

Achievement goal orientation and cohesivity reduce social loafing tendency among undergraduate students

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Abstract

Working in a group setting is commonly implemented in higher education as part of student-centered learning. However, the social loafing phenomenon has been reported to disrupt the performance of university students in group assignments. The current study aims to examine the influence of achievement goal orientation and cohesivity on social loafing among undergraduate students. A total of 377 undergraduate students (70.8% females) in Indonesia was recruited through cluster random sampling. All respondents answered three questionnaires, namely Social Loafing, Achievement Goal Orientation, and Cohesivity Scales. Partial Least Squares Path Modeling (PLS-PM) was used to analyze the correlations among variables that were built into the research model. The results showed that both achievement goal orientation and cohesivity had a significant negative effect on social loafing. In addition, cohesivity was reported to partially mediate the effect of achievement goal orientation on social loafing. It was also revealed that the research model was a fairly high model fit to explain the relations among variables in the study. These findings suggest that both achievement goal orientation and group cohesivity could reduce social loafing tendency during group tasks among university students.

Keywords: *Achievement Goal Orientation, Cohesivity, Social Loafing, Group, University Students.*

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Introduction

One of the active learning methods generally delivered in higher education is group assignments or team-based projects which are believed to be advantageous for students in terms of improving social skills and providing practical benefits (Goo, 2011). This approach would also offer a higher learning quality and cover a more significant number of topics without having to employ an excessive amount of individual effort (Lerner, 1995). Kenrick et al. (2010) state that cooperating in groups is likely to be more effective than working as an individual because people would feel responsible to contribute to the task through discussion. In addition, the workload can be distributed among group members which means that a common goal is likely to be achieved more effectively by working in a group.

However, group assignments may not be effective if the group members are hesitant to cooperate. Previous studies have found that working in groups can lead to social loafing phenomenon (Karau & Williams, 1993; Tosuntaş, 2020). Social loafing is defined as the tendency of individuals to exert less effort when individuals are required to work collectively in a group to achieve common objectives (Myers, 2012). Social loafing has been reported as one of the most significant sources of dissatisfaction in group assignments (Hall & Buzwell, 2012). When a person does social loafing, the negative consequences may not only have an impact on the group but also the individuals because that person would lose the opportunities to improve their own soft skills (Schnake in Liden et al., 2004). Thus, it is important to explore the antecedents of social loafing because of its negative impacts on group performance in the learning context.

One of the variables reported to predict social loafing is achievement goal orientation. Hoigaard & Ommundsen (2007) found that there was a relationship between the dimensions of achievement goal

orientation and social loafing among soccer players Other studies have also found the influence of achievement goal orientation on academic engagement (Alonso et al., 2022). Furthermore, Liden et al. (2004) suggested that social loafing may decrease if group members develop effective communication to discuss the common goals.

Achievement goal orientation consists of four types including mastery-approach, mastery-avoidance, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). The mastery approach strives to do better than the previous achievements and associated with internal locus of control (Akin, 2008a) and compassion (Akin, 2010). Students of this type show effective adaptation and well-being. To illustrate, they tend to have low anxiety but high academic achievement and involvement (Daniels et al., 2008; Gonçalves et al., 2017; Tuominen-Soini et al., 2008, 2012).

Meanwhile, students with the mastery avoidance type will reject failure in mastering a certain job task and developing individual skills. These individuals would get away from previous bad actions, and they focus on understanding, self-improvement, and high mastery goals (Schwinger et al., 2016). Adolescent students often mention mastery of goals as the reason for learning (Lee & Bong, 2016). Another type which is the performance approach contributes to regulating normative thinking that has a positive valence which is about better performance than the performance of others in achieving success (Akin, 2008b). In contrast, individuals with a performance-avoidance type would dismiss failures which means that their concern about performance may increase their vulnerability to emotional pressure, such as anxiety, stress, and fatigue (Daniels et al., 2008; Tuominen-Soini et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2016). To investigate the tendency of social loafing among undergraduate students, it is important to understand which types of achievement goal orientation would influence students' behavior in the learning context.

