# Social Loafing with Class Modality and Grading Format

## Lindsay Fedder, Hannah McCarthy, & Alyssa Titzer

UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

## INTRODUCTION

### Grading Format

- Social loafing is more likely to occur when being graded as a group than when being graded individually or a combination of both (Ying et al., 2014).

- When an individual is working on their own, they're more motivated to complete work because they are the only one contributing towards an end goal (Mihelic & Culiber, 2018).

- When put into a group, the morals of each individual is hidden and can result in a reduction in the efforts exerted from each individual (Mefoh & Nwanosike, 2012).

### Course Modality

- With online group work, there is a lack of face-to-face meetings opening the doors for a member to go silent and not communicate with others (Abraham & Trimutiasari, 2015).

- Groups that work solely virtually on assignments require technology for any level of communication which can lead to lack of collaboration among group members (Choi & Kang, 2010).

- Lack of an authoritative figure instructing groups online encourages group members to make adaptations to how they will work cohesively (Choi & Kang, 2010).

## METHOD

### Participants

- Sample consisted of 101 college students.
- Ages ranged from 18 to 48 years old.
- Participant requirements:
  - Must be enrolled in at least one course.
  - Must be at least 18 years old or 17 years old with parental consent.

### Materials

- Six scenarios discussing a student enrolled in a course and assigned to a group project:
  - Each version consisted of different class modality (in-person or online) and different grading criteria (individual grade, group grade, or combination).
- Existing 10-item social loafing scale (George, 1992):
  - Adapted to evaluate the perceived behaviors of the person described in the third-person scenario.
  - Five additional items developed to address the absence of social loafing centered around positive work ethic.

### Procedure

- Participants recruited via social media platforms and the UMW participant pool.
- Qualtrics randomly assigned participants to one of six versions of a scenario involving collaborative work.
- Participants took a survey to assess their perceptions of social loafing based on the scenario they read..

## RESULTS

### 2X3 Between Groups ANOVA - Negative Scale

- Our hypothesis for perceived social loafing based on class modality was not significant.
  - $F_{(1,100)} = 1.39$, $p = .242$, $n_p^2 = .015$
- Our hypothesis for perceived social loafing based on grading criteria was not significant.
  - $F_{(2,100)} = .81$, $p = .449$, $n_p^2 = .017$
- Our interaction between class modality and grading criteria yielded no significant results.
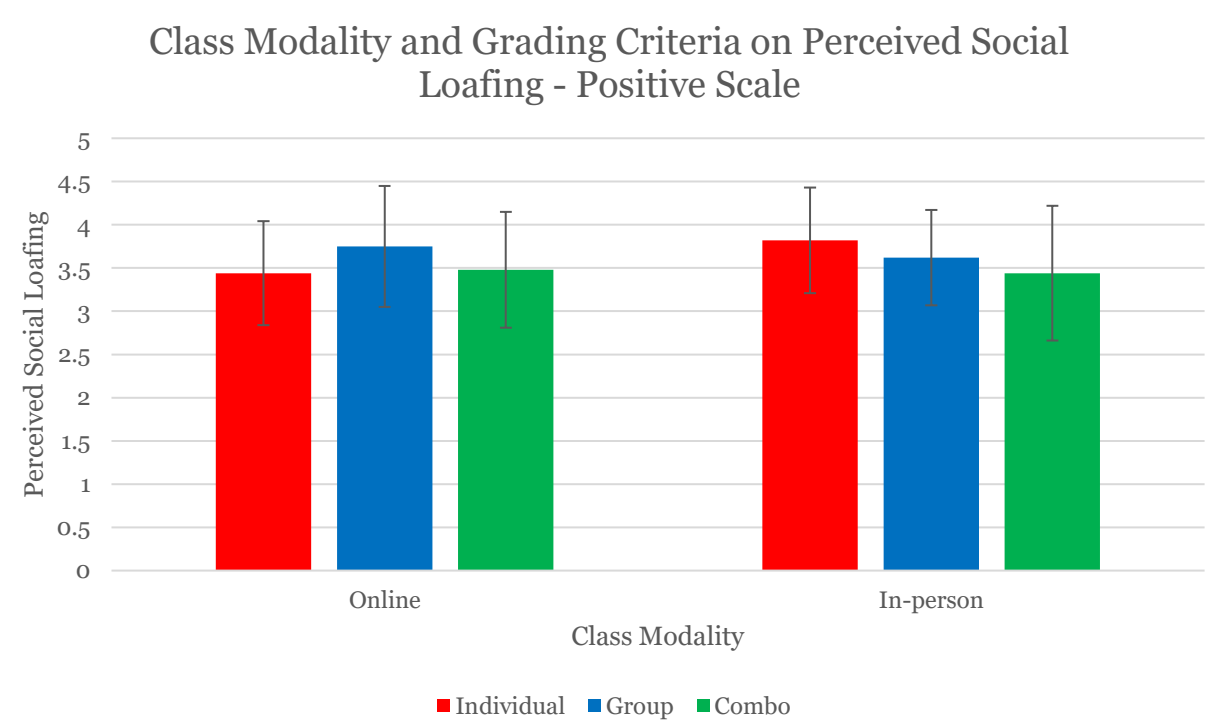  - $F_{(2,100)} = 1.16$, $p = .317$, $n_p^2 = .024$



Class Modality and Grading Criteria on Perceived Social Loafing - Negative Scale
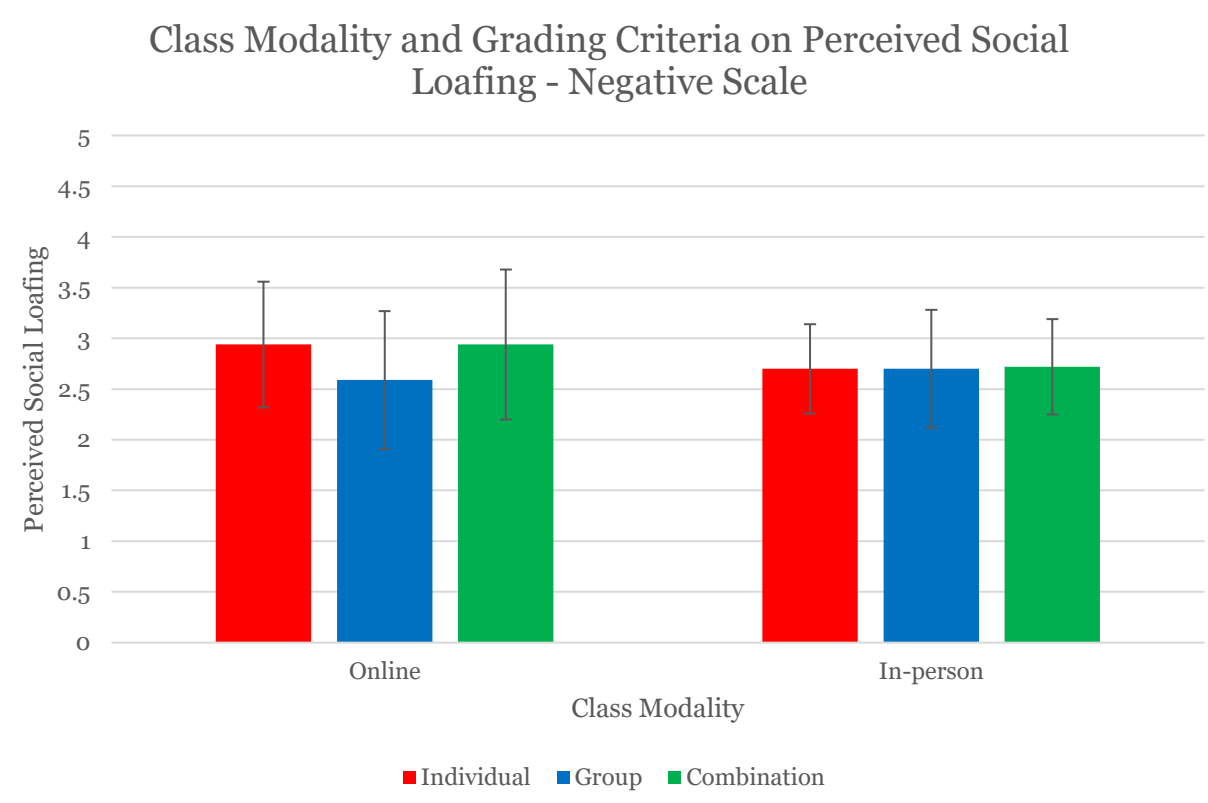
*Means and Standard for Class Modality and Grading Criteria for Negative Scale*

| Grading Criteria | Class Modality | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Online | | In-Person | |
| | M | SD | M | SD |
| Individual | 2.94 | 0.62 | 2.6 | 0.44 |
| Group | 2.59 | 0.68 | 2.7 | 0.58 |
| Combination | 2.94 | 0.74 | 2.72 | 0.47 |

### 2X3 Between Groups ANOVA - Positive Scale

- Our hypothesis for perceived social loafing based on class modality was not significant.
  - $F_{(1,101)} = .27$, $p = .602$, $n_p^2 = .003$
- Our hypothesis for perceived social loafing based on grading criteria was not significant.
  - $F_{(2,101)} = 1.12$, $p = .335$, $n_p^2 = .023$
- Our interaction between class modality and grading criteria yielded no significant results.
  - $F_{(2,101)} = 1.26$, $p = .288$, $n_p^2 = .026$



Class Modality and Grading Criteria on Perceived Social Loafing - Positive Scale

*Means and Standard for Class Modality and Grading Criteria for Positive Scale*

| Grading Criteria | Class Modality | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Online | | In-Person | |
| | M | SD | M | SD |
| Individual | 3.44 | 0.6 | 3.82 | 0.61 |
| Group | 3.75 | 0.7 | 3.62 | 0.55 |
| Combination | 3.48 | 0.67 | 3.44 | 0.78 |

## HYPOTHESES

- We hypothesized that social loafing behavior is more likely to be expected when working in online groups that in in-person groups.

- Our other hypothesis was that social loafing is more likely to be perceived when participants are graded as a group compared to when they are graded individually or a combination of individual and group grades.

- Our group anticipated that an online class modality combined with group grading will encourage the perception of social loafing within group work.

## DISCUSSION

### Conclusion

- Our research findings for both class modality and grading criteria on social loafing were not consistent with research.
- Both main effects and interactions for the positive scale and negative scale did not produce significant results to align with our hypothesis.
- Research does prove significant results for the individual variables to have an affect on social loafing.

### Limitations

- There was no manipulation check for the two scales used.
- Smaller sample size than anticipated.
- Only able to collect data through an online survey.
- Limited to only making assumptions for those enrolled in college courses.

### Future Research

- More information included in the scenarios.
- Manipulation checks for the scale used.
- Attempting the design with an in-person experiment.
- Altering perceived social loafing to first person.