

Original Article

## Investigating the Effective Factors on Social Loafing in Sports Leisure Time of University Students

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**Citation:** Naeimi, H. and Azimkhani, A. (2022). Investigating the Effective Factors on Social Loafing in Sports Leisure Time of University Students. *Humanistic approach to sport and exercise studies (HASES)*, 2(1), 166-176.

**Received:** 1 September 2021

**Accepted:** 4 February 2022

**Published:** 17 March 2022

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**Abstract:** The aim of this study was to investigate the factors affecting social loafing in sports leisure time of university students in Mashhad (Firdausi Mashhad and Imam Reza). The research method was descriptive-survey in terms of propose and field based in terms of the data collection. The statistical population consisted of male student-athletes of Mashhad universities from which 118 were randomly selected as statistical samples. The research instrument included a researcher-made questionnaire based on research background, the validity of which was assessed by six professors in the field of sports science and its reliability was also assessed by Cronbach's alpha test (0.84). Based on the results, the items of socio-sports loafing for students constitute 50.20% of the total variance and the model for assessing the causes of socio-sports loafing of students, based on the results of factor analysis, has appropriate validity. Moreover, there is a significant correlation between the causes of socio-sports loafing (dodgery, felling of self-inferiority, group characteristics and egocentricity) in students ( $P < 0.01$ ). Furthermore, the results of all factors are higher than the average. Considering the relative importance for each of the studied factors among athlete student, it seems that one of the important reasons for such a fact is the change in lifestyle and the tendency of people to use modern technologies, which reduces the activity of people in society, especially young people, young athletes and young students. Many of these people, due to their strong presence in virtual activities, are less inclined to do group work and are more likely to perform individual actions and achieve their personal goals.

**Keywords:** Students, leisure time, social loafing, low group cohesion;

## 1. Introduction

In today's world, one of the most important factors in life is spending leisure time, and knowledge of how to spend this period, provides psychical and mental health, calmness and enjoyable environment for man. Spending leisure time optimally is a factor in achieving the growth and flourishing of talents, having a healthier and happier life and motivating men to be together in society (Birvanvand, 2015). Hence, leisure sports, which are associated with various sports activities, are often done in groups or as a team and allow people to interact with each other (Chidambaram and Tung, 2005). This interaction of individuals with each other is undoubtedly necessary for the development of society and the growth of its capital, especially the youth. However, research shows that people in group-activities show less effort and are slower in performing their tasks, which is known as social loafing.

Social loafing is a phenomenon that refers to a decrease in group productivity (Cicekdagi et al, 2018). According to Hall and Buzwell (2013), the cause of social loafing is the lack of recognition of how to perform. According to this theory, it seems that if people's efforts or activities are recognizable to themselves and others, they are more inclined to do their job better. In other words, if a person knows that his individual performance is visible in the group, he will try harder (Lam, 2015). In this regard, societies that think about improving the current situation and preparing a better future for themselves, pay attention to leisure time, especially in the age group of adolescents, because these people, as energetic and talented people and potential futures of the community.

In order to achieve increasing progress and technology, it is necessary to pay attention to this generation and plan for the optimal use of leisure time, and ignoring this issue will have many negative consequences (Perry et al., 2016). According to the relative recognition of social loafing, paying attention to social activities can improve person's individual tendencies and predispositions. Therefore, sport, as one of the most important leisure activities in fostering physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health, as well as in family cohesion, has an extremely positive role. The positive effects of leisure sports and recreation are no longer limited to entertaining and pleasurable participants in these activities, but go far beyond that of its positive role in fitness, which is a manifestation of physical health, social adjustment and growth in different stages of life.

In this regard, psychologists say that many people have very valuable memories of their childhood experiences. Such experiences often play a very important role in creating positive self-expression and, more importantly, in strengthening the bonds and interests between parents and children. These experiences, in addition to being useful for children,

are also very effective in the mental health of parents (Teng and Lu, 2015). In a related study, Poluzov et al. (2018) found that social loafing in the sports environment had different effects on player performance, and in games where team levels were unequal, players of the weaker team were likely to reduce their athletic performance due to loafing.