In addition to achievement goal orientation, another key factor reported to deter or eliminate social loafing is the role of group cohesiveness which is fundamental to group functioning. Cohesivity is seen by the presence of high desire or a positive assessment of the group through intense communication, mutual trust, and mutual help (Karau & Hart, 1998). It emphasizes the degree to which all members consider the group as valuable which leads to higher group productivity. In other words, people in a highly cohesive group would be less likely to engage in social loafing because they are willing to invest individual efforts to satisfy the expectations and objectives of the valuable group members (Carron & Hauseblas, 1998).

The impact of group cohesiveness on positive group outcomes such as productivity, job satisfaction, well-being has been reported in previous studies (Li et al., 2014; McLeod & von Treuer, 2013). Some past studies have also found that task cohesion significantly reduced social loafing (Karau & Hart, 1998; Lam, 2015). Similarly, few studies in Indonesia also reported a significant effect of group cohesiveness on social loafing using different instruments (Anggraeni & Alfian, 2015; Paksi et al., 2020). These findings indicate that the presence of group cohesiveness would improve the participation and commitment of the group members in completing the task, so they tend to be more active and productive in the discussion.

Despite previous studies, the current study would attempt to measure cohesivity through four aspects based on Forsyth (2010) including social cohesion defined as the attraction of members toward each other and to the group as a whole, task cohesion which refers to the capacity to succeed as a coordinated unit and as part of the group, perceptual cohesion which refers to the individual's perception that he or she is part of the group in which all members form the whole group, and emotional cohesion which is the emotional intensity of individuals when they are in the group.

A number of past studies have examined some predictors of social loafing in educational settings. However, no studies have yet explored the causal relationship between the three variables in the research model. Thus, the current research was conducted to better understand the relationship between achievement goal orientation, cohesivity, and the tendency of social loafing. Following the above explanation, the study proposed four hypotheses as follows:

- H1: Achievement goal orientation had a significant influence on cohesivity.
- H2: Achievement goal orientation negatively influenced social loafing.
- H3: Cohesivity negatively influenced social loafing.
- H4: The relationship between achievement goal orientation and social loafing was mediated by cohesivity.

The relations among variables in the study are shown in Figure 1.

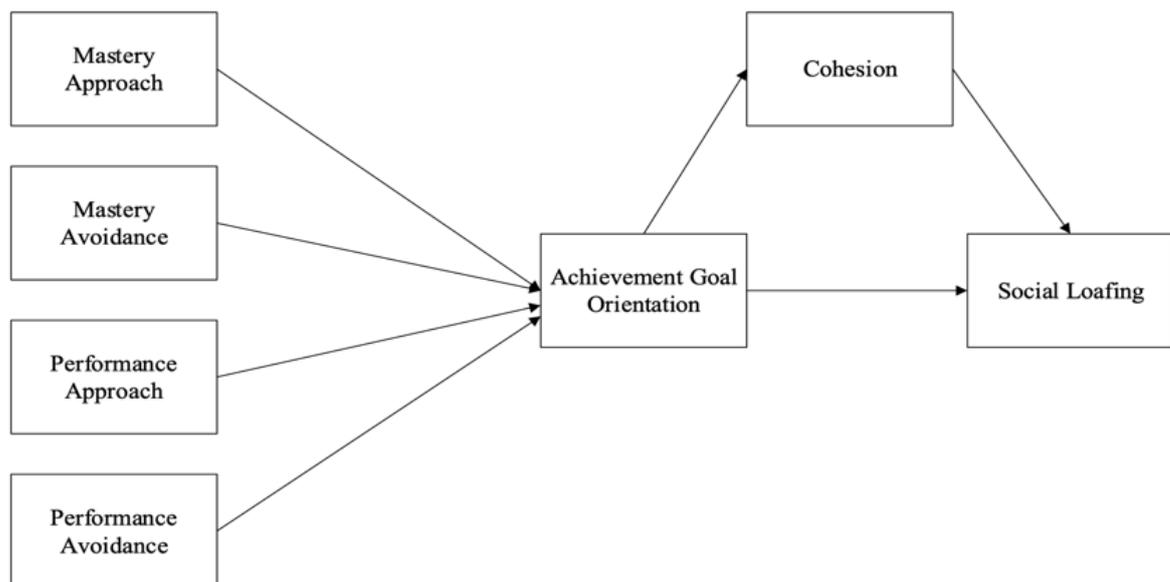


Figure 1. Hypothetical Model

Method

Participants

The population in this research were active undergraduate students in Andalas University located in the city of Padang, Indonesia. A total of 377 participants were recruited using the online platforms. Cluster random sampling was used to select participants where the cluster represented 15 faculties in the university. The majority of participants were female (70.8%) ranging from 17 to 23 years old. Nearly a half proportion of participants were currently in the third or fourth semester (42.4%), followed by fifth and sixth semester (25.5%). In addition, most participants have a GPA of 3 or more (91.5%). All participants signed an online informed consent before participating in the study.

Measures

Data were collected through online questionnaires delivered to the students through *Google Form*. Three questionnaires with a Likert model scale were used in the study constructed by researchers based on the theory of each variable.

Social Loafing Scale. The social loafing scale consisted of 32 items based on the theory of Myers (2012) consisting of five aspects, such as: (1) decreased individual motivation to be involved in group activities; (2) passive attitude of members in the group (e.g. “*I prefer to be passive and let the work done by other members in the group*”); (3) widening of responsibilities (e.g. “*When I become a group member, I do not feel the need to actively help other group members*”); (4) shifting responsibility to fellow members known as free riders (e.g. “*I do not have to bother completing all my tasks because other members would help me*”); and (5) decreased awareness of evaluations from other people (e.g. “*I do not care when group members advise me about my work*”). The reliability of this scale using Alpha Cronbach was 0.946.

Achievement Goal Orientation Scale. This scale was used to measure the achievement goal orientation of students from the theory of Elliot & McGregor (2001). It is a 29-item scale rated from (1) strongly disagree to (4) strongly agree. The scale consisted of four types of achievement goal orientation, such as mastery approach (e.g. “*I am determined to reach my goals*”), mastery avoidance (e.g. “*I always study to prepare for exams so that my test scores are good*”), performance approach (e.g. “*I will compete with my friends to be the best*”), and performance avoidance (e.g. “*My lecturer often scolds me because my scores are bad which makes me even lazier*”). It yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.938.

Cohesivity Scale. This 23-item scale was used to measure the level of cohesivity according to the theory of Forsyth (2010). This scale measured four aspects of cohesivity, including social cohesion, task cohesion, perceived cohesion, and emotional cohesion. An example of the item was “*We always collaborate when working on group assignments*”. Each item was rated from (1) strongly disagree to (4) strongly agree. The reliability of the instrument was 0.955.

Data analysis

Data analysis techniques used the partial least squares path modeling (PLS-PM). The analysis tool used to test the hypothesis was the software of SmartPLS version 3.2.7 to study the multivariate relationship among the observed and latent variables, which are included in the structural equation modeling. Thus, this research was conducted to test the theoretical model of social loafing empirically.

Result and Discussion

Examination of Linearity Assumptions

Before further evaluation, it was necessary to examine the linearity assumption. The results showed that the relationship between variables in this study was linear. As seen in Table 1, all pathways fulfilled the linearity assumption in which the results of the F test in the linearity section were significant ($p < 0.05$).

Table 1. Examination of Linearity Assumptions

From	To	Linearity		Deviation from Linearity		Explanation
		F	P	F	P	
Achievement Orientation	Goal Cohesivity	183.10	0.000	1.961	0.000	Linear
Achievement Orientation	Goal Social Loafing	128.19	0.000	0.717	0.930	Linear
Cohesivity	Social Loafing	183.34	0.000	1.290	0.125	Linear

Validity and Reliability of Constructs

A good measurement model should have a sufficient level of reliability. As shown in Table 2, the measurement models in this study had high reliability.

Table 2. Results of Convergent Validity

Construct/Dimension	Cronbach's Coefficient	Alpha	Composite reliability	AVE	Communality
Construct					
Cohesivity	0.837		0.891	0.676	0.676
Social Loafing	0.876		0.915	0.729	0.729
Achievement Goal Orientation					
• Mastery Approach	0.638		0.802	0.585	0.585
• Mastery Avoidance	0.846		0.897	0.687	0.687
• Performance Approach	0.781		0.901	0.820	0.820
• Performance Avoidance	0.613		0.838	0.721	0.721

In addition to the convergent validity, a measurement model must have discriminant validity. As shown in Table 2, cohesivity had an AVE coefficient of 0.676, while the AVE root was 0.822 (*see Table 3*). The correlation coefficient of cohesivity with other constructs ranged from 0.444 to 0.577 which depicted a good discriminant validity.

Table 3 presents the calculation of the AVE root of constructs and the correlation value between the constructs. The results showed that the root AVE value of the variable was higher than the correlation value between variables which means that the measurement model of this research has fulfilled the discriminant validity.

Table 3. Results of Discriminant Validity

Construct/Dimension	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cohesivity (1)	(0.822)					
Social Loafing (2)	-0.577	(0.854)				
Mastery Approach (3)	0.444	-0.437	(0.765)			
Mastery Avoidance (4)	0.488	-0.465	0.728	(0.829)		
Performance Approach (5)	0.448	-0.398	0.529	0.578	(0.906)	
Performance Avoidance (6)	0.460	-0.382	0.555	0.580	0.542	(0.849)

Note: The coefficient on the diagonal part is the root of AVE; The coefficient outside the diagonal is the correlation coefficient between the constructs; AVE = Average Variance Extracted.

Correlation Matrix of Latent Variables

The three variables in the model had correlation coefficients in the range of 0.512 to 0.577 as shown in Table 4. The correlation coefficient in the relationship between variables was significant because the critical value of 377 participants was 0.101. The correlation coefficient between achievement goal orientation and social loafing with -0.512 explained that there was a negative correlation between these two variables. In other words, social loafing will decrease if university students have a strong achievement goal orientation. In addition, the coefficient of social loafing explained by cohesivity was also relatively high, which was -0.577.

Table 4. Correlation Matrix Between Variables

	Achievement Orientation	Goal Cohesivity	Social Loafing
Achievement Goal Orientation	1.000		
Cohesivity	0.551	1.000	
Social Loafing	-0.512	-0.577	1.000

In the hypothetical model, cohesivity acted as a mediator in the relations between achievement goal orientation and social loafing. The assumption of cohesivity as a mediator was quite strong because the correlation coefficient between achievement goal orientation and cohesivity was 0.551.

Structural Model Testing (Inner Model)

The hypothetical model was calculated by using SmartPLS to determine the significance of the path coefficient in the model or its significance for the hypothesis support (Ghozali, 2008; Hartono & Abdillah, 2009). The path coefficient is considered significant if the p-value is less than 0.05. The summary of the inner model results was described in Table 5.

According to Table 5, there are some information obtained from the analysis results. First, the path coefficient from the achievement goal orientation to social loafing decreased to -0.278, whereas the path coefficient on the relationship of achievement goal orientation to social loafing was -0.512 without cohesivity mediation (*see Table 4*). The decrease in path coefficient was because cohesivity acted as a mediator in the relationship between these two variables. Second, the path coefficient from cohesivity to social loafing was stronger than the path coefficient from the achievement goal orientation to social loafing. This finding explained that the role of cohesivity to reduce social loafing was better.

As shown in Figure 1, four hypotheses will be tested in the current study. According to Table 5, **Hypothesis 1** was supported as the results showed that achievement goal orientation had a significant and positive effect on cohesivity ($B = 0.551$, $t = 14.682$, $p < 0.05$). Similarly, the finding also supported **Hypothesis 2** as achievement goal orientation had a significant negative influence on social loafing ($B = -0.278$, $t = 6.252$, $p < 0.05$). In line with **Hypothesis 3**, the results showed that cohesivity significantly and negatively influenced social loafing ($B = -0.424$, $t = 9.202$, $p < 0.05$). One interesting finding from the study was that the results of the loading factor test on all dimensions of achievement goal orientation were significant ($p < 0.05$). However, the strongest achievement goal orientation was found in mastery avoidance ($B = 0.463$).

Table 5. Results of the Path Coefficient on the Inner Model

Relationship	Path Coefficient	Standard Deviation	t-statistics	p
Between Variables				
Achievement Goal Orientation → Cohesivity	0.551	0.038	14.682	0.000
Achievement Goal Orientation → Social Loafing	-0.278	0.044	6.252	0.000
Cohesivity → Social Loafing	-0.424	0.046	9.202	0.000
Dimensions of Achievement Goal Orientation				
Mastery-Approach → Achievement Goal Orientation	0.277	0.012	22.418	0.000
Mastery-Avoidance → Achievement Goal Orientation	0.463	0.013	34.899	0.000
Performance-Approach → Achievement Goal Orientation	0.236	0.011	21.841	0.000
Performance-Avoidance → Achievement Goal Orientation	0.207	0.010	20.880	0.000

The model also depicted an indirect influence due to the mediation of cohesivity. According to the Sobel test shown in Table 6, the indirect influence of achievement goal orientation on social loafing through cohesivity had a negative coefficient of -0.234. This finding indicated **Hypothesis 4** was supported which means that cohesivity mediated the influence of achievement goal orientation on social loafing. Based on the Variance Account For (VAF) value of 45.7%, cohesivity played a partial mediation indicating that both achievement goal orientation and cohesivity could influence social loafing, but the outcomes will be higher if university students have higher cohesivity.

Table 6. Direct and Indirect Influence, Total and its Nature of Mediation

Relationship	Direct	Indirect	Total	t-statistics	Variance Account For (VAF)
Achievement Goal Orientation → Cohesivity	0.551	-	0.573	14.682	-
Cohesivity → Social Loafing	-0.424	-	-0.424	9.202	-
Achievement Goal Orientation → Social Loafing - Through Cohesivity	-0.278	-0.234	-0.512	7.748	0.457

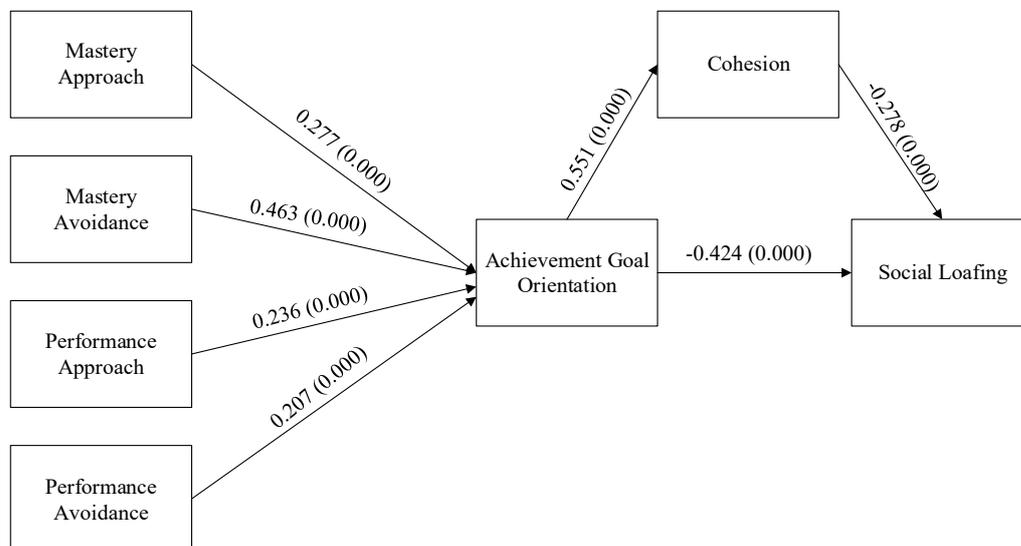


Figure 2. Path Analysis Results

(Achievement Goal Orientation and Cohesivity Reduce Social Loafing Tendency ...)

Model Fit

The model fit can be assessed from several indicators such as the coefficient of determination (R_m^2), the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), and the f^2 value. The coefficient of determination of the model was calculated using all coefficients of determination (R^2) that existed in the model.

Based on Table 7, the R^2 value for cohesivity was 0.304 indicating that the achievement goal orientation contributed 30.4% to the variation of cohesivity among university students, while the rest was explained by other variables. Meanwhile, the R^2 value for social loafing was 0.413 which indicates that the variation of social loafing explained by the achievement goal orientation and cohesivity was 38.7%, while the rest was explained by other variables.

Table 7. The Coefficient of R-Square

Dependent Variable	R^2
Cohesivity	0.304
Social Loafing	0.387

The model showed two determination coefficients of more than 0.20 which indicated the fit of the model was classified as fairly good. The first way to calculate the model fit using the formula of R_m^2 showed 0.573 indicating that this research model had a fairly high model fit. The model contributed 57.3% to explain the structural relationship of the three variables, whereas the remaining percentage was explained by other variables that were not involved in the model.

Another way to assess the model fit was by using the goodness of fit index (GFI) as seen in Table 8. The goodness of fit index is defined as the root of the communality mean and the mean of R^2 for all endogenous constructs (Tenenhaus et al., 2005).

Table 8. The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)

Variable	Communality	R^2
Dimension of Achievement Goal Orientation		
• Mastery Approach	0.585	-
• Mastery Avoidance	0.687	-
• Performance Approach	0.820	-
• Performance Avoidance	0.721	-
Cohesivity	0.676	0.304
Social Loafing	0.729	0.387
Total	4.218	0.691
Average/Mean	0.703	0.303
Index Goodness of Fit (GF)	0.493	

The two previous results related to the model fit emphasize the general assessment of the model. Furthermore, the fit of the model can be analyzed by calculating the value of f^2 which is the impact of endogenous variables if one of the paths is omitted. As there were three paths in the hypothetical model, three f^2 values were calculated. Table 9 presents the results of calculating the f^2 value for each path.

Table 9. The f^2 values for the model sensitivity

Variable	Achievement Goal Orientation	Cohesivity	Social Loafing
Achievement Goal Orientation	-	0.436	0.088
Cohesivity	-	-	0.204
Social Loafing	-	-	-

According to Table 9, all f^2 values were more than 0.02 in the model which means that none of the paths in the model were omitted. The calculation of the model suitability with f^2 proved that the proposed model had a good level of fit model.

Discussion

The objective of this study was to test the research model and investigate whether achievement goal orientation and cohesivity predicted social loafing among university students. Although the existing literature has reported some predictors of social loafing in educational settings (Karau & William, 1993), it is necessary to build a model to better understand the phenomenon underlying social loafing among university students. According to the analysis, the research model had a fairly high model fit which contributed 57.3% to explain the structural relationship among the three variables. Each hypothesis will be discussed in more detail.

The Influence of Achievement Goal Orientation on Social Loafing

The analysis results supported the hypothesis that the achievement goal orientation and all its dimensions had a significant negative influence on social loafing. Students who have higher achievement goal orientation were less likely to perform social loafing.

In more detail, the first type which is the mastery approach has aspects of interest and involvement in high tasks. Thus, people with this type have a desire and interest in both individual and group tasks. As reported by Hoigaard & Ommundsen (2007), undergraduate students who have a mastery approach can minimize the tendency of social loafing as it is related to adaptive motivation variables, such as academic locus of control, and self-compassion (Akin, 2010). In addition, the mastery approach relates to the tasks involvement influenced by task attraction which produces an internal pressure to be productive and can contribute to groups, so it can minimize the social loafing behavior (Simms & Nichols, 2014). Undergraduate students who adopt a mastery approach orientation usually focus on developing their competencies related to assignments and will show positive behavior, such as a high task engagement, independent learning, and high responsibility to their assignments (Pekrun et al., 2006).

Meanwhile, the type of mastery avoidance among undergraduate students was classified high. Avoidance is defined as the motive of students or undergraduate students in learning to avoid failure with a behavior that is less adaptive than the mastery approach (Linnenbrink, 2005). However, one important aspect of this type is avoiding bad deeds that have been done previously which shows that undergraduate students of this type would try to avoid the tendency to social loafing when completing the group assignments.

The third type which is the performance approach was reported to be high in the research participants. Undergraduate students with this type focus on displaying the competencies that they have while doing group assignments (Linnenbrink, 2005). Therefore, they have a low social loafing tendency. Moreover, students with the performance approach tend to show quite adaptive patterns in learning shown by good intrinsic task motivation because they want to show their competencies (Janke et al., 2016). In other words, they want to complete the tasks, either individually or in groups to achieve a good performance.

Finally, the performance avoidance type is more often found in ineffective groups (Kim et al., 2012). When individuals and groups have a high level of performance avoidance, the higher the appearance of social loafing behavior in the group that can be seen. When the groups focus on the performance goals (we want to do a task better than other groups) instead of mastery goals (we want to learn to complete this task better than before together), they show more of being social loafers and show a better minimal contribution to the group. Undergraduate students with this type tend to show maladaptive behavior in the learning process related to low intrinsic motivation, high anxiety, and low desire for achievement.

The Influence of Achievement Goal Orientation on Cohesivity

Based on the results, achievement goal orientation positively predicted cohesivity. This is also supported by one type of achievement goal orientation, which is the mastery approach characterized by having task attraction and task engagement during the learning process. This is in line with a study by Summers & Svinicki (2007) who found that undergraduate students with the mastery goal orientation in study groups reported positive behaviors in learning experiences, including a good sense of group, good task engagement, and independent learning to find answers when facing disagreements with fellow group members. Besides, when students have group goals that they want to achieve, each group member commonly has a desire to contribute

to the group. This shows that students with a mastery approach have the potential to have task-oriented solidarity with fellow group members in completing the group goals.

The Influence of Cohesivity on Social Loafing

The research results also reported that cohesivity had a significant influence on social loafing. In line with Paksi et al. (2020), there was a significant relationship between cohesivity and achievement motivation with social loafing among undergraduate students at the State Undergraduate of Padang. The negative relationship between the three variables indicated that the lower the cohesivity and achievement motivation would result in a higher level of social loafing, and vice versa. Besides, Anggraeni & Alfian (2015) found that cohesivity was a very important variable to minimize or eliminate social loafing in group assignments among students. The effective contribution provided by cohesivity to social laziness was 41% (Krisnasari & Purnomo, 2017). Lam (2015) also reported that communication and cohesion in group assignments significantly reduced social laziness (53%). Hoigaard et al. (2006) stated that the high level of cohesivity unites students to work together in groups and prevents the emergence of social laziness. It can be said that the united groups will support each other.

Based on the results, the cohesivity of undergraduate students in the research was considered high characterized by having an interest and enthusiasm for doing group learning in class, have good interactions among fellow members, have feelings of similarity with all group members, and have a passion for achieving group goals (Forsyth, 2010). The level of cohesivity of undergraduate students can be seen by its aspects, in which the highest aspect was doing the task (task cohesion) compared to other aspects. This shows that undergraduate students have high cooperation to achieve group goals which are in the learning process and doing group assignments (Walgito, 2010).

The Indirect Influence Achievement Goal on Social Loafing through Cohesivity

The results found that cohesivity mediated the influence of achievement goal orientation on social loafing. This is in line with several previous studies which showed that cohesivity can be a mediator on social loafing (Lam, 2015; Ryanta & Suryanto, 2015). Based on the results of the PLS-SEM model, the addition of cohesivity as a mediating variable provided an additional contribution as an explanation for social loafing. The coefficient of determination on social loafing was 38.7% (see Table 7).

The contribution of cohesivity in groups to reduce social loafing has long been explained in social psychology studies (Baron & Byrne, 2004). This is because cohesivity is needed in reducing social loafing in doing group tasks. Cohesivity is seen by the presence of high desire or a positive assessment of the group, which leads to intense communication and mutual trust and also mutual help (Karau & Hart, 1998). According to Krisnasari & Purnomo (2017), cohesivity will only be able to contribute to reducing social loafing if the activities in the group require collaboration with all group members. However, when there is one student who feels disappointed because of the laziness of the other members, it will cause disappointment and lead to internal conflict.

Social loafing is vulnerable in the context of education, especially among undergraduate students because each group assignment in education requires much effort, is rarely supervised by lecturers, and is only evaluated occasionally (Fitriana & Saloom, 2018). When a person cannot evaluate their efforts, then the responsibility is transferred to the entire fellow group (Harkins & Jackson, 2014; Kerr & Bruun, 1981). However, when the social facilitation experiment was conducted, it increased the exposure to evaluation. When they become the center of attention, people consciously monitor their behavior (Mullen & Baumeister, 1987). Therefore, the presence of other people causes individual efforts to be evaluated which will raise anxiety, so the arousal appears and becomes social facilitation. However, if the presence of other people causes individual efforts to be collected and not evaluated, this means that there is no anxiety about evaluation and causes social laziness. To avoid these problems, clear goals or aims are needed because undergraduate students who have clear goals are able to minimize the emergence of social loafing. Furthermore, research conducted by Liden et al. (2004) reported the possibility of decreasing social loafing behavior through effective communication with group members regarding the goals that the group wants to achieve.

Limitations

The present study has two limitations that should be considered for future study. First, self-report questionnaires were employed for data collection which has a risk of social desirability, particularly regarding

social loafing tendency. Therefore, integrating qualitative measures such as observation or structured interviews or using an experimental design in addition to quantitative data would be recommended for future research. Secondly, as the current research focused on two predictors in the model, it is suggested to investigate other predictors to be added into the model which also contribute to the occurrence of social loafing among university students.

Conclusion

The current study aimed to investigate the influence of achievement goal orientation and cohesivity on social loafing among university students. The results showed that achievement goal orientation had a significant positive effect on cohesivity. In addition, both achievement goal orientation and cohesivity had a significant negative influence on social loafing. One interesting finding from the study was that the mastery avoidance type was the strongest predictor of social loafing compared to the other types of achievement goal orientation. In addition, the results reported that cohesivity played a partial mediating role in the relations between achievement goal orientation and social loafing. While achievement goal orientation contributed 30.4% to cohesivity, both achievement goal orientation and cohesivity contributed 38.7% to social loafing. It can also be concluded that the research model had a fairly high model fit to explain the relationships among variables investigated in the study.

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