



Sociology Subject Teacher's Strategy in Overcoming Students' Social Loafing in Surakarta

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Abstract: This study aims to find out the teacher's strategy for overcoming social loafing in students in sociology subjects that occur in high schools. This research discusses the causal factors, impacts, and methods of sociology teachers in overcoming the phenomenon of social loafing in Surakarta high schools. The study used a qualitative approach with a phenomenological research type. Data sources come from informants, observation results, and documentation. Informants involved 10 students in grades X and XI, two sociology teachers, and observations of the school environment. Observations were made by observing the learning process of sociology teachers in the classroom – research documents in the form of photos and recordings of research interviews. Test the validity of the data using the source triangulation method by comparing all data. Data analysis using the Miles & Hubberman technique includes reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that the causes of students' social loafing include low learning motivation, group cohesiveness, teacher interpersonal communication, and other external factors. The impact of social loafing consists of an unequal division of tasks in group work, fragile friendships, decreased self-confidence, laziness in learning and schoolwork, and difficulty concentrating. Strategies employed by sociology teachers include identifying individual performance, adopting a variety of learning methods, encouraging interactive communication, paying attention to students who find it difficult to mingle, and collaborating with counseling teachers. Based on this, it can be concluded that students still tend to social loaf, but the strategies pursued by teachers can help them reduce laziness in group work.

Abstrak: Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui strategi guru dalam mengatasi *social loafing* pada peserta didik di mata pelajaran sosiologi yang terjadi di SMA. Penelitian ini membahas mengenai faktor penyebab, dampak, serta strategi guru sosiologi dalam mengatasi fenomena *social loafing* di SMA Surakarta. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian fenomenologi. Sumber data berasal dari informan, hasil observasi, dan dokumentasi. Informan melibatkan 10 peserta didik kelas X dan XI dan 2 guru mata pelajaran sosiologi dan pengamatan lingkungan sekolah. Observasi dilakukan dengan mengamati proses pembelajaran guru sosiologi di kelas. Dokumen penelitian berupa foto dan rekaman wawancara penelitian. Uji validitas data menggunakan metode triangulasi sumber dengan membandingkan seluruh data. Analisis data menggunakan teknik Miles & Hubberman meliputi reduksi, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penyebab *social loafing* peserta didik meliputi rendahnya motivasi belajar, kohesivitas kelompok, komunikasi interpersonal guru, dan faktor eksternal lain. Dampak *social loafing* meliputi ketimpangan pembagian tugas pada kerja kelompok, hubungan yang renggang antar teman, kepercayaan diri menurun, timbulnya rasa malas belajar dan sekolah, serta kesulitan berkonsentrasi. Adapun strategi guru sosiologi meliputi mengidentifikasi kinerja per individu, mengupayakan beragam metode pembelajaran, mengupayakan komunikasi interaktif, memperhatikan peserta didik yang sulit berbaur, dan bekerja sama dengan guru BK. Berdasarkan hal tersebut dapat disimpulkan bahwa peserta didik masih memiliki kecenderungan *social loafing* namun dengan strategi yang diupayakan guru, peserta didik dapat mengurangi tingginya kemalasan dalam kerja kelompok.

A. Introduction

The development of soft skills is essential for learners alongside cognitive abilities. This is important given the increasingly fierce competition in the modern era. Therefore, teaching should not focus solely on theory but on enhancing learners' competencies (Fachmi et al., 2022). Among these competencies are critical thinking skills, digital literacy, communication, and creativity (Mansyur et al., 2024). Education that emphasizes these skills is known as "21st Century Learning." This concept highlights the "4Cs": Creativity and Innovation, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Communication, and Collaboration (Utari & Muadin, 2023).

Collaboration and communication skills are critical for learners to develop as preparation for their future. Accordingly, the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) designed the Merdeka Curriculum. Since 2020, this curriculum has emphasized peer collaboration to produce meaningful learning experiences (Hastasasi et al., 2024). Collaboration is the individual's ability to work effectively, flexibly, and equitably with others to achieve shared goals (Taher, 2023). It is one of the life skills that learners need to cultivate to grow within their social environments (Junita et al., 2021). From this explanation, it can be concluded that collaboration is essential in the learning process.

Group assignments are one method teachers can use to foster collaboration among learners during instruction. Collaborative learning has been shown to improve academic performance and social skills—such as leadership, communication, and responsibility—in the classroom (Ghavifekr, 2020). Collaboration helps learners learn to appreciate differing viewpoints, negotiate, solve problems, and reach consensus with their teammates (Wardani, 2023).