Masterson et al. (2000) found in their research that students who are physically active have a higher quality of life. Nikkhah and Dargazi (2017) also stated that there was no significant difference between the variables of age, marital status and income with the amount of sports activity, but the comparison of the mean scores obtained from the amount of sports activity, based on gender and educational level showed a significant difference. According to research results, procrastination or social loafing includes behavioral, emotional and cognitive factors that cause the formation of various types of procrastination in work (Hill et al., 1978). In fact, what has created content as a form of loafing is the difference in the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral factors of procrastinators.

Social loafing, due to the complexity of its cognitive, emotional and behavioral factors, has different examples, including general loafing, loafing in decision-making, neuroticism loafing, obsessive-compulsive loafing and academic loafing, which is the most common type of loafing (Rosario, 2009). Rothblum et al. (2003) defined this type of loafing as a constant tendency of learners to delay academic activities, which is usually accompanied by anxiety. A clear example of this is the delay in studying the lessons until the night of the exam and the resulting rush that afflicts students. Research findings indicate that social loafing is related to the level of anxiety (Ferrari et al., 2005).

In this regard, the anxious person feels helpless and unable to control his / her academic events. According to Hill and Wigfield (1984) and Stead et al. (2004), students who experience high levels of anxiety do not persevere or even avoid difficult tasks and exhibit behaviors similar to loafing. In addition, empirical evidence shows that students who find homework annoying or those who have higher levels of anxiety or fear of poor homework show more procrastination (Solomon and Rathblum, 1984, quoted in Hashemi and Latifian, 2013). However, none of the researches has mentioned the role of trait and mood anxiety in procrastination and only one study has shown that mood anxiety leads to a reduction of procrastination in individuals (Sandall et al., 2005).

Considering the above explanations and the measurable role of loafing in the occurrence of positive group behaviors of athletes in the present study, the role of these factors in expressing the attitudes of athlete students was studied. Academic conflict, which is one of the most important types of loafing, is more prone to lazy behaviors. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the factors affecting the social



loafing as the main problem of the present study to answer the question that what the factors affecting the incidence of social loafing in students' sports leisure be? Are these factors of relative importance from the students' point of view? In addition, what solutions can be offered to prevent these factors from occurring?

## 2. Methods

The research method was descriptive-survey in terms of purpose and field based in terms of the data collection. The statistical population of the study included all male student-athletes of Mashhad universities (Ferdowsi Mashhad and Imam Reza). According to accurate statistics, the number of athletes present was 180 persons of the university's sports teams to participate in the student sports Olympiad. It is necessary to explain that the number of selected people was designated according to winning the quota in the sports Olympiad that was hosted by the University of Gilan in 2021. Consequently, according to Morgan's table, 120 samples were randomly selected as a statistical sample. In order to collect data in this study, according to the researches related to the research background, a designed questionnaire was used (observing the validity and reliability standards). It is necessary to explain that there were many different internal and external questionnaires. Social loafing was not studied in the field of sports. After much study on the research conducted by Geravand (2014) who had constructed and standardized the social loafing questionnaire; first, the researcher defined the components related to social loafing and then identified the related questions about social loafing and after its completion, a social loafing sports questionnaire was developed, reviewed, and finally approved by 6 professors and experts. Finally, the questionnaire was adjusted with twenty items and 4 dodging factors (items 1 to 5), Feeling of Self-inferiority (items 6 to 10), group or activity characteristics (items 11 to 15) and egocentricity

(items 16 to 20). The construct validity was evaluated using heuristic factor analysis and its reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha test, which was 0.84. Then, based on the available statistics on the number of students in the sports teams of Mashhad universities who were able to get the entrance quota of students' cultural and sports Olympiad in 2021 hosted by the University of Gilan, coordination was done to distribute the questionnaires in two stages. In addition, the selected sport fields were volleyball, taekwondo, table tennis, wrestling and Track and Field, respectively, which were equally selected from Firdausi University of Mashhad and Imam Reza University. Finally, the obtained data were analyzed using SPSS 22 and LISREL 8.80 statistical software. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for statistical analysis of the findings. In the first part, descriptive analysis of the findings in the form of frequency distribution tables and graphs, and in the second part, inferential analysis of the findings and testing of hypotheses (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Pearson correlation coefficient and one-sample t-test) were presented and finally the research model was offered.

