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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED GROUP-BASED PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND SOCIAL LOAFING AND THE MODERATING ROLE OF TASK VISIBILITY

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

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Danışman: Doç. Dr. Ayşe Alev Torun

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Marmara Üniversitesi
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to investigate the contribution of perceived group-based performance appraisal on perceived co-worker social loafing. Besides, perceived task visibility was examined in terms of its moderating effect on the relationship between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing. Moreover, the relations between demographic characteristics and perceived co-worker social loafing were explored.

The research model was tested with 151 participants working as a team at different private organizations in İstanbul, Turkey. The survey consisted of four sections including perceived task visibility, perceived co-worker social loafing, perceived group-based performance appraisal, and demographic characteristics. SPSS 15.0 program was used to conduct the statistical analysis of the data.

The findings of the research indicated that perceived group-based performance appraisal had a positive contribution on perceived co-worker social loafing. The moderating effect of perceived task visibility on this relationship was also investigated and the results showed that there was a positive contribution of perceived group-based performance appraisal on perceived co-worker social loafing in work groups with low task visibility. However, in work groups with high task visibility, the contribution of perceived group-based performance appraisal on perceived co-worker social loafing became insignificant. In other words, this contribution disappeared in the high task visibility condition.

Also a research question was asked for investigating the relation between demographic variables (gender, age, tenure, group size) and perceived co-worker social loafing. According to difference tests, it was found that female employees had higher scores of perceived co-worker social loafing than male employees and younger employees perceived higher co-worker social loafing than the older ones. Also, it was found that employees, who worked in larger work groups, perceived higher co-worker social loafing than employees who worked in smaller work groups.

The difference test for the tenure variable revealed no significant difference between senior and junior employees in terms of perceived co-worker social loafing scores.

Research findings of the present study imply that making performance evaluation on a group basis may increase employees' perception of social loafing on the part of their colleagues and increasing task visibility in work groups may decrease perceived co-worker social loafing related with perceived group-based performance appraisal.

Key words: Task visibility, social loafing, performance appraisal

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, grup-odaklı performans değerleme algısının, iş arkadaşı sosyal kaytarma algısı üzerindeki etkisini incelemektir. Ayrıca, algısal görev görünürlüğünün grup-odaklı performans değerleme algısı ile iş arkadaşı sosyal kaytarma algısı arasındaki ilişki üzerinde şartlı değişken etkisinin olup olmadığı da araştırılmıştır. Buna ek olarak, demografik özellikler ile iş arkadaşı sosyal kaytarma algısı arasındaki ilişkiler de incelenmiştir.

Araştırma modeli İstanbul'daki farklı özel kuruluşlarda takım halinde çalışan 151 katılımcı ile test edilmiştir. Araştırma anketi, algısal görev görünürlüğü, iş arkadaşı sosyal kaytarma algısı, grup-odaklı performans değerleme algısı ve demografik özellikleri içeren dört bölümden oluşmaktadır. Toplanan verilerin analizi SPSS 15 paket programıyla yapılmıştır.

Elde edilen sonuçlara göre; grup-odaklı performans değerleme algısının, iş arkadaşı sosyal kaytarma algısı üzerinde pozitif bir katkısı vardır. Algılanan görev görünürlüğünün bu ilişkiye şartlı değişken olarak etki edip etmediği de araştırılmıştır. Bulunan sonuçlara göre; düşük görev görünürlüğü olan çalışma gruplarında, grup-odaklı performans değerleme algısının, iş arkadaşı sosyal kaytarma algısı üzerinde pozitif bir katkısı vardır, ancak görev görünürlüğü yüksek olan çalışma gruplarında bu katkı anlamsız bir hale dönüşmektedir. Başka bir, deyişle, yüksek görev görünürlüğü olan durumlarda bu katkı ortadan kalkmıştır.

Ayrıca, iş arkadaşı sosyal kaytarma algısı ile bazı demografik değişkenler (cinsiyet, yaş, kıdem, grup büyüklüğü) arasındaki ilişki bir araştırma sorusu ile incelenmiştir. Fark testi sonuçları, kadın çalışanların erkek çalışanlardan ve genç çalışanların yaşlı çalışanlardan daha yüksek iş arkadaşı sosyal kaytarma algısına sahip olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, kişi sayısı olarak daha büyük gruplarda çalışanların küçük gruplarda çalışanlara oranla iş arkadaşı sosyal kaytarma algılarının daha yüksek olduğu bulunmuştur.

Kıdem değişkeni için yapılan fark testi sonuçlarına göre, kıdemli ve kıdemsiz çalışanların iş arkadaşı sosyal kaytarma algılarında anlamlı bir fark yoktur.

Araştırma bulguları, grup temelli performans değerlendirmelerinin çalışma arakadaşları ile ilgili sosyal kaytarma algısını arttırabileceğini göstermektedir. Öte yandan, bulgular, çalışma gruplarında görev görünürlüğünün arttırılması ile, grup-odaklı performans değerleme algısı ile ilişkili iş arkadaşı sosyal kaytarma algısının azaltılabileceğine işaret etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Görev görünürlüğü, sosyal kaytarma, performans değerleme

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ABBREVIATIONS

KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
MBO	Management by Objectives
PCSL	Perceived Co-worker Social Loafing
ed.	Edition
e.g.	Exempli Gratia (For Example)
etc.	Et Cetera (And So On)
f.	Frequency
HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resources Management
p.	Page
pp.	Pages
PA	Performance Appraisal
PM	Performance Management
RM	Reward Management
Sig.	Significance
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
Std.	Standard
LMX	Leader Member Exchange

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Purpose and Importance of the Study

As Reilly and McGourty (1998) indicated, the movement to group-based work has been one of the most dramatically changes in the business world. Today, work groups became essential parts of the way business is being done in organizations (Ülke, 2006). Government task forces, sports teams, organizational committees, symphony orchestras, juries, and quality control teams provide but a few examples of groups that combine individual efforts to form a single product (Karau and Williams, 1993). In the work arena, groups have become a major mechanism for organizations to tackle problems that are too large or complex for individuals to solve alone (Ülke, 2006). The top three reasons for moving to teams and groups are to improve customer satisfaction, improve products and services, and increase productivity (Heneman and Courtney, 1995).

However, there are several drawbacks of group work. The group work utilizes more time and more resources than individual work. Also, group performance is sometimes lower than the combined performance of group members working as individuals. Because collective work settings are so pervasive and indispensable, in order to make the maximum benefit from group work, it is important for organizations to determine under which conditions individuals are likely to reduce their effort when working collectively, in other words, when do individuals display a tendency to loaf (Karau and Williams, 1993).

Ringelmann (1913) defined this concept as, the tendency for people to be less productive when they work with others than when they are individually accountable, and called it as social loafing. According to Latane, Williams, and Harkins (1979), social loafing is a term used for a phenomenon that when people perform in groups, they do less work or put in less effort than when they work alone.

Social loafing has some bad consequences such as: disappointed team members, less productive team members, loss of opportunity for individual talents to surface,

employee burnout, reinforcement of poor participation and/or effort (Harkins and Petty, 1982). Thus, many organizations are far away from their organizational goals because of social loafing phenomenon.

Since group-based work has become so popular in today's organizations, and the main problem which threatens group work is social loafing, it is chosen for investigation as a dependent variable in the current study.

When social loafing literature is reviewed, it is seen that several issues such as the nature of the task (e.g. task visibility, task interdependence, task meaningfulness, easy or boring tasks), individual differences (e.g. personality traits, preference of group work, winning orientation, age, gender), and group-related aspects (e.g. group size, group cohesiveness) have drawn interest.

Various theories, approaches, and constructs have been developed to explain social loafing such as; social impact theory, diffusion of responsibility, evaluation apprehension, social compensation, dispensability of effort, collective effort model-expectancy value approach, output equity, the ability to identify individual effort.

Although there is a vast amount of literature on social loafing, quantitative research exploring the relationship between performance appraisal and social loafing seems to be scarce. Besides, studies which have focused on the relationship between performance appraisal and social loafing are mostly in a theoretical nature. For example, Heneman and Courtney (1995) suggested that balancing group and individual rewards may decrease social loafing in work groups; however, they did not conduct an empirical study to verify this relationship. Thus, the present study assumes an important role in shedding light on an under researched topic.

In some organizations, it is believed that the use of group-based performance appraisal methods will be influential for improving teamwork among team members in the form of cooperation, collegiality, and the like. Unfortunately, group-based pay plans

sometimes create an opportunity for social loafing and a place for free riders to hide (Heneman and Courtney, 1995). Therefore, important losses for organizations may occur in the form of reduced effectiveness.

Thus, the main purpose of the study is to explore the relationship between employees' perception of group-based performance appraisal and their perception of co-worker social loafing.

Research findings reveal that when group members work collectively and without individual accountability, many hands make light work (Myers, 2000). Therefore, making individual efforts identifiable may decrease social loafing. Perceived task visibility is an individual's belief that his/her supervisor is aware of one's individual effort in a group context (Kidwell and Bennett, 1993). Such monitoring of employee performance may lead workers to refrain from slacking off. Studies that reveal a negative relation between task visibility and social loafing (Atoum and Farah, 2001; George, 1992; Liden, Wayne, Jaworski, and Bennett, 2004) confirm this suggestion.

Based on these arguments about the critical role of task visibility, another objective of the study has been determined as investigating whether employees will still decrease their efforts when they perform collectively under conditions of close observation by their superiors.

Also, a research question, intending to explore the relation between demographic variables (gender, age, tenure, group size) and perceived co-worker social loafing has been put forward. Since studies conducted with Turkish participants are rare, it will be examined whether personal characteristics and group properties make a difference in terms of social loafing as observed in other cultures.

It is expected that such a research which investigates the relationships among the above mentioned concepts will have a positive contribution to the literature and business world. While the role of group-based performance appraisal as a potential antecedent of

social loafing is hoped to be clarified, it is also expected to provide some practical suggestions for better management of the workforce. Since in several organizations it is required from employees to join group work, social loafing and its reduction appears to be quite important for the success of the organization.

Following a short introduction about the research purpose and its importance, we will focus on the research model, hypotheses, and research question in the next part.

1.2. The Research Model, Hypotheses, and Research Question

Figure 1 presents the research model that is designed in the direction of the research hypotheses. Accordingly, the dependent variable that the current study aims to explain is perceived co-worker social loafing; the independent variable that is assumed to predict perceived co-worker social loafing is perceived group-based performance appraisal, and the moderator that is expected to affect the relationship between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing is perceived task visibility.

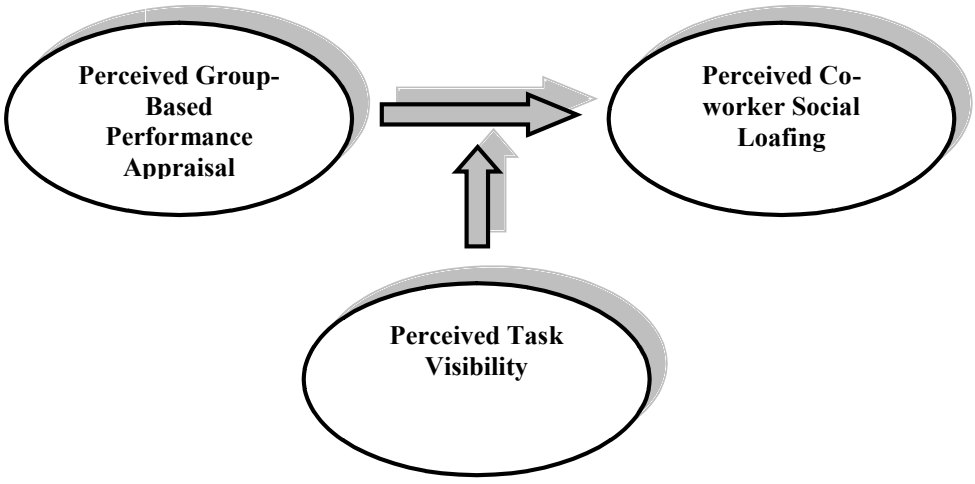

Figure 1: Research Model

According to the research model, the hypotheses are listed as follows:

Hypothesis 1): Perceived group-based performance appraisal contributes positively to perceived co-worker social loafing.

Hypothesis 2): Perceived task visibility moderates the relationship between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing in such a way that when task visibility is low, the positive relationship between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing becomes stronger.

Also, a research question is formulated as follows:

Question 1): What is the relation between demographic variables (gender, age, tenure, group size) and perceived co-worker social loafing?

Firstly, the variables which are employed in hypotheses will be defined.

Perceived social loafing has been defined as the perception that one or more group members are contributing less than they could to the group (Comer, 1995). The perception of social loafing and the subsequent consequences of that perception have received limited attention. However, previous research has shown that social loafing and perceived social loafing are correlated and have similar consequences (George, 1992; Kidwell and Bennett, 1993). Therefore, social loafing perception of group members is important in terms of examining the consequences of loafing on group's satisfaction and performance regardless of the accuracy of those perceptions.

Performance appraisal is concerned with the conceptualization, measurement, and analysis of how well people do their jobs and how satisfied they are in their work settings (Ployhard, Schneider, and Schmitt, 2006). The absence of evaluative feedback about performance leads to social loafing even in established teams (Hardy and Latané, 1988).

Research findings emphasize the importance of performance evaluation for avoiding social loafing in work groups.

Group-based performance appraisal measures group performance and rewards individuals on the basis of how well the group performs (Heneman and Courtney, 1995).

Group-based performance appraisal approach generally proves to be very functional, directing group members' efforts toward common goals consistent with the organization's strategies and critical success factors. Unfortunately, group-based plans may also create the opportunity for low-performing employees to earn the same reward as high performers (Heneman and Courtney, 1995). George (1992) reasoned, with regard to group-based performance appraisal, those who are appraised may tend to worry more than appraisers about fairness issues as some individuals who do not assume their share of the group workload, may lead to social loafing. Social loafing occurs when employees withdraw their individual efforts with the hope that other group members will ensure that the group meets its goals. Like George (1992), Heneman and Courtney (1995) also indicated that if group-based performance appraisal is used within an inappropriate setting where there is a potential for employees to withdraw their efforts, it may cause social loafing in work groups. Low spirit of commitment to the group, large group size, objectives which are far from being challenging, competence differences among group members, and absence of individual accountability may be responsible from social loafing (Myers, 2000).

Based on the above statements, it is assumed that perceived group-based performance appraisal will contribute positively to perceived co-worker social loafing.

This study also investigates the moderating role of task visibility on this relationship. The moderator variable of the research, task visibility is a term used for defining identifiability of individual effort (George, 1992).

When the individual believes that his/her supervisor is able to follow his/her efforts in the context of a group, the employee's task is said to be visible (Kidwell and

Bennett, 1993). Whether the employee's task is visible or not may have an influence on the relationship between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing.

It is expected that in work groups with low task visibility, there will be a positive relationship between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing. When group-based performance appraisal methods are used, this may provide an opportunity for free riders to hide since individual outcomes are not examined in such an evaluation. In a situation like this, if the supervisors are not able to follow employees' efforts closely, a higher extent of social loafing may result.

However, in work groups with high task visibility, we assume that the contribution of perceived group-based performance appraisal on perceived co-worker social loafing will become insignificant. Although group-based evaluation creates a potential for slacking off, the visibility of task-related behavior discourages employees from depending on others. In other words, group-based performance appraisal's contribution to social loafing will disappear in high task visibility condition, since task visibility will play a role in making individual's efforts within the group more observable.

For the relationship between demographic variables of gender, age, tenure, group size, and social loafing, there are some cues in the literature supporting our research question.

When it comes to the relationship between gender and social loafing, Karau and Williams (1993) found that the tendency to loaf is stronger in men than in women. It was found that women tend to be more group-oriented than men and are generally characterized by their sensitivity about the importance of interrelatedness to others.

Previous research has explored the role of gender in terms of social loafing. However, in this research, perception of employees about their co-workers' loafing inclination in relation to gender will be studied.

Since literature on social loafing does not present examples of studies related to age and tenure, it is decided to examine the role of these demographic variables in relation to social loafing.

Karau and Williams (1993) mentioned the importance of group size on social loafing. Almost all studies about social loafing revealed that as group size increases social loafing also increases within the groups (Harkins, Latané, and Williams, 1980; Harkins and Petty, 1982; Ingham, Levinger, Graves, and Peckham, 1974; Kerr and Bruun, 1983; Sorkin, Hays, and West, 2001). It is aimed to explore the relationship between group size and social loafing in the current study to see whether these findings are generalizable.

Following a short introduction about our research, starting from the next chapter on, we will focus on the literature which includes the variables of social loafing, performance appraisal, task visibility, previous studies about these concepts, and the interrelationships among them.

2. LITERATURE

In this part, first of all, the dependent variable "social loafing" will be examined. To be able to understand "social loafing" fully, it will be described with its antecedents, including task visibility and group-based performance appraisal. Finally, the relationship between the independent and the dependent variable and the moderating role of task visibility will be described by using previous literature.

2.1. Social Loafing

2.1.1. What is Social Loafing?

As it was stated in the introduction part, Ringelmann (1913) is the first person who used the term social loafing. He defined social loafing as a tendency for people to be less productive when they work with others than when they work alone. Although his focus was not specifically on the difference of mean performance between individual condition and group condition, he found that mean performance was higher in an individual performance condition than a group condition (Kravitz and Martin, 1986).

Another definition for social loafing conveys that when people perform in groups, they do less work or put in less effort than when they work alone (Latane et al., 1979). Then Karau and Wiliams (1993) changed the definition of social loafing in terms of coactive and collective work. They redefined social loafing as the reduction in motivation and effort when individuals work collectively as compared to the situation wherein they work individually or coactively. When working collectively, individuals work in the real or imagined presence of others with whom they combine their inputs to form a single group product. When working coactively, individuals work in the real or imagined presence of others, but their inputs are not combined with the inputs of others.

Since perceived co-worker social loafing is employed as a dependent variable in the current study, we should also give the definition of perceived social loafing.

Perceived social loafing has been defined as the perception that one or more group members are contributing less than they could to the group (Comer, 1995). Social loafing is hard to measure since it is a sensitive issue. Therefore, it is preferred to use perceived co-worker social loafing scale as an instrument in order to eliminate possible respondent bias.

2.1.2. Previous Studies on Social Loafing

Almost a century ago, in 1913 Max Ringelmann documented the phenomenon known as social loafing in an experiment in which he had people pull on a rope either alone or in groups of two or seven. He measured how hard they were pulling using a strain gauge, and found that those pulling alone pulled harder than those pulling in a group. He found that mean performance was higher in an individual performance condition than in a group condition (Kravitz and Martin, 1986).

Latane et al. (1979) conceptually replicated Ringelmann's (1913) findings with an experiment. The researchers designed an experiment in which they had people clap and shout, either alone or as a member of a group. The experiment results were the same as those of Ringelmann's (1913) study. Researchers measured how loud the participants clapped and shouted and found that participants in the group condition clapped and shouted significantly less loudly than those in the alone condition (Latane, et al., 1979). This claps and shout experiment also coined the term social loafing for the demotivating effects of working in groups. It seems that this influence becomes more profound when people work in larger groups. Petty, Harkins, Williams, and Latane (1977) studied group size as a function of social loafing and found that as the number of group members increases, so does social loafing.

According to a meta-analytic review which was performed by Karau and Williams in 1993; 80 studies have been conducted on social loafing in which individuals' coactive efforts were compared with individuals' collective efforts.

In these studies, different tasks were used such as shouting, rope-pulling, swimming, generating ideas, and perceptual tasks such as maze performance and vigilance tasks on a computer screen. Both laboratory experiments and field studies have been conducted by using a range of subject populations varying in age, gender, and culture (Karau and Wiliams, 1993). These studies revealed that collective effort led to less output than coactive effort.

For exploring cultural effects on social loafing, a widely known study was conducted by Earley (1989). He focused on the influences of individualism and collectivism on the utility of work groups in organizations and found that in individualistic cultures, social loafing was observed at a higher level as compared to collectivistic cultures.

Harkins and Petty (1982) found that when tasks are difficult and participants perceive that they can make a unique contribution to the task, social loafing decreases. Also, some studies indicated that task visibility and identifiability of team member contributions were related negatively to social loafing (Kerr and Bruun, 1981, 1983; Williams, Harkins, and Latané, 1981). When group member evaluations are performed by team members and if the task interdependence is high, then task visibility increases which results in a decline in social loafing.

Liden, Sparrowe, and Wayne (1997), studied leader member exchange theory to reveal the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and social loafing. LMX theory argues that leaders do not form uniform relationships with their subordinates (Liden et al., 1997). Instead, with some subordinates they form a higher quality exchange that is characterized by trust, affect, and mutual respect, whereas with others they form a lower quality exchange that does not go beyond interactions required by an individual's role definition.

According to Liden et al. (1997), when there is a poor exchange between team members and leaders, it may result in social loafing and poor performance. However, when leader-member exchange is satisfactory, then it provides work-related behaviors such as

good performance and organizational citizenship behavior (Gerstner and Day, 1997; Liden et al., 1997).

Williams, Harkins, and Latane (1981) argued that social loafing may occur when participants believe they will be performing two tasks, one as a group and the other alone. They reasoned that participants would conserve their energy by not performing at their highest level in group tasks so that they would perform in the best possible way while working individually.

Eric, Jason, and Michelle (2007) developed and tested a multilevel, interactive model of social loafing behavior. They found that preference for working as a group related negatively with social loafing behavior and that winning orientation moderated the relationship between social loafing and preference for group work. According to study results, group members were more likely to self-report social loafing when their preference for group work and winning orientation were both low. Peer-rated social loafing was most likely when preference for group work, winning orientation, and task interdependence were all low.

In some studies, the relationship between social loafing and anti-normative behaviors were investigated since both behaviors can be explained with deindividuation effect (Diener, Lusk, DeFour, and Flax, 1980). Theories of deindividuation propose that it is a psychological state of decreased self-evaluation and decreased evaluation apprehension causing anti-normative and disinhibited behavior (Diener, et.al., 1980). It seems that when people have an opportunity to hide in a group, they are more likely to act in ways that are contrary to social norms.

In this section, the definition of social loafing is given and related research findings are presented. In the following section, antecedents of social loafing will be provided.

2.1.3. Antecedents of Social Loafing

2.1.3.1. Social Impact Theory

Social impact theory is the most popular theory among others to explain possible causes of social loafing. The theory states that people are viewed as sources or targets within a group. Individuals who are influenced by social forces are defined as the targets and those who influence others are defined as the sources within the group context. When an individual is the target of social forces, by increasing the number of people in the target group, the social pressure on each individual will be diminished because the impact is divided among group members (Williams et al., 1981).

Williams et al. (1981) described social impact as a phenomenon in which people affect one another in social situations. Through daily experiences such as embarrassment, persuasion, humor, and several others, one can see the number of situations that are governed by the presence and actions of others. The impact is not only observed visually, it also alters forces within the target such as thoughts, attitudes, incentives, and physiological state.

The strength of social impact theory is its ability to specify group size effects (Karau and Williams, 1993). According to the theory, the individual efforts of members decrease in work groups where people work collectively (Williams et al., 1981). This theory is also known as diffusion of responsibility among group members (Postmes and Spears, 1998).

2.1.3.2. Dispensability of Effort and Feelings of Uniqueness

This theory was proposed by Kerr and Bruun in 1983. According to the researchers, group members may exert less effort when working collectively because they feel that their inputs are not essential for a high-quality group product. The theory is also known as free-rider behavior in the social loafing literature. A free rider is someone who

benefits from a good group product without contributing to the achievement of it (Hogg and Vaughan, 2005).

Charbonnier (2010) argued that people's collective effort depends on the extent to which they evaluate themselves as better than others. The study of the researchers revealed that self-beliefs related to one's feeling of uniqueness moderates social loafing in group settings. Social loafing effect was found to be stronger in participants who were high in self-uniqueness as compared to those who were low in self-uniqueness. This finding suggests that social loafing is typical of people who are motivated to assert their individuality and uniqueness.

2.1.3.3. Expectations of Co-worker Performance and Sucker Effect

This theory tries to explain social loafing within the context of perceived co-worker social loafing. Individuals, who believe that their co-workers are loafing, are inclined to withhold effort in a group setting (Kerr and Bruun, 1983). Harkins and Jackson (1985) suggested that people tend to compare their efforts with their co-workers' efforts when working collectively. Thus, social loafing occurs because individuals expect others to slack off in groups and, therefore, reduce their own efforts to maintain equity (Harkins and Jackson, 1985). Rather than playing the sucker role, group members may decline their own performance. This has been termed the sucker effect (Kerr and Bruun, 1983).

There are several studies which have investigated the relation between sucker effect and social loafing (i.e., Harkins and Jackson, 1985; Kerr and Bruun, 1983; Schnake, 1991; Williams and Karau, 1991).

In some of these, sucker effect was produced when the partner was perceived to be devoid of motivation rather than ability (Jackson et al., 1985; Williams and Karau, 1991). Schnake (1991) found that expectations of co-worker social loafing had negative impact on output of quantitative tasks, internal work motivation, and job satisfaction.

However, in situations where group goals are set by consensus, the degree to which group members perceive loafing decreases (Mulvey and Klein, 1998).

Williams and Karau (1991) investigated the effect of expected co-worker performance on social loafing from a different perspective. The researchers claimed that under particular conditions, the expectation that others will perform poorly may increase the performance of those who hold these beliefs. They stated that individuals may actually increase their efforts when they expect their co-workers to display poor performance on a meaningful task. Such an effect is called as social compensation.

Comer (1995) suggested a new model of social loafing in real work groups which included some tendencies of employees developed in response to others whom they believed to loaf. Such tendencies include, "a wish to avoid sucker role", "a wish to avoid appearing too competent", "perceived dispensability", and "a wish to avoid appearing incompetent". According to Comer (1995), the wish to avoid appearing too competent increases with perceived superiority to co-workers and the wish to avoid appearing incompetent increases with perceived inferiority to co-workers related to the particular task.

2.1.3.4. Expectancy-Value Approach

Another important theory that explains social loafing is expectancy-value approach. Before explaining how it effects social loafing, information about expectancy-value theory will be provided first. Expectancy-value model proposes that individuals will be willing to exert effort on a task only to the degree that they expect their effort to result in performance that is instrumental in obtaining valued outcomes (Heckhausen, 1977; Vroom, 1964).

Shepperd (1993) proposed that this approach can be extended to collective contexts by specifying how working in a group influences individuals' perceptions of the relationship between their effort and their expected outcomes.

In order to explain how expectancy–value approach affects social loafing in a group context, Karau and Williams (1993) stated that social loafing can occur in groups because there is a less powerful perceived contingency between individual effort and valued outcomes when working as a group. This is especially relevant when individuals expect their co-workers to perform well-enough. In such a case, the link between their own effort and the group performance is reduced since the group is likely to perform well even if the individuals reduce their own inputs. However, when individuals expect their co-workers to perform poorly, the contingency between their own effort and the group performance is actually enhanced.

Naylor, Pritchard, and Ilgen (1980), on the other hand, stated that expectancy-value theory can be extended into a model which accounts for organization-level motivational phenomena. Thus, the expectancy-value model is quite important in terms of emphasizing motivational losses in organizations which utilize group work.

2.1.3.5. Group Cohesiveness and Group Size

Karau and Williams (1997) defined group cohesiveness as the degree to which membership in the group is valuable or important for the members. When the group is formed of close friends in contrast to strangers, cohesiveness is higher. Group cohesiveness is an indicator of a member's attraction to the group (Hogg, 1992).

Since most of the studies on social loafing have been conducted in non-cohesive groups which are formed of strangers, it is important to examine if group cohesiveness has an effect on social loafing.

A study by Harkins and Szymanski (1989) revealed that working in cohesive groups may contribute even further to an individual's motive to obtain self-validation from one's important reference groups. Such an expectation may account for the tendency to loaf less in cohesive groups. Karau and Williams (1997), on the other hand, showed that members of non-cohesive groups tended to reduce their collective efforts and socially loaf.

Karau and Hart (1998) conducted two experimental studies which examined individual motivation within both cohesive and non-cohesive groups. According to the results, it was seen that group cohesiveness can reduce or eliminate social loafing when individuals have the opportunity to make useful contributions.

When it comes to the effects of group size over social loafing, almost all studies about social loafing indicated that as group size increases social loafing also increases within the groups (Harkins et al, 1980; Harkins and Petty, 1982; Ingham et al., 1974; Kerr and Bruun, 1981; Sorkin et al., 2001). Jones (1984) stated that as a group increases in size, individual anonymity also increases. This increase in anonymity makes it more difficult to assess each individual's contributions. So this leads individuals to loaf within groups which have large numbers of members.

2.1.3.6. Individual Factors

At the individual level of social loafing analysis, researchers tried to explain social loafing with individual differences (Atoum and Farah, 2001; George, 1992; Latané et al., 1979; Kidwell and Bennett, 1993; Price, 1987). Some individual attributes that were used in studies to explain social loafing are as follows;

- Preference for group work,
- Winning orientation,
- Task interdependence,
- Gender
- Individualistic or collectivistic orientation,
- Self-uniqueness,
- Big Five personality dimensions.

Preference for group work refers to the degree to which individuals prefer group work and compare it favorably with autonomous work. It was found that preference for group work was consistently and negatively related to social loafing behavior (Eric, Jason, and Michelle, 2007).

Winning orientation is another important personal variable. People who have high winning orientation are achievement oriented. Hart (2000) focused on the role of winning orientation on collective task performance. He found that people with high winning orientation did not engage in social loafing.

Task interdependence is the degree to which team members must rely on one another to complete their work. It is found that when individuals have the opportunity to evaluate or observe team member contributions, social loafing declines (Van de Ven, Delbecq, and Koenig, 1976).

Group members are more likely to self-report social loafing when their preference for group work and winning orientation are both low. Peer-rated social loafing is most likely when preference for group work, winning orientation, and task interdependence are all low (Eric et al., 2007).

Karau and Williams (1993) found that the tendency to loaf is stronger in men than in women. In the same research they also found that the tendency to loaf is stronger in individualistic groups than in collectivistic groups. It seems that women and people with a collectivistic orientation seem to be much more sensitive about others. Accountability, on the other hand, is shown to reduce loafing in individualistic groups but not in collectivistic groups.

Research findings indicated that individuals high in self-uniqueness engaged in social loafing on easy tasks but they did not do so on difficult or challenging tasks (Smith, Kerr, Markus, and Stasson, 2001). It seems that individuals with a high need to differentiate themselves from others engaged in social loafing on easy tasks because they had no

opportunity to display their difference. However, they did not do so on difficult or challenging tasks, since they had a chance to show their unique efforts and valuable contributions.

In a research about big five personality dimensions, Bolin (2002) found that group members' conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness were negatively related to social loafing. However, there was no significant relationship between social loafing and the two dimensions of openness to experience and emotional stability.

Ülke (2006) also studied the relationship between big five personality dimensions (Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Openness to Experience, Neuroticism, and Agreeableness) and social loafing. Results supported only two hypotheses of the research proposing positive relations between social loafing and the dimensions of extraversion and neuroticism.

Above results indicate that the relationship between personality and social loafing requires further research since there are contradictory findings about the issue.

2.1.3.7 Task Visibility

Theory of identifiability states that when an individual's performance is combined with others so that his/her contribution is unknown, he/she will expend less effort. However, when the individual's contribution is identifiable, social loafing effect decreases substantially (Bartis, Szymanski, and Harkins, 1988; Harkins and Jackson, 1985).

Bartis et al. (1988) argued that lack of identifiability is one of the largest contributing factors to social loafing.

In many studies it has been emphasized that making individuals' efforts observable to group members may be enough to decrease or eliminate social loafing in several situations (Harkins, 1987; Harkins and Jackson, 1985; Harkins and Szymanski, 1988,

1989). It is found that when individuals were convinced to believe that their efforts were identifiable, they exerted high levels of effort and did not engage in social loafing

In this part, the definition of task visibility which is the moderator variable of the current research will be given.

Task visibility is the term used for defining identifiability of individual effort. Perceived task visibility is an individual's belief that his/her supervisor is aware of one's individual effort in a group context (Kidwell and Bennett, 1993). For any task, the level of visibility depends on the extent to which the work context permits monitoring and evaluation of individual performance and when it is difficult to keep track of individual contributions, task visibility is decreased (Jones, 1984).

When task visibility is low, individuals think that it is difficult for their supervisor to determine how hard they are working and how much effort they exert on the job. In such situations, social loafing may occur because workers believe it will go unnoticed and thus, negative consequences will not result (George, 1992). There are many studies which show the importance of task visibility in reducing social loafing (Atoum and Farah, 2001; George, 1992; Liden et al., 2004; Price, 1987; Williams, Harkins, and Latané, 1981). If task visibility is high, workers believe that their supervisor is aware of levels of individual effort and thus, are less likely to engage in social loafing (George, 1992). When an individual works alone, his/her effort can be monitored easily, such as that in piece work. In such a case, task visibility is high. On the other hand, when people work in groups, their efforts and outputs can not be easily monitored, thus, task visibility is at a low level (Jones, 1984).

In the current study, it is preferred to use the term "perceived task visibility", since as Jones (1984) suggested, perceptions of task visibility are likely to vary across workers, and it is those perceptions that influence social loafing.

The framework for social loafing based on the degree of task visibility is offered by expectancy theory of motivation (Vroom, 1964). Specifically, social loafing is more

likely to occur as individuals' perceptions of the relationship between their efforts and outcomes become weaker (Jones, 1984; Karau and Williams, 1993). Because performance and outcome ratio perceptions is expected to be less positive when task visibility is low, that is, individual efforts are less visible by the supervisor, individuals seem to be less motivated to put forth effort (George, 1992). It appears that if individuals believe that their effort is indistinguishable from the effort put forth by others, their performance-to-outcome expectancies drop. They think that neither an increase nor a decrease in effort will be noticed, and therefore neither a reward nor a sanction will result. Conversely, when the perception of task visibility is high, individuals believe that their efforts are distinguishable from the efforts put forth by co-workers.

Besides social loafing, task visibility literature presents examples of other negative behaviors that are due to lack of task visibility. Behaviors in work groups which are contrary to social norms are among these (Postmes and Spears, 1998).When individuals lose self-awareness and evaluation apprehension in group situations, they are said to be deindividuated (Myers, 2000). According to Postmes and Spears (1998), a subjective deindividuated state which is caused by conditions that facilitate anonymity and draw attention away from the individual leads to transgression of general social norms. Larger groups, physical anonymity, arousing and distracting activities are among the factors that contribute to a deindividuated state (Myers, 2000).

2.1.3.8. Performance Appraisal

Some studies have focused on the relation between the method of performance appraisal and social loafing. For example, Heneman and Courtney (1995) suggested that by paying attention to individual success and rewarding it, the identifiability of the individual effort can be increased. Thus, balancing group and individual rewards decreases social loafing in work groups.

Williams et al. (1981) also stated that two requirements must be met for the evaluation process to eliminate social loafing; (a) the participant's output must be known or

identifiable, and (b) there must be a standard (personal, social or objective) with which this output can be compared.

Since the relationship between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing is examined in this study, first, basic explanations about performance and performance appraisal will be given, then, individual, group, and team performance appraisal methods will follow these explanations.

Before giving the definition of performance appraisal, the definition of performance must be given. When it is examined on an organizational basis, performance is the ability to achieve the predetermined targets of the organization by using the resources as effectively as possible (Daft, 1997).

Bernardin and Russell (1998) defined performance as the record of outcomes produced on a specified job function or activity during a specified time period. There are several factors that influence an individual's performance. Cummings and Donald (1993) classified these factors into two main domains: personal and external. Experience, skills, knowledge, competence, motivation can be given as examples of personal influence. For external influence, social (family), economical (salary), and cultural (education) elements may be cited. So, when we consider today's complex organizational structures, duties, and relations, it can easily be observed that the measurement of a worker's performance is not an easy task. Hence, different performance appraisal methods must be designed for different organizations and for different types of assignments.

After giving basic explanations about performance and contributing factors, now it is the time to provide essential definitions of performance appraisal.

Performance appraisal is utilized since two thousand years (Taormina and Gao, 2009). According to Patten (1977), the earliest documented appraisal of employees can be traced back to the 3rd century AD, when emperors of the Wei dynasty in China employed 'imperial raters' to evaluate the performance of the dynasty's officials. In today's

organizations, several definitions and methods for performance appraisal exist. According to Harvey and Bowen (1996), performance appraisal refers to a description which reviews an individual's job performance in the simplest way. It is defined as the total system of gathering information, the review and feedback to the individual, and the storage of data to improve organizational effectiveness.

Performance appraisal can also be defined as a structured formal and periodic interaction between the employee and the supervisor in which the work performance of the subordinate is examined and discussed with a perspective of identifying weaknesses and strengths as well as opportunities for improvement and development of skills (Daft, 1997).

Rudman (2003) refers to performance appraisal as "performance planning and review" and he describes it as a process of planning an employee's future work goals and objectives, reviewing job performance and work behaviors, assessing progress towards the predetermined work goals, and discussing training and development opportunities. Ployhard et al. (2006) on the other hand, have stated that performance appraisal is concerned with the conceptualization, measurement, and analysis of how well people do their jobs and how satisfied they are in their work settings.

Like other theoretical constructs, performance appraisal can also be examined in terms of both the process used to conduct an appraisal and the content of evaluation. However, many researchers tended to focus on the process (e.g. Landy and Farh, 1980; Philp, 1983), paying little attention to the content. One reason for this lack of interest in content is related to the assumption that 'every job is different', which leads to a belief that each job should be evaluated by using different performance criteria.

Although this would be ideal for employees; developing individual performance appraisal criteria for every worker would be an excessively time-consuming task for managers, especially in large organizations (Taormina and Gao, 2009).

Performance appraisal systems must not only accurately measure how well an employee is performing a job, but they must also include mechanisms for reinforcing strengths, identifying deficiencies, and feeding such information back to employees so that they can improve their future performance.

Thus, performance appraisal has both evaluative and developmental purposes (Lloyd, 1992). It is also a plan for the future and a way to discuss methods to do the tasks efficiently and effectively. However, it should not be used against people as a tool for punishment (Cole, 1998).

According to Ivancevich and Matteson (1996), some of the major evaluative purposes of performance appraisal are;

- Identifying high-potential employees,

- Making compensation decisions,

- Validating the effectiveness of employee selection procedures,

- Evaluating previous training programs,

- Facilitating future performance improvement.

For the developmental aspect of performance appraisal, again Ivancevich and Matteson (1996) listed the purposes as follows;

- Developing ways of overcoming obstacles and performance barriers,

- Identifying training and development opportunities,

- Establishing supervisor-employee agreement on performance expectations,

- Providing directions for future performance.

Performance appraisal techniques have been categorized by Rudman (2003) into two classes. The first is the people approach and the second is the process approach. According to people approach, high performance can only be achieved through right people. Process approach, on the other hand, assumes that highest performance can be achieved by using the best procedural system.

Richard (1997) has emphasized that a performance appraisal system based on the process approach may be successful under particular conditions. The researcher has listed basic steps of process-based performance appraisal as follows;

1) The first step is to determine the reason for the organization to evaluate employee performance.

2) The second step is to identify relevant evaluation criteria. Criterion is a way of describing employee success.

3) The third step is to create and choose methods for measuring the criteria.

4) The fourth step is to explain the system to both employees and supervisors and to note their suggestions.

5) The fifth step is the actual evaluation of the employee using the instrument chosen in the third step.

6) The final step is the performance appraisal review, during which the supervisor formally communicates the results of the appraisal to the employee.

Like Richard (1997), Macky and Johnson (2000) suggested that a typical successful performance appraisal system should include the following items;

- Communicating the mission/strategies of the organization to its employees.

- The setting of individual performance targets to meet the employees' individual goals, team objectives, and ultimately the organization's mission/strategies.

- Regularly appraising employees against the agreed targets.

- Using appraisal results for the identification of developmental and /or administrative decisions.

- Continually reviewing the performance appraisal system to ensure that it continues to contribute to the organization's performance, ideally through consulting with employees.

Decenzo and Robbins (2002) stated that several methods are used for evaluating employee performance. Among these, absolute standards, relative standards, objective standards, 360 degree feedback, team appraisal, and group-based performance appraisal may be mentioned. There are particular shortcomings of each method which can be minimized through training and information. Still, they produce different consequences in terms of employee satisfaction.

Since we will examine group-based performance appraisal and its effects on social loafing, particular attention will be given to the topic of group-based performance appraisal.

2.1.3.8.1. Group-Based Performance Appraisal

Winston and Creamer (1997) have stated that most of today's business is being conducted in the form of collaborative work. The successful performance of teams plays an important role in achieving organizational goals. Traditional individual-based appraisal methods which focus on personal performance and reward competition rather than cooperation are dysfunctional in environments that emphasize collective success. One way to eliminate this problem is to consider group output for evaluation and rewarding rather than focusing on individual achievement (Kenneth, Cardy and Dobbins, 2011).

Accordingly, appraisal of team performance should be integrated into group-based activities. This is important for businesses that use team structures to reach their goals since they look for ways to reward cooperation between individuals and departments.

With the new structure of the organizations that is mostly based on group work, a new performance appraisal method has been started to be used. With this method, group performance is measured and individuals are rewarded on the basis of how well the group performs (Heneman and Courtney, 1995).

Group-based performance appraisal approach generally proves to be very functional, directing group members' efforts toward common goals consistent with the organization's strategies and critical success factors. Unfortunately, group-based plans may also create the opportunity for low-performing employees to earn the same reward as high performers (Heneman and Courtney, 1995). Although such systems encourage individual efforts toward common business goals, they also tend to reward underperforming employees along with average and above-average employees, thus leading to a possible negative influence on justice perceptions.

2.1.3.8.2. Individual versus Group-Based Performance Appraisal

Previous research has shown that individual-based and group-based performance appraisal approaches have both benefits and costs (Jones and Schilling, 2000; Kaplan and David, 1993).

Performance appraisals based on individual performance are generally associated with increased pressure on individuals to perform alone, accept responsibility for their own actions, and assume risks (Milkovich and Newman, 1990). Individual rewards, however, can be especially useful in large work groups where workers might otherwise feel lost in the system (Lawler, 1971).

When performance appraisal method is based on group work, group members show greater liking and respect for each other, enhanced self-esteem and perceptions of

control, lower anxiety, and more task enjoyment (Johnson and Johnson, 1989). Also, it is found in several studies that group-based rewards encourage cooperation and helping (Milkovich and Newman, 1990).

Group-based rewards can have negative effects as well. Group-based incentives can promote regression to the mean rather than an outstanding contribution (Milkovich and Newman, 1990). Low performers may have little motivation to obtain training and even if they do, it is not enough to raise their contribution. In such a case, high performers may believe that others are taking advantage of them. Thus, they can hold back from exerting themselves or leave the organization altogether.

Since there are some advantages and disadvantages of both individual-based traditional performance appraisal and group-based performance appraisal approaches, team performance appraisal as a new evaluation system has been adopted for group work.

Team performance appraisal system also measures and rewards individuals on the basis of individual contributions to the team and team performance (Reilly and McGourty, 1998). The following subsection will present the basic differences between team-based and group-based performance appraisal systems.

2.1.3.8.3. Team versus Group-Based Performance Appraisal

Before giving the definition of team appraisal concept, it is better to explain what a team is and why there is a need for team appraisal. Although teams have different definitions in the literature, a broad definition of a team includes the following characteristics: Teams involve two or more people who interact dynamically and interdependently and share a common and valued goal, objective, or mission (Dickinson et al, 1992). With the change of organizational structure to the team based, it is needed to adjust the traditional performance appraisal style toward a more team-based style.

In a team setting, it is not possible to separate out an individual's contribution. Proponents of team appraisal argue that, in such cases, individual appraisal can be

dysfunctional since it detracts from the critical issues of the team. To address this problem, organizations have started developing team appraisals to evaluate the performance of the team as a whole (Carrell, and Elbert, 2000).

Team appraisals represent one way to break down barriers between individuals and encourage their collective effort. Frequently, the system is complemented by the use of team incentives or group variable pay (Özdemir, 2006).

As emphasized by Reilly and McGourty (1998), team performance appraisal focuses on and tries to measure two performance domains. These are the performance of the individual and that of the team. Individual performance includes behaviors under the control of the individual employee. These behaviors include those related with the performance of non-integrated tasks as well as actions necessary for the achievement of team tasks (Reilly and McGourty, 1998).

Team performance, on the other hand, includes the behavior of the team as an integrated and interdependent unit and focuses on the achievement of measurable team objectives (Reilly and McGourty, 1998).

There is an important difference between team-based performance appraisal and group-based performance appraisal. In team-based performance appraisal, individual competencies and contributions are taken into account in team appraisal processes. However, in group-based performance appraisal measures, evaluators focus on group performance and reward individuals on the basis of how well the group performs (Heneman and Courtney, 1995). As a summary, team performance appraisal system also measures and rewards individuals on the basis of individual contributions to the team but group-based performance appraisal only measures the total group success without paying attention to individual contributions (Heneman and Courtney, 1995).

2.2. The Relationship between Perceived Group-based Performance Appraisal and Perceived Co-worker Social Loafing

Hypothesis 1: Perceived group-based performance appraisal contributes positively to perceived co-worker social loafing.

Since, the relationship between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing will be tested in our first hypothesis, it is decided to focus on this relationship in a more detailed way by giving examples from previous research.

Today, organizations continue to shift emphasis away from individual performance, placing greater importance on the role of teams and work groups. To support this new emphasis, many organizations have designed group-based performance appraisal systems, to reward employees for the group's success in order to contribute to the organization's strategy (Heneman and Courtney, 1995). When performance appraisal method is based on group work, employees show greater liking and respect for each other, their self-esteem is enhanced, perceive higher control and lower anxiety, and experience more task enjoyment (Johnson and Johnson, 1989). Also, it is found in several studies that group-based rewards encourage cooperation and helping (Milkovich and Newman, 1990).

While various studies have documented the effectiveness of these group-based performance appraisal plans, questions still remain on how to use them in the best way. One such issue centers on whether the organizations' pay systems support alignment between the individual and the group (Heneman and Courtney, 1995). So, it is important to reward groups and individuals in a balanced manner since there are advantages and disadvantages of each rewarding style. The main disadvantage of group-based performance appraisal is to create an opportunity for social loafing (Heneman and Courtney, 1995; Kenneth et al., 1992; Latane et al., 1979).

For example, Latane et al. (1979) stated that in group-based tasks, when the rewards are fully distributed on an egalitarian basis, individuals can "hide in the crowd". That is, employees can benefit from the group success by making less or even no contribution to the group product since individual group members are rewarded equally for the final group product. That's why group-based plans may set the stage for low-performing employees to earn the same reward as high performers (Heneman and Courtney, 1995). Based on these arguments, it is hypothesized in this study that group-based evaluations will contribute to the perception of social loafing on the part of co-workers.

According to Kenneth et al. (1992), ignoring these individual-based performance differences may have some negative consequences within the groups. Overlooking individual differences may satisfy poor performers and free-riders. However, the inequity and lack of managerial response would negatively affect high-performing team members. In such instances, free riders can create a demotivating effect on those who perform well. Therefore, individual appraisals should not be completely abandoned when organizations move to a group-based approach (Kenneth et al., 1992).

Some researchers on the other hand, have stated that when the performance appraisal is fully based on individual effort for the purpose of overcoming social loafing, then it causes a harsh competitive environment and this prevents cooperation within working groups (Kenneth et al., 1992).

To avoid a situation like that, employees can be appraised on how well they work with team members. Examples of measures used to appraise "team-supportive" behavior could include the degree to which: the employee participates in team meetings, the employee volunteers for team projects, the employee communicates with members in a constructive and non-threatening manner, and/or the employee is perceived by other members as pleasant to work with and cooperative. By using this method, both social loafing and the fully competitive environment may be eliminated.

2.3. Moderator Effect of Task Visibility

Hypothesis 2: Perceived task visibility moderates the relationship between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing in such a way that when task visibility is low, the positive relationship between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing becomes stronger.

In the current research, we hypothesized a positive contribution of perceived group-based performance appraisal on perceived co-worker social loafing when groups work under low task visibility. But in work groups with high task visibility, we assumed that the contribution of perceived group-based performance appraisal on perceived co-worker social loafing would become insignificant. In other words, group-based performance appraisal's contribution to social loafing is expected to disappear in a high task visibility condition. That's because task visibility would play a role in terms of increasing the visibility of individual's efforts within the group even when the appraisal method is based on group effort.

An individual may not be able to claim any benefits from high levels of effort nor incur any penalties for low levels of effort when individual contributions to group performance are not identifiable (Jones, 1984). Since group members think that their individual contributions to the team task are not rewarded in a group-based evaluation system, they are inclined to loaf, observing the fact that the visibility of the task is low.

We developed the above hypothesis since there are some studies which indicate that group-based performance appraisals sometimes create an opportunity for social loafing and a place for free riders to hide (Heneman and Courtney, 1995). But with increasing the task visibility within the group, managers can prevent group members from hiding as free riders. Then, individuals will not engage in social loafing because their efforts are identifiable and they are given an equitable amount of resources/rewards compared to their inputs.

Thus, when task visibility is increased, social loafing and perceived social loafing can be decreased, although group-based performance appraisal is used.

3. METHOD

In this section, firstly, the demographic characteristics of the participants are described. Then, the research instruments, namely, perceived task visibility scale, perceived co-worker social loafing scale, and perceived group-based performance appraisal scale are presented. Finally, data collection and analysis processes are explained.

3.1. Sample

The study is conducted with a convenience sample of 151 employees working in teams for different private organizations in Istanbul.

Gender is almost equally represented in the sample, with 79 males (52.3%) and 69 females (45.7%). Three participants did not mention their gender. The age of the subjects varies between 23 and 50, with a mean of 29 years. When it comes to marital status, it is seen that 50.3 % (N= 76) of the subjects are single, 48.3% (N= 73) of them are married, and two data are missing.

Mean tenure in the present company is 2,9 years (minimum 2 months, maximum 23 years), while mean of total work experience is 5,5 years (minimum 2 months, maximum 25 years). As to the distribution of the participants among the sectors, it is observed that 70.2% (N= 106) of them work in telecommunication sector, 5.3% (N= 8) are employed in IT companies, 4.6% (N= 7) of them work in finance sector, and 19.9% (N= 28) of the respondents are employed in sectors such as energy, production, education, automotive, and defense. Two data are missing.

Sample characteristics indicate that the education level of the participants is quite high. Of the participants, 68.9 % (N= 104) have an undergraduate degree, 24.5% (N= 37) hold master degrees, and 6.6% (N= 10) have PhD.

The participants are also asked about the number of members in their groups and the mean age of them. The related data is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Work Groups

Group Characteristics	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Group Size (number of members)				
6 and lower	35	23.2	23.2	23.2
Between 7 and 12	44	29.1	29.1	52.3
Between 13 and 20	36	23.8	23.8	76.2
21 and higher	36	23.8	23.8	100
Total	151	100	100	
Mean Ages of the Group Members (in years)				
25 and lower	17	11.3	11.3	11.3
Between 26 and 30	108	71.5	71.5	87.8
31 and higher	26	17.2	17.2	100
Total	151	100	100	

As to the distribution of the participants in terms of job title, it is observed that 45% (N= 68) of them are electronic engineer, 13.9% (N= 21) of them are computer engineer, 10.5% (N= 16) of them are manager, and 30.6% (N= 46) of the respondents are employed as assistant, construction engineer, consultant, industrial engineer, mechanical engineer, instructor, quality engineer, sales engineer, and HR specialist.

3.2. Research Instruments

Study participants were required to answer a questionnaire (see Appendix A) with four parts on different personal and employment related aspects (Perceived task visibility, perceived co-worker social loafing, perceived group-based performance appraisal, and demographic characteristics). Except the demographic questions, all items were responded on a 6-point scale [(1) = Never, (2) = Rarely, (3) = Sometimes, (4) = Often, (5) = Quite often, (6) = Always].

3.2.1. Perceived Task Visibility Scale

Section 1 of the questionnaire includes a 13-item scale which aims to measure the respondents' perceptions in relation to the team leader's evaluations about how visible the task is on the part of participants' themselves, the team, and individual team members. Items refer to the individual employee's belief about the extent to which their supervisor was aware of how much effort he or she and other group members exerted on the job and how hard they worked.

The original perceived task visibility scale with 6 items was developed by George (1992). The Cronbach's alpha reliability for the original scale was .84 (George, 1992). Scale items refer to individual's perceived task visibility. This scale was adapted to Turkish by Ülke (2006). In the first stage of the adaptation, items were translated into Turkish by three different translators. Then, three other experts rated each translated scale item on a 10-point scale according to their semantic similarity with original scale items.

Since the Turkish version of the scale which was translated by Ülke (2006) evaluates only the perception of individual task visibility, new items were developed and added to this scale to measure the perception of team's task visibility.

In the present study, seven new items were developed based on a literature review of the concept and added to the original scale. This new scale with 13 items which were related to the individual's, team's, and team members' perceived task visibility were checked by the faculty staff in terms of their face validity.

High scores indicate that perceived task visibility is high. Items 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, and 13 are reverse scored.

3.2.2. Perceived Co-worker Social Loafing Scale

Section 2 of the questionnaire covers a 13-item scale which requires the participants to rate the extent to which their group members tend to engage in social loafing.

Liden et al. (2004) adapted nine items of a 10-item social loafing scale developed by George (1992). The adapted items which intended to measure perceived co-worker social loafing had a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .96 (Liden et al., 2004). This scale was translated to Turkish by Ülke (2006) and three items were added. The Cronbach's alpha reliability for the Turkish version was found to be .93 (Ülke, 2006).

High scores indicate that perceived co-worker social loafing is high. Items 2 and 13 are reverse scored.

3.2.3. Perceived Group-Based Performance Appraisal Scale

Section 3 of the questionnaire includes a 6-item scale that measures perceived group-based performance appraisal in work groups.

The source of scale items were interviews conducted with HR managers of three different international telecommunication companies located in İstanbul. By combining information about performance appraisal processes in these companies with the related literature on performance appraisal, a six item scale was composed. Items were revised by the faculty staff so as to increase their clarity.

High scores indicate that perceived group-based performance appraisal is high. Items 1 and 2 are reverse scored.

3.2.4. Demographic Characteristics

Section 4 of the questionnaire is comprised of 10 items on demographic characteristics of respondents: Gender, marital status, level of education, age, tenure in the

present company, total work experience, job title, company's business sector, number of group members, and the mean ages of group members.

3.3. Procedure

Questionnaires were administered directly and via e-mail. Out of 260 survey forms that were distributed, only 151 (58%) of them were valid. The e-mails contained a prescription letter which explained the purpose of the research. The participants were informed that all the data would be kept confidential and used for research purposes only.

The instruction paragraph asked subjects to answer the questionnaire thoroughly and completely. It was also stated that only employees who worked as a team could participate in the study. All the data was collected within two weeks.

3.4. Statistical Analysis

Results of this study were evaluated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15.0 for Windows. Descriptive statistics were used to present the main characteristics of the sample.

First of all, factor analysis was conducted for each variable (perceived task visibility, perceived co-worker social loafing, and perceived group-based performance appraisal). For the factor structure of the scales, factor analysis was performed with principal components model and factor loadings were taken into consideration. For the internal consistency of the scales, reliability analysis was performed and coefficient alphas were computed.

Correlation analyses, simple linear and hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted for variables of perceived task visibility, perceived co-worker social loafing, and perceived group-based performance appraisal to test the hypotheses. For testing the moderator effect of task visibility, the hypotheses were also tested by Excel

worksheets which help interpreting two-way interaction effects (Dawson and Richter, 2006).

By entering unstandardized regression coefficients (including intercept/constant) which are acquired by hierarchical multiple regression analysis onto the worksheet, the interaction effect (Independent variable × Moderator) was plotted.

Finally, independent samples t-test and Welch and Brown-Forsythe tests were conducted to examine the demographic differences in terms of perceived co-worker social loafing. Throughout the statistical analysis, significance level of 0.05 was taken into consideration.

4. FINDINGS

In this part, findings of the study are presented in four sections. In the first section, results related to the factor analyses and internal consistencies of the scales are reported. Each scale was factor analyzed in order to figure out the factor structure. After determining the underlying factors within each scale, reliability of each factor was computed.

The second section includes correlations among study variables, namely, perceived group-based performance appraisal, perceived co-worker social loafing, and perceived task visibility. In the third section, simple linear regression analysis, hierarchical regression analysis, and interaction tables related to hypothesis tests and potential moderation effects are presented. Lastly, in the fourth section, demographic comparisons in terms of perceived co-worker social loafing conducted through difference tests for examining the research question are reported.

4.1. Factor Analysis and Internal Consistencies

Exploratory factor analysis with principal component analysis and varimax rotation was conducted for revealing the factorial structure of the scales. Then reliability analysis of each scale was implemented by computing Cronbach's alpha to see whether it was greater than .70 or not. According to McIntire and Miller (2000), the Cronbach's alpha coefficient over .70 is adequate for a good reliability.

4.1.1. Analysis for Perceived Task Visibility

Firstly, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy test and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were calculated to see whether the data for this variable was convenient for conducting factor analysis.

It was seen that KMO value was 0.953 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p = 0.000 < 0.001$); which indicated that the data was adequate and appropriate to conduct factor analysis.

When the factor analysis was conducted, results revealed only one factor. This single factor explained 67.17% of the total variance with an eigenvalue of 8.73. The anti-image correlation matrix and component matrix of the items were analyzed and it was shown that all 13 items are convenient to be collected under this factor.

A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.95 was obtained for perceived task visibility scale which revealed that the scale has high internal consistency.

4.1.2. Analysis for Perceived Co-worker Social Loafing

Before starting the factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy test and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were computed. It was seen that KMO value was 0.940 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p = 0.000 < 0.001$). These results showed that perceived co-worker social loafing scale could go through factor analysis.

When the factor analysis was conducted, only one factor was found. This factor explained 63.47% of the total variance with an eigenvalue of 8.25. The anti-image correlation matrix and component matrix of the items were analyzed and it was shown that all 13 items are convenient to be placed under this factor.

The reliability analysis results indicated that perceived co-worker social loafing scale has high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.95$).

4.1.3. Analysis for Perceived Group-Based Performance Appraisal

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy test and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were again calculated for this variable. It was seen that KMO value was 0.810 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p = 0.000 < 0.001$).

These results showed that perceived group-based performance appraisal scale with 6 items was suitable for factor analysis.

When the factor analysis was conducted, only one factor was found. This factor explained 53.47% of the total variance with an eigenvalue of 3.29. The anti-image correlation matrix and component matrix of the items were analyzed and it was shown that all 6 items are convenient to be loaded under this factor.

As to the reliability analysis of perceived group-based performance appraisal scale, a satisfactory result (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.82$) was obtained.

4.2. Correlation Analysis

Factor analysis revealed that all scales represented one-dimensional constructs. New variables were formed from means of factors forming the scales. To examine the relationships among variables, bivariate correlation analysis is performed. In this analysis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient is computed. The means, standard deviations, and correlations related to all variables are presented in Table 2. All correlations are significant at 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Study Variables

	Mean	*SD*	**1**	**2**	**3**
1. Perceived Group-based Performance Appraisal	*3.61*	*1.05*	1		
2. Perceived Task Visibility	*4.02*	*1.18*	-0.03	1	
3. Perceived Co-worker Social Loafing	*3.11*	*1.07*	0.35*	-0.37*	1

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Correlation analysis results displayed in Table 2, indicated a significant positive relationship between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing ($r = 0.350$, $p < 0.01$) as expected. Also, a significant negative relationship has been obtained between perceived task visibility and perceived co-worker social loafing ($r = - 0.370$, $p < 0.01$).

4.3. Simple Linear and Hierarchical Regression Analyses

In order to statistically demonstrate the contribution of perceived group-based performance appraisal to perceived co-worker social loafing, simple linear regression analysis is used (test of Hypothesis 1).

Hierarchical regression analysis was conducted in order to statistically demonstrate the moderating effect of perceived task visibility on the above mentioned relationship between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing (test of Hypothesis 2).

4.3.1. Simple Linear Regression Analysis

The first hypothesis is reminded below since it is tested in this section;

H1: Perceived group-based performance appraisal contributes positively to perceived co-worker social loafing.

Simple linear regression is used to analyze Hypothesis 1 (Table 3). Perceived group-based performance appraisal has a significant (p=,000<,005) and positive contribution (Beta= ,359) on perceived co-worker social loafing and the explained variance is 12%. So, this finding is important in terms of supporting the first hypothesis of the research. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was confirmed.

Table 3

Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Dependent Variable: Perceived Co-worker Social Loafing (PCSL)			
Variables	**Beta**	**t**	**p**
Perceived Group-based Performance Appraisal	0,359	4,562	0,000
$R= 0,350$; $R^2= 0,123$; $F= 20,813$; $p= 0,000$			

4.3.2. Hierarchical Regression Analysis

The second hypothesis is reminded below since it is tested in this section;

H2: Perceived task visibility moderates the relationship between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing in such a way that when task visibility is low, the positive relationship between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing becomes stronger.

The following regression table (Table 4) shows the equation models of the independent variable, the moderator, and their interaction to explain the dependent variable. All the variables were standardized, and standardized variables were used during the regression analyses.

The first step in Table 4 has already been presented in Table 3 while reporting simple linear regression analysis results.

The second step in Table 4 shows that perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived task visibility together can statistically explain perceived co-worker social loafing (R^2=0.254, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$).

As it comes to the third step in Table 4, when the moderator (perceived task visibility) interacts with the independent variable (perceived group-based performance appraisal), it is found that the interaction can statistically explain the dependent variable (perceived co-worker social loafing), (R^2= 0.360, p = 0.000 < 0.05).

This means that the moderator (perceived task visibility) has an effect on the relationship between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing. So, this finding is important in terms of supporting the second hypothesis of the research. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was confirmed.

Table 4

Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Dependent Variable: Perceived Co-worker Social Loafing (PCSL)

Variables	Beta	t	p
Step 1			
Perceived Group-based Performance Appraisal (PGPA)	0,359	4,562	0,000
R= 0,350; R^2= 0,123; F= 20,813; p= 0,000			
Step 2			
Perceived Group-based Performance Appraisal (PGPA)	0,346	4,746	0,000
Perceived Task Visibility (PTV)	-0,330	-5,099	0,000
R= 0,504; R^2= 0,254; F= 25,153; p= 0,000			
Step 3			
Perceived Group-based Performance Appraisal (PGPA)	0,194	2,609	0,010
Perceived Task Visibility (PTV)	-0,284	-4,669	0,000
Interaction (PGPA*PTV)	-0,258	-4,951	0,000
R= 0,600; R^2= 0,360; F= 27,603; p= 0,000			

To test the moderator effect of task visibility for the relationship between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing, a dummy task visibility variable was created which has two conditions (high task visibility and low task visibility) according to the mean scores of task visibility. Then, the correlation between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing was retested for the two separate conditions. According to correlation analysis, the following results were found;

For the low task visibility condition, a significant positive relationship between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing has been found ($r = 0.827$, $p=,000 < 0.01$) as expected.

For the high task visibility condition, an insignificant negative relationship was found between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing ($r= -,025$, $p=,808>0.01$) as assumed.

Also, the effect of the moderator can be clearly seen on the interaction plot which is formed by Aiken and West (1991) and Dawson and Richter (2006) to display the interaction effects.

According to Figure 2, it can be said that there is a positive contribution of perceived group-based performance appraisal on perceived co-worker social loafing in work groups with low task visibility condition. On the other hand, in work groups with high task visibility, the contribution of perceived group-based performance appraisal on perceived co-worker social loafing becomes insignificant. In other words, this contribution disappears with the high task visibility condition.

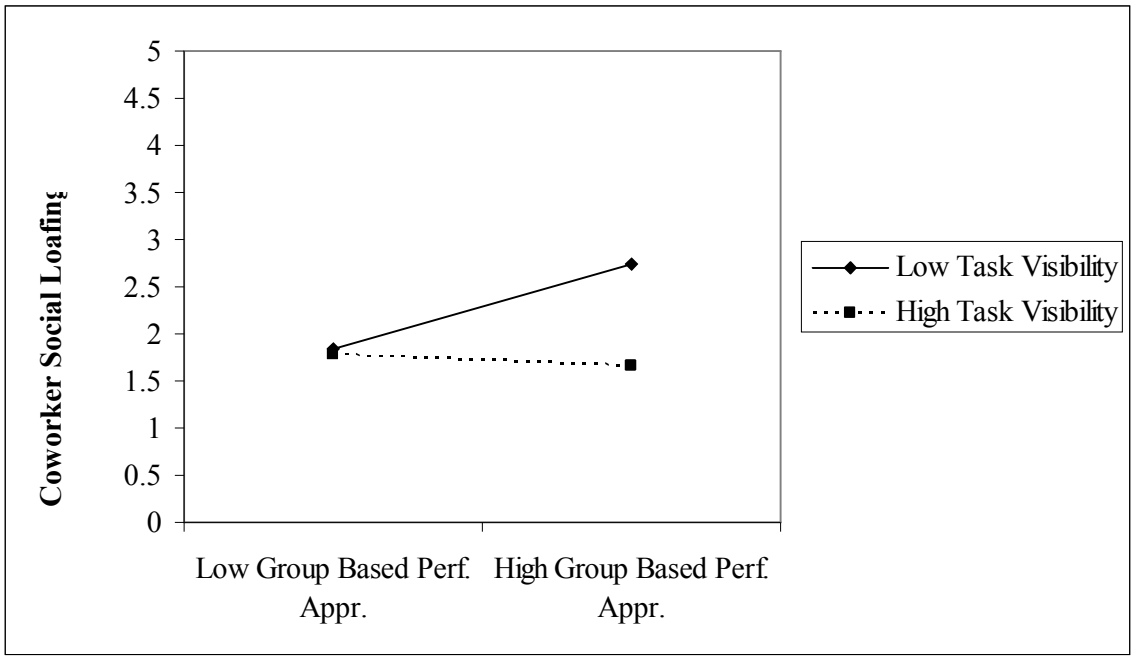

Figure 2: Interaction Plot for Perceived Task Visibility

4.4. Difference Tests

The research question of the study can be stated as follows: *"Q1: What is the relation between demographic variables (gender, age, tenure, and group size) and perceived co-worker social loafing?"*

In order to investigate the research question, difference tests were conducted. In this study, parametric tests were used because the normality condition for the variables was provided and the sample size of difference groups was large enough to conduct a parametric test. As a parametric category, independent samples t-test and Welch and Brown-Forsythe tests were conducted to measure and compare the mean scores of groups for perceived co-worker social loafing.

4.4.1. Gender

Firstly, Levene's test was implemented to test the equality of variances for males and females in terms of perceived co-worker social loafing scores. According to the test result, the variances of males and females in terms of social loafing scores were not accepted as equal since the significance level of the Levene's test was found as 0,007 as seen in Table 5.

Table 5

Independent Samples t-test for Gender Differences in terms of Perceived Co-worker Social Loafing

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Perceived Co-worker Social Loafing	Equal variances assumed	7,4	0,007	-2,89	146	0,004
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,84	127,1	0,005

Independent samples t-test was implemented to see if males' and females' perceived co-worker social loafing mean scores were significantly different or not. It is shown that there is a significant difference ($p= 0.005 < 0.05$) between males' and females' perception of social loafing scores. For the male participants, the mean perceived co-worker social loafing score was measured as 2,88 and for females, the mean score was found as 3,38.

Table 6

Gender Differences in terms of Perceived Co-worker Social Loafing

	Gender	N	Mean Scores	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Percieved Co-worker Social Loafing	Male	79	2,88	,91787	,10327
	Female	69	3,38	1,18967	,14322
	Total	148			

These tests showed us that there is a significant difference between males' and females' perception of social loafing scores. According to gender difference analysis, it can be said that female employees have higher scores of perceived co-worker social loafing than male employees.

4.4.2. Age

Firstly, the participants were categorized into two groups according to their ages. Employees less than 29 years old were accepted as the first group and employees above 29 years old were accepted as the second group.

As it is shown in Table 9, Levene's test was implemented to test the equality of variances for Group-1 and Group-2 in terms of perceived co-worker social loafing scores. According to the test result, the variances of Group-1 and Group-2 in terms of social loafing scores were accepted as equal since the significance level of the Levene's test was found as 0,59 as seen in Table 7.

Table 7

Independent Samples t-test for Age Differences in terms of Perceived Co-worker Social Loafing

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Perceived Co-worker Social Loafing	Equal variances assumed	0,28	0,59	3,1	149	0,002
	Equal variances not assumed			3,1	91,52	0,002

Independent samples t-test was implemented to examine age differences in terms of perceived co-worker social loafing. It is seen that there is a significant difference ($p= 0.002 < 0.05$) between employees under 29 years and employees above 29 years in terms of perception of social loafing scores (Table 7). For employees under 29 years, the mean perceived co-worker social loafing score was measured as 3,29 and for employees above 29 years, the mean score was found as 2,27 (Table 8).

Table 8

Age Differences in terms of Perceived Co-worker Social Loafing

	Age (Categorical)	N	Mean Scores	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Percieved Co-worker Social Loafing	<29	104	3,29	1,05878	,10382
	>29	47	2,27	1,02536	,14956
	Total	151			

These tests showed us that there is a significant difference between younger and older employees' perception of social loafing. So, younger employees perceive higher co-worker social loafing than the older ones.

4.4.3. Tenure in the Company

Participants were categorized into two groups according to their present tenure. Employees who have tenure below 3 years were accepted as the first group and employees who have tenure above 3 years were accepted as the second group. However, a significant difference between the two groups could not be found.

4.4.4. Number of Group Members (Group Size)

As it is seen in Table 9, respondents' group sizes are categorized into 4 groups (*G1=lowest thru 6, G2=7 thru 12, G3=13 thru 20, G4= 21 thru highest*) for the difference test analysis.

Firstly, Levene's test was implemented to test the equality of variances for these four groups in terms of perceived co-worker social loafing scores. According to Levene's test results, the significant level was found 0,00 < 0,05. Thus, it was decided to implement Welch and Brown-Forsythe tests to examine the differences among groups for perceived co-worker social loafing scores since the groups' variances were not equal. According to Table 9, all scores were significantly different from each other except those for Group 2 (7 thru 12) and Group 3 (13 thru 20).

The mean scores of groups are shown in Table 10. The mean scores of groups for perception of co-worker social loafing increases when the number of group members increases ($\mu G1 = 2,31$; $\mu G2 = 3,09$; $\mu G3 = 3.14$; $\mu G4 = 3,90$).

According to these findings, it can be said that employees who work in larger work groups, perceive higher co-worker social loafing than employees who work in smaller work groups.

Table 9

Group Size Differences in terms of Perceived Co-worker Social Loafing

Dependent Variable: Perceived Co-worker Social Loafing				
(I) Group_size	(J) Group_size	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
G1= Lowest thru 6	G2= 7 thru 12	-0,782	0,196	0,001
	G3= 13 thru 20	-0,827	0,198	0,001
	G4= 21 thru highest	-1,587	0,251	0,000
G2= 7 thru 12	G1= Lowest thru 6	0,782	0,196	0,001
	G3= 13 thru 20	-0,045	0,182	1,000
	G4= 21 thru highest	-0,806	0,239	0,008
G3= 13 thru 20	G1= Lowest thru 6	0,827	0,198	0,001
	G2= 7 thru 12	0,045	0,182	1,000
	G4= 21 thru highest	-0,761	0,240	0,014
G4= 21 thru highest	G1= Lowest thru 6	1,587	0,251	0,000
	G2= 7 thru 12	0,806	0,239	0,008
	G3= 13 thru 20	0,761	0,240	0,014

Table 10

Mean Scores of Groups in terms of Perceived Co-worker Social Loafing

	Group Size (Number of Group Member)	N	Mean Scores	Std. Deviation
Perceived Co-worker Social Loafing	G1= Lowest thru 6	35	2,31	,88
	G2= 7 thru 12	44	3,09	,84
	G3= 13 thru 20	36	3,14	,78
	G4= 21 thru highest	36	3,90	1,21
	Total	151		

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the relationship between employees' perception of co-worker social loafing and their perception about group-based performance appraisal was examined. It was assumed that task visibility affects the relationship between perceived co-worker social loafing and perceived group-based performance appraisal as a moderator. Also, for exploring a research question about the relation between demographic variables (gender, age, tenure, group size) and perceived co-worker social loafing, some difference tests were performed.

Before starting the discussion section, brief definitions of study variables will be provided.

Perceived co-worker social loafing was used as the dependent variable in the current research. Social loafing is a term for a general phenomenon that when people perform in groups, they do less work or put in less effort than when they work alone (Latane et al., 1979). Perceived co-worker social loafing has been defined as the perception by employees that one or more group members are contributing less than they could to the group (Comer, 1995).

Perception of group-based performance appraisal is the independent variable of the study. Performance appraisal is concerned with conceptualization, measurement, and analysis of how well people do their jobs and how satisfied they are in their work settings (Ployhard et al., 2006). Group-based performance appraisal measures group performance and rewards individuals on the basis of how well the group performs (Heneman and Courtney, 1995).

Task visibility, the moderator variable of the study, is the term used for defining the identifiability of individual effort (George, 1992). Perceived task visibility is an individual's belief that his/her supervisor is aware of one's individual effort in a group context (Kidwell and Bennett, 1993).

Since, currently, working as a group is a widely recognized way of doing jobs and rewarding employees' on the basis of collective performance has become an acceptable way of performance evaluation, it seems important to conduct a study on its effects. Social loafing, as an undesirable employee behavior related to group-based performance appraisal, presents a threat for most organizations. It is expected that such a research focusing on the relationship between performance appraisal methods and social loafing, will have a positive contribution to the literature and business world.

After summarizing the variables and their definitions, we can start the discussion section by examining the results of the factor analysis and reliability analysis of our scales.

As a result of the factor analysis, perceived co-worker social loafing was found to be a one-dimensional construct, which is a consistent finding with the studies of George (1992), Liden et al. (2004), and Ülke (2006). High internal consistency of the scale indicates that it can be used with confidence in future studies.

Task visibility scale that was composed of only items measuring employee task visibility was developed by adding new items that measure individual team members' task visibility and the team's task visibility as a whole. This scale and the newly formed group-based performance appraisal scale were also found to be one-dimensional constructs. Again, high internal consistency coefficients were obtained which imply that they can be comfortably utilized in new studies.

The first hypothesis was about the contribution of employees' perceived group-based performance appraisal on perceived co-worker social loafing. Before regression analysis, in order to examine the relationship between these variables, correlation analysis was conducted. As a result, it was seen that perceived group-based performance appraisal was significantly related to perceived co-worker social loafing. According to correlation analysis results, a significant positive relationship between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing has been found as expected.

After the correlation analysis, simple linear regression was used to examine the first hypothesis. According to the results; perceived group-based performance appraisal has a significant and positive contribution on perceived co-worker social loafing. This result is consistent with the study of Heneman and Courtney (1995).

Thus, this finding confirms the first hypothesis of the research. Literature review presents some cues which are in line with this finding. For example, Hardy and Latane (1988) argued that the absence of evaluative feedback about performance leads to social loafing even in established teams. This research was outstanding in terms of showing the importance of performance evaluation for avoiding social loafing in work groups.

Heneman and Courtney (1995) suggested that although group-based performance appraisal approach generally proves to be very functional in terms of directing group members' efforts toward common goals consistent with organization's strategies and critical success factors; it may also create an opportunity for low-performing employees to earn the same reward as high performers.

George (1992) reasoned that with regard to group-based performance appraisal, employees who are evaluated may be worried about fairness issues since they believe that some members would not assume their share of the group workload. In such a case, social loafing will occur as employees withdraw their individual efforts with the hope that other group members will ensure that the group meets its goals. As George (1992), Heneman and Courtney (1995) also indicated that if group based-performance appraisal is used within an inappropriate setting, it may cause social loafing in work groups.

The above findings from the literature and the results of the current study seem important in terms of supporting the first hypothesis.

The effect of group-based performance appraisal on group members' perceived social loafing may be related with employees' socio-cultural and educational backgrounds.

For the current study, sample characteristics indicate that the education level of the participants is quite high. All participants have at least an undergraduate degree and almost all of them are working as a white-collar employee.

When we consider that these participants have been raised by emphasizing the importance of individual performance in the family and at school, working as part of a group and being evaluated on the basis of group performance might have presented adaptation difficulties for them. Therefore, when they feel that their individual efforts are not evaluated adequately, they may develop a tendency to reduce their performance.

Ocak (2010) studied the impact of organizational and individual culture fit on organizational justice perception of employees. He found that individualistic cultural fit and collectivistic cultural fit predicted distributive justice. It was seen that if employees with an individualistic orientation were treated and appraised in a collectivistic way in their work groups, their perception of distributive justice was affected negatively. Also, Susan, Wayne, Liden, and Erdoğan (2003) found that justice perceptions were related to social loafing. When an employee's perception of justice was low, he/she displayed a higher tendency to loaf in a group.

When we review these two studies (Ocak, 2010; Susan et al., 2003) and relate them with our research, we can assert that when group-based-performance appraisal methods are used in evaluating the performance of employees who are reluctant about being appraised as a group, this may affect their distributive justice perceptions negatively. And this may lead to a higher tendency for and perception of social loafing.

According to equity theory, individuals compare the ratio between their contributions and rewards with others'. They believe that there is justice when they realize that there is a balance between the ratios. If they find out that there is no balance, they try to restore justice. They do this either by increasing or decreasing their efforts or changing the person with whom they compare themselves (Beugre, 2002). When they think that their

individual contributions are not taken into account, they experience a moral and motivational loss which leads them to engage in social loafing.

For the second hypothesis of the current research, we argued that perceived group-based performance appraisal would contribute positively to perceived co-worker social loafing in work groups with low task visibility.

However, in work groups with high task visibility, we assumed that the contribution of perceived group-based performance appraisal on perceived co-worker social loafing would become insignificant. That's because task visibility is expected to increase the visibility of individual's efforts within the group.

There are many studies which indicate a negative relationship between task visibility and social loafing (Atoum and Farah, 2001; George, 1992; Liden et al., 2004). An individual's perception about a co-worker's social loafing is highly correlated with his/her perceptions of task visibility. If one believes that his/her supervisor is aware of how much effort each group member exerts on the job, then s/he does not think that other group members are loafing (Ülke, 2006). In the current study, a negative correlation between perceived co-worker social loafing and task visibility is also found.

But in the current research, task visibility is used as a moderator to predict its effect on the relationship between perceived group-based performance appraisal and perceived co-worker social loafing. To test the moderator effect of task visibility, hierarchical regression analysis is conducted. The analysis confirmed the moderating role of task visibility, thus supporting the second hypothesis.

When the task visibility within the work group is increased, employees think that their individual efforts and contributions are visible to their managers and their colleagues. Such a visibility may decrease actual and perceived social loafing although group-based performance appraisal is used. When employees' performances are under close supervision, it seems that group rewards do not lead to co-worker social loafing. However, although

social loafing seems to be prevented, the possibility of violated justice perceptions still calls for action on the part of managers.

The research question of the study was put forward to examine if there was a relationship between demographic variables and perceived co-worker social loafing. In order to investigate the research question, difference tests were conducted.

In terms of gender differences, results revealed a significant difference between males' and females' perception of social loafing. Female employees had higher scores for perception of co-worker social loafing than male employees. This result may be accepted as consistent with research findings which revealed that the tendency to loaf is stronger in men than in women (Karau and Williams, 1993). It appears that female employees are more sensitive about free-riding at work and observe higher incidents of slacking off.

The relationship between perceived co-worker social loafing and group size was also examined in the present study. In previous social loafing literature, it has been shown that as group size increases social loafing also increases within the group (Harkins et al., 1980; Harkins and Petty, 1982; Ingham et al., 1974; Kerr and Bruun, 1981; Sorkin, Hays, and West, 2001). Jones (1984) suggested that as a group increases in size, individual anonymity also increases. This increase in anonymity makes it more difficult to assess each individual's contributions. So, this leads the individual to loaf within groups which have large number of members. In line with these findings, it is also seen in this study that the perception of co-worker social loafing increases when group size increases.

Study findings indicated that young employees perceive a higher level of social loafing on the part of their colleagues. It appears that employees who are new in their career focus more attention on their co-workers who display reduced effort. It is possible that the younger an employee, the higher is the importance given by him/her to individual contribution. Such young employees seem to be much more aware of their colleagues' free riding due to an emphasis on personal rewarding.

Study findings provide support for suggestions put forward in the literature to overcome social loafing. Below, some basic hints will be given which may be helpful for managers to deal with social loafing problem in groups.

According to Cox and Brobrowski (2007), setting rules at the beginning of the group development stage would help all team members to achieve the team objectives and performance goals. Establishing ground rules help to prevent social loafing and free-riding behaviors by providing assurance that such free-riding attempts will be dealt with (Cox and Brobrowski, 2007). This is critical for initial assignments that set the stage for the rest of the task. Tasks that require pre-work and input from all group members produce a set of dynamics that largely prevent social loafing from happening in the first place.

Krumm (2000) suggested that not to create or allow a team to undertake a two-man job may be another important precaution to avoid social loafing. That is, if there is a task which can be performed by one or two persons, it does not require a team. The researcher emphasized the importance of group size and suggested to avoid large work groups which may have free-riders as members. Peer evaluations, on the other hand, may also be used to instill accountability for individual contributions in work groups to overcome social loafing (Brooks and Ammons, 2003). Besides, being informed plays an important role. If group members clearly know the group goals, know how far they need to go, and where the competition is, they are more inclined to work towards the goal than if they do not have that knowledge (Tan and Min, 2008).

Cohesiveness, on the other hand, has been shown to display a negative relationship with social loafing since early studies (Hogg, 1992; Lott, 1965). Thus, developing the degree of attraction among group members may be helpful in reducing free riding. When opportunities are provided for members to socialize and establish trusting relationships, group cohesiveness can be increased. Then, these dedicated relationships lead people to fulfill their duties more efficiently, and consequently, social loafing may be decreased (Karau and Hart, 1998). It should also be noted that giving challenging objectives and

providing a spirit of commitment to the group may lead members to work hard and loaf less (Myers, 2000).

After we have discussed the findings of our research, we can proceed to the "limitations and recommendations" section where we will address the deficiencies of and future suggestions about our study.

6. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As with any research, the current investigation has several limitations. The main limitation of this study is about the sample. Findings regarding the hypotheses of this research are obtained from individuals who work as a group, gathered through a convenience sampling method. The conclusions regarding the results of this study are restricted with its sample, in which 70.2% of the participants represent the telecommunication sector. As a result, we can say that these findings are more valid for engineers who work in telecommunication sector. Whether the findings can be generalized must be tested through research that will cover organizations operating in different cities and sectors, different professional groups, and people whose level of education are below bachelor's degree.

In the current study, social loafing is measured by using only perceived co-worker social loafing scale. In further studies, besides co-worker ratings, supervisor appraisals can also be used to measure social loafing in order to make multi-source evaluation possible.

Although perceived group-based performance appraisal scale holds only 6 items which were prepared to measure the independent variable of the current study, the reliability analysis of the instrument yielded a satisfactory result. This scale can be developed and used in future studies to measure the perception of group-based performance appraisal in relation to other variables.

Since, in previous literature, there is not much quantitative research investigating the relationship between performance appraisal methods and social loafing, the importance of this study increases as it will be the first research in Turkey. However, since the research is a cross-sectional study, it is not scientifically appropriate to make a cause-effect interpretation with our findings related to our research hypotheses.

As the results of the current research display a relationship between social loafing and the nature of the performance appraisal method, in future studies, the relationship

between social loafing and other performance appraisal methods such as peer evaluation or 360 degree feedback may be examined.

Also, according to the findings of the current research, it can be easily said that increasing task visibility works well to prevent social loafing related to the use of group-based performance appraisal methods. However, the influence of task visibility on other employee attitudes and behaviors is also subject to inquiry. In studies that will be conducted in the future, increased task visibility can be examined in terms of its relationship with employee privacy, well-being, job satisfaction, and creativity so as to investigate its potential positive and negative impact.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Sayın Katılımcı,

Bu anket , Marmara Üniversitesi İngilizce İşletme Ana Bilim Dalı, Örgütsel Davranış Bilim Dalında gerçekleştirilmekte olan bir bilimsel araştırmaya veri tabanı sağlamak üzere hazırlanmış olup, çalışanların çeşitli durumlar ile ilgili görüşlerini almayı amaçlamaktadır.

Cevaplayacağınız anket 4 bölümden oluşmaktadır. Anketin üzerine hiçbir şekilde isminizi yazmayınız. Bu çalışmaya katılan kişilerin vereceği her türlü bireysel bilgi tarafımızdan kesinlikle gizli tutulacak ve hiçbir kişi veya kuruma aktarılmayacaktır. Anket sonuçları araştırmacıda saklı kalacaktır.

Lütfen hiçbir ifadeyi atlamadan ve boş bırakmadan değerlendirmenizi yapınız. İfadelerin doğru veya yanlış cevapları yoktur. Bizim için önemli olan sizin fikrinizdir ve sizin fikirleriniz başkalarının fikirlerinden tamamen farklı olabilir. Değerli zamanınızı ayırarak katıldığınız bu çalışmanın doğru ve anlamlı sonuçlara ulaşabilmesi için, ankette yer alan her bir soruyu gerekli özeni göstererek cevaplamanız büyük önem taşımaktadır.

Ankete katılarak bilime sağladığınız destek için teşekkür ederiz.

Tez Danışmanı	Yüksek Lisans Tez Öğrencisi
Doç. Dr. Ayşe Alev TORUN	Ertuğrul BUZ

BÖLÜM 1: Aşağıda **yöneticinizin/takım liderinizin** gözlemleri ve yaptığınız işin görünürlüğü ile ilgili algılarınızı yansıtan ifadeler yer almaktadır. Sizden istenen bu ifadeleri okuyarak, görüşlerinizi "hiçbir zaman", "nadiren", "bazen", "sıklıkla", "çoğu zaman", "her zaman" seçeneklerinden birini işaretleyerek belirtmenizdir.					
1 Hiçbir Zaman	**2 Nadiren**	**3 Bazen**	**4 Sıklıkla**	**5 Çoğu Zaman**	**6 Her Zaman**
	1. Bu işletmede yapılan işin sonuçları, müşteriler, tedarikçiler ve diğer paydaşlar tarafından açıkça görülebilir.				
Yöneticimiz(in)…					
	2.Yaptığım iş miktarının farkındadır.				
	3. Bir takım elemanı bir işte başarısız olduğunda, bunu fark etmesi zordur.				
	4. Benim ne kadar çalıştığımı belirlemesi zordur.				
	5. Ben bir işte başarısız olduğumda, bunu fark etmesi zordur.				
	6. Bir takım elemanının yaptığı iş miktarının farkındadır.				
	7. Takımımız şirket için önemli sayılabilecek, iyi bir iş çıkarttığında, bunun farkına varır.				
	8. Takımımızın yaptığı iş miktarının farkındadır.				
	9. Takımımızın ne kadar çalıştığını belirlemesi zordur.				
	10. Bir takım elemanı, çalıştığımız şirket ya da içinde bulunduğumuz takım için önemli sayılabilecek, iyi bir iş çıkarttığında, bunun farkına varır.				
	11. Takımımız bir işte başarısız olduğunda, bunu fark etmesi zordur.				
	12. Ben, çalıştığım şirket ya da içinde bulunduğum takım için önemli sayılabilecek, iyi bir iş çıkarttığımda, bunun farkına varır.				
	13. Bir takım elemanının ne kadar çalıştığını belirlemesi zordur.				

BÖLÜM 2: Aşağıda **çalışma arkadaşlarınızın** grup içindeki davranışları ile ilgili maddeler bulunmaktadır. Sizden istenilen, ifadelerde belirtilen davranış örneklerine hangi sıklıkta rastladığınızı "hiçbir zaman", "nadiren", "bazen", "sıklıkla", "çoğu zaman", "her zaman" seçeneklerinden birini işaretleyerek belirtmenizdir.

1 Hiçbir Zaman	**2 Nadiren**	**3 Bazen**	**4 Sıklıkla**	**5 Çoğu Zaman**	**6 Her Zaman**

	1.Toplu görev dağılımlarında sorumluluk almaktan kaçınmak.
	2. Kendisine verilen bir işi başkasına bırakmadan istenen kalite ve zamanda yapmayı hedeflemek.
	3. İşi yapacak başkaları varsa, kendisine verilen görevi değil, kendi istediği işi yapmak (İşin kendi istediği kısmına yoğunlaşmak).
	4. Bireysel hedeflerini grup amaçlarının önünde tutmak.
	5. Mesai saatleri içerisinde iş ile ilgili olmayan aktivitelere zaman ayırmak.
	6. Kendi üstlenmesi gereken bazı sorumlulukları diğer çalışanlara yüklemek.
	7. İşi yapabilecek kendisinden başka çalışanlar olduğu zaman, işi yapmak için daha az çaba göstermek.
	8. İşin kendi üzerine düşen kısmını yapmamak.
	9. Ekipteki diğer çalışanlardan daha az çaba göstermek.
	10. Eğer işi yapacak başka çalışanlar varsa daha gevşek davranmak.
	11. Eğer diğer grup üyeleri müsait durumdaysa, müşterilerin işlerini yapmak için daha az zaman harcamak.
	12. İşleri başkası yapıyorsa, çalışıyor gibi görünmek ama iş yapmamak.
	13. Ekip veya grup içinde bir görevi tamamlamak için elinden geleni en iyi şekilde yapmak.

BÖLÜM 3: Aşağıda görev yaptığınız çalışma grubunun performans değerlendirmesi ile ilgili bazı ifadeler yer almaktadır. Sizden beklenen bu ifadeleri okuyarak, cevaplarınızı "hiçbir zaman", "nadiren", "bazen", "sıklıkla", "çoğu zaman", "her zaman" seçeneklerinden birini işaretleyerek belirtmenizdir.					
1 Hiçbir Zaman	**2 Nadiren**	**3 Bazen**	**4 Sıklıkla**	**5 Çoğu Zaman**	**6 Her Zaman**
	1. Performans değerlendirme kriterleri belirlenirken, bulunduğum gruptaki çalışanların kişisel başarı ve yetenekleri grup performansından daha önemli rol oynar.				
	2. Performans değerlendirme sonucu verilen ödül ve/veya primler eşit şekilde dağıtılmaz; içinde yer aldığım grubun üyelerinin bireysel başarılarına ve yeteneklerine göre farklılık gösterir.				
	3. Performans değerlendirme sonucu yapılan maaş artışları, içinde bulunduğum grubun başarısıyla paralellik gösterir.				
	4. Bireysel olarak yapılan hatalı ya da eksik işlerden, tüm grup çalışanları sorumlu tutulur.				
	5. Çalıştığım grubun yöneticisi, grup içindeki bireysel başarı ve başarısızlıkları vurgulamaktan kaçınır.				
	6. Performans değerlendirme sonucu yapılan maaş artışları, çalıştığım şirketin başarısıyla paralellik gösterir.				

BÖLÜM 4: Lütfen son olarak aşağıdaki soruları yanıtlayınız.	
1.	Cinsiyet : ❑ Erkek ❑ Kadın
2.	Medeni Durum : ❑ Evli ❑ Bekâr
3.	En son aldığınız diploma: ❑ İlköğretim ❑ Lise ❑ Lisans ❑ Yüksek Lisans ❑ Doktora
4.	Yaşınız : …….
5.	Şu anki işinizde ne kadar zamandır çalışıyorsunuz? : ..... yıl .....ay
6.	Toplam ne kadar zamandır çalışıyorsunuz? : ..... yıl .....ay
7.	İş yerinde çalıştığınız pozisyon (unvanınız) : .....
8.	Kurumunuzun dahil olduğu sektör : .....
9.	Bulunduğunuz grupta çalışmakta olan elemanların sayısı : .....
10.	Bulunduğunuz grupta çalışmakta olan elemanların tahmini yaş ortalaması : .....

ANKETİMİZE ZAMAN AYIRDIĞINIZ İÇİN TEŞEKKÜR EDERİZ.