Collaboration or teamwork plays a crucial role in sociology classes because sociology studies human relationships within groups (Soekanto, 2014). Collaboration is a key learning outcome in the Merdeka Curriculum. The learning outcomes published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology state that in addition to fostering critical, analytical, and collaborative thinking, high school sociology education must also develop collaborative attitudes in diverse communities (BSKAP, 2022). Thus, collaboration skills are necessary for learners to achieve the essence of sociology education.

One strategy teachers use to enhance student collaboration is assigning group work. Group work is a teaching method in which learners are divided into small groups to complete specific tasks under the teacher's supervision (Nurhasanah et al., 2019). Small-group discussions increase opportunities for learners to share opinions and ideas, solve problems, and enjoy learning together. Moreover, group work has created a positive and effective learning environment for teachers and students (Crisianita & Mandasari, 2022; Dugang, 2020).

However, a common weakness in group assignments is that one or two students often do not take the work seriously—neglecting to take notes and copying or photographing a peer's notes (Nurhasanah et al., 2019). This phenomenon is known as "social loafing" (Efthariena et al., 2024). Research indicates that active contribution among

group members is difficult for students to achieve. Rahmawati (2019) found that active contribution ranked lowest among the five assessment phases compared with flexibility and respect. For example, in the scheduling phase, active collaboration was only 63.3%, whereas flexibility reached 92.2%. In the results-testing phase, active collaboration was 62.2%, while respect reached 85.6%. Similar research showed an average active-contribution score of 0.30, indicating low collaborative activity (Mansur et al., 2022). This imbalance suggests that low collaboration can lead to social loafing.

Research by Adhesty & Ismanto (2024) at a public high school in Semarang found that of 250 students sampled, 99.20% (248 students) exhibited moderate social loafing, and 0.80% (2 students) exhibited high social loafing. Another study reported that 60–79% of students at a particular high school demonstrated high social loafing (Akbar et al., 2024). Teachers must address this phenomenon to ensure students collaborate effectively, especially on project-based group assignments. The issue identified in prior studies is that some students rely on peers and become lazy, causing uneven task distribution within groups.

From these findings, it is evident that social loafing frequently occurs in many schools. It arises from a lack of motivation among group members (Latané et al., 1979; Myers, 2012). Therefore, it is necessary to identify the causes and consequences of social loafing among students and strategies to reduce it. The novelty of this study lies in examining students' social loafing through a qualitative approach to gain in-depth information. Furthermore, previous research has not linked this phenomenon to high-school sociology; thus, this study will explore it within sociology instruction.

The general objective of this research is to analyze students' social loafing in group work activities. The specific objectives are to identify the causes and impacts of social loafing and the strategies that sociology teachers employ to overcome social loafing among students at Surakarta High School.

B. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a phenomenological research design. According to Sugiyono (2013), qualitative research is an approach to obtaining deep, meaningful data. Phenomenology, meanwhile, is a method for investigating an event or the lived experience of informants regarding a social phenomenon (Apriyanto et al., 2022). This phenomenological study was conducted to analyze the causes and effects of social loafing among students in sociology lessons and the strategies that sociology teachers use to address this issue. Data were collected through Observation—by watching teachers in the classroom—and through direct interviews with two sociology teachers and ten students from grades X and XI at SMAN 1 Surakarta and SMA Bina Widya Surakarta. These two schools were selected to compare the strategies used by public school and private school sociology teachers in Surakarta. Observations and interviews took place from March to April 2025.

This study uses purposive sampling, a technique in which samples are chosen according to specific criteria established by the researchers. The criteria for teacher informants were sociology teachers at the high school level who have taught diverse groups of students and have already implemented strategies to counteract social loafing, particularly during sociology classes. The criteria for student informants were those who demonstrated either high or low levels of social loafing, as identified through a brief descriptive questionnaire and teacher recommendations. This ensured that data collection would allow these two student groups to compare mindsets. The questionnaire served as preliminary data to identify the presence of social loafing before deeper investigation; its indicators included assignment preferences, student performance in group tasks, learning motivation, and final academic results. The questionnaire was administered to 80 students in grades X and XI at SMAN 1 Surakarta and four SMA Bina Widya Surakarta grade-X students. Students who reported suboptimal performance on sociology group tasks, low motivation during lessons, and unsatisfactory final exam scores due to laziness were categorized as having high social loafing; those without these characteristics were categorized as having low social loafing. As a result, eight student informants were selected from SMAN 1 Surakarta and two from SMA Bina Widya Surakarta. After data collection, validity was assessed via source triangulation by comparing the various pieces of information obtained. Data analysis followed Miles & Huberman's techniques—data condensation (reduction), data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 2014).

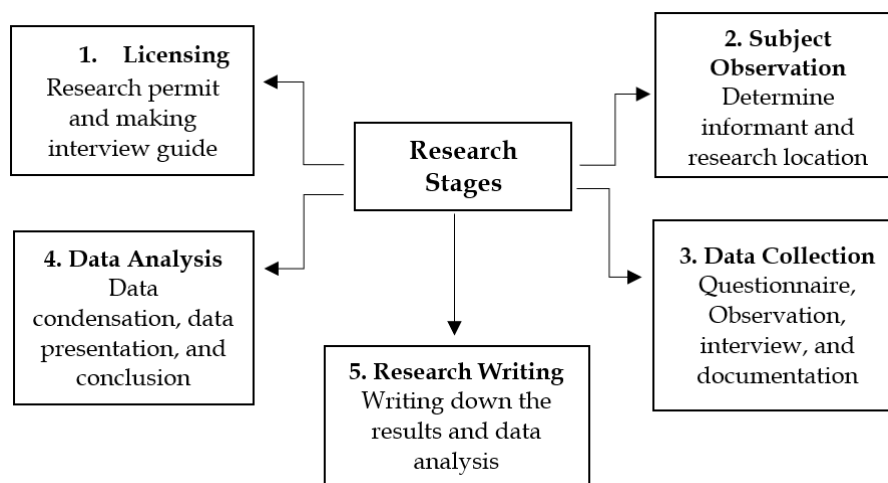


Figure 1. Research Stages

C. Result and Discussion

Result

Collaboration is a skill that students need to develop. Interviews with both teacher informants show that they are aware of the importance of fostering collaboration among students:

"Honestly, if you ask how important it is – it's extremely important because it also trains cooperation. Some students benefit from it, and some feel burdened. As a teacher, I do assign them to groups because I consider it important for practicing cooperation and responsibility."
— Interview with a teacher at SMA Bina Widya.

It is important. Both from the government's side and, as far as I know, the world recommends four skills for the 21st century. One of them is collaboration. Moreover, from the government's side – through the 'P5' framework – there is also an element of collaboration. Working alone is easy. However, bringing many things together is not easy. However, the results will be far better than doing something alone." — Interview with a teacher at SMAN 1 Surakarta.

The sociology teachers also understand the importance of collaboration in sociology lessons. They explain that sociology studies society and cooperation within it, so collaboration is fundamental to the subject. Through effective collaboration, students learn to understand one another and prepare themselves for community life. No matter how brilliant a student is, they may become individualistic and foster unhealthy competition without collaboration.

"I often emphasize this to the students, especially those who are lazy... Collaboration skills are important. This is just the first stage; working in groups is a tiny glimpse of what adult life will be like." — Interview with a teacher at SMA Bina Widya.

"First, individualism. The most apparent consequence of individualism is competition. In any competition, there are winners and losers. The impact on the loser – the one who does not win – can affect their mental state; not everyone handles it wisely or well. Mentally, it will have an impact." — Interview with a teacher at SMAN 1 Surakarta.

Both teachers have implemented group-based learning as recommended by 21st-century pedagogy and the Merdeka Curriculum to instill collaboration. Assignments include individual and group tasks using various methods such as writing papers, debates, discovery learning, playing Snakes and Ladders, and more. During classroom observations, teachers used several animated sociology videos to deliver material. Then, they announced the pre-formed groups who would present in the next session. Group selection is usually random, though sometimes students can choose their groups to promote freedom and teach them to resolve issues independently.

"For example, they might be told to choose their groups in that class. To avoid discrimination, they spin a bottle or draw lots. Indirectly, they do not choose themselves, but it is fair. I think that is a plus." — Interview with a teacher at SMAN 1 Surakarta.

However, planting collaboration through group work also creates challenges, one of which is that some students reduce their effort in group tasks – a phenomenon known as social loafing. Although social loafing usually occurs in a group, it can also appear during regular lessons. In our observations, some students seated at the back paid little attention

and played on their phones. High-social-loafing students often rely on others – for example, preferring to photograph someone else’s notes or request a photo rather than take their own.