## 3. Results

Based on the results of the study, it was found that the highest and lowest percentages of frequency based on age status with 98.3% and 1.7%, respectively, belong to the group "20 to 25 years" and "26 to 30 years". Also, based on the field of study, the highest and lowest percentages of frequency with 70.0% and 30.0%, respectively, belong to the "humanities" and "engineering" groups. Based on the place of residence, the highest and lowest percentages with 91.7% and 8.3%, respectively, belong to the "native" and "non-native" groups. Finally, the highest and lowest percentages based on sports history (background), with 46.8% and 10.0%, respectively; belong to the "4 to 7 years" and "8 to 11 years" groups.

**Table 1.** The statistical description of demographic characteristics

Demographic variable	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Age	20 to 25	118	98.3
	26 to 30	2	1.7
	Total	120	100
Field of Study	Engineering	36	30.0
	Humanities	84	70.0
Residency	Native	110	91.7
	non-native	10	8.3
Sport Background	1 to 3 years	52	43.3
	4 to 7 years	56	46.8
	8 to 11 years	12	10.0



Initially, effective factors were identified and investigated using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. In this analysis, using the principal components analysis method and eigenvalues greater than 1, four factors: 4 dodging, Feeling of Self-inferiority, group or activity characteristics and egocentricity were determined and confirmed. Table 3 shows that the factor loads of all questions exceeded the baseline value (0.40). Also, according to Table 1, the value of chi-square statistics used for this model was equal to 760.983, based on which the dimensions

of the model are confirmed and the tools of factors affecting the incidence of social loafing in students are multidimensional structures. To determine that the research tool is saturated with several significant factors, two main indicators: 1. Eigenvalues, 2. Ratio of variance explained by each factor, were also considered so that the four factors in total constitute 50.20% of the variance of effective factors of social loafing in sports and emphasized the multidimensionality of tools in sports.

**Table 2.** Bartlett and Kaiser - Meyer and Oaklin test results

Assumption		Value
Kaiser-Meyer and Oaklin amount (sample volume adequacy)		0.723
Bartlett's test	The amount of chi-square statistics	760.983
	Freedom	190
	Significancy	0.001

The results of Table 1 show that all the required assumptions related to the use of factor analysis method have been observed. The Kaiser-Meyer and Oaklin test is an indicator of sample adequacy. Based on the mentioned test, it is possible to determine the degree to which the variables belong to each other (causal factor) and as a result, their suitability for factor analysis, and also to determine the suitability of each variable alone. Given that its value is equal to

0.723, so the judgment about it is reported to be excellent. In the Bartlett test, the correlation hypothesis between the questions is examined. Considering the value of chi-square and significance level ( $P < 0.001$ ,  $X^2 = 760.983$ ), it is concluded that there is a correlation between the questions, so it is permissible to continue and use other steps of factor analysis.

**Table 3.** Results of the variance share of each factor in the 4-factor model of the study of social loafing factors

Factor Number	Name of Factor	Squares of Extracted loads		
		Total Variance	Percentage of Variance	Percentage of Cumulative Variance
1	Factor 1(Dodging Factor)	3.42	17.11	17.11
2	Factor 2(Self-esteem Factor)	3.14	15.74	32.87
3	Factor 3(Group or Activity Characteristics)	1.75	8.77	41.63
4	Factor 4(Self-Control)			

Table 2 shows the eigenvalues, the variance of the factors and the percentage of their cumulative variance. The predictive power of this model based on

the total variance of the four factors is equal to 50.20%.

**Table 4.** Results of principal component analysis with varimax rotation about the factor loading of questions

Items	Factors			
	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4



1	0.70			
2	0.70			
3	0.48			
4	0.59			
5	0.43			
6		0.58		
7		0.61		
8		0.79		
9		0.69		
10		0.54		
11			0.50	
12			0.59	
13			0.66	
14			0.59	
15			0.40	
16				0.79
17				0.52
18				0.75
19				0.75
20				0.46
Percentage of Variance	17.11	15.74	8.77	8.56
Percentage of Cumulative Variance	50.20			

The results of factor analysis presented in Table 3 show that the items of factors causing socio-sports loafing in students include 50.20% of the total variance. The variance percentages for factor 1 is 17.11, factor 2 is 15.74, factor 3 is 8.77 and factor 4 is 8.56. The results of the factor load of the questions show that the factor load of all the questions is acceptable. Then, after identifying the factor loads of the research items by exploratory analysis, using confirmatory factor analysis, the construct validity of the questionnaire was examined. The values of indicators (Table 4) indicate the appropriateness of the dimensions of the study for socio-sports loafing in students. In order to measure the appropriateness of

the model, in addition to the ratio of chi-square to the degree of freedom, The comparative fit index (CFI), The goodness of fit index (GFI), Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (NFI) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were used. The optimal limit for the ratio of chi-square to the degree of freedom is less than three, the value is more than 0.90 for The Goodness fit index, the comparative fit index and Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index, and less than 0.1 for the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). Therefore, the tool for assessing the causes of socio-sports loafing in students has appropriate validity according to the mentioned cases.

**Table 5.** Tests and indicators of the model tool for assessing the causes of social sports loafing

Model	X <sup>2</sup> /df	AGFI	NFI	GFI	RMSEA
Factors Affecting	1.54	0.94	0.91	0.94	0.068







equation model of the research is presented and the results of its fit indices are presented in Table 8.

Figure 2. Model of structural equations for the causes of social sports loafing in the standard state

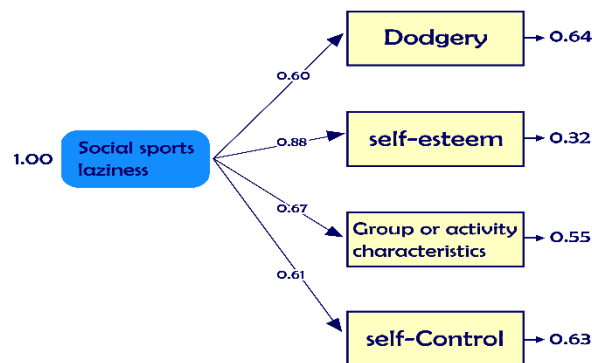


Figure 2. Structural equation model of the factors for social sports loafing in the standard state

Table 8. Index of fit of the factors of social loafing in sports

Fit Indexes	Indexes Values	Acceptable Values	Explanation
Chi Square	89.24	-	-
degree of freedom	$\chi^2$	-	-
Chi-square ratio to degree of freedom( $\chi^2 / df$ )	2.62	1-3	Appropriate
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.069	<0.1	Appropriate
Index (AGFI) adapted GFI	0.91	>0.9	Appropriate
Normalized Fit Index (NFI)	0.93	>0.9	Appropriate
Goodness Fit Index (GFI)	0.94	>0.9	Appropriate

The results of model for fit indices in Table 7 show that the fit indices have an acceptable value and the fit indices (GFI, NFI, AGFI) are at the desired level and higher than 0.9. Therefore, the research model is approved.

### Discussion

The aim of this study was to explain the concept of social sports loafing. Therefore, it is necessary to mention that the development of scientific literature in relation to interdisciplinary variables requires many studies, and due to the novelty of the present study in comparison with the results of similar research, we face many shortcomings. Considering the results of the present study, in relation to the dodging factor, the results showed that the score of dodging factor indicates a favorable relative status. Therefore, it can be said that the students will avoid doing a sports activity when it should be done in group, and at has not the aspects of attractiveness from the students' point of view. In addition, when other students are

engaged in sports, they do less activity, which is in accordance with the results of research by Lin and Hong (2009), Murphy et al. (2004) and Duffy and Shaw (2000) as the results of the present study. In this regard, Lin and Hong (2009) state how social attachments change a person's desire to act according to the wishes of others and create a force in him to reduce participation and avoid social activities. Murphy et al. (2004) also state that individuals use underemployment and social avoidance (doggery) as a way to respond to poor quality relationships in their social interactions with other members of the group. In fact, when people do not have a good quality communication with the team or organization, they are not supposed to be motivated to work harder because they do not know that their efforts help the team and the organization. Similarly, people who have good quality exchanges with their leader may try to make up for it by not engaging in social activities. Besides, Duffy and Shaw (2000) state that group



doggery is negatively correlated with group solidarity, which in turn is associated with group performance, absence, and satisfaction.

As a result, it can be said that students, when other people participate in sports activities, avoid doing these activities more, which may be due to unwillingness to do work and group activities. These people tend to do the activities assigned to them in the simplest way possible or delegate their responsibilities to others when they are in a group. In addition, when sports activities are not attractive enough for these people, they simply avoid doing it, or if they feel that other people are also avoiding their duties, they did it so immediately and shrugged off the responsibility. Therefore, the coach should always give the necessary motivation to these people and create a sense of cooperation and participation in them by performing group and team activities. Of course, it should also be noted that the study population was consisted of student-athletes and many of these individuals had prior and accurate knowledge of each other, and this could be a reason for the mentioned fact.

Regarding the Feeling of Self-inferiority factor, the results showed that the score of this factor indicates a favorable relative status, and when the student feels less competent than other members of the group, his self-confidence decreases and works with less energy. These findings are consistent with the results of research by Wu et al. (2012) and Agrwell and O'Brien (2008). In this regard, Wu et al. (2012) stated that people who feel that their efforts are unnecessary, have little motivation to participate in teamwork and are procrastinating to achieve personal goals. Also, Agrawal and O'Brien (2008) state that some people in the group feel that other people in the group are doing less effort than them. This makes them feel that the necessary benefit from the group's results is not equal to all the effort they have put in, and that they will feel unfair situation in the team.

Some people find that when they are more active, their problems are more obvious, or when they are less active in the group, they reduce their activity and do less energy. Moreover, when they realize that the results of their activities in the group are not valuable, their self-confidence decreases and they limit their efforts.

In this case, the coach is advised to increase the necessary self-confidence in these people, to make them take more responsibility and try not to avoid sports activities. Besides, the attention and encouragement of other teammates or classmates can have a significant effect on increasing the self-

confidence of these people and as a result, their greater participation in sports activities.

Regarding the group characteristics factor, the results showed that the component score indicates a favorable relative status. This finding is consistent with the results of Sing (2018), Klassen et al. (2013) and Shiue et al. (2010). In this regard, Sing (2018) states that the factor that has the greatest impact on social loafing in the group is the characteristics of the group and group members. This means that the structure of each group and the behaviors that group members perform towards each other cause social loafing. Also, Klassen et al. (2013) state that perceived organizational culture and perception of solidarity influence social loafing behaviors. Furthermore, in group activities, by creating social culture and improving social personality, social lazy attitudes can be prevented. Shiue et al. (2010) also point out that the emotional tone of the group, which is one of the characteristics of the group, plays a very effective mediating role in controlling social loafing and increasing productivity. Therefore, it can be said that the student does not spend enough energy to do the work whose type is not clear to him. Likewise, the large number of people in the group is another reason for inadequate effort in sports activities. Lack of clear frameworks and rules in sports activities or very easy or difficult achievement of group goals and lack of necessary empathy and harmony between group members are other causes of social loafing. In this regard, it can be said that the instructor or coach, at the beginning of the semester or the beginning of the course, can prevent social loafing by specifying the criteria and legal framework and also determining and delegating the responsibilities of each person in the group.

Regarding the egocentricity factor, the results showed that this factor indicates a favorable relative status. As a result, it seems that when students' sense of effort in the sports group is lost, they have no desire to be more active, and in group sports activities, individual goals will be more important to them than group goals. These findings are consistent with the results of Suleiman and Watson (2008) and Nourbakhsh Moghaddam (2017). In this regard, Suleiman and Watson (2008) stated that social loafing can be measured when it gives individual internal feedback. While other types of feedback have been very effective in increasing productivity, but have little effect on controlling and reducing this phenomenon (social loafing). Besides, Nourbakhsh Moghaddam (2017) states that social adjustment predicts 18% of





the variance of job performance, while social loafing predicts only 5.1% of the variance of job performance. Considering these cases, it can be said that students in group sports activities pay more attention to their individual goals than collective goals, and when they feel that their activities in the group are useless, they reduce their efforts. Moreover, if they feel, they are more useful in a non-group activity than group responsibilities, they shy away from group activities, or act individually and think that they are more effective in group activities and finally they feel that other people are misusing their efforts and taking advantage of them. In this regard, it can be said that these people are very interested in doing individual activities and prioritize individual goals, which seems somewhat natural considering the statistical population of the study and the point made earlier. Therefore, the coach should talk to these people and present the benefits of collective activity and achieve collective goals, in order to encourage these people to participate more in group activities and avoid social loafing.

It was also found that the structural equation model of the research has a significant fit. In this regard, Sharifi Moghadam (2015) states that there is a significant relationship between academic loafing and variables such as, disorder at the level of system (e.g., intra-university disorder, extracurricular disorder, lack of

planning in the university, lack of supervision and control in the university, educational evasion, culture of loafing in society, low loafing costs in society). There is also a significant relation between disorder at the individual level and dimensions such as academic alienation, and lack of interest and motivation to study. Moreover, the results of the structural model test showed that the above variables could explain 62% of the changes in academic loafing (individual, group). Biranvand (2015) also stated that the lack of motivation for progress and moral anger at the micro level and political alienation and populism at the macro level with 0.48% are the most important explanations for social loafing in this study.

According to the results, it can be said that the studied subjects paid attention to all the components to the same extent and from their point of view, there was no special priority for the components of social loafing. In this regard, one of the important reasons is the change in lifestyle and the tendency of people to use the latest technologies in the world, which has reduced the activity of people in society, especially young people and young students. Many of these people, due to their low presence in social activities, are less inclined to do group work and are more likely to perform individual actions and achieve their personal goals.

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## بررسی عوامل مؤثر بر بروز تنبلی اجتماعی در گذران اوقات فراغت ورزشی دانشجویان

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**چکیده:** پژوهش حاضر، با هدف بررسی عوامل مؤثر بر بروز تنبلی اجتماعی در گذران اوقات فراغت ورزشی دانشجویان دانشگاه‌های شهر مشهد (فردوسی مشهد و امام رضا (ع)) صورت گرفته است. روش پژوهش به لحاظ هدف کاربردی، در دسته پژوهش‌های توصیفی-پیمایشی و از نظر جمع‌آوری داده‌های آن به صورت میدانی انجام شد. جامعه آماری، شامل دانشجویان ورزشکار پسر دانشگاه‌های شهر مشهد بود که ۱۱۸ نفر نمونه آماری به صورت تصادفی-خوشه ای انتخاب گردید. ابزار پژوهش شامل پرسشنامه‌ی محقق ساخته مبتنی بر پیشینه پژوهش بود که روایی آن توسط ۶ نفر از اساتید حوزه علوم ورزشی و پایایی آن با استفاده از آزمون آلفای کرونباخ ارزیابی ۰/۸۴ بدست آمد. بر اساس نتایج گویه های عوامل بروز تنبلی اجتماعