bergh & Theron, 2006). At the conclusion of this stage a hierarchy will be developed (Bergh & Theron, 2006) and members are beginning to understand one another better.

Stage 3: Norming

This stage deals with the group developing a sense of cohesiveness, commitment and in exhibiting behaviour that is participative in nature (Miller, 2003; Bergh & Theron, 2006). The roles, duties and responsibilities of members are clearly identifiable and defined (Miller, 2003). This stage is complete when group norms and values are apparent and solidified (Bergh & Theron, 2006).

Stage 4: Performing

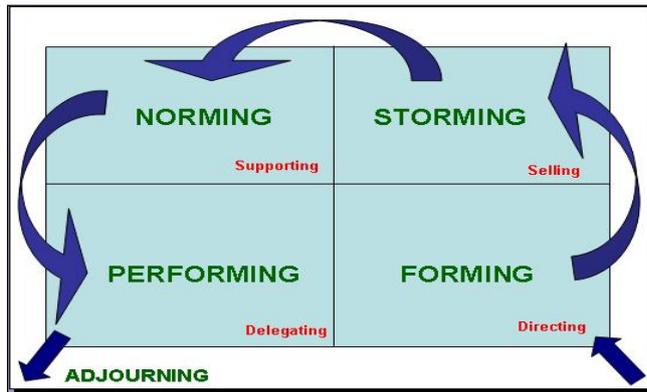
Task completion and problem solving is key at this stage of the process and group members are fully aware of task expectations, how these tasks should be completed as well as by whom they will be completed (Miller, 2003; Bergh & Theron, 2006). Much work is accomplished during this stage and the group functions as a cohesive unit. Delegation forms a critical part of this stage of the model.

Stage 5: Adjourning

This stage occurs in a group that is temporary rather than permanent. Such a group comes together to accomplish specific goals of a specific project and then disband upon completion of that project (Bergh & Theron, 2006). The group focuses on wrapping up their activities and feel bitter-sweet emotions. Excitement at successfully completing the task coupled with the sadness of having to leave other members with whom they have developed tight bonds (Miller, 2003; Bergh & Theron, 2006).

The ultimate goal is the creation of a unified group who are well prepared to work together in order to achieve a shared goal or vision. In relation to the model this would equate to them functioning at the "Performing Stage". Figure 1 illustrates the five stages of group development as well as the styles the leaders within the group should adopt to match the status of each stage.

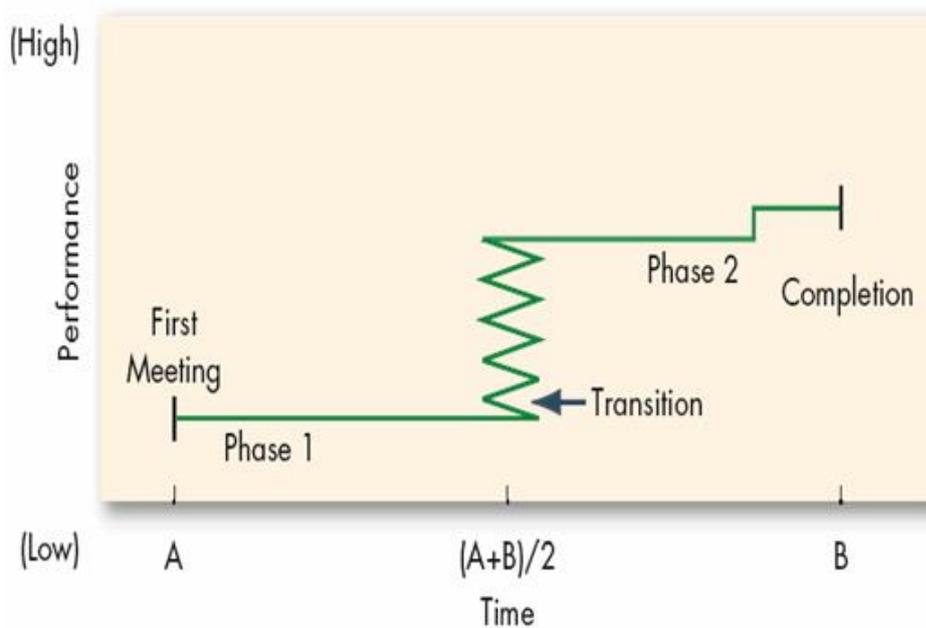
Figure 1: The Group Development Model by Tuckman



2.2.2. Punctuated Equilibrium Model

A temporary group, typically the case in a tertiary education environment, may go through different phases in the execution of their duties as a group. These phases combine to form the Punctuated-Equilibrium Model (Robbins & Judge, 2007).

Figure 2: The Punctuated Equilibrium Model



In Figure 2 the phases of the Punctuated-Equilibrium Model are demonstrated and can be explained as follows (Robbins & Judge, 2007; Chang, Bordia & Duck, 2003):

- The group's direction is detailed and laid out at the first meeting held by members. Very little occurs (inertia) from here until the group has reached half its allocated task completion time frame;
- At this time, the group transit from inactivity towards major action and change;
- This period of activity is followed by another stage on inertia;
- The final stages of group existence are marked with accelerated performance in order to achieve specific task outcomes and objectives.

Students are often assigned to groups with people they are unfamiliar with. Such circumstances will require these members to establish themselves as a constructive group and may mean that they need to progress through these stages of group formation. This is also the case when group members are friends as they need to determine the new roles and functions they each play within a new context, a work group. It becomes noteworthy then that students should be prepared and taught about group dynamics and how to create a healthy, functioning work group so that they may achieve the group objective in the most successful, efficient and effective manner. Should this not occur some members may not understand the group, its interactions, and ultimate goals which will leave them to become social loafers due to ignorance around the process. If students perceive that they add no real value to the group they may be more inclined to engage in social loafing.

2.3 RATIONALE FOR UTILISING GROUP WORK IN EDUCATION

"Strong teamwork ability is a competence in itself"

(Mirjam Godskesen, 2009)

Working in groups and teams has formed part of teaching philosophies for the longest time. Educators and facilitators make use of group learning activities across educational levels as it is viewed as an opportunity for students to formally come together to complete course work; it provides them with the chance to learn, discuss and formulate new concepts and ideas; to condense a great volume of work into fewer

critical hours as well as in giving them the time to build networks and relationships with other group members (Burdett, 2003; Brooks & Ammons, 2003; Mannix & Neale, 2005). Living within a multicultural country like South Africa as well as competing and functioning within a global marketplace means that group work allows its members to generate multiple perspectives and solutions when faced with complex tasks (Comer, 1995).

Group work allows students the opportunity to develop life skills that will be valuable after the completion of their tertiary qualification. Such skills include: social skills; negotiation skills; conflict management; time management; cooperation and collaboration; as well as decision making skills (Sellitto, 2009). These skills can be grouped into four categories (Sellitto, 2009). The first is a "holistic" category which refers to skills which complement the student as a whole i.e. personality changes and maturation. The second category is "individual" whereby an individual gains improved negotiation skills and learns how to take criticism in a constructive way so that they may develop and learn through the learning process. The third category referred to by Sellitto is "Vocational" in nature and refers to skills that will enhance the student's ability to perform their jobs well. The fourth category is "Collaborative" and provides the student with the ability to work well with others even when they are grouped with people with different backgrounds, languages, races and religions (to name but a few).

The benefits to such a method of learning and problem solving are numerous but there are often challenges that go hand-in-hand with it. Some such challenges include conflict between group members, poor communication as well as poor decision making. An additional challenge is the possible occurrence of social loafing.

2.4 THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL LOAFING

Social loafing refers to a reduction of effort when individuals work within a group context compared with when they work independently (Murphy, Wayne, Liden & Berrin, 2011; Robbins & Judge, 2007; Liden, Wayne, Jaworski & Bennett, 2004; Swartz, de la Rey & Duncan, 2004; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Bordens & Horowitz, 2002; Comer, 1995; Karau & Williams, 1993; George, 1992; Brickner, Ostrom & Harkins, 1986). This means that some group members gain from the effort of others

and do not contribute to their full potential. Thus, regardless of their input these group members reap the same extrinsic rewards as other fully contributing group members (Comer, 1995).

The phenomenon of social loafing has been explored over numerous years and some researchers have conducted experiments to prove their hypotheses on the subject. Some of the experiments have elicited interesting results and include the studies by Max Ringelmann which served to highlight how as group size increased group performance was lower than it would be if one was to add the individuals' performances (Karau & Williams, 1993). Ingham, Levinger, Graves and Peckham (1974) (cited in Karau and Williams;1993) conducted an experiment involving blind-folded males pulling a rope which also served to indicate that as group size increased so did performance. Latane's study involved a group, of a constant size, where members had to shout and clap; this study elicited results demonstrating that decreased performance of groups is attributable to reduced individual effort (Karau & Williams, 1993; Baron, Byrne & Branscombe, 2006; Brickne et. al., 1986).

Fascinatingly, Sorbral (1997) cited in Gatfield (1999) conducted a study which elicited results indicating that students working in groups achieved a higher grade than those working in a control situation involving individual students. One might assume then that all the members of these work groups contributed to their full potential but higher average scores on group work projects do not indicate the efforts of each group member, nor can such group work activities be accurately standardised and compared to individual activities. One may thus query whether it was a few hard working members of the group who collaborated in achieving this higher result and whether there were other group members who merely rode on the efforts of these other hard working members. This is one challenge of group work - some group members do learn and grow through this process of collaboration, others merely exist during the process and all seem to benefit from the mark awarded.

2.4.1. Factors relating to the incidence of Social Loafing

The following are factors that appear to promote the phenomenon of social loafing in a work group context:

2.4.1.1 The type of project or task

Research has indicated that the amount of task interdependence can have an impact on the incidence of social loafing (Liden et al, 2004). Task interdependence refers to the extent to which a member has to interact with other members in order to complete the task or project at hand (Campion, Medsker & Higgs, 1993). The more interdependent the task the less members feel a personal sense of accomplishment and achievement and the more likely they are to engage in social loafing (Liden et al, 2004). Members may view their performance as indistinguishable from others and dispensable in terms of the groups objectives (Comer, 1995), this idea combined with the feeling of low personal accomplishment may likely result in a reduction of effort (social loafing).

2.4.1.2 Task visibility and evaluation

Task visibility refers to how aware other group members or evaluators (for the purposes of the dissertation the evaluator would constitute a lecturer of the specific module) are of the specific input of each member of the work group. If each member's input is easily identifiable, social loafing tends to be minimal (Liden et al, 2004; Comer, 1995; Brickner et. al., 1986). The problem exists in the fact that group work involves the combined inputs of members into a final group product and it is often challenging to clearly, accurately and fairly determine which member did what. When unequal effort is not reflected in the overall result some members observe that their lack of contribution cannot be identified but that their final result is secured through the efforts of other group members (Burdett, 2003; King & Behnke, 2005; Pfaff & Huddleston, 2003).

It can thus be concluded that social loafing surfaces when group members' motivation to perform to their full potential decreases as they realise that there is no means to evaluate their individual effort compared with that of their peers (Comer, 1995).

Hence, ensuring that group members know they will be evaluated on their personal contribution as well as on the group's is an essential tool to eradicating social loafing (Harkins, 1987). This is confirmed by Comer (1995) who states that "...the potential for evaluation of individual performance by the individual himself or herself or by an outsider can eliminate social loafing [sic]".

Self-evaluations and personal reflections during and after the group work process may also allow the individual members to internalise the importance of the role that they play within the group as well as to reflect on how well the process worked and what was gained from it. These reflections may even be handed in to the evaluator as an additional means of evaluation (King & Behnke, 2005; McLoughlin & Luca, 2004).

Group evaluations have been identified as a means of assessment and making group members accountable to one another (King & Behnke, 2005; McLoughlin & Luca, 2004). The problem with this form of evaluation is that group members may have established relationships within the group and not be willing to truthfully evaluate friends' performances. In addition, some members of the group may have been friends before the commencement of the work group and thus show bias in their evaluations. Also, members may fear retaliation from their peers if members are given feedback on the other members' evaluations of themselves. In addition, the evaluations made by students on their peers may be influenced by various subconscious prejudice held by the evaluator (King & Behnke, 2005). In such a situation, a student's results from the peer evaluation could be based on factors other than their actual performance.

Performance goals are essential in preventing the incidence of social loafing. By having clearly defined, realistic goals and objectives for each project or task it ensures that individual members work with specific outcomes in mind and they have clear benchmarks from which to evaluate themselves and their peers (Clark, 2005; Locke & Latham, 2002). A vision of what the proverbial finish line looks like will help to determine when the group has arrived.

2.4.1.3 Group member selection

Members of a group who have high-quality relationships may be less inclined to engage in social loafing as they have a vested interest in the other members of the group. When there is a strong relationship between group members they are inclined to exert additional effort for the betterment of the group as a whole regardless of whether there are personal rewards involved or not (Murphy et al., 2011).

In contrast, Oakley et. al, (2004) deem it necessary for the educator to select the individuals who will comprise the work group. They noticed that when students can select their own group composition the stronger students are quick to align with one another which may mean that the remainder of groups comprised of weaker students. The problem with this scenario is in the fact that the weaker groups may work tirelessly and aimlessly towards an end goal and the stronger groups will divide the combined group work into individual sections to be completed. They also assert that having people who are familiar to one another in a work group may allow for a greater incidence of social loafing as the members will cover for those who are not contributing (Oakley, et. al., 2004). In addition, having groups made up of diverse capabilities allows for the opportunity for all to learn. The stronger members can teach and facilitate the thinking process of the weaker members which allows the weaker members to grow and realise greater learning potential but teaching allows the stronger members growth and development also (Oakley, et. al., 2004).

What is of most valuable importance in relation to the relationships between group members is highlighted in the research that tertiary institutions are the building blocks for later functioning within an organisational setting (Oakley, et. al., 2004; Pfaff & Huddleston, 2003; De Vita, 2001) . We do not get to pick our colleagues at this level and we need to learn how to function and operate with people who are unfamiliar to us, different from us and of differing skills levels.

2.4.1.4 Personal Involvement and attitude towards group work

The greater the intrinsic benefits and meaning for the individual group members, the greater their contribution to the group's efforts will be (Brickner et. al., 1986).

Specific members of the group may prefer to achieve work outcomes independently of other group members, thereby limiting the participation of others' (Pfaff & Huddleston, 2003).

2.4.1.5 Individualism versus Collectivism and its link to Social Loafing

Societies promote values that place people along different points on a continuum, the individualist-collectivist continuum (Carolissen, 2004; Johnson & Johnson, 2009). An individualistic culture refers to the degree to which a culture "encourages individuals to think of themselves as independent selves" (Matsumoto, 1996, p. 24) conversely, collectivistic cultures "see themselves as intricately linked to and dependent upon others" (Carolissen, 2004, p. 156).

South Africa utilises western principles of conducting business which is highly focused on individualism rather than that of collectivism. Globalisation is another reason as to why the utilisation of western ways in conducting business, within a South African context, is of such importance.

Tertiary institutions adopt an individualistic framework from the perspective that students realise their final results as an individual accomplishment by achieving the required results for each module they complete and ultimately the attainment of a degree, diploma or certificate. Interestingly, the end goal is attained by the representation of an individual result although the journey towards that result may be made up of various group endeavours and results. Group work relies on a collectivistic attitude and all members are relied upon for the completion of a task, activity or project.

The above may send a contradictory message to students who are aiming to achieve positive individual results in order to complete their respective degrees, diplomas or certificates while they are simultaneously expected to work in a unified fashion with other members of a group, putting their personal motives aside for the benefit of the group.

Figure 3: Individualism vs. Collectivism Cultures

Ten Differences Between Collectivist and Individualist Societies	
Individualism	Collectivism
• Everyone is supposed to take care of him- or herself and his or her immediate family only	• People are born into extended families or clans which protect them in exchange for loyalty
• "I" - consciousness	• "We" -consciousness
• Right of privacy	• Stress on belonging
• Speaking one's mind is healthy	• Harmony should always be maintained
• Others classified as individuals	• Others classified as in-group or out-group
• Personal opinion expected; one person one vote	• Opinions and votes predetermined by in-group
• Transgression of norms leads to guilt feelings	• Transgression of norms leads to shame feelings
• Languages in which the word "I" is indispensable	• Languages in which the word "I" is avoided
• Purpose of education is learning how to learn	• Purpose of education is learning how to do
• Task prevails over relationship	• Relationship prevails over task

<http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~culture/hofstede.htm>

Source: <http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~culture/hofstede.htm>

Figure 3 demonstrates the differences between having an individual mind-set compared with that of a collective mind-set. This illustrates how students are required to shift between thinking about themselves and tasks when working individually to thinking about the group as a whole, the task at hand, as well as the relationships developed within that group context when working with others in a work group.

Members within the group may be naturally prone to one mind-set or the other. Within a South African context there are diverse people from multiple cultures. The African cultures, in particular, adopt more of a group and collectivistic mind-set (Carolisen, 2004). This has an impact on the interaction of group members as well as in how they view the work group. Members who naturally gravitate towards an individualistic orientation may not feel accountable for the success of the group and may also not feel that their membership to the group is essential for the group's success (Comer, 1995) making them more likely to engage in social loafing. Earley (1989) conducted research where he found that social loafing may also occur with those who adopt a collectivist attitude. They are prone to engage in loafing when they perceive other group members from being different and not closely identifiable to them. They engage in social loafing as they do not feel much confidence in the different members within the group and would rather rely on members with whom they identify and feel a

connection to in some way or form (Earley, 1989). In contrast, Baron et al. (2006) noted that collectivistic cultures are likely to work harder within a group context than what they would individually as the "collective good" is valued more than the pursuit of individual or personal outcomes.

A change in mind-set and orientation is essential to eradicating social loafing and in obtaining the most value from group work activities. Highlighting individual members' attitudes and behaviours within a group context may serve as a means of solving this problem. Awareness on these different orientations may also create understanding amongst members when dealing with one another and encourage them to motivate those who would ordinarily adopt an independent way of working towards a more collective manner.

2.4.1.6 Diversity

Diversity refers to "differences between individuals" (Van Heerden, 2006). Perceiving differences between people assists in the understanding that another person is different from us (Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998).

Diversity is a consideration in research relating to group performance due to its propensity to affect work processes as well as individual member's attitudes and motivations (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007).

People differ due to a multitude of factors. These differences can be assigned to a person's genetic predisposition or due to environmental factors that the individual has been and/or is exposed to throughout their lives (Van Heerden, 2006). Homogeneity refers to people who share the same or similar genetic predisposition (race, gender) or environmental factors (such as upbringing, culture, religion, education) whereas Heterogeneity refers to those who differ.

Heterogeneous groups have been shown to produce superior task outcomes when grouped for mentally challenging projects or activities, particularly when compared with that of homogenous groups (Hoffman, 1959; Robbins & Judge, 2007). It is thought that this is the case as heterogeneous groups bring together people from different backgrounds, cultures, ethnicity's, races, genders and different approaches to problem

solving which may all lead to increased levels of creativity and innovation and ultimately enhanced performance outcomes (Mannix & Neale, 2005; Robbins & Judge, 2007; Pfaff & Huddleston, 2003; McLeod, Lobel & Cox, 1996).

A benefit to homogenous groups are that students, in particular, tend to find greater connection with others who hold similar values and attitudes to themselves (Mannix & Neale, 2005) which may translate into better levels of communication and interaction than would be found in a heterogeneous group. This has been shown to be true though for a heterogeneous group too but at later stages of group performance. At the beginning stages of group work homogeneity appears to enhance cohesion and communication but after a period of working together and in terms of performance, heterogeneity has proven to be a greater driver in overall group success (Robbins & Judge, 2007). In terms of social loafing it would appear that in the longer term a homogeneous group is more efficient and effective in terms of dynamic problem solving.

It has been shown that women are less likely to engage in social loafing than their male counterparts (Karau & Williams, 1993).

2.4.1.7 Group Roles

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players; They have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts, his acts being seven ages."

(William Shakespeare, As You Like it, Act II, Scene VII)

People perform roles on a daily basis and in different aspects of their lives. A role can be defined as "A set of expectations governing the appropriate behavior [sic] of an occupant of a position toward occupants of other related positions" (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Robbins & Judge, 2007; Bergh & Theron, 2006). Some of these roles include and are not limited to mother, father, daughter, son, grandparent, employee, employer, spouse, guardian, educator, learner.

We approach roles in one of two ways, namely psychosocial or anthropological-sociological (Aritzeta, Swailes & Senior, 2007). The psychosocial perspective explains that a role can be viewed as the individual's expected behaviour in terms of their position held (Aritzeta, Swailes & Senior, 2007). From an anthropological-sociological perspective, social status and positioning is a determinant of the values proposition, attitudes and behaviours that are assigned to individuals (Aritzeta, Swailes & Senior, 2007). We naturally take on duties and activities associated with these roles as we move through daily life.

Performing specific roles within a group work context are essential in reaching the group's desired objectives and goals (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). The roles assumed by the individuals within a work group will be determined by the psychosocial and anthropological-sociological perspectives held by the group and by each individual.

These roles transition between one another and, ideally, group members should demonstrate a balanced combination and mix of roles (Godskesen, 2009). All groups will have members who are assigned or whom assume certain roles.

Understanding the roles necessary for group task completion can assist in achieving the group's goals and objectives with accuracy and efficiency.

According to Belbin there are eight roles that should be assumed in the completion of group work in order to best meet the desired group goals (Ounnas, Davis, Millard, 2009; Senior, 1997). Belbin details how it is the right mix of people that make teams effective (Ounnas et. al., 2009; Senior, 1997). When there is a lack of understanding of such group roles, conflict and inefficiencies may arise (Ounnas et. al., 2009; Senior, 1997). These nine roles are shown in Figure 4 and highlight the strengths and weaknesses of each role in group task completion.

Figure 4: Belbin's Classification of Group Roles

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Team Role Summary Descriptions

Team Role	Contribution	Allowable Weaknesses
Plant 	Creative, imaginative, free-thinking. Generates ideas and solves difficult problems.	Ignores incidentals. Too pre-occupied to communicate effectively.
Resource Investigator 	Outgoing, enthusiastic, communicative. Explores opportunities and develops contacts.	Over-optimistic. Loses interest once initial enthusiasm has passed.
Co-ordinator 	Mature, confident, identifies talent. Clarifies goals. Delegates effectively.	Can be seen as manipulative. Offloads own share of the work.
Shaper 	Challenging, dynamic, thrives on pressure. Has the drive and courage to overcome obstacles.	Prone to provocation. Offends people's feelings.
Monitor Evaluator 	Sober, strategic and discerning. Sees all options and judges accurately.	Lacks drive and ability to inspire others. Can be overly critical.
Teamworker 	Co-operative, perceptive and diplomatic. Listens and averts friction.	Indecisive in crunch situations. Avoids confrontation.
Implementer 	Practical, reliable, efficient. Turns ideas into actions and organizes work that needs to be done.	Somewhat inflexible. Slow to respond to new possibilities.
Completer Finisher 	Painstaking, conscientious, anxious. Searches out errors. Polishes and perfects.	Inclined to worry unduly. Reluctant to delegate.
Specialist 	Single-minded, self-starting, dedicated. Provides knowledge and skills in rare supply.	Contributes only on a narrow front. Dwells on technicalities.

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Status within a group is an important consideration. Status refers a "defined position or rank" (Bergh & Theron, 2006, p. 235) that is assigned to people within a particular group. Should a discrepancy exist between an individual member's own perceived status within a group and the status that they have been assigned by other members of that group, it can have detrimental effects on group functioning and as such may impact on motivational and productivity levels. For example, should one member consider themselves a "Specialist" according to Belbin's roles but the other team members do not hold the same view, this can cause despondency for the group member and as such effect their outputs within the group work context.

With the above in mind, educators need to take heed of the roles that are required for the effective completion of group tasks and that the correct mix of individuals can impede or enhance the group's overall performance.

2.4.1.8 Group Size

Group size may have an impact on the occurrence of social loafing. In smaller groups each member's input equates to a significant proportion of all contributions made towards the overall outcome and group objective and thus if a member fails to contribute to the group it is easily recognisable and they may be held accountable (Comer, 1995). It is thus apparent that as the group size increases so does the difficulty in accurately assessing each member's contribution and with an increase in the potential for members to engage in social loafing as they feel that they can "hide in the crowd" (Comer, 1995; Liden et al., 2004; Brickner, Ostrom & Harkins, 1986).

As group size increases the less accountable individual members feel for the achievement of group goals and objectives (Comer, 1995; Liden et al., 2004; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Robbins & Judge, 2007). The result of this lack of accountability is well stated by Liden et al (2004) "individuals will withhold effort, achieve identical rewards, and calculate greater benefits with lower cost".

With all of the above in mind, the recommended group size is seen to be between three to four group members (Oakley, et. al., 2004; Burdett, 2004) and no more than 10 (Robbins & Judge, 2007).

It thus becomes apparent that work groups should be kept to a small number of members in order to eradicate the incidence of social loafing. The saying... "two heads are better than one"...is certainly true and the ability of more than one person to pool ideas and resources will make for more detailed and comprehensive outcomes but one needs to closely monitor at which point additional "heads" become detrimental to the success of group work processes.

2.4.1.9 Perceived Social Loafing by Peers

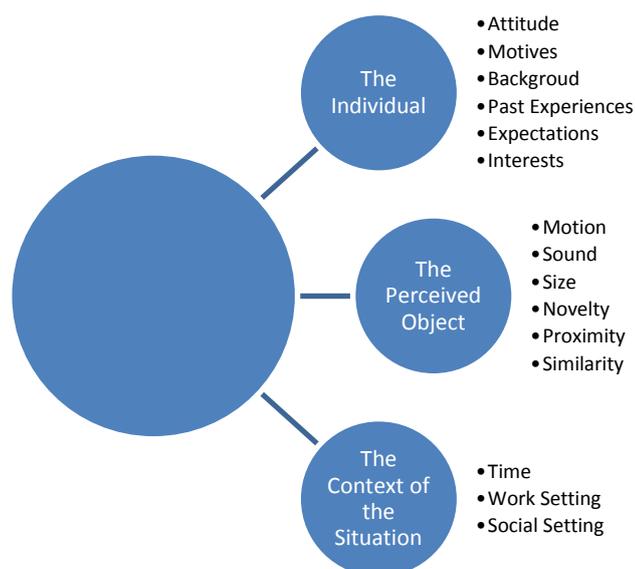
Perception refers to how we create meaning from the sensory inputs on display around us and assists us in shaping our reality (Robbins & Judge, 2007; Swartz, 2004; Bergh & Theron, 2006). Perception is a completely subjective process and is the result of a number of factors, namely the individual (the perceiver); the perceived object; as well as the context of the situation (Robbins & Judge, 2007; Bergh & Theron, 2006).

An individual's reality is a product of their personal subjective experiences and background combined with their motives, attitudes and expectations (Robbins & Judge 2007; Bergh & Theron, 2006). These particular factors will determine how the individual perceives something.

An object will be perceived in a particular way by the individual based on the characteristics that it portrays (Robbins & Judge, 2007; Bergh & Theron, 2006).

The context in which the perceiving is taking place is of importance as it can determine the overall point of view of the individual (the perceiver). The timing of a given situation can determine the perception held by the perceiver for example, if someone has recently ended a relationship they may notice more loving couples around them than they would have had they still been in a relationship (Bergh & Theron, 2006).

Figure 5: The Factors Influencing Perception



Perceived social loafing refers to the perception held by some group members that one or more other group members are not contributing to their full capacity (Mulvey & Klein, 1998). The perceptions held by individuals serve as either motivators or demotivators. A statement that reflects this is “private perceptions control personal motivation, not publically shared views or generally accepted reality” (Clark 2005). Should some members perceive that others within the group are withholding effort it can have a large impact on the effort that they put forward (Mulvey & Klein, 1998; Johnson & Johnson, 1999). The behaviour of others may often dictate the actions of the individual observing them, even if these perceived behaviours are not what is actually performed in reality it is the perception of peer social loafing that is significant and what ultimately determines the response of the perceiver (Mulvey & Klein, 1998; Liden et al., 2004). This impact on group member motivation is highlighted in Burdett (2003) where feedback from a student who had engaged in group work was as follows:

“I acknowledge the reasons for including group work as a component of a university course; however due to the nature of groups, it usually falls to one or two individuals to do the bulk of the work. As a student motivated to achieve the best result of which I am capable, I find it frustrating that not only do other students get a free ride so to speak, but that through being forced to work in groups, the task becomes more difficult than it would have been if done alone.”

This perception of social loafing is highly negative for the overall performance of the group as group members who perceive that other group members are taking advantage of their hard work may reduce their efforts in order to restore equilibrium and thus the combined performance is less than if some of the members had been working on their own (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

2.4.1.10 Group Conflict

"Madness is the exception in individuals but the rule in groups"

- Frederich Nietzsche (Robbins & Judge, 2007, p. 298)

Conflict refers to "a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively effect, something that the first party cares about" (Robbins & Judge, 2007). In addition, conflict can refer to the extent to which parties' incompatible and opposing interests to one another (Baron et. al., 2003; Van Heerden, 2006).

Three types are conflict should be considered in a work group situation namely role conflict, relational conflict and task conflict.

Role conflict refers to when there is a divergence between the requirements and expectations that are associated with particular roles and these do not coincide with one another (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Robbins & Judge, 2007; ACCA, 2006). Should such a conflict arise within a group work setting it can inhibit group effectiveness and efficiency as group members find it problematic to align and move between the different role expectations that they have either been assigned or have been self-assumed (Bergh & Theron, 2006; Robbins & Judge, 2007).

Relational conflict is conflict based on interpersonal relationships (Robbins & Judge, 2007). This type of conflict is dangerous to group work and increases the risks of social loafing as group members harbour hostility towards one another and their relationship dynamics supersede the group goals and productivity levels. It is apparent then that the focus is not goal directed and is rather focussed on power relations within the group (De Dreu & Wyngardt, 2003; Robbins & Judge, 2007). This is detrimental as members perceive group membership negatively and may result in the inclination to loaf.

Task or process conflict is related to the goals outlined for work as well as the content related to it (Robbins & Judge, 2007). Such conflict can be functional for work outcomes and productivity (thus reducing the incidence of social loafing) as this allows

for conversation and debate regarding how tasks should be completed and what the goals of the work group will be.

With the above in mind, some authors (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006; Slavin & Cooper, 1999) consider that task or process related conflict and not relational conflict, can be beneficial to group work in the following ways:

- It enhances problem solving and the sharing of ideas;
- It reduces group think as the members are questioning one another with regards to decisions that are being taken;
- Creativity is enhanced;
- Problems that may have been overlooked before may be identified and corrective action can be sought efficiently;

. In contrast, Relational conflict can have the following detrimental effects on group work:

- Group cohesiveness declines;
- Attention is removed from the task at hand and is instead focused on finding a new equilibrium state in terms of group relationships;
- It may influence and bring about group think;
- It inhibits creativity and innovation;
- It may reduce the motivational levels of group members; and
- A reduction in the group's overall performance

A lack of cooperative learning in a group may create an environment where relational conflict occurs and as such, social loafing may become more prevalent (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

2.5 COOPERATIVE LEARNING

"Extraordinary achievement comes from a cooperative group, not from the individualistic or competitive efforts of an isolated individual".

(Johnson & Johnson, 1999)

Cooperative learning refers to a number of individuals working together, for a specified amount of time, in order to achieve clearly defined outcomes and goals (Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Baron et. al., 2006).

The desired outcome of cooperative learning is that group work allows for a greater volume of content to be covered in a short period of time but also through creating an environment in which students can learn from one another. Students who are working with a cooperative learning group are more likely to retain the information they have learnt in a cooperative group; be able to transfer that knowledge to other relevant situations; they experience higher levels of intrinsic motivation; and they are more likely to successfully achieve performance outcomes that they may have been unable to achieve alone (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 2007; Baron et. al., 2006).

Interestingly, studies have been completed comparing three methods of task completion at a tertiary level namely, cooperative, competitive and individualistic (Johnson et. al., 2007). These results showed that when students were completing tasks in a competitive fashion, with their fellow colleagues, their scores were at the 50th and 53rd percentile. In contrast, these scores would increase to 69th and 70th percentiles when task completion was conducted in a cooperative group (Johnson et. al., 2007).

Cooperative learning has been shown to facilitate greater relationships between students and differing background and cultures appear to be more easily overcome in such settings (Johnson et. al., 2007; Slavin & Cooper, 1999). When learning is cooperative and not competitive or individualistic a culture of information sharing is brought about as there is no need to hide knowledge, skills or abilities from one's group members and this facilitates the learning process for all involved as all are committed to the achievement of group goals by means of cooperation.

Cooperative learning appears to be more conducive to student success than that of its competitive and individualistic counterparts.

Cooperative learning will occur when the following factors are present:

- 1) Positive interdependence amongst group members;
- 2) Individual accountability;

- 3) Positive interaction;
- 4) Social skills; and
- 5) Group processing.

(Slavin, 1999; Baron et. al., 2006).

With the above factors in mind, individuals merely grouped together to complete a project or task will not automatically translate into collaborative learning (Slavin, 1999; Baron et. al., 2006).

With diversity at play together with differing personalities it is often difficult to get everyone's needs and desires to align in order to avoid a competitive or individualistic mind-set from dominating. Individuals comprising group membership have to make the decision between maximising outcomes for themselves or to act towards the benefit of others which may reduce the size of their personal gain. A group where cooperation does not transpire can be deemed to have social dilemmas that exist (Baron et. al., 2003). This is highlighted in the following quote, "Many students do not understand how to work cooperatively with others. The culture and reward systems of our society are oriented toward "competitive and individualistic work" (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1998).

An additional consideration when focussing on cooperative learning is on the interaction between student and lecturer. This relationship, in order for it to be conducive to knowledge transferral, requires cooperation between both parties. Lecturers need to ensure that the way in which they are interacting and relating with their students and other lecturers should also allow for cooperative engagement and learning (Johnson et. al., 2007).

With the above theoretical benefits in mind, it becomes apparent why educators select group work as a means for task completion and knowledge generation. What needs to be explored in more depth is how many task groups within a tertiary educational setting are achieving this pinnacle of learning.

2.6. MOTIVATION AS A CONSIDERATION FOR SOCIAL LOAFING

The word "motivation" is derived from the Latin terms "movere" which means "to move" (Mohsan, Nawaz, Khan, Shaukat & Aslam, 2011). This has been utilised to define motivation as a movement towards the achievement of specified goals and objectives. Specifically, motivation refers to a "process that initiates and maintains goal-directed performance" (Clark, 2005). The study of motivation in education and learning contexts is specifically aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of what factors, ideas and concepts make human beings act in a certain manner in order to achieve specific outcomes that are preferable to them (Pintrich, 2003).

Motivation and its relationship with performance has been a topic of interest dating back to the time of the Greek Philosophers (Steers & Shapiro, 2004). It is still relevant and noteworthy today as an understanding into the motivation and drive of individual and/or groups of learners forms an integral part of research with significant focus in an educational context (Pintrich, 2003; Latham & Pinder, 2005; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). Such a focus highlights the manner in which students can be influenced in order to for them to learn and develop in accordance with module and qualification outcomes.

Motivation is a phenomenon that has relevance when investigating the occurrence of social loafing as it is a key determinant that drives an individual's desire to perform optimally or not (Steers & Shapiro, 2004). Optimal performance is the effort behind understanding what will motivate a student at a tertiary level.

Studies on motivation have had a varying focus over the years with some theorists highlighting the importance of affect (an individual's needs, instincts and drives) as well as, more recently, on social-cognitive processes (Pintrich, 2003; Pekrun, Frenzel, Goetz & Perry, 2007).

Motivation, in totality, cannot be attributed to successful performance as this may be due to a combination of knowledge, skill and drive to carry out goal-directed behaviour (Clark, 2005; Grobler et. al. 2006) but it plays an important role in understanding human behaviour and decisions when analysing performance and is thus worthy of consideration in this study.

The following theories should be acknowledged when dealing with the construct of social loafing as they deal with the motivation of individuals to perform.

2.6.1 Self Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory is concerned with an individual's underlying motives to take action and make choices (Reiss, 2012; Vansteenkiste, Lens & Deci, 2006; Gagne & Deci, 2005). This theory combines the affect and social-construct ideas of motivation (Pintrich, 2003). This theory posits three fundamental needs, namely the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Pintrich, 2003; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Autonomy, in terms of motivational needs, refers to an appetite for being in control of your own behaviours and actions (Pintrich, 2003).

Relatedness refers to one's need to connect with others (Pintrich, 2003) and may be viewed as the affect element of the theory.

Competence deals with one's ability to be proficient in interacting with the external environment (Pintrich, 2003).

Self Determination Theory assumes that needs are consistent across all people. This may be appropriate when dealing with social loafing within a group work context as individuals, according to Self Determination Theory, want to be able to be able to engage with others, while determining their own behaviours and how those behaviours will influence and be influenced by their surroundings. The belief is that should these three needs be stunted then individual's motivational levels will be greatly reduced (Pintrich, 2003).

This theory can be compared to the Need Theory which is identified below.

2.6.2. Cognitive Evaluation Theory

Cognitive Evaluation Theory posits that human beings' actions and behaviours are motivated by intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

Intrinsic motivation is the engagement in an activity for its own sake i.e. engagement for the inherent joy and satisfaction that will be gained from it (Swartz, 2004; Reiss, 2012; Vansteenkiste et. al., 2006; Sturmeijer, 2007). Such motivation is psychological and inherent in nature i.e. praise; satisfaction from mastering a task; status associated with a specific job (Potgieter, 2003). In comparison, extrinsic motivation refers to completing a task or activity as a means to an end rather than for its own sake (Swartz, 2004; Vansteenkiste, 2006). Material factors such as remuneration; working conditions; incentives and benefits serve as motivators.

Researchers have found that when extrinsic motivation was combined with performance an individual's levels of intrinsic motivation are reduced.

2.6.3. Expectancy-Value Theory

The expectancy-value theory refers to an individual's beliefs regarding the consequences of their behaviour (Theron, 2006; Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996; Lawler & Suttle, 1973). An individual's goal-directed behaviour is a function of the following three factors: (1) Expectations - the belief that performance is dependent upon the effort exerted; (2) Instrumentality - the conviction that outcomes are dependent upon performance & (3) Outcome value or valence - the attractiveness and value attached to achieving the outcome for the individual (Sheppard & Taylor, 1999; Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996; Lawler & Suttle, 1973) i.e. $Motivation = Expectations \times Instrumentality \times Valence$. Thus the motivation of individuals regarding these three spheres may impact on their commitment to the group goals and how fully they participate and perform. Group goals thus need to be important to all members of the group in some way or form as well as the adoption of positive outcome expectations that are shared by the whole group.

2.6.4. Need Theory

David McClelland identified three types of needs that may have relevance to an individual's level of motivation when participating in group work. These three needs are:

2.6.4.1 Need for Affiliation

This need refers to an individual's desire for positive relationships and interaction with others (Robbins & Judge, 2007; Potgieter, 2003).

2.6.4.2 Need for Power

Individuals who possess a need for power seek to control and assert their authority over other members of the group in which they belong in order to make them behave in a specific manner that is desirable to them (Robbins & Judge, 2007).

2.6.4.3 Need for Achievement

This need is characterised by an individual's need for success and accomplishment over the possible regards associated with group performance (Robbins & Judge, 2007). Autonomy is important to these individuals and they pride themselves on positive feedback and recognition for their efforts.

Figure 6: McClelland's Need Theory

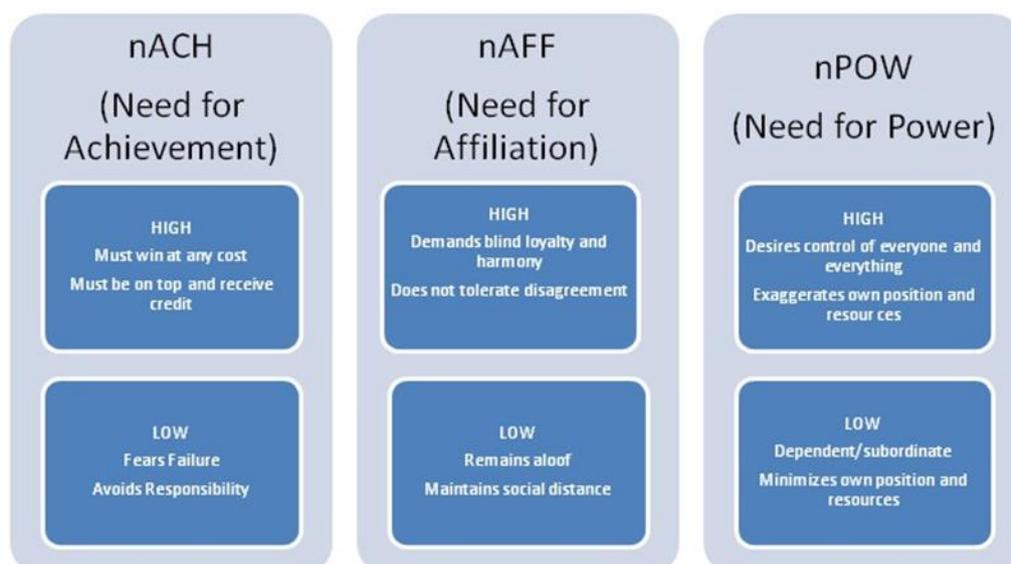


Figure 6 shows the products of possessing a high or low need for achievement, power or affiliation.

One complex dynamic regarding motivation is how different things motivate and drive people in a variety of ways (Clark, 2005). This theory speaks to this idea as it postulates that the three needs highlighted will vary in strength from person-to-person and differing factors will serve to satiate these needs (Pintcher, 2003). These needs should be considered when grouping individuals together in order to ensure optimal performance and the successful achievement of group objectives. Should a group member have such needs and they are not met through the group processes they are more likely to be less invested in the outcomes of the group and thus more likely to engage in social loafing.

2.6.5. Equity-Value Theory

Equity relates to the perception of fairness held by group members (Theron, 2006; Baron et. al., 2003). It is intricately tied to the evaluation of an individual group member's personal inputs and outputs (status within the group; autonomy; interesting and challenging tasks) compared with that of the inputs and outputs of other group members (Theron, 2006). Should an individual's evaluation result in the perception of inequity then they will embark on certain behaviours by which to restore equity to the group such behaviour is likely to be some form of social loafing.

Factors that can affect an individual's perception of fairness or equity are the following:

2.6.5.1 Distributive Justice:

This refers to the perception held by the individuals' of the equity in the distribution of recognition and rewards (Baron et. al., 2003). Due to the fact that these distributions are being perceived by the individual themselves there is a reduction in the objectivity of such evaluations.

2.6.5.2 Procedural Justice:

This element in the perception of equity within the group refers to the process which is followed to determine how rewards and recognition are disseminated (Baron et. al., 2003).

2.6.5.3 Transactional Justice:

This refers to the explanations and reasons that are provided to individuals for the way in which rewards were disseminated (Baron et al., 2003).

Relating this motivational theory to social loafing highlights that an individual group member who feels they have contributed more than others but has received less in terms of what rewards are available and who does not understand the distribution process, may reduce their efforts in order to restore the balance. The maintenance of the perception of member's equity is an important consideration when attempting to eliminate or diminish the phenomenon of social loafing.

2.6.6. Conclusion to motivational theories and social loafing

Our behaviours are often a product of factors and thoughts which are subconscious. Motivational theories are thus relevant when considering each group member; their performance within the group; and interactions with one another as all of these contexts are shaped by these subconscious thinking processes.

It is clear from the theories detailed above that students' motivational levels are affected by how important the task is to them; how important the outcome is; how fairly they feel they are being evaluated and/or rewarded; their perception of the position they hold within the group; how valued they are by others and how they value fellow group members'.

Having a greater understanding into how students' are driven to achieve will allow for us to create settings in which they can thrive towards higher levels of performance within a group work environment.

2.7 CONCLUSION

There are multiple dimensions of group work that contribute to the incidence of social loafing and these elements need to be closely monitored in order to diminish the occurrence of the phenomenon within the group and to ensure that each member contributes and takes meaning from the group work experience.

Group work, in theory, appears to be a viable and successful avenue to pursue in encouraging in-depth and creative thinking. Although, in practice, group work and the structure of groups may leave students with different outcomes than those anticipated and desired. Social loafing is a hindrance to effective group work and in ensuring that the outcomes of group tasks are internalised and learned.

It is evident that an individual's perceptions have a large impact on the way in which they interact with others as well as on how they choose to act and behave in a work group context which involves these other people.

Students should be provided with the opportunity to reflect on their group work experiences in order to fully benefit from the endeavour and to establish what value was added to their knowledge base and what was insufficiently addressed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study aimed to understand how tertiary students perceive social loafing within work groups throughout their exposure to tertiary education. It is a cross-sectional study to be conducted at one point in time and will involve a cross-section of the students who attended a tertiary institution and are enrolled in a postgraduate academic programme at the University of Pretoria (Babbie, 2008).

This chapter details the methodology that was utilised in this study in order to investigate the phenomenon of social loafing and the perceptions held by post graduate students regarding its effect on group work.

The research methodology was descriptive, exploratory and qualitative in nature due to the depth of understanding that was sought regarding the phenomenon of social loafing. This research study focused on non-numerical data, specifically people and their perceptions, and as such these were an appropriate strategy to utilise (Babbie, 2008). The purpose of the research was to describe a specific state of social affairs (Babbie, 2008) and to describe the nature of the perceptions held by students within a group work context in terms of the phenomenon of social loafing (Kotze, 2010).

3.1. A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

This particular study was conducted from a qualitative perspective and as such a social constructivist philosophy was assumed. Such a strategy of inquiry is useful as it sought to explore the “self-world relationship” (Terre Blanche et. al., 2006). This deals with the notion of individuals being in the world in relation to specific phenomena, in other words it is how individuals perceive and experience the world from a personal perspective. The reason for this choice lay with the fact that as human beings we observe and experience the world around us from multiple and varying viewpoints, realities and perspectives (Smith, 2008; Creswell, 2009). Such observations and experiences are thus subjective and need to be explored from the various sources from whom they may arise.

The phenomena under study aims to explore the perception of social loafing that exists from an individual's point of view thus adopting a qualitative strategy of inquiry was most suitable to the research objectives (Creswell, 2009; Terre Blanche, 2006).

Results for this research were compiled retrospectively using direct interviews, the likes of which tapped into subjective experiences of specific types of social interaction, using a sample that was experienced in tertiary level group work. This further illustrates the reason for adopting a social constructivist point of view.

3.1.1. Characteristics of the broad research design: Qualitative Research

The difference between quantitative and qualitative data may be viewed as the difference between numerical and non-numerical data (Babbie, 2008). This research study focussed on non-numerical data, specifically people and their perceptions, and was a qualitative research design was an appropriate strategy to utilise.

The researcher was the primary instrument for gathering data throughout the research process which was additional reason as to why qualitative research was appropriate (Cresswell, 2009). The researcher engaged with the research participants through face-to-face interaction with the aim of extracting the meaning held by the participants on the phenomenon of social loafing (Cresswell, 2006). Qualitative research provides a holistic viewpoint on a given phenomenon, it is flexible in nature and allowed the researcher to alter the research process as new information and understanding was gained and was thus a worthwhile endeavour (Rynes & Gephart, 2004).

3.1.2. Phenomenology as a Paradigm for Qualitative Research

A paradigm is the “patterning of the thinking person” (Groenewald, 2004, p. 6) and as such creates the lens through which a researcher observes a phenomenon. It guides the thinking and action of a person. Taking into consideration how a phenomenon will be investigated was essential and determined the paradigm that was utilised. Phenomenology was adopted as the paradigm for this study.

Phenomenology deals with understanding individuals and their unique interactions with their world and the meanings that they attach to them (Lopez & Willis, 2004). It was developed by Edmund Husserl (1859 - 1938) who sought to explain that objects in the external world do not exist independently and that only an individual's personal consciousness can be regarded as true (Groenewald, 2004).

The data to be gathered in this study centres on the personal experiences of people and their perception of social loafing within group work contexts. These people will have experienced such phenomena from their own perspectives and have attached meaning therein in personal ways. It was necessary for the researcher to utilise phenomenology in order to uncover the individual's truths and realities relating the phenomena under investigation.

The researcher acted as the primary source of data collection in this study. This allowed for detailed exploration and description of the investigated phenomena. It provided the researcher with rich data on the lived experiences of human beings; how they perceive these experiences and how those perceptions influence action and behaviour (Lopez & Willis, 2004; Groenewald, 2004; Giorgi, 2005).

3.1.3. Classification of the proposed study's overall research design

The following were appropriate descriptors that best described the broad research design of the study:

Table 1: Descriptor's of the Broad Research Design

Descriptor	Rationale
Empirical Research	This research study was empirical in nature. The motivation behind the use of an empirical study lay in the fact that the researcher wished to explore the experiences and perceptions of social loafing within a work group context of students at tertiary level.

Primary Data	Primary, textual (qualitative) data was utilised in the research process in the form of interviews with participants and analysis of their transcripts.
Basic Research	Basic, pure and fundamental research applied to this study as the research did not aim at directly solving any of the issues surrounding the phenomena under study (Kotze, 2010; Babbie, 2008).
Descriptive Research	The purpose of the research was to describe a specific state of social affairs (Babbie, 2008) and to describe the nature of the perceptions held by students within a group work context in terms of the phenomenon of social loafing (Kotze, 2010).
Cross-sectional Research	The study was to be conducted at one point in time and involved a cross-section of the students who attended a tertiary institution who had completed at least an undergraduate qualification (Babbie, 2008).

3.2 SAMPLING

3.2.1. Unit of Analysis

The desired population consisted of current post-graduate students who have completed or are in the process of completing a post graduate bachelor's degree (ensuring sufficient exposure to group work). These persons were sampled from a department at a tertiary education institution, namely the University of Pretoria. Additionally, it must be noted that no demographic standards were implemented in the sampling process, i.e. people from all racial, religious, age, and gender groups were eligible for selection. The major precepts guiding this purposive sampling were that the research participant was enrolled with a post graduate degree programme within the Human Resource Department at The University of Pretoria at the time that the study was conducted.

3.2.2. Sample Method

The sample for this research study was selected through the use of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling refers to a sample which is specifically (purposefully) selected based on the researcher's judgment about which individuals were the most useful, appropriate and representative (Babbie, 2008). Sampling in such a way was necessary in order to ensure that the individuals participating in the research had extensive experience of group work projects and had been significantly immersed in group work at a tertiary level by virtue of having been enrolled in post graduate studies within the Human Resources Department at the University of Pretoria.

Purposive sampling assisted in determining if each member of a specific work group held the perception that social loafing exists within their group and what they feel their true performance contribution to the work group is. Each respondent's claims were analysed respectively and then a collective overview of analysis was conducted; therefore the standardisation of sample characteristics was imperative.

A list of enrolled post graduate students within the Human Resources Department at the University of Pretoria was provided to the researcher and was utilised in order to locate the sample. The participants were contacted telephonically and requested to participate in the study.

All participants were requested to volunteer their time for the study. No person was coerced or forced to participate.

3.2.3. Sample Size

The sample size of this study consists of 8 students from the Human Resource Management Department at The University of Pretoria.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

This section deals with the data collection process and technique that will be followed as well as how the data will be managed once collected.

3.3.1. Data Collection Technique and Process

Open-ended, semi-structured interviews were utilised and proved to be a useful technique. Due to the fact that this research study delved into individual's perceptions of self and others, it was worthwhile to allow them a certain degree of freedom in expressing their views and beliefs related to the topic, especially since a small sample was used (Boyce and Neale, 2006). The reason for making use of semi-structured interviews was to obtain a deeper understanding of the interviewees' social reality (Maree, 2009) which provided a richness of information and assisted in ensuring that the research was a success.

Focus groups were deemed unsuitable for this study as the concept under investigation, "social loafing", has negative connotations attached to it and participants may not be open and honest in their answers and explanations if other group members are present.

The researcher ensured that the interview conversations did not digress from the topic at hand and channelled the conversation towards obtaining meaningful, detailed information. The researcher achieved this by means of having "a general plan of inquiry" (Babbie, 2006; Boyce & Neale, 2006).

This "general plan of inquiry" included a list of things that were kept consistent across interviews (assisting with reliability) for example:

- What was said to participants when setting up the interviews;
- What was said at the beginning of the interviews which included acquiring their informed consent, instructions for the interviewer to follow and ensuring participants of confidentiality;
- What was said at the conclusion of an interview;
- How the interview was recorded (audio, descriptive and reflective notes) and
- What activities were out after completion of the interview like checking of the audio tapes and make notes of key information (memoing).

(Creswell, 2009; Boyce & Neale, 2006)

An additional benefit to utilising open-ended, semi-structured interviews for this study lay in the fact that it allowed for a more relaxed atmosphere and participants were more willing to divulge their inner feelings and thinking in such an environment (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

Such a technique was suitable for the topic at hand but there were certain limitations that needed to be acknowledged and considered when embarking on this study. Firstly, open-ended questions allow for researcher bias to enter the process making the findings less objective. This was accounted for by unpacking the researcher's personal perceptions and biases beforehand making the researcher more aware of her own biases and not allowing them to interfere in the interview process. By writing detailed notes and memo's after the interview the researcher could again, check her own thinking and account for any bias.

Secondly, generalisations of results are complex as small samples are used. The desire to extract detailed and descriptive data regarding the phenomenon of social loafing makes the use of small samples important and the lack of generalisation void.

Some examples of possible questions to be asked during the interviews in order to elucidate information regarding the research objectives are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Questions used as a guideline during data collection

Item Number	Item Content	Justification for Inclusion
1	Age	The first few questions in the study are meant to give basic demographic information and to ensure that they meet with the guidelines necessary for an individual to be a respondent in the study.
2	Gender	
3	Race	
4	Year of study	
5	Course	
6	Are you aware of the term social loafing?	



		answer the questions that follow they will need to have an understanding of what social loafing is. If they cannot provide a definition, the researcher will provide one as oftentimes individuals may not have the definition for something but when explained they understand the phenomenon and may have experienced it.
7	Have you experienced any instances of social loafing while working in a work group?	<p>This question is important as it will elicit whether or not the respondent has experienced the occurrence of social loafing through the course of their studies and multiple group work sessions.</p> <p>Probes are essential as they will hopefully encourage the respondents to think about group work settings and whether each person actively participated or not and allow them to highlight why they believe social loafing occurred within the group work setting or what factors, they believe, prevented it from happening.</p> <p>Probes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) If so, why do you think it occurs?b) If not, what do you think prevented it from occurring?
8	How were your whole groups' motivational levels influenced by the presence of a social loafer?	Understanding whether social loafing impacts on other group members' level of performance is important. In the absence



		of a loafer would the group be motivated to perform better?
9	How does the experience of having a social loafer in a group affect your personal levels of motivation?	To gain an understanding of how affected the individual was in terms of motivation when another was perceived to be loafing.
10	Do you feel that social loafing affected the overall performance in any of the groups that you have worked in?	One needs to find out if students feel that their final result could have been better if a social loafer had not been present, or if, in fact, it had no effect at all.
11	Do you feel that you have ever engaged in social loafing during the course of group work?	Question 13 serves to allow the respondent a moment for introspection. It is important to know if: the respondent has engaged in loafing, and if so, what were the factors that led to this choice of action.
12	What factors caused you to engage in social loafing?	This question builds on Question 13 and allows the researcher some insight into the reasons behind the respondent's choices to engage in social loafing or not.
13	How would you describe the profile of a social loafer?	To be able to analyse the research findings across all respondents and determine if there is a specific kind of profile that can be attributed to a loafer. Alternatively, what are some of the characteristics held by an individual who is more likely to engage in social loafing? Some probes could include: do these persons have a distinct modus operandi, typical personality type, gender, or appearance?



14	How have you, generally, been grouped with others to complete projects or assignments?	This question will elicit information regarding whether respondents are allocated to groups through self-selection or if groups are assigned by lecturers.
15	How do you believe the allocation of group membership ought to be carried out?	This line of questioning is important to determine if individuals feel that social loafing is more or less likely to occur within groups that they have been able to pick themselves and/or if the groups are assigned by lecturers. Their preference will be probed by asking why they have made that choice.
16	How have demographic aspects (age, gender, race, home language) affected your group experiences with others?	<p>This question has been included in order to determine if individuals found that they worked with more cohesion within an heterogeneous or homogenous group. The sub-questions allow for the respondent to elaborate on why or why not they found more cohesion amongst group members with such factors in mind.</p> <p>The literature indicated that often people who are alike in terms of background and culture tend to work better together but that often the content of the completed task may not be as innovative as it would have been if the group were more heterogeneous.</p>
17	How do you think that group size affects the incidence of social loafing?	Group size may be a factor that limits or enhances the prevalence of social loafing.



	How has a group's size influenced the productivity of the group?	
18	How has work been delegated within the groups that you have participated in?	This question serves to indicate whether or not all course material is covered by all group members or if it is split. Probe: In your experience, did it work well?
19	Explain whether you feel that each member of the group derives learning from the course content that is assigned to the group as a whole?	This question is utilised in order to gain an understanding into whether or not group work and its objectives are actually being fulfilled. Are all group members exposed to the full course content or are they limited to delegated portions of work?
20	From your experience is loafing more prevalent from the leader or from the follower of the work group?	This will determine if specific roles are adopted and which role is perceived to loaf more.
21	Do you think that group marking is just and fair with the current model that is employed? How do you feel about the way in which group work is evaluated?	The literature indicates that the manner in which group work is evaluated is often a key determinant in whether one will engage in social loafing or not.
22	What actions, if any, have you taken to intervene or control a social loafer within your group?	By asking this question we gain insight into whether the perceiver ever intervened to control/limit/eradicate the social loafing demonstrated by a peer within the group work. Probes will allow them to elaborate on how they

23		confronted the loafer or why they allowed the loafing to continue without reproach.
	What measures do you think lecturers could implement in order to reduce the incidence of social loafing?	Insight into how students' feel facilitation from the tertiary institution and its staff could assist with this phenomenon and its impact on group learning initiatives.
24	In your experience, would you prefer to work individually or in a group? Please justify why?	

Table 2 shows the research questions that served as a guideline during the interview stage of the data collection process and the rationale to why they were viewed as important for inclusion.

All of the questions listed in Table 2 were selected in order to obtain rich and descriptive information from each participant in the hope of achieving the research objectives of the study (chapter 1).

3.3.2. Data Management

The interviews were electronically audio-recorded. The use of electronic audio-recordings was beneficial to the research study as accurate transcriptions of the data could be obtained. In addition, listening for verbal cues and slight inflections in the individuals' tone of voice is important and provided additional insight into the interviews.

Field notes were taken during the interview to note any immediately interesting responses as well as after the interview to make key notes on the impression of the interview, how the participant reacted, subject areas they showed apprehension or complete openness to.

The interviews were conducted in a pre-booked venue on the main campus at The University of Pretoria at a time that was suitable to the participant in order to ensure the least amount of background noise and the best recording possible.

Each interview with each participant was assigned a code i.e. Participant A. Hard copy and electronic folders were created where all information relating to each participant was stored. Each interview was recorded separately from the others, labelled as per their specific code.

In each hard copy and electronic file a division for each participant was opened and the following was stored in it:

- The audio recording of the interview
- The Informed consent form
- The researchers personal notes from the interview
- Field notes that were made after the interview
- Notes relating to data analysis and themes
- Summaries of each interview
- Detailed transcriptions of each interview

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis involved reading through the collected data repeatedly, categorising that data into themes and then interpreting and elaborating on them in great depth (Terre Blanche et. al., 2006). This was necessary in order to produce a compelling account of the phenomenon under study. For this particular study social loafing in a work group was the phenomenon examined.

The following are the phases of data analysis that were adhered to for this phenomenological study (Terre Blanche et. al., 2006; Maree, 2009; Groenewald, 2004; Wojnar & Swanson, 2007):

- **Bracketing**

Bracketing is the process of "suspending as much as possible the researcher's meanings and interpretations and entering into the world of the individual who was

interviewed" (Tesch, 1992: 92). The researcher was cognisant of this process and ensured that reflexivity took place before immersing herself with the interviewees or the elicited data.

- **Familiarisation and Immersion:**

All interviews with each participant were transcribed, verbatim. The researcher familiarised and immersed herself in these transcribed responses. The transcription for each participant were read and re-read in order to allow the researcher to gain a richer understanding of the ideas, thoughts and perceptions held by the participants regarding the phenomenon of social loafing within a work group (Thomas, 2006).

- **Inducing Codes and Themes:**

Once a level of understanding was reached by the researcher, she could begin to look for meaning among the responses. This phase of analysis involved an inductive approach. This allowed for themes to emerge after a complete and thorough analysis of the interview data was conducted (i.e. familiarisation and immersion) (Thomas, 2006). Such themes are necessary in order to create meaning and interpretations from the data elicited from the sample. Although the research process starts with particular research objectives in mind and these help to guide the research questions asked in the data collection phase of the study, they are not used to predetermine the information drawn from the findings. The raw data, itself, was closely analysed so that themes could be drawn directly from it.

Multiple themes could be found in one sentence of the raw data and in some cases no codes were drawn from full paragraphs of text. It should be noted though all data elicited was read and provided insight and understanding into the individual and the background of how they came to feel and experience the phenomenon of social loafing in group work.

Finding themes was not a rigid and phase driven process. The researcher moved back and forth between review of the data, establishing themes as well as in discovering new insights. Being able to link similar and related information from the data was necessary as it allowed for greater exploration into the identified themes. This stage

of analysis allowed for detail and richness of the data to emerge and a clearer understanding of the phenomenon under study was gained.

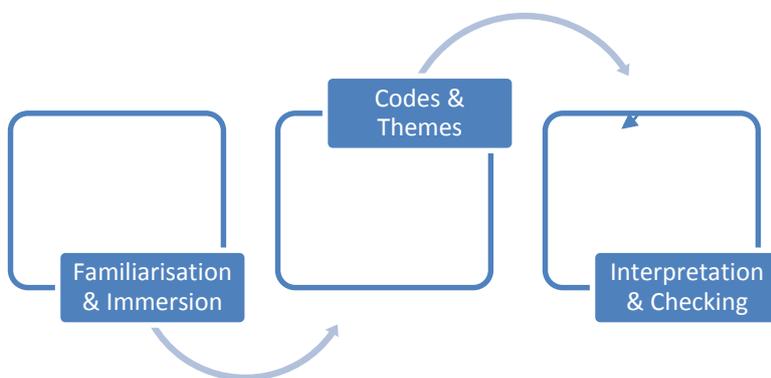
The researcher wrote noteworthy observations in the left hand margin of her transcriptions for each participant. Summaries of each interview were written. Thereafter transcription notes and summaries were re-read and themes were drawn. Themes were drawn until saturation was reached (Tesch, 1992). These themes were written down electronically and consulted with continuously in order to extract insight and meaning from the participants responses and the themes that emerged through analysis.

- **Interpretation and Checking:**

This phase entailed a written account of the phenomenon under study by making use of the themes identified throughout the analysis process.

The themes that were drawn through the inductive phase and showed recurrence were organised and linked into categories. Each of these categories were detailed and defined, so that throughout the analysis phase they could be referred to in order to ensure that the correct codes were being linked together. Analysis in this study was not a phase driven approach and was more iterative in nature, which allowed for the researcher to continuously evaluate if the categories were appropriate and where they were not they could be adjusted. This is necessary to ensure that correct meaning is extracted from the raw data. This process can be viewed in Figure 7.

Figure 7: The Data Analysis Process



Categories were then analysed to determine how they related to one another and interpretations were drawn from these relationships. These interpretations were then compared with existing theory.

The researcher double-checked all the findings and interpretations made to ensure that they add value to the study. This was necessary to ensure that trivial points were not overanalysed and given too much weight where there was no real reason for it.

In addition, the researcher engaged in a personal reflection of the role that she played throughout the data collection and analysis phases to determine whether she was open minded in her endeavours.

3.5. THE QUALITY AND RIGOUR OF THE RESEARCH

In this qualitative, phenomenological study, an investigation was conducted into the viewpoint of particular individuals' perceptions. Subjective meanings and perceptions are essential to such research and it was the duty of the researcher to access this information and to understand the experience of the individual rather than trying to generalise the findings elicited from the study (Krefting, 1991; Field & Morse, 1985).

Reliability and validity are strategies which are utilised to test the rigour of quantitative research and do not necessarily fit with the purpose of qualitative studies (Krefting, 1991). For this purpose, validity in a qualitative setting refers to the researcher checking for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures and reliability refers to the researchers approach being consistent across different researchers and projects (Creswell, 2006, p. 190). Reliability in a qualitative strategy of inquiry is referred to as trustworthiness (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

The following are practices that assisted in ensuring the trustworthiness of the study: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Maree, 2009; Krefting 1991). They are highlighted below:

- Credibility refers to how accurately the researcher recorded the information elicited by the participants of the study and the confidence held the findings

(Shenton, 2004; Bowen, 2005). This replaces internal validity in quantitative research (Shenton, 2004; Krefting 1991).

- Transferability refers to the volume of descriptive data obtained from the researcher through investigation in a specific context in order to make comparisons in other, new contexts (Terre Blanche, et. al., 2006; Bowen, 2005; Shenton, 2004; Krefting 1991). Generalisability or external validity, which is a strategy utilised in quantitative research studies, is not of relevance here, as the aim of qualitative research is to describe a phenomenon in a particular context and not necessarily to generalise the findings to the population as a whole (Terre Blanche, et. al., 2006). "Qualitative research emphasizes the uniqueness of the human situation, so that variation in experience rather than identical repetition is sought" (Field & Morse, 1985).
- Dependability in qualitative research refers to the extent that the reader can be convinced that the experiences occurred as they are pointed out by the researcher (Terre Blanche, et. al., 2006; Bowen, 2005).
- Confirmability makes reference to the idea that the researcher, as a human being, brings with to the study her own subjective perceptions and predetermined conclusions and that in order to remove this element from tainting the research, the researcher needs to unpack these ideas and become aware of the existence so that they do not influence the interpretation of the information received from the informant (Shenton, 2004).

In order to ensure that the study was credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable and overall trustworthy, the following tools were utilised:

- Triangulation(Terre Blanche, et. al., 2006; Shenton, 2004);
- Voluntary participation by informants:
Despite the use of purposive sampling, informants will agree or disagree to participate in the study. This will assist in eradicating the need for informants to give socially acceptable responses.
- Supervisory Review:
Peer examination was used to verify the validity of the study (Maree, 2009; Cresswell, 2006). The supervisor for this particular study acted as an objective eye to the interpretations drawn and process followed throughout the research.
- Reflexivity of the researcher:

The researcher was the primary instrument for gathering data throughout the research process, which was an additional reason as to why qualitative research was an appropriate strategy to utilise (Cresswell, 2009). The researcher engaged with the research participants through face-to-face interaction with the aim of extracting the meaning held by the participants on the phenomenon under investigation (Cresswell, 2006). Qualitative research provided the potential for a holistic and exploratory approach to the phenomena under study. It is flexible in nature and allowed the researcher to alter the research process as new information and understanding was gained (Rynes & Gephart, 2004).

Due to the study being qualitative in nature, it was necessary for the Researcher to interact and immerse herself with the research participants. Due to this, it is important for the researcher's preconceived views, ideas and perceptions to be unpacked in order to ensure that the researcher does not project her personal views, ideas and perceptions regarding social loafing onto the research participants. Her attempt at reflexivity was documented through the analysis phase.

- Thorough analysis of transcription:

Transcripts were inspected to make sure they were absent of mistakes that may have been made during the transcription process; that the definitions of codes remained the same throughout the process and had an inter-coder agreement whereby another party served as a sounding board and cross-checked the codes to see if they agreed on the meaning and use thereof (my supervisor performed this role) (Cresswell, 2006).

- Crystallisation:

Crystallisation was made use of. It entailed establishing themes based on merging several perspectives from participants (Cresswell, 2006).

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics is concerned with what is good with regard to human interaction and ethical behaviour emerges when one considers what is good for others as well as oneself (Rossouw & van Vuuren, 2006).

When conducting any type of research that involves human participants, in this case an interview, it is important consider the ethics that should be involved. This is necessary in order to protect the physical and psychological well-being of the respondent.

In conducting the interviews for this research the following ethical guidelines were considered and adhered to:

3.6.1. Autonomy and Respect for the Dignity of Persons:

This deals with the protection of individual confidentiality and anonymity (Terre Blanche, et. al., 2006). The respondents were assured that their identity would remain anonymous and the only individuals who would be privy to the information would be the researcher and her Supervisor. Such data will be stored safely for a specified period of time and access to this data will be restricted.

3.6.2. Nonmaleficence:

The research should not bring harm to respondents of research (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). In this case, no harm or wrong befell the interviewee. They were treated with the greatest care and respect throughout the interview process as well as following the interview. Their interests were taken into account with all decisions that were taken.

3.6.3. Informed Consent:

The participant was informed about the objective of the interview and what their role would be for the outcome of the report. The participant willingly volunteered to participate in the interview.

Participants were informed that they may withdraw at any time during the interview process without the threat of penalties. This informed consent was confirmed in writing (this document may be found in Appendix 2). This document outlined the major aspects of the interview with reference to the objective of the research, the parties

concerned as well as to the fact that the data obtained from the interview will be kept confidential.

3.6.4. Institutional Permission

To engage with postgraduate students from the University of Pretoria special permission was sought and gained from the Research Ethics Committee from the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences.

By seeking permission through these channels demonstrates that the participants' well-being was of vital importance and held the researcher to specific standards of conduct when engaging with human subjects for research purposes.

3.6.5. Participants' involvement in research:

During the interview, respondents' were encouraged to ask the interviewer to clarify any questions. At any time, the respondents' were welcomed to skip questions that posed discomfort, quit the interview process or to be excluded from the research completely.

3.6.6. Duties of the Researcher in terms of the interview:

Researcher partiality was eliminated by generating an awareness of the researcher's own thoughts and opinions through reflexivity and by adhering to well established methods of data analysis and interpretation (Babbie, 2006). This ensured that the researcher did not only see "what they are looking for or wanting to find" (Babbie, 2006) but rather what was presented to them by each participant.

3.7. Conclusion

In this chapter the following was detailed and discussed: a qualitative research approach; sampling; the method to be utilised to collect data; data analysis; the quality and rigour of the research and well as the ethical considerations for conducting research.

In the following chapter the research findings, recommendations and conclusions are discussed.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter details the analysis of the data collected from the study.

In order to conduct an accurate analysis of the data, the researcher immersed herself into the transcribed interview data. From this immersion, the researcher was able to analyse the data and identify themes and sub-themes that emerged.

4.2. The Sample

The sample for this study consisted of eight participants that were selected from a tertiary institution, namely the University of Pretoria. The researcher utilised a contact list of students, provided by her Supervisor, who were currently enrolled at the University of Pretoria. All participants were interviewed in a room, on the institution's campus, that was designed to conduct Assessment Centres and as such was conducive to an interview of this nature. It was a quiet and undisturbed environment. It also allowed the participants some familiarity with their surroundings. This room was pre-booked with the Department of Human Resources Management. Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were utilised as an appropriate means of collecting data with this sample. Table 3 provides an overview of the participants from the study.

Table 3. Overview of the demographics of the Research Participants

	Age	Race	Gender	Year of Study	Course
Participant A	22	White	Female	Honours	Human Resources Management
Participant B	22	White	Female	Honours	Human Resources Management
Participant C	24	White	Female	Honours	Human Resources Management
Participant D	25	White	Female	Masters	Industrial & Organisational Psychology

Participant E	24	White	Female	Masters	Industrial & Organisational Psychology
Participant F	23	White	Male	Masters	Industrial & Organisational Psychology
Participant G	22	White	Female	Honours	Human Resources Management
Participant H	22	White	Female	Honours	Human Resources Management

Table 3 highlights that seven of the participants were white females and one participant was a white male. All of them were completing a post graduate degree in either Human Resource Management or Industrial and Organisational Psychology.

4.3. Data Analysis

The researcher in a qualitative research endeavour serves as the main tool through which data is collected and analysed. Accurate analysis of the data requires the immersion of the researcher into the content of the data provided by each research participant. With this in mind it is important for the researcher to be reflexive and understand her own mode of thinking in order to eliminate bias. Below is the researcher's attempt at reflexivity.

Reflexivity:

As the researcher, I had to attempt to distance myself from the knowledge, ideas and opinions that I held due to my exposure to the same courses, within the same department and at the same tertiary institution as the research participants. I had to separate my personal views on this topic and I had to listen to the respondents in order to gain their knowledge and understanding of their own experiences.

In order for me to attempt this level of distance I had to unpack and bracket my own thoughts and perceptions regarding this subject. This is my story:

I am an only child. A lack of siblings and exposure to immediate play mates meant that I had to be quite inventive with my time in order to have fun and keep myself occupied. It also meant that I was spending my time doing things that I liked and enjoyed without anyone to compromise with or appease. My imagination was left to run wild and I was always inventing new games. Due to this, I became at ease with my own company.

I know of all the stereotypes that are associated with being a single child: spoilt, bossy and a brat. I cannot state for a fact that I am none of those things but what I do know is that I socialised well and never had a problem making friends. It should be noted though, that I did always try and take the lead in games or work related tasks and activities.

My parents divorced when I was six years old. This meant that both parents were working full-time and due to this I attended an after school care facility throughout my primary school years. This translated into me having to take control and manage my homework without the guidance and supervision of parents. If I didn't do it, it did not get done. I quickly learnt self-discipline and the wonder of achieving something that I was solely responsible for. I thrived. This continued into High School.

There were 25 people in my entire Matric grade. I loved it from a relational point of view as the friendships formed were close and intimate. I disliked it from a work perspective as all group work endeavours were met with challenges. Every work group, whether assigned or self-selected, resulted in working with people where close bonds existed. This meant that work related issues were often overlooked or left unspoken in order to avoid conflict between friends. I have always shied away from conflict situations. As such, I experienced group work as negative and disliked being assigned to groups in order to complete academic related tasks. I liked to work to a certain standard of excellence and wanted to achieve high results. My peers did not always feel the same way. This meant that a select few and I would complete the full assignment on our own or with very little assistance. In some ways, this may have suited my personality as the disinterest from the others allowed me a degree of control over the content and final product of a specific assignment.

I was made Head Girl for my Matric year. A privilege I took seriously and another role that I wanted to excel in. My peers informed me that I was firm but fair in the execution of my duties in this role. Something I took great pride in.

When I started my studies at a tertiary institution I was excited to be a number in an enormous institution. It was so completely foreign to any other aspect of my life up until that point and I welcomed the change.

I anticipated that group work would be different to my High School experiences. After all, these were people who achieved good results in Matric and had chosen to further themselves in terms of their education. I assumed that these were like minded individuals. I was not entirely correct. I certainly found like-minded individuals with a passion for learning and an ambition to excel but I also encountered the opposite, people who did not have any desire to apply their minds to a project or assignment. I found that these individuals were happy to rest on their laurels and have others complete a task on their behalf. Some of these people were even friends. Again, I was in this predicament of working alongside friends with whom I could not confront regarding their lack of input. Even though group evaluations were in the form of peer reviews I could not necessarily mark my peers accurately as they would react negatively towards me if they were given a lower mark than myself. Peer evaluations were certainly easier when I was working within a group where I had no connections to the individuals outside of the working group or class.

Group work became more enjoyable at a post-graduate level as almost all of my peers were interested in the assignment content and in completing the assignment to the highest standard possible. There was also greater camaraderie at this educational level as peers would even assist one another on individual assignments. People with certain strengths in specific areas did not hesitate to assist those whose strengths lay elsewhere and vice versa.

I have always conformed to the rules. I find comfort in structure and guidelines. I thrive in an environment where rules, procedures, objectives and goals are clearly

defined. This may be why I excelled in the schooling system. I never rebelled or did anything that I was not prepared to share with my parents.

When given the freedom to make choices and to find "my own way" I tend to try and find vindication from others regarding my decision/s. I am indecisive. I concern myself over the opinion and feelings of others and I do not like anyone to be unhappy by a choice that I have made. As such I am always trying to find the course of action that pleases as many people as possible. I perceive that the people closest to be tend to find this frustrating and exhausting.

This incongruence in me is quite fascinating. On the hand, I push for control when I feel that there is an outcome to be evaluated and something to be achieved. I feel confident in making decisions and taking action I believe best in order to obtain the best possible outcome but when asked to make a day-to-day decision regarding which movie we should see or which restaurant we should eat at, I feel an overwhelming sense of responsibility and a desperate need to ensure that my desires are not coming before that of another.

I have come to realise that it may have all begun with my childhood and early development. First, through having to occupy myself with things that I found interesting and entertaining and later, in having to manage school related matters and social responsibilities. The independence I was given in choosing what I wanted to do and how I wanted to do it, empowered me academically but by not having to negotiate with others I developed an overarching need to be liked and included by others which has resulted in my seeking the affirmation and approval from them before making decisions that affect them, socially.

4.3.1. Summary of Each Participant's Interview

As part of the data analysis process, a summary of each participant's interview is provided below. This summary together with the detailed transcriptions of each interview, served as the means through which the researcher gained insight into the perception of social loafing held by the students. Each interview summary is followed by reflexivity on the part of the researcher. It details her thinking and feelings regarding the interview and the participant. The summary of each interview follows:

Participant A:

Participant A was a twenty two year old white female. She was completing her Honours degree in Human Resources Management.

This participant informed me that she had been exposed to large amounts of group work and that group work activities started from her first year of study at the University of Pretoria. The participant had taken part in group work activities with the same people since her second year at university. The only time that group membership would differ would be when a lecturer assigned students to specific groups. She was aware of the term social loafing and had previously experienced it within a group work settings at the University.

She defined loafing as “whenever you are in a group you don't have to pull your weight because everyone else is doing your job”.

Her experience of loafing centred on a particular individual with a work group who was not contributing to the same level of the rest of the group members. Due to this, she reasoned that self-selecting group members was essential to a productive group work experience.

This participant held that she loves working in her current group and that she is "blessed with the best". Her preference for working individually or within a group would be dependent on the specifications of the assignment.

Reflexivity:

This participant was incredibly passionate about the topic of group work and answered the interview questions zealously.

As the first interview I conducted, I was taken aback at her enthusiasm for group work. She appeared to have an experience that I had never encountered in my group work endeavours: from her perspective, the members seemed to have the perfect balance of personalities and each person was fulfilling a task that they enjoyed. They all knew their strengths and played to them.

From the way that she was speaking, I could identify that she was most likely a type-A personality that wants to be in control and feels a desperate desire to achieve well.

I identified with her need to achieve and to have control over the final product and I envied the wondrous group that she spoke of.

Participant B

Participant B was a twenty two year old white female. She was completing her Honours degree in Human Resources Management at The University of Pretoria.

Participant B had been exposed to group work from her first year of study at the University of Pretoria. This participant had experienced social loafing within her work groups during her studies.

This participant mentioned that one of her experiences with loafing occurred in a work group of six people. One member did not contribute at all to the final product of the assignment. She mentioned that this individual had many other social activities that were occupying her time and she believed that these could be the reasons for her lack of effort in the assignment.

She felt that the subject and type of assignment determined whether she would like to work in a group or individually. She felt that she liked working in groups where she may have difficulty in understanding key concepts or ideas and that through brainstorming with others she gains greater insight and understanding than she would

have if she was working on her own. She also felt that a greater volume of course work could be covered through group work.

Reflexivity:

This participant impressed me with the time she took to think about the questions that were posed to her. She truly thought about what she wanted to say before she expressed it to me. This may have been due to Afrikaans being her home language. From listening to this participant it appeared that before her postgraduate studies, she had always seemed to work in groups with people that she did not have a relationship with outside of the workgroup.

Participant C:

Participant C was an Honours student in Human Resources Management. This respondent was a white, twenty four year old female.

This participant had been enrolled at the University of Pretoria for 6 years and felt that she had sufficient group work experience to answer the questions posed to her in the interview. This participant was aware of the term social loafing and had experienced it through the duration of her studies at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. She defined social loafing as *“It is when someone exerts less effort when in a group than if they were to work alone”*.

In particular, this participant had a group member take credit for work that was not completed by her. The group had to conduct interviews with Industrial and Organisational Psychologists. Each member of the group was assigned a person to interview. Due to the shyness of one member, participant C conducted her interview for her. This shy member proceeded to take credit for the interview thereafter. In addition, this particular member did not add value to the rest of the assignment as she did the bare minimum. Despite this, she felt that she had sufficient group work experience to carry out the assignment in its entirety on her own.

Social loafing had an effect on the way in which she views group work. She would rather work alone.

Reflexivity:

I found that throughout my interview with this participant, I kept comparing her experience to my own. She enjoyed working on her own and if she was to work in a group she preferred to be with people who would let her take control and make the decisions.

I did find myself passing judgement towards this participant when she stated that at their Honours team building they had to produce and act in their own play and that she informed her team that she would not participate at all due to the lack of reward for doing so.

Participant D:

Participant D was a twenty five year old white female completing her first year of Masters in Industrial and Organisational Psychology at the University of Pretoria.

This participant was aware of the term social loafing and had sufficient experience in group work in order to participate in the study. She defined social loafing as, *"When an individual does not exert an amount of effort that he or she would have exerted individually, when they are in a group"*.

The participant expressed that she had been in a group where the lecturer of a module had assigned the students into groups. The participant had a negative group experience as one of the members engaged in social loafing. The loafer did the bare minimum; she was late for every deadline; the work she did complete was incorrect and had to be corrected. The presence of the loafer was felt by the group and the participant felt frustrated and extra pressure to perform. She stated that it complicated matters as each group member had their own schedule and that the presence of the loafer meant extra time checking on someone else's work and additional time to change it.

Due to the participant's group experiences at a postgraduate level she hates group work and would rather work individually.

Reflexivity:

This participant left an impression. Her body language was what spoke loudest to me. She answered the questions candidly enough but her body language said something different. She was sitting very upright, rigid and had her arms crossed over her chest. The only time that they moved was when she took a sip of water. I felt that she would rather have been somewhere else.

Participant E:

Participant E was a twenty four year old white female completing her first year Masters course work in Industrial and Organisational Psychology. This participant had been sufficiently exposed to group work experiences in order to participate in the study. She was aware of the term social loafing and had personal experience relating to the subject. She defined the term as *“People just taking the easy route. Not pulling their weight in a group”*.

This participant felt that people in a group were either oblivious to the fact that they were contributing less than their peers or they attempted to manipulate others into thinking that they were participating but were doing very little. An example of the latter was when this participant had to complete a group research assignment with two full time students. At every meeting the one, non-contributing, member would attempt to distract the group from the work she had not completed. She would list things that needed to be done; she would busy herself with writing and with shifting papers and documents around. Despite her efforts, the group identified her lack of input.

Participant E stated that she liked individual work over group work as she felt less guilt in working according to her own time schedule; she did not have to worry that others were dependent on her; there was less pressure; and she could work to her own standards. Although, she does acknowledge that working in groups provided her with

many insights that she may not have gained through individual work due to the brainstorming and idea sharing that took place.

Reflexivity:

This participant spoke openly about her experiences. She held very strong views on group work and I found her insights interesting.

She spoke a lot and would answer many questions at one time. She fidgeted quite a bit and would not necessarily follow her ideas through to full fruition. With active listening though, I was able to tie up and make sense of her dialogue.

Participant F:

Participant F was a white male of twenty three years of age completing his first year course work for his Master's degree in Industrial and Organisational Psychology.

The participant had been exposed to a significant amount of group work and as such was able to participate in the study. He was aware of the phenomenon of social loafing and had personal experiences thereof. He described social loafing as *"When you go to less effort or out in less effort to get something done or achieve a goal when you are working in a group then when you are working individually"*.

Interestingly, this candidate acknowledged that he had loafed himself as well as having experienced loafing by other group members.

This participant has a negative view of group work based on his experiences, particularly during his Masters studies. He stated that his choice to work individually or in a group would be dependent on the type of assignment at hand. If it was a large volume of work, it was nicer to complete it in a group, but sometimes it was nice to work at his own pace and do things his own way and thus an individual assignment would be better.

Reflexivity:

This participant was the only male in the sample. I found him to be very laid back in the way that he entered the room, the way that he sat for the duration of the interview and the way in which he answered the questions.

Participant G:

Participant G is a twenty two year old white female who was completing her Honours degree in Human Resource Management.

This participant had been exposed to group work and was familiar with the term social loafing. She defined it as *“When someone rides on the back of others in group work. They tend not to do as much as the others then they get the same mark”*.

Participant G mostly had positive experiences at a postgraduate level. She stated that she had a hard working group and that two of the group members have the same work ethic as herself. She had, however, been in a group where there were 6 individuals who were divided into pairs in order to complete specific tasks and one pair did not contribute at all and the other members had to complete the work.

Participant G explained that she loved group work and team work. When she has worked in her group she felt that she was permitted to be creative and was relied upon to develop new ideas. She says that individual work is also enjoyable as you can determine your own deadlines and there is no difficulty in getting members to meet. So she is happy to carry out work in either format.

Reflexivity:

I feel that this participant may have been hindered in her responses due to language barriers. She is Afrikaans and I feel that had the interview been conducted in her home language her responses may have been richer. Although, I do feel that she was still able to answer candidly and authentically.

Participant H:

Participant H was a twenty two year old white female. She was completing her Honours degree in Human Resource Management.

This participant had exposure to group work throughout her studies. She was aware of the term social loafing. She was not certain that she had significant exposure to the phenomenon but was willing to continue with the interview and in answering the questions. She explained her understanding of the term social loafing as “...*happens in a group setting; people working in groups. There is always that one or two people that go along with what the group says and don't really work hard themselves and then at the end they loaf, as the term says, at the end they get extremely good marks when they didn't really do a lot*”.

With some contemplation, this participant found that people who were working full time during her Honours year tended to have less time to complete assignments and she found that their focus and thoughts were elsewhere. As such, this may have played a role towards social loafing.

She acknowledges that group work provided her with an opportunity to deal with others, to become aware of social loafing and how to confront it. She enjoyed group work and found that it was helpful when there was a large amount of work to be covered and she enjoyed the opinions of others. She did, however, enjoy working on her own as she could work at her own pace.

Reflexivity:

I perceived this participant as someone who is nonchalant about life and daily activities. I felt that deadlines that are dictated by others would hamper her sense of self and that she does not conform well to direction and instructions from others. In addition, she does not strike me as someone who is concerned with excellence. She appears content to achieve what is necessary and that anything over that is personal time wasted.

I did wonder to myself what it would be like to exist in such a fashion and I envied her ability to not be driven by deadlines and marks.

4.3.2. Themes from the Interviews

Themes were derived from the data elicited from the interviews and from additional insights that were drawn from summarising the interview of each respondent. Each participant's verbatim quotations are utilised as validation for the inclusion of each theme. The themes identified are detailed below:

4.3.2.1. Social Loafing - Definition Overlap with Diverging Interpretation

What I found interesting through my reading of the data was how each participant could define the concept of social loafing accurately (I do believe that this is, in part, due to their training) but that when asked to conduct introspection on their own behaviours and possible engagement in the phenomenon, their interpretations of loafing were noteworthy and disparate.

Participants identified ways in which one can loaf that do not directly link with work output and content, which the term social loafing is commonly known for, but that it occurred when there was a lack of observable reward; when there were other dominant parties or overachievers present; when delegation of work topics were utilised as a means to reduce time spent on the task; when one was unprepared or had limited knowledge of the topic.

Participants expressed that loafing occurred when other group members would take charge in organising, leading, and controlling the group. These dominant individuals shaped the way in which Participant B, F and G viewed their personal contributions to the group as a whole.

Participant B stated that she had withdrawn in terms of communication and leadership when dominant parties were present. She explains it in the following way:

"I withdrew because there were dominant leaders who were making arrangements and giving dominant input into how to approach the assignment",

"...perhaps in the logistical management of group work".

She went on to explain that she is not competitive in nature but likes to get the job done. She feels that when another strong personality enters the group and appears competent enough to lead the group towards the final goal, she takes a step back and allows this person to do so.

Participant F felt that the presence of overachievers was cause for his engagement loafing in a group work context:

"...the overachievers really drive and drive and they want a 90 and you also want to do good but they sometimes take it to the extreme and then at some point you just like sort of give it over to them and let them run with and you sit back and loaf".

In dealing with overachievers, Participant G felt that she had not exerted sufficient effort when compared with her mark driven peers:

"...if there are lot of overachievers in your group and you do your part but then they do more than what we discussed at the beginning of the assignment"

"...makes that other group members feel like Whoa! give me some more work...".

Participant G emphasised that she always contributed to the output that was agreed upon at the commencement of the group work assignment but that due to the overachievers providing more than what was agreed to, she often felt that she had not contributed equally.

Participant E referred to her meaning of loafing by making certain that she was delegated tasks that she most wanted to complete either because she had knowledge of the topic or had previously completed an assignment on such a topic. She admits to achieving this by manipulating her group members:

"I would quickly try and figure out which questions would be the most easiest [sic] for me to do, that I have done research on previously and I will be able to quickly produce something",

"...convincing everyone that I must do this part...and not giving them an option".

Participant C admits to withdrawing her efforts when she was asked to participate in a team building activity involving role play with her peers:

"I said to the group, listen I will stand there in the corner you people can do this".

She refused to involve herself in the activity due to a lack of observable reward or outcome for her, personally. Most interesting about this participant was that when initially asked if she had ever engaged in loafing, her immediate response was to deny that she had. After some thought though, she admitted that she may have done so in team building activities.

Participant H explained that she had loafed when she did not have the necessary information available to her in order to brainstorm with her group. She feels that this occurs when she has not set aside time to go over the work before meeting with her group:

"...If I am not prepared".

4.3.2.2. Power

A central theme that was communicated by the participants was one of power. Power relations impacted the personal relationships within a group work setting as well as the effectiveness and success of the group. These power relations were demonstrated by participants in their attempts to control, intervene or be submissive towards the incidence of social loafing in their groups:

Control:

Control was a prominent theme in the data. There were those who sought control in every facet of every group in which they interacted; there were those who were happy to relinquish control in the presence of a more dominant personality; and then those

who were always content to follow the direction of another from initiation of the assignment through to completion.

Participant A and D were fervent in their pursuit for control. Each one expressed that they had never engaged in loafing at any time.

Participant A was the self-proclaimed leader of her group. She admits, though, that her group were a "well-oiled machine" in that they knew their own as well as the others' strengths and weaknesses and as such this lessened her need to lead. She verbalised that success and the best results from each assignment were always her ultimate goal and as such if someone in the group was not contributing to that outcome she would work that person out of the group.

Participant A details how she is described by her mother: a "stoomroller"(English translation: steam roller) in that whatever she wants she will get it. In practice, an individual was standing in her way of achieving the best results in a group work setting and as such she ensured that she worked them out of their group:

"I bypassed her in the system".

She was incensed by the presence of the loafer and expressed her feelings regarding this individual in the following ways:

"Who are you to influence my marks and toegang tot keuring (English translation: access to selection)".

"We do not need her".

Participant D stated that she had never engaged in social loafing as her marks and results were too important to her and that at a postgraduate level one has to perform well:

"Group members may not all have the same goals and objectives. Some are prepared to just pass and that is not an option for me, I want to get the highest possible mark on every assignment".

Both participants articulated their need to oversee the whole assignment and that they would be responsible for the editing and final product that is submitted. Their actions were always directed towards the pursuit of excellence.

Participant C, too, admitted to wanting control over the assignment as a whole:

"I would rather do more because I know what I am capable of";

She stated that she liked working with individuals who were not too concerned with the content of the assignment as this made negotiating for control and decision making much easier.

"I like to know what is going on in the assignment".

In addition, she emphasised that even if she was grouped with a strong member she would still amend the individuals work to meet with her specific standards:

"...even if she had performed excellently, I would have changed her words, spelling and grammar".

Participant E felt that it was more efficient to have a more inclusive group work environment. She felt that groups worked best when tasks and activities were delegated and based around an action plan. This said action plan should be developed by the group as a whole and that group members should be asked how they felt and what specific tasks they would like to complete. She believed that group work was about compromise and that if necessary she could assume the leadership role but if there was someone else who appeared more dominant and competent then she was content to let that person lead.

Participant F was at ease to let another person lead the group but if the circumstances transpired where nobody else took initiative to get the project done, then he would step in:

"Sometimes you will play the leader if nobody does or sometimes you get the heavy overachievers then you tend to step back and take more of a following role".

Participant G was content to be led by another member of her group. She stated that her group members were delegated tasks by their group leader and that this person kept control over the assignment as a whole:

"One girl delegates the work and I love it because I hate delegating or telling people what to do".

She also explained that her group was in a position of control as it was known throughout the class that her group worked well together and they worked efficiently and they could pick and choose the members that they wanted to add to their existing group:

"Not to brag but we were in such a position"

Participant H attempted to steer clear of working in a group with members who were not "A-type" personalities, that had low stress levels and that were not looking to put in 25% more effort than what would have been necessary. She preferred to work at her own pace and these individuals were not understanding of that. She did not like to feel that another person was controlling her time or her output.

Confrontation

Participants also experienced a break down in relations with peers when loafing was exhibited by themselves or others. Often, this indicated break down occurred whether the loafer was confronted for their behaviour or not at all.

After several work assignments participant A eventually confronted the loafer from her work group. This had a detrimental impact on their relationship thereafter. She provides a particular example of this experience:

"She [the loafer] came to me and asked me can she be in my group and then I took the grown up route and told her 'no', and this is the reasons...; for the first time I actually explained to her and said it as it is. She said, 'why didn't you tell me earlier?' I said 'We did, we tried, what were we supposed to do?' Needless to say, we were friends but we aren't anymore".

This participant's decision was vindicated when the loafer joined another group. A group member from this new group expressed to Participant A that she could fully grasp why the decision had been made to exclude her from additional group work activities. This loafer had carried her loafing behaviour into her new group:

"She was in a new group with one of my friends and after their group work she [the friend] expressed that she understood why I said no".

In a group where Participant B had dealt with a social loafer she contemplated discussing this individual's lack of participation with a lecturer but decided that this was not the solution to the problem as the loafer would have been passed on to another group to deal with or this individual would not have anyone to work with at all. She stated that such an action would not have been "human". She admits to having tried to control the specific loafer's behaviour by grouping all of the members into pairs in order to complete specific sections of the group assignment. The person that she paired the loafer with was someone he had positive relations with and that she felt would assist in getting the loafer to meet the required deadlines and objectives. Due to her lack of relationship with the loafer she did not feel comfortable in confronting the individual face-to-face.

Confrontation was not an avenue that Participant C wished to pursue in her interactions with a loafer. The actions of her fellow group members forced her hand in this regard. The loafer had attempted to add her own name to content of the assignment that was completed by Participant C and as such she felt that this behaviour was unacceptable. The intervention came in the form of a conversation between Participant C and the loafer regarding plagiarism and the implications for all of the members. The solution that they arrived at was that no name would appear on that section of the assignment. Thereafter, she withdrew in terms of her personal relationship with this individual as they were previously friends.

Participant F expressed a similar stance to that of Participant C. He explained that he avoids conflict as a rule and as such would rarely confront loafers in his groups. The only confrontation that ever took place was when other members of the group confronted the specific loafer. From his observations, their attempts were futile, as the behaviour of the loafer did not change:

"The group told him to pull his weight and then he did some work but not to the level that we expected".

Participant D voiced frustration when she was faced with a loafer in her work in her Masters year of study. She felt that at this level, it was too complicated and time

consuming to confront the person regarding their loafing and that she merely came to terms with the fact that she would have to complete the unfinished work:

"If you say something, there is a negative aura or atmosphere in the group and that will affect progress of the assignment. At a Masters level you don't have time to deal with conflict so you just over see it and do that person's part as well".

The manner in which Participant E attempted to confront the loafer that was present in her work group was to constantly send her emails and messages regarding her portion of the work. She would reply with detailed notes on what needed to be completed and created deadlines. When she worked in a group with this person she started to identify which piece of work would be easiest for this person to complete. In some ways she felt that it had an impact but she noted that it affected her personal relationship with the person.

For Participant G the other members of her group decided that action needed to be taken to control the loafer and her lack of contribution to the specific assignment. They decided that approaching a lecturer was not the best solution so one of the group members confronted the loafer directly. The respondent stated that even after confrontation the work by the loafer did not improve and they demonstrated a "don't care" attitude. The personal relationships changed between the loafer and the member who confronted them:

"I felt like there was a lot of conflict in the group. After the assignment there was lots of tension between them and the person who told them that they could not hand their portion in"

Participant H did confront the social loafer face-to-face. Through discourse she found out that it was due to the person working full time that her participation and contribution were not up to standard. She explained that the group as a whole could be slightly more lenient on the loafer but that it did mean that the person could submit substandard work as the group were still Honours students and should be held to that level of work. Participant H claims that the behaviour improved after confrontation.

Interaction and Appraisal

The manner in which students interacted and worked with one another in a group context as well as the way in which they were evaluated was noteworthy. These dynamics are instrumental in understanding the impact of social loafing on the functionality of a work group. This theme can be broken down into two subthemes, namely Impact of loafing on relationships and Peer evaluation.

- Impact of loafing on relationships:

Grouping individuals together to complete a task or activity requires these individuals to work closely with one another. The narratives of some of the participants illustrated how familiarity with group members affected a group's ability to work well together and to achieve good results.

Participant A strongly believes that the success of her group work endeavours was due to her knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of each of her group members and as such task delegation was efficient and effective. Further to this, she explains that lecturer assigned groups are "messy", and that there is limited knowledge of members and time is limited in order to get to a point where you do:

"For a group to be effective you need to know one another".

She explained that the group she had continuously worked with for several years performed together like a well-oiled machine and that she would hate to have to work with other people:

"If they tell me that next year in Masters you are not allowed to work with anyone from your Honours group, I will cry and have a nervous breakdown. No Jokes!"

Participant B felt that she had much more positive group experiences at a postgraduate level. She felt that this was due to the fact that at postgraduate students knew each other better, they were more invested in the process and they needed to perform well and perform quickly.

She believed that group member selection was determined by two factors: a) does a person want good grades and high quality output or b) does a person want to learn to engage with others. She preferred to select her own members based on point "a" so that she could select the individuals she could work well with and that she knew would contribute well.

In congruence with this view is Participant A's explanation of the time constraints that a postgraduate student experienced and that adjusting to new people, understanding their strengths and weaknesses and building constructive working relationships was challenging.

"Time is so short and pressure is so high there is no time to create or identify dynamics in a group or to get to know one another".

Participant D believed that working with people that she knew meant that it was possible to select group members who worked to a similar standard and were seeking the same objectives and outcomes:

"I have worked with friends in a group and we all aim at higher marks so we know each other's way of working and the tempo at which we work, so that is good".

This participant preferred to select her own group members as they delegate work content in terms of their strengths and this ensured that the assignment is completed in the best manner possible.

Participant H expressed that she preferred to work with new people on each new assignment as she liked the idea of new people and learning from her experiences with them. She stated that she worked best with people who she identified with and that had a more laissez a faire demeanour.

She is therefore of the same opinion as Participant A and D in that selecting people you know, are familiar with and are happy work alongside is advantageous for happy group relations and results that suit each work group.

Some participants experienced a break down in personal relationships when the presence of a loafer was perceived in a group work context. Participant A elucidated that the display of loafing tendencies in a group *"affects the friendships and the whole dynamics in the group"*. This is best summarised in her statement: *"don't mix business with friends"*.

To support this, Participant C and E provided feedback that the manifestations loafing made continued, personal relationships difficult after group work activities were complete. Group work interactions had a lasting impact:

Participant C had previously only picked her own group members. She picked members based on marks and friendships. She acknowledged that in the group where she was friends with a member, they clashed due to their similarities in personality and in wanting to dominate the group objectives:

"The one oke [male] and I clashed a hell of a lot on one of the assignments, only when I left the group this year and I entered into a new group then he and I became closer friends. He also likes to be in control".

In another incident, Participant C expressed "I am not friends with that girl any more" when she was asked about her relationship with a member that had loafed in a group that they were working in. Due to these interactions, Participant C explained that she would prefer to be assigned to a group rather than selecting her own group members. She believed that this provided one with additional scope in dealing with a multitude of personalities and provided an opportunity additional learning:

"You learn to work with different kinds of people instead of choosing the same people for every assignment, it gets boring (well for me) and not challenging".

Participant E expressed that loafing created gossip within the group and she experienced that it was disruptive to group goals and destructive to group relationships.

Participant B believed that in undergraduate group work experiences the quality and standard of work was of a lower standard and that loafing occurred. She admitted to

being the policeman or group leader of the group in order to get things done and circumvent the loafers. She felt that having to behave in this way may have affected her personal relationships within the group:

Participant F preferred to choose his own group members. He felt, however, that due to personal relationships people stayed in the same group time and time again which it made it harder to change group members even when social loafing occurred:

“It is hard to change members because now that you have gotten to know them and how they work it is hard to kick them out”.

Even with this in mind, he would still prefer to select his own group members

- Peer Evaluation:

From the data it became clear that all participants mentioned peer evaluations in their discussions of social loafing. They all held their own insights thereof:

Participant B detailed that being honest in a peer evaluation had negatively impacted her personal relationships with another group member. She felt that a group member had not contributed fully or to the same extent as the rest of the group members, so she was honest in her peer evaluation of this group member and rated her as such but the rest of the group did not employ the same tactic. She felt that due to her honesty, she had negatively impacted her relationship with this group member for a while.

“I am honest but I have experienced that other people are not honest. I was too honest in a peer evaluation and the group member felt very offended as nobody else gave her the mark that I did. I have never downgraded a group member saying that your work is low quality, I was just, from my opinion being honest”.

She believed that the other group members were not honest in their appraisal of the loafer due to friendship and insight into other responsibilities that this member for the duration of the particular group assignment:

"They knew her social schedule and res activities and stuff like that so in a sense they could sympathise a bit more and I only looked at your work was not done and you only contributed to this part of the work where they could perhaps give an explanation for why she did not contribute".

Despite this feedback, participant B supposes that peer evaluations may be a means to eliminate social loafing in a group work setting. She feels that a constructive way to implement peer evaluations in order to reduce social loafing would be to have each assignment completed in "milestones". Each milestone should be accompanied with a peer evaluation by each group member so that the lecturers can receive continual feedback regarding each member's participation in the work. In addition, each group member's work should be submitted to the lecturer for review.

Participant F expressed that people are either too harsh or too lenient when appraising the contributions of their peers. In a previous work group, the entire group had discussed the lack of input by a specific member and how angry it had made them feel. When the time came to conduct a peer review Participant F was honest and awarded the loafer a lower mark than that of the rest of the group. When he discussed the peer evaluation with the other members they admitted that they had awarded the loafer the same mark as the others. Participant F made the following statement regarding their chosen course of action:

"So what is the point of a peer review".

Despite this view, he stated that he believed that peer evaluations were effective tools in reducing social loafing. Although, he admitted to never having followed up to determine if his peer evaluation had an effect on the outcome of another member's overall assignment mark.

Similarly, Participant C felt that peer evaluations were useful:

"We did give a peer evaluation that was anonymous so that was helpful".

After some probing, the participant admitted that even though she was honest in her evaluation of this peer the loafer still received the same mark as herself.

Participants D acknowledged that peer evaluations were important to her group work endeavours and that all members, including herself, were honest when completing these instruments. Added to this, Participant A explained that she was honest in her peer evaluations. She felt that the lecturer needed to know about what was happening in her group and the lack of input from this individual loafer. She stated that peer evaluations were good tools to utilise in group work and that it allows one the opportunity to communicate with the lecturer regarding the performance of others. She explained it as a type of venting outlet:

"I am gatvol (English translation: I am fed up with) for this person please do something".

Participant E did not feel that peer evaluations were effective tools to determine a group member's level of participation. She felt that a 360 degree evaluation was a more accurate method. She stated that creating a culture of honesty around group evaluations would be essential in creating efficient and effective work groups with limited to no social loafing. She felt that this should start from the onset of group work activities at university. She did not believe that this level of honesty persisted for peer evaluations to be an effective group work tool.

Anonymity proved to be something that most of the participants agreed was essential when asking members of a group to complete a peer evaluation of one another:

Participant C felt that peer evaluations should be submitted electronically so that they are anonymous. This would be necessary due to the occurrence of group members reading what the others have written about themselves and others and how ratings had been awarded amongst other group members. Participant G was of the same opinion and stated:

"Peer evaluations to be honest they should be anonymous and therefore completed in an online format".

The evaluation by others towards one's own performance proved to be a concern for some participants.

Participant A voiced that a motivational factor for not engaging in loafing within group work was due to the fact that she would not want others to perceive her performance negatively. This facet was integral in her decision to refrain from any loafing behaviour:

"I know what it feels like to be in a group where someone has not done their part and I don't want someone to feel that way about me".

Participant D expressed similar sentiment to Participant A. Good marks are important to her and she felt that this must be the case for the other group members as well:

"I do not want to be the reason that others are affected by a low mark".

4.3.2.3. Responsibility

Responsibility on the part of the lecturers; the group members themselves; and the group size emerged as a theme throughout the data.

Responsibility to Learning:

Those whom are prescribing group work have a responsibility to ensure that learning is achieved by all members of a group. The participants had several concerns in this regard.

Participant D felt that lecturers should not assign as many group work activities as is currently the case. She felt that it was not a worthwhile endeavour for all group members as only partial learning takes place.

A common reaction from participants mirrored the opinion of Participant D. They felt that due to the way in which tasks were delegated in their respective groups, group members did not always receive the full knowledge of the topic.

Participant F elaborated that:

"If you split the work, you place more focus on the work that you have to do so the other parts that you don't do, you don't really get much exposure or understanding of that part of the work".

Participant G described a group that she had worked in:

"I don't think that they had an idea about what was in the final document. Quite a lot of the content was required to write the exam and I don't think that they understood it".

Participant H experienced that gaining a holistic understanding of the assignment and its overall content was time dependent. Work was completed individually, within a group, due to time constraints. As such, she admits that mostly did not have a thorough knowledge of the full content of the assignment that was completed.

Participant A felt that her current group members had grasped a holistic understanding of the content of each assignment. She believed that all of the members in her group had participated equally.

Participant F felt that there was little that lecturers could do in order to limit social loafing. He felt that the lecturer cannot determine which member contributed what and that doing so goes against the whole objective of group work. He believes that at a postgraduate level students are expected to be more responsible in their academic endeavours:

"They [lecturers] can't sit in front of them and watch everyone doing their part".

Participant E sensed that lecturers were not sufficiently hands on regarding the process of group work. The opinion held by this participant was that lecturers stated that group work is "a reality of life" and something that needs to be dealt with. She stated that she agreed with their perspective but elaborated and felt that it was their responsibility to manage it. She explained that as an Industrial and Organisational Psychology student it would one day be her responsibility to facilitate group work of others but that she could not facilitate productive group interactions in her own group. She recommended face-to-face conversations between the lecturer and each group member was necessary in order for them to understand how they should assist in this process in a very practical way. This insight could provide information on how each group is functioning but to also give guidance to group members on how to overcome certain issues in practice. She stated that she fully appreciated that a group was

responsible for ensuring contribution by each group member but that she believed greater facilitation by lecturers was necessary.

Responsibility of Group Members

When a loafer did not contribute, Participant D felt that additional responsibility was placed on her and the other group members to ensure that the loafers section was completed. She felt that this additional responsibility added pressure to her already busy schedule and meant that the same amount of effort could not be exerted for this additional work:

"You plan your own schedule and he/she doesn't do their part then it is down to you".

Participant F experienced the fact that someone always took responsibility for the work in the end. He explained that either the overachievers would make sure that the group received a good mark or you would pick up the slack. Either way, the assignment would be completed. He admits to being on both sides of this coin. He admits that when he was left to do the work he felt angry:

"...if you are working hard and the other person is going to get the same mark as you for doing nothing"

Interestingly, Participant H felt that having a loafer present in a group increased the responsibility of the other group members and gave them little room for loafing themselves:

"You can't rely on them if you want to slack a bit".

She explained that the point of group work was to lean on others. It was not always possible for her to perform at her best and it was good to know that she had other members to assist her. She believed that when you view all the group work endeavours over the whole year, it all balances out. In other words, not everyone could always perform at their best and so someone else would assist them but that they tables would turn in another group assignment and the favour would be returned.

Participant B detailed that it was her groups' responsibility to delegate and plan. It was a team effort; if the team did not do their part then they should be prepared to accept the result. If they want to change their output they need to change their input. In other words, if a group had a social loafer present it was the group's responsibility to address this.

Participant E refers to the responsibility that each group member has to the other. She explains that each person is dependent on the other to achieve common objectives and that in some of the groups that she participated in, this concept was lost on some members. She believes that if each person contributed fully the final product would be greater:

"They didn't realise that there was a possibility that we might not finish it."

"They don't feel as if I am dependent on them".

Contrary to some of these ideas some participants identified certain learning outcomes, that despite the incidence of social loafing, they had gained through group work.

Participant B and E explained that they found that working in a group was a great tool in assisting them in understanding subject matter that they were not previously familiar with or was a particular weakness for them.

In addition, they stated that working in groups provided them with the opportunity for exposure to new ways of thinking and concepts that they would not have been privy to had they not participated in group work.

Group Size:

Keeping a group's size to less than five members was a recurring theme. Participants pointed out that having too many people in a group made loafing easier. Most participants felt that it was the responsibility of a lecturer to ensure that group size is kept small.

Participant C made reference a work group that she was in for her Bachelor's Degree. She explained that they had 10 group members working together and that the task was only completed by a select few of those members:

"I had to be in a group of 10, I ended up being the group leader and I think only 4 of us completed the assignment, because the group was so big they felt that they could shift responsibility on to other people who they know would do the work".

She felt that they knew that she was driven and wanted to achieve good results and that they used that to their advantage:

"They knew I was warned about my marks and that I would do the work, and I did".

She believes that an optimal group size is between two to four members.

Participant B felt that group size was integral in ensuring that all members received an holistic view of the topic under review. She had to work in a group consisting of her and someone else whereas the rest of the class had more than two people allocated to their groups. Her two-person group had to work closely together in order to complete the tasks and knew each aspect of the assignment in its entirety. In the other groups, where they were five people, most of the members only knew the sections that they had completed. They had no idea how their content fitted in the greater scheme of things. In her opinion, a group of four people could internalise and grasp the content of the assignment but with five or more, she does not believe that this is the case.

Participant F explained that he felt bigger groups almost certainly resulted in lower productivity. This participant felt that an optimal group size was between three to four people. He believed that anything bigger than that allowed people to socialise more than completing any work:

"Smaller groups are more focussed on getting work done".

She also feels that group size should be limited to three to four members in order to reduce the potential for loafing to occur. In two separate group assignments where she was grouped with six members she experienced loafing by at least one member.

A group size of 5 is viewed as an optimal group size by Participant A. She states that *"too many cooks spoil the pot"*.

Participant D and E had experienced that a group size of four members was optimal. They both alleged that larger groups provide greater opportunity to hide their efforts.

Participant H believed that in a larger group a larger scope of work could be completed but that this is the case for medium groups as well. She finds that a smaller group is easier to coordinate meetings amongst members.

4.3.2.4. Observed characteristic/factors for loafing

Males

A common theme amongst participants was that males tend towards social loafing when they are working in a group.

Participant C had previously worked with an older male of a different race and believed that he did not contribute in the same way as the other group members. She felt that the males in her groups, in general, were less productive than their female counterparts. She did explain though that she would rather work with males as they allow her to take control and to make the decisions regarding the overall group endeavours. She liked working with males as they were most likely to relinquish the control of the assignment to her:

"I have noticed that the males that I have worked with generally do not perform as great as girls....but I would rather work with a man because then I can exert control. They are like 'yeah, just do whatever, take the lead'...and then all is well".

Males, according to participant B, were more likely to loaf. She believed that this was due to the fact that assignments required attention to detail and that more effort was required. She stated that males believed that their female counterparts are better at those aspects and that males withdrew based on the hope that the females would take over these responsibilities. In addition, she does not believe that the males paid as much attention or show as much interest as their female counterparts during classes.

Participant G described the profile of a social loafer as being male. She stated that males knew that girls like to get tasks and activities done and completed in a certain way. She believed that the males she has worked with utilised this to their advantage.

Interestingly, Participant F (who is male) admitted to having engaged in loafing. He stated that he was more likely to loaf when grouped with overachievers who are controlling and are happy to do the bulk of the work in order to get the best results. He stated that he too would like good results but is satisfied with a lower mark than that of the overachiever-type personalities that he has been grouped with. In addition, he also states that his interest in a topic determined whether or not he engaged in loafing. If he was interested in the content then he was less likely to loaf. He believed this to be true for most people. He also stated that time restrictions were a reason why loafing occurred. Working part-time meant that he had less time than a full time student and as such may not have contributed to his full potential.

He admits that he does not think that the other members perceived his loafing actions though as they would have expressed their dissatisfaction with him.

Extroversion

Participant E describes the profile of a social loafer as someone who may be selfish; someone who pretends to take on the role of the leader and then delegates all of the work that should be completed to others; people in a position of power either by being attractive, through wealth or a position that they hold; they are social, manipulative and talkative; more commonly found in the Southern Hemisphere.

Participant F described a loafer in the following way:

"...a person who appears to be "happy-go-lucky", they are always smiling and easy going and nothing negative really affects them, everything will work itself out."

Participant H felt that the profile of a social loafer can be described as a laid back person who does not stress a lot; someone who is very social and likes to interact with

people and the group; they are more relational focussed than task focussed; and they are people who do as little as possible but just want to get the task done.

Participant A felt that loafers are generally individuals who said that they would complete tasks and then don't. She says they are a "load mouth" and are full of empty promises.

Interest

Participant B and F also believed that interest in actual content or subject matter of the work assignment could determine whether one engaged in loafing or not.

3.4.2.4. Frustration as a product of Social Loafing

Participant A felt that the presence of a social loafer had an effect on the motivational levels of everyone in her group, including herself. She explained that people are frustrated and disappointed but that one tries to be diplomatic about the situation. She states that, personally, she translated the presence of a loafer into being more driven and motivated in her own group work endeavours. Similarly, when Participant F perceived loafing in his group, it increased his motivational levels as he realised that he would have to work harder in order to get the work done.

Participant B felt that social loafing affected the motivational levels of the other members of her group as the knowledge of the presence of a social loafer may have meant that the loafer's specific tasks would become the groups'. She, personally, felt demotivated, frustrated and angry when having to deal with a loafer in a work group. She was not excited to participate in the group:

"I felt drained by the group activities. The prospect of having to attend this specific group's meetings could ruin my whole day."

Participant E believed that the presence of a loafer had an effect on the overall outcome of the group assignment and that if there had been another member in the group whom had contributed fully, they could have achieved a greater result. She felt

that the presence of a social loafer was irritating. This participant did feel that the presence of a loafer effected the overall work performance of the group. It made members feel like they may not complete the overall assignment and that the social loafer did not comprehend how dependent each member was on the other to contribute their specified task. She stated that it was disruptive and made all the group members negative. The assignment was longer a project of excellence it was merely a matter of ensuring it was complete on time.

Participant G indicated that the presence of a social loafer made the other members in her group angry and she felt that their behaviour was unfair. Likewise, Participant H stated that when she had someone in a group was not contributing fully; it was frustrating to her and the group. She believed that the presence of a loafer did affect their overall performance and result as an assignment can always be better if all the heads in the group are contributing to the task at hand.

4.3. Conclusion

This chapter served as an analysis of the data that was collected through the semi-structured interviews. The following chapter will detail the findings based on this analysis as well as conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“The time will come when diligent research over long periods will bring to light things which now lie hidden. A single lifetime, even though entirely devoted to the sky, would not be enough for the investigation of so vast a subject... And so this knowledge will be unfolded only through long successive ages. There will come a time when our descendants will be amazed that we did not know things that are so plain to them... Many discoveries are reserved for ages still to come, when memory of us will have been effaced. Our universe is a sorry little affair unless it has something for every age to investigate...Nature does not reveal her mysteries once and for all.”

(Seneca, Natural Questions, Book 7)

5.1. Findings:

The findings for this study are indicated below in two distinct sections. The first is a tabulated overview of findings presented against the original guiding research objectives. Following that is an overview of the general findings of this exploratory qualitative study; this section does not necessarily adhere strictly to the research objectives but was nevertheless deemed important, as various findings emerged that had not originally been accounted for within the objectives.

Table 4. Overview of Findings relating to the Objectives of the study

Objective	Finding
To understand the definition of social loafing from a student’s perspective.	The clinical ‘textbook definition’ of loafing was stated by participants with uniformity and without hesitation. Upon investigation of subjective interpretations of loafing a considerable amount of diverging perceptions were recorded.



<p>To describe how students perceive social loafing within a group work context.</p>	<p>Further to the finding above, students perceived the loafing in non-linear and disparate forms. Social loafing in the group work context was perceived to take place under conditions lacking discernible reward, in the presence of overly dominant parties, when extensive delegation is present, and when the loafer is unprepared or lacking knowledge of the subject matter at hand.</p>
<p>To describe the perceived prevalence of social loafing from a student's (regularity with which they have encountered social loafing) perspective.</p>	<p>Students were all able to cite instances in which they have encountered loafing and/or in which they themselves may have been guilty of partaking in it. Based on participants' depth of responses, ability to reference examples, and readiness to divulge loafing information, it can be concluded that loafing has been commonly experienced by them in the group work setting.</p>
<p>To determine how social loafing has affected previous group performance based on group work experiences.</p>	<p>The results indicated that social loafing was experienced in highly divergent and subjective ways. Responses focused heavily on personal thoughts, experiences and reactions and less on actual group output.</p>
<p>To describe how students dealt with social loafers within their specific groups. In particular, to understand whether they took action in the form of intervention or not.</p>	<p>It was indicated that some students confronted the loafers face-to-face in attempts to understand the cause for loafing; in order to prevent the social loafer from forming part of any future group work activities; or to attempt to change the behaviour of the loafer.</p>



	<p>Some students attempted to intervene through alternative means by utilising the peer review mechanism instituted by lecturers.</p> <p>Some students demonstrated an aversion to conflict and chose not to take any action.</p>
To understand the role that students feel lecturers should play in reducing the phenomenon of social loafing.	<p>The students felt peer evaluations were a key tool in reducing the occurrence of social loafing and lecturers' responsibility for the implementation thereof.</p> <p>Some students experienced that lecturers should be more hands on and facilitate their group work endeavours in order to ensure that the correct group work skills are transferred into practice.</p> <p>Others felt that there was not much that lecturers could do, as it was each groups' responsibility to ensure that the group functioned efficiently and effectively. It was also recommended that lecturers reduce the number of group work assignments delegated.</p>
To explore whether the intended benefits of group work are filtering through to all the individuals within a group work setting.	<p>Students indicated that that group work endeavours should be lessened due to the fact that only partial learning takes place. Students felt that most of the group members in their work group did not have a holistic understanding of the content of each assignment. Only one participant experienced the opposite,</p>

	where all members were exposed to and grasped the full assignment content.
To explore whether social loafing by certain group members impacts on motivational levels of other group members.	All students experienced an impact on the motivational levels of all members of the group. Almost all described the presence of a loafer as frustrating. Some felt that the presence of a loafer had an impact on their group's final result, while others felt that it motivated them to work harder.
To describe the perception held by students' regarding their own participation in social loafing (if at all).	Students held interesting views of their own behaviours and engagement in loafing. They each defined their withdrawal of effort in varying ways: through allowing dominant members take control and lead the group; through not participating where there were no visible rewards; where members were not prepared; and through the manipulation of others in order to delegate preferential work topics.

Social loafing appeared as a significant phenomenon, and seemingly highly prevalent, as no respondent was unaware of the concept or could state that they had not personally experienced it or taken part in it. Students were accurately able to define the concept in an objective fashion without exception - this formed a part of the overlap noted from responses. While the previous sentence satisfies the initial objective of endeavouring to understand how students define loafing, of greater interest were the diverging subjective interpretations of loafing. Key findings for this study, and related to the initial objective, included:

- Social loafing occurred under conditions lacking discernible reward for group members;
- Social loafing took place prominently in the presence of dominant group members which was related to the inequitable delegation of work topics;
- When group members held limited knowledge of the work topic there was a self-reporting phenomenon revealing that they were likely to shift their involvement and reduce responsibility;
- Interpersonal manipulation and psycho-political on goings emerged in cases where individuals sought to secure portions of work in which they held a comprehensive knowledge or saw that body of work as desirable.

From this, it appears that when we are looking at our own behaviours we may interpret them with a different lens than we would employ for the behaviour of others. We may veer from text book definitions of known concepts and derive our own meaning of them and how they translate into our own lived actions and experiences.

Already imbued in the points above one can note the power relations and often Machiavellian undertones at play within the group environment which contributed to a key theme, namely 'power'. These were primarily in relation to the important findings listed below. In conducting this study, and allowing the data to weave its own story, several elements relating to the manoeuvres of members to alter intra-group dynamics were strongly noted. In essence it was found that these manipulations manifested through control, issues around personal relations, instances of confrontation, complicated forms of peer evaluation, responsibility, group size, gender and extroversion as indicators for loafing, and, ultimately, frustration as a product of social loafing.

On one hand it was observed that, through a combination of mistrust of the performance abilities of other group members and a routine desire for power and the role of 'leader', some individuals would manipulate themselves into positions of self-endowed influence. Robbins & Judge (2007) refer to this as relational conflict. The participants who displayed this desperate desire for control all expressed that they wanted to achieve the highest possible result attainable. It became apparent that the participants who demonstrated these attributes were motivated by the need theory

with strong indicators for their need for power and need for achievement (Robbins & Judge, 2007).

The remainder of individuals could be logically clustered as either passive and non-confrontational or weak with an outright desire to be led. In these instances the passive individuals were engaging in conflict-avoidance and using their own powers of manipulation in order to do so, while the weaker group members were likely to be the loafers.

Since group work necessitates interpersonal communication and collaboration (to varying extents), it is logical to assume that the above-mentioned tactics and loafing could impact on the quality of relationships and that already established relationships may strengthen the quality of work output. This was indeed found, as participants strongly claimed that they actively sought out individuals with whom they were familiar, had an established relationship or had previously experienced positive group work outcomes. Oakley et. al. (2004) found that stronger students were quick to align with one another when faced with a group work task. This phenomenon, unfortunately, may also feed into participants claiming that breakdowns in established relations also took place in the group work context in the presence of loafing. According to Robbins and Judge (2007), when this takes place there is relational conflict and the focus of the group shifts from the pursuit of group goals towards the relationship dynamics at play and how they exist within the group context.

It would appear that group members seek out those with whom they are familiar and have an established relationship, but that if loafing occurs in this context it depresses the previously formed bond. This is a finding that would be unlikely to take place within groups of strangers (Oakley et. al., 2004), although preserving relationships through entering into group work with strangers (exclusively) poses a perceived performance risk for participants. This represents a two way series of perceived paradoxical risks for participants entering a group work environment.

Social loafing surfaces when group members realise that there is no discernible way for their efforts to be identified from that of their fellow group members and they thus reduce their inputs accordingly. This finding is shared by Comer (1995). In order for this reduction in effort to occur it is important for group members to know that their personal contribution will be evaluated. It is, therefore, understandable why each

participant identified or made reference to peer evaluations as an important mechanism in eradicating or reducing the occurrence of social loafing within their work groups. Swartz (2004) & Vansteenkiste (2006) link this with the cognitive evaluation theory and that the existence of an extrinsic outcome may influence behaviours and thinking towards performance.

The phenomena relating to the personal relations between group members also fed into the ways in which this peer evaluation mechanism was managed. Participants divulged that honest evaluations had been perceived perniciously by peers, while loafers who leveraged a friendship within the group received feedback that was lenient. King & Behnke (2005), echo this in their findings that peer evaluations are often driven by subconscious influences. While evaluations may, in the minds of most participants, present a good way to tackle loafing, it was evident that doing so anonymously may be most appropriate as dishonesty within evaluations was notable.

Something else that is noteworthy regarding evaluations, was the reaction by some participants regarding the effectiveness of the use of the peer evaluation mechanism. Some participants stated that they believed the use of this tool to be effective in reducing social loafing and increasing accountability of fellow group members. In some cases though, they had no concrete evidence that these peer ratings had altered the loafing member's final result but still believed peer evaluations to be useful. Thus demonstrating, that the mere presence and perception of a tool being utilised to prevent particular behaviours may influence individuals to believe that the tool is effective even when there is no evidence that it had actually been implemented. This correlates with the findings of Harkins (1987) and Comer (1995).

In light of the presence of power relations and interpersonal systems of control, coupled with potential relationship issues, confrontation was reported as an outcome in the face of loafing. Participants cited instances of disallowing perceived loafers from even entering into the group at the stage of member selection or allocation, although most confrontation occurred upon noting actual loafing behaviour in the course of group work. Not all instances of confrontation involved participants directly intervening with loafers through verbal means; instances of group members attempting to confront situations were also noted. These actions involved altering the group's structure in

order to mitigate against loafing and providing loafers with the lowest workload or seemingly easiest tasks.

Group work within tertiary education ultimately relies on collective and personal responsibility (for both members and lecturers). Lecturers themselves had, by participant claim, an integral part to play in promoting or mitigating against loafing. In particular, the extent of group work was seen to be too high, such that individual knowledge on selected topics was not as substantive as it might otherwise have been. Additionally, this extent of group work was seen to promote the prevalence of loafing. While lecturers may, at times, create the backdrop for loafing, it is of course the individual who commits the act itself. This neglect of responsibility on the part of loafers, in turn, weighed heavy upon other group members' loads and respective responsibilities. Effectively then the lecturer can, through excessive group work assignment, be perceived as 'loafing' in his/her own right as this act reduces his/her load while creating further ground for student loafing. The student loafer in turn neglects his/her responsibility and, ultimately, the diligent student's necessary locus of responsibility increases unfairly.

Group size

Participants resoundingly raised the issue of group size as a variable that is directly linked to the likelihood of experiencing a loafer. The claim made through the experiences of participants was that loafing increases alongside group numbers. This is echoed by Comer (1995), Liden et. al. (2004), Johnson & Johnson (2009), Robbins & Judge (2007). This is a logical assertion as a larger group affords further opportunities to remove one self from activities unnoticed and also creates greater difficulties in group coordination. The inverse phenomenon was posited for smaller groups. The optimal group size that was mentioned by participants was between four and five members. This line of thinking is supported by Oakely et. al. (2004) and Burdette (2004), who state that an increase in group members makes the tendency to loaf within the group much easier and therefore more likely. The optimal group size verbalised by participants was four to five members and the literature is supportive of these numbers, stating that three to four members have been found to be the ideal group size in preventing social loafing (Oakley et. al., 2004; Burdett, 2004).

Gender and Extroversions as Indicators for Social Loafing

Gender was indicated as a factor that influences the likelihood of loafing, as participants claimed that males were more inclined towards lower levels of productivity within the group. Karau & Williams (1993) concur with this finding. While the profile of a loafer was generally perceived to be male, it was noted that those who tend towards taking control in fact sought out male group members. This was viewed as one tactic that would promote the ability to take control in the group and exert authority in the group work context. This finding was notable as one individual actively pursued those who were perceived as likely to loaf in order to ensure that they would be able to exert authority; this was an instance in which loafing was not necessarily considered as undesirable.

Individuals who were viewed as extrovert in their interactions with others were highlighted as possible people who may engage in loafing behaviours. Their behaviour made it easier to loaf as their personalities are distracting. They are well liked and this may make manipulating fellow group members easier and others may be more willing to cover for their lack of contribution in terms of content.

Frustration as a product of social loafing:

Frustration was a common feeling experienced among participants when they perceived that social loafing had occurred in their work groups. Mulvey and Klein (1998) and Johnson & Jonson (1999) indicate that the mere perception of an individual withholding effort in a group context can have a detrimental effect on the effort exerted by the perceiver. Clark (2005) emphasises that it is personal perception that drives one's motivational levels and not that of public opinion or view.

Participants in the study experienced frustration due to the realisation that there was a possibility that their personal workload and group work contribution would have to increase in order to get the assignment complete.

5.2. Conclusions and Recommendations

This section seeks to succinctly present the conclusions that logically follow on from findings deliberated over in section 5.1. Subsequent to conclusions the reader will find tabulated recommendations (with associated motivation) that have been informed by the findings and that, if implemented, will likely contribute to a reduction in social loafing in group work endeavours for students.

Conclusions

From the findings of this study the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Social loafing is certainly a prevalent phenomenon amongst a sample of participants who eagerly cited personal examples of it taking place.
2. Loafing was easily defined by those sampled but was also found to be a highly personal and subjective experience. Individual participants viewed loafing in diverse ways and engaged with the phenomenon in contrasting ways (through loafing themselves, creating circumstances that led others to loaf, or confronting the matter).
3. Pre-cursors to loafing, from a student perspective, were viewed as (a) group work that lacked reward or incentive; (b) experiencing an overly dominant party in the group; (c) having to engage within a large work group (larger than 5 individuals); (d) when the need to delegate excessively is present (related to previous point); (e) when group members are not well-versed with the subject matter; (f) males and extroverts were viewed as more likely to loaf.
4. Dominant power relations were found to be important as some individuals did not trust the abilities of others and actively sought to exclude them from engaging in the group work context. Some students were observed to be passive and easily removed, willingly or unwillingly, from any prolific involvement in such a context.
5. Participants mentioned that they felt compelled to seek out group members with whom they had an established relationship or with whom they had previously had positive group work experiences.

6. Confrontation was noted through both active and passive means. Some students had previously taken to asserting their grievances with loafers, while others had intentionally excluded perceived loafers from joining their group. Passive group members altered the group's workload and task allocation or acquiescently allowed the behaviour despite their frustration.
7. Lecturers themselves were viewed as both loafers and as enabling loafing to take place through allocating exorbitant numbers of group work assignments that ultimately decrease their respective loads. The exercise of doing so promotes the climate for loafing behaviour, especially if the activity is exacerbated by assigning excessive numbers of student to each group.
8. Engagement in loafing behaviour by one or more group members creates feelings of frustration and annoyance in the remaining group members. These feelings can have a dual effect on the performance and motivational levels of the remaining group members: some work harder; others are demotivated by the unfairness of the work distribution and the inequity of the final result.
9. Loafing behaviour was viewed as disruptive to group goals and that it hindered the progress of groups towards the efficient completion of group tasks and objectives.
10. Loud and charismatic people may engage in loafing as they rely on their personalities to distract the group from their lack of content contribution.

Recommendations:

Social loafing was found to be a well-known and damaging activity within group work. It created discord within groups; it caused frustration amongst students; it disallowed some members from receiving the desired exposure to education; and other factors that serve to undercut the learning experience.

In tabular form below are several recommendations that are posited as crucial factors in minimising or preventing social loafing within a tertiary educational setting.

Table 5. Recommendation 1 to minimise or prevent social loafing

<p><u>Recommendation:</u> <i>Clearly defined goals and objectives</i></p> <p>All group work activity should be entered into with a defined goal and reason for such a goal. The reason for a given activity and the importance of it (through contribution to year mark or learning experience) should be clearly communicated.</p>
<p><u>Motivation</u></p> <p>It was found that loafing was seen as an activity taking place in the absence of reward or incentive. If students are unaware of the expected outcome of the activity or, alternatively, are aware that the exercise holds no weight to their marks or good standing with the university, then they are not necessarily motivated to engage.</p>

Table 6. Recommendation 2 to minimise or prevent social loafing

<p><u>Recommendation:</u> <i>Evaluation</i></p> <p>Post-hoc weighted peer evaluation should be introduced.</p>
<p><u>Motivation:</u></p> <p>Students who are overly dominant and mistrusting of others were seen to intentionally dismiss fellow group members in order to control all activity. This process undermines the learning of others. Conversely, those who actively loafed placed unnecessary pressure on fellow members, yet enjoyed the benefits of their labour.</p> <p>It is asserted here that a system of peer evaluation, in which a proportion of an individual's total mark is decided by the group's evaluation of his/her efforts across key pillars, should be introduced. The key pillars envisaged here include: (1) perceived contribution; (2) perceived efficiency; (3) quality of task execution; (4) equitable share of work output; and (5) quality of team engagement. If a simple system revolving around a 5 point rating scale for each variable was introduced, then the individual would receive a total summed mark out of 25 from each fellow member. The average of this mark from all group members could be tallied and, in turn, influence a proportion of the individual mark. In this way both loafers and dominant parties' marks could be normalised. In an example of this a group receives a mark of 60% but individual A ultimately receives a mark of 51% as he/she was inactive, showed poor output, and did not engage equally. Individual B receives an</p>

overall mark of 66% as he/she was easy to engage with, highly efficient, and did more than expected of him/her. This system may promote better group relations and engagement while bolstering the need for incentive (as mentioned above).

Table 7. Recommendation 3 to minimise or prevent social loafing

Recommendation: *Group Size*

Groups to be limited to 5 members.

Motivation:

While it is acknowledged that lecturer workloads and student numbers are disproportionately positioned, allocating too many students to a group in the interests of having fewer actual groups promotes loafing. Larger groups provide the backdrop for potential loafers to pull away and leverage the other members. The high number also allows for dominant parties to arise with weaker, less assured members, disengaging. Another notable point was that the cumbersome requirement of excessive delegation promoted loafing. The maximum group number should not exceed 5 members.

Table 8. Recommendation 4 to minimise or prevent social loafing

Recommendation: *Prior exposure to topic*

Group work must not take place prior to a modular assessment.

Motivation:

It was noted that students were seen to be more likely to loaf in instances where they were unfamiliar with the subject matter. This process may be explained by anxiety to engage with the unknown or by attempts to preserve pride by not admitting to any ignorance and therefore loafing.

It is believed therefore that students should not be required to engage in group work prior to an assessment on the subject matter such as a semester test, class test, or similar. In this way the student has already been required to analyse the topical information for an assessment, which, it is believed, will lead to greater group-based engagement when the time arises.

Table 9. Recommendation 5 to minimise or prevent social loafing

<p><u>Recommendation:</u> <i>Role of Lecturers</i></p> <p>Lecturers need to take an active role in mitigating against loafing.</p>
<p><u>Motivation:</u></p> <p>When lecturers themselves attempt to reduce their workloads by assigning students group work and/or breaking a class into larger groups, loafing is a likely result. An extension of this is a detachment of students from the learnings and an overall tertiary educational effort that does not accomplish its intrinsic goal.</p>

Table 10. Recommendation 6 to minimise or prevent social loafing

<p><u>Recommendation:</u> <i>Time Frames</i></p> <p>Lecturers should be cognisant of the time frames which are provided in order for the work that is prescribed for a group assignment are realistic and enable all members to participate and have exposure to the content.</p>
<p><u>Motivation:</u></p> <p>Students mentioned that they were not being exposed holistically to an assignment topic. Perhaps if greater time frames were provided, the entire group may have more time to work together and thus reducing the occurrence of partial learning.</p>

Table 11. Recommendation 7 to minimise or prevent social loafing

<p><u>Recommendation:</u> <i>Improved group work skills</i></p> <p>Students need to be taught how to be a constructive group member.</p>
<p><u>Motivation:</u></p> <p>Group work skills should be included in a compulsory module for all first year students. One cannot assume that all students join a group with the knowledge and understanding of how to add value to a group and group goals. They need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills on how to participate in group work. These skills should include but would not be limited to: Time management; Delegation; Project Management.</p> <p>It is recommended that as part of this module, lecturers oversee group work activities during lecture times. This is imperative in ensuring that students can</p>

facilitate and coordinate their own group work activities. It means that group work activities throughout tertiary studies may be more efficient and effective and that all students work well together. In addition, it can assist in ensuring that students have the opportunity to obtain a holistic knowledge of the course content.

Table 12. Recommendation 8 to minimise or prevent social loafing

Recommendation: *Group composition*

Group-based relationship management to be introduced through combinations of familiar and unfamiliar peers.

Motivation:

It was found that loafing took place in contexts where group members were familiar with one another which led initially to complacency and, ultimately, to relational strain. From the research, it is reasonable to believe that some people may loaf when grouped with strangers as a lack of established relations could lend itself to loafers not fearing disappointing their unfamiliar peers and disengaging. It is anticipated that an appropriate blend of familiar and unfamiliar characters within a group could promote engagement. If a class consisted of 50 students a lecturer would be well advised to select 10 students and ask each one to select 2 friends to join them. Thereafter the lecturer can randomly assign the remainder of the class to the existing student groups, i.e. another 2 unfamiliar. This process in turn would lead to 10 mixed relational groups of an optimal 5 members per group.

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APPENDIX A

-Data Collection Instrument(-s)-

Item Number	Item Content	Justification for Inclusion
1	Age	The first few questions in the study are meant to give basic demographic information and to ensure that they meet with the guidelines necessary for an individual to be a respondent in the study.
2	Gender	
3	Race	
4	Year of study	
5	Course	
6	Are you aware of the term social loafing?	<p>Probe: What do you understand it to mean?</p> <p>This question is pivotal to the whole interview. In order for the respondent to answer the questions that follow they will need to have an understanding of what social loafing is. If they cannot provide a definition, the researcher will provide one as oftentimes individuals may not have the definition for something but when explained they understand the phenomenon and may have experienced it.</p>
7	Have you experienced any instances of social loafing while working in a work group?	<p>This question is important as it will elicit whether or not the respondent has experienced the occurrence of social loafing through the course of their studies and multiple group work sessions.</p> <p>Probes are essential as they will hopefully encourage the respondents to think about group work settings and whether each person actively participated or not and allow them to highlight why they believe social loafing occurred within the group work</p>



		<p>setting or what factors, they believe, prevented it from happening.</p> <p>Probes:</p> <p>a) If so, why do you think it occurs?</p> <p>b) If not, what do you think prevented it from occurring?</p>
8	How were your whole groups' motivational levels influenced by the presence of a social loafer?	Understanding whether social loafing impacts on other group members' level of performance is important. In the absence of a loafer would the group be motivated to perform better.
9	How does the experience of having a social loafer in a group affect your personal levels of motivation?	To gain an understanding of how affected the individual was in terms of motivation when another was perceived to be loafing.
10	Do you feel that social loafing affected the overall performance in any of the groups that you have worked in?	One needs to find out if students feel that their final result could have been better if a social loafer had not been present, or if, in fact, it had no effect at all.
11	Do you feel that you have ever engaged in social loafing during the course of group work?	Question 13 serves to allow the respondent a moment for introspection. It is important to know if: the respondent has engaged in loafing, and if so, what were the factors that led to this choice of action.
12	What factors caused you to engage in social loafing?	This question builds on Question 13 and allows the researcher some insight into the reasons behind the respondent's choices to engage in social loafing or not.
13	How would you describe the profile of a social loafer?	To be able to analyse the research findings across all respondents and determine if there is a specific kind of profile that can be attributed to a loafer. Alternatively, what are some of the characteristics held by an individual who is more likely to engage in



		social loafing. Some probes could include: do these persons have a distinct modus operandi, typical personality type, gender, or appearance?
14	How have you, generally, been grouped with others to complete projects or assignments?	This question will elicit information regarding whether respondents are allocated to groups through self-selection or if groups are assigned by lecturers.
15	How do you believe the allocation of group membership ought to be carried out?	This line of questioning is important to determine if individuals feel that social loafing is more or less likely to occur within groups that they have been able to pick themselves and/or if the groups are assigned by lecturers. Their preference will be probed by asking why they have made that choice.
16	How have demographic aspects affected (age, gender, race, home language) your group experiences with others?	<p>This question has been included in order to determine if individuals found that they worked with more cohesion within an heterogeneous or homogenous group. The sub-questions allow for the respondent to elaborate on why or why not they found more cohesion amongst group members with such factors in mind.</p> <p>The literature indicated that often people who are alike in terms of background and culture tend to work better together but that often the content of the completed task may not be as innovative as it would have been if the group were more heterogeneous.</p>
17	How do you think that group size affects the incidence of social loafing?	Group size may be a factor that limits or enhances the prevalence of social loafing.



	How has a group's size influenced the productivity of the group?	
18	How has work been delegated within the groups that you have participated in?	This question serves to indicate whether or not all course material is covered by all group members or if it is split. Probe: In your experience, did it work well?
19	Explain whether you feel that each member of the group derives learning from the course content that is assigned to the group as a whole?	This question is utilised in order to gain an understanding into whether or not group work and its objectives are actually being fulfilled. Are all group members exposed to the full course content or are they limited to delegated portions of work?
20	From your experience is loafing more prevalent from the leader or from the follower of the work group?	This will determine if specific roles are adopted and which role is perceived to loaf more.
21	Do you think that group marking is just and fair with the current model that is employed? How do you feel about the way in which group work is evaluated?	The literature indicates that the manner in which group work is evaluated is often a key determinant in whether one will engage in social loafing or not.
22	What actions, if any, have you taken to intervene or control a social loafer within your group?	By asking this question we gain insight into whether the perceiver ever intervened to control/limit/eradicate the social loafing demonstrated by a peer within the group work. Probes will allow them to elaborate on how they confronted the loafer or why they allowed the loafing to continue without reproach.
23	What measures do you think lecturers could implement in order to reduce the incidence of social loafing?	Insight into how students' feel facilitation from the tertiary institution and its staff could assist with this phenomenon and its impact on group learning initiatives.



24

In your experience, would you prefer to work individually or in a group?
Please justify why?

APPENDIX B

-Informed Consent Form-



Sciences

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Economic and Management

Informed consent for participation in an academic research study

Dept. of Human Resource Management

TITLE OF THE STUDY

A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL LOAFING HELD BY POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Research conducted by:

Ms. C.F. Smith (26246262)

Cell: 082 459 6159

Dear Respondent

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Cammy Frances Smith, a Masters student from the Department of Human Resource Management at the University of Pretoria. The purpose of the study is to discover the extent to which particular individuals who are functioning within a group setting perceive the levels of social loafing exhibited by others and themselves and what the impact of such perceptions are on the overall functioning of the group.

Please note the following:

- This study involves an interview. Your name will remain anonymous and the answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential. You cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.
- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- Please answer the questions in the attached questionnaire as completely and honestly as possible. This should not take more than 30 minutes of your time.
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.
- Please contact my supervisor, Mr H Brand (hein.brand@up.ac.za) if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