“Taking a photo is easier to store and share with friends. Then you can take turns, depending on who takes the photo first.” – Interview with a student.

Because social loafing can affect any student, teachers need strategies to mitigate it. Below is a table summarizing the interview findings on the causes of social loafing, its impacts, and the analysis of the sociology teachers’ strategies.

Table 1. Causes, Impacts, and Teacher Strategies for Social Loafing

No.	Cause Aspect	Student Social Loafing	Impact	Teacher Strategy
1	Learning Motivation	- Students are not interested in the lesson - No motivation except right before exams - The lesson takes place at the end of the day when students are already tired	- Students do only the smallest portion, feeling their peers deem them incompetent - Group members feel frustrated by unequal task division - Some students become unenthusiastic about learning and working in groups	- Assess each student’s performance individually and include peer assessments - Use a variety of engaging teaching methods and communicate the expected learning outputs - Maintain interactive, relaxed communication throughout the lesson
2	Group Cohesiveness	- Group members do not hear opinions - Some students cannot find a group because they lack a friendship circle - Difficulty blending in with classmates - Placed in groups with peers who are more ambitious or smarter - Others’ low contribution leads to loafing	- Students' self-confidence drops, and they hesitate to speak up - They become the “reject” group, further reducing their contribution - Peers tend to avoid them, making them quieter in the group - They choose smaller tasks, feeling less competent	- Appoint a group leader to guide members, resolve issues, consult, and work together - form groups randomly or via an online “wheel spin” tool - please pay special attention to isolated students and ensure they are placed in small groups - distribute top-performing students across different groups

No.	Cause Aspect	Student Social Loafing	Impact	Teacher Strategy
			Tension arises between highly active and loafing members	use peer assessment focused on creativity and collaboration, with direct feedback or warnings
3	Teacher's Interpersonal Communication	Students do not understand the material as presented	Students become lazy about completing assignments.	Provide engaging and interactive explanations, linking lesson content to students' daily lives.
4	Other External Factors	- Low-income family, social, or economic background - Lack of sleep and excessive phone use during lesson - Coming from a more relaxed junior high environment	- Students view school as a "luxury" or escape, so learning becomes secondary - They fail to concentrate, making group contributions difficult - They struggle with the higher workload and underperform	- Do not judge students for their circumstances; adapt teaching methods and expected outcomes accordingly - Collaborate with the guidance counselor to warn and advise students addicted to their phones - Recognize the junior-high to high-school transition; design lessons that are fun yet disciplined (e.g., Snakes & Ladders, personal "island" projects, debates)

From the table of research results above, internal and external factors influence students' levels of social loafing. These factors affect both less-motivated and highly-motivated students since they experience declines in learning motivation and their willingness to work in groups. From observations, SMAN 1 Surakarta and SMA Bina Widya have different student body sizes, allowing the teacher at SMA Bina Widya to get to know each student's characteristics more closely. Nevertheless, according to the observations and interviews, both teachers have strived to offer engaging lessons and understand their students' traits using methods such as discovery learning models, Socratic methods, Team Game Tournament (TGT), etc. Both schools are also equipped with various learning-support facilities, so there is no significant difference in how sociology material is delivered in the public versus the private school. However, it cannot be denied that teachers cannot employ these strategies in every single class session, so some students continue to exhibit high levels of social loafing.

Discussion

Sociology is the science that studies social life, including the interactions within it. This makes it necessary for sociology teachers to instill collaboration skills as preparation for students' futures. Based on interviews with sociology teachers, it is clear that instilling collaboration in sociology learning is important for students. Through collaboration, students can combine different ideas, concepts, and theories to reach a solution (Junita et al., 2021; Siwitomo et al., 2023). Collaboration in education is usually achieved through group assignments and various learning methods (Mansur et al., 2022; Taher, 2023).

Nevertheless, some students still have difficulty making their maximum contribution to group assignments and rely on their group members to do the work. This phenomenon is called "social loafing." Maximilien Ringelmann first introduced the term to describe the situation when individuals exert less effort when working in a group than when working alone (Fitriana & Suhastini, 2022; Myers, 2012).

Based on interviews with 10 students, it can be concluded that all students tend to be inactive in group tasks (social loafing) but at different levels. Four students can be classified as high social loafers, and the other six as moderate to low. This analysis is based on how much effort students put into group tasks. The tendency to reduce their group contribution aligns with Myers (2012) statement that someone can be tempted not to get actively involved in group work, also called free-riding. From the interviews, student social loafing can be divided into four causes: learning motivation, group cohesiveness, the teacher's interpersonal communication, and other external factors.

The first cause of student social loafing is low learning motivation. Research shows that students' contributions to a group are based on their internal motivation. Students with low learning motivation consider academic achievement not a priority, so they contribute less in groups (Dahiam & Ghaleb, 2024; Syachtiyani & Trisnawati, 2021). In contrast, students with low social loafing are motivated to get good grades, speak in public, and take initiative in the group (Leobisa & Namah, 2022). These differences can affect relationships with group members, causing uneven task distribution (Katkar et al., 2022). To overcome this, teachers give individual assessments in group tasks. This aligns with Latané's research on social loafing causes, namely the lack of supervision of individual performance in groups (Latané et al., 1979; Myers, 2012), so teachers need to identify each student's performance even in group assignments. Teachers also inform students of the expected group outputs. According to Karau & Williams (1993), informing goals and outcomes of learning can increase an individual's effort in a group.

Lesson timing also becomes a factor that causes students to engage in social loafing. Morning classes usually see better motivation because the brain and body are still fresh; however, end-of-day classes make students lose motivation because their brains are fatigued from earlier lessons. As a result, students become lazy about listening to the teacher and completing tasks. Coordination with peers will also be suboptimal in group tasks because members are already tired. Therefore, sociology teachers increase motivation in late classes

by providing interactive learning, so students become enthusiastic about the lesson (Haryati & Puspitaningrum, 2023).

The second aspect of high student social loafing is group cohesiveness. According to Fitriana & Suhatini (2022), group cohesiveness can be defined as the solidarity that binds members collectively based on individual attraction to each other. Group cohesiveness can be seen in the relationships among peers in a group. If an individual feels comfortable with their group members, cohesiveness will form, social loafing will decrease, and vice versa (Paksi et al., 2020). According to the study, peer relationships are important in achieving group assignment goals. Students with good social skills easily find group members or friendship circles compared to those with difficulty blending in. With like-minded peers, they feel excited to do tasks.

In contrast, students who are shy and have difficulty blending in usually struggle to find group members. This causes them to be placed in groups that are not suitable for them, so they are not enthusiastic about tasks or discussions with other members, which also impacts their self-confidence (Yurdakul & Oneren, 2020; Zahara & Damayanti, 2021). Students with low self-confidence are likely to have high social loafing (Narotama & Rustika, 2019).

Of the four causes of social loafing, informants most frequently mentioned group cohesiveness. This makes sense, given that adolescents must interact with peers and gain recognition or self-actualization (Risal & Alam, 2021). This feeling of alienation correlates with high student social loafing. According to Myers (2012), social loafing in groups decreases when members are friends. Therefore, sociology teachers have taken various steps to increase group cohesiveness, such as forming random groups, selecting group leaders to manage members, and giving extra attention to students who have difficulty blending in (Amelia et al., 2023; Lamanepa et al., 2021; Wahyulianingsih et al., 2023). Sociology teachers also form smaller groups to increase each member's contribution. The fewer the members in a group, the greater the effort each member exerts (Dahiam & Ghaleb, 2024; Karau & Williams, 1993). This helps identify high-social-loafing students who have difficulty blending in because the number of members is small.

The research on group cohesiveness also revealed that even students with low social loafing may choose to reduce their activity in a group if placed with peers they perceive as more intelligent and ambitious. This aligns with Karau & Williams's view that when someone sees other group members as unlikely to contribute more, they will work harder; conversely, if other members seem more competent, they will reduce their effort (Karau & Williams, 1993). Teachers implement random grouping and appoint a group leader to address students' tendency to group with homogeneous peers. This effectively increases each member's performance.

The third aspect of student social loafing causes is the teacher's interpersonal communication. This aspect is important for the continuity of the learning process because it can affect students' motivation. A teacher's ability to deliver enjoyable communication makes it easier to convey messages in learning and impacts students' enthusiasm for

completing tasks (Kusman, 2019). From interviews, it is known that students feel lazy if the teacher does not enjoyably deliver lessons. Student informants also stated that their sociology teachers had delivered lessons enjoyably by relating learning material to students' daily lives (Kristy et al., 2024). This helps students think along and contribute to learning, reducing social loafing and making material easier to understand. Therefore, it can be concluded that good teacher communication skills can lower students' social loafing.

The next cause of social loafing is other external factors, including students' backgrounds and habits. Through interviews, teachers stated that the school has diverse students with different backgrounds. Students with less favorable social, economic, and environmental conditions are likelier to have high social loafing. This aligns with Mona (2021) research, which states that social and economic environments influence learning interest and achievement. Therefore, teachers need to consider these conditions and adjust learning to motivate students.

Another external factor is students' phone use at home and during school. Social media positively impacts school learning by finding additional references, watching learning videos, and discussing with peers. However, excessive phone use can worsen students' social loafing. From interviews with both sociology teachers, it was found that students addicted to phone use have high social loafing levels. As a result, they get less sleep, their concentration decreases, and they disrupt the learning process with other peers (Badrumilah & Rigianti, 2022). Problems and conflicts among members can occur if high-social-loafing students appear indifferent to their group responsibilities. Latané equated individuals' indifference to group responsibilities with a disease because social loafing will lead to many adverse outcomes if left unchecked (Latané et al., 1979). Therefore, teachers apply strategies by giving warnings or reflections to students caught using phones for other purposes during class. Teachers can also work with guidance counselors to raise students' awareness and build their sense of responsibility (Hanaris, 2023).

The final external factor is the transition from junior high to high school. This transition sometimes requires students to adjust to the heavier workload in high school, including group assignments that require peer collaboration. If students cannot adjust, they are likely to exhibit social loafing. Therefore, teachers need to ensure that this transition does not cause students to lose interest in learning by providing enjoyable assignments and boosting motivation. According to Karau & Williams (1993), the more engaging the task, the lower an individual's social loafing.

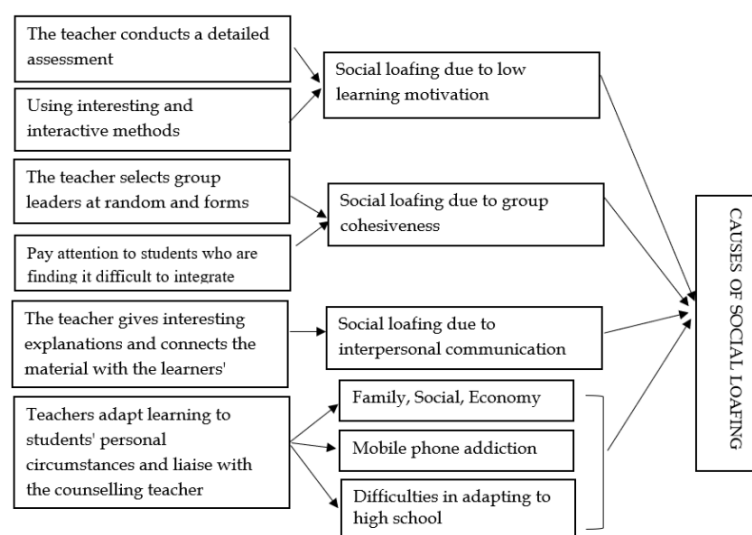


Figure 2. The Relationship Between Research Findings and Social Loafing.

The diagram above shows that the social loafing theory introduced by Ringelmann and further developed by experts such as Bib Latané, Myers, and William Karau remains relevant to secondary education in Surakarta. The tendency toward social loafing among students can impact the learning process. However, teachers can implement strategies to address it, as the sociology teachers in this study have done. Although these strategies may not yield immediate results, student progress becomes evident over time.

D. Conclusion

Several factors are causing high social loafing among students: learning motivation, group cohesiveness, the teacher's interpersonal communication, and other external factors, including students' backgrounds and habits. The impacts of social loafing include affecting students' self-confidence, decreasing learning motivation, weakening group cohesiveness, and creating tension with group members who exhibit low social loafing. Therefore, sociology teachers have implemented various strategies such as creating differentiated instruction, providing interactive learning, offering motivation and corrective feedback, organizing fair and balanced group assignments, and identifying each student's performance.

Based on this study, Ringelmann's social loafing theory remains relevant to today's high school students. Identifying individual performance is a strategy to reduce social loafing within groups. The practical implications of this research can help students and teachers avoid social loafing tendencies early on and assist teachers in designing learning strategies to minimize student social loafing.

This study is limited to private and public schools only. Future research is expected to examine the phenomenon of social loafing in a wider variety of schools – such as faith-based, international, and outdoor schools – so that the data obtained will be more diverse.

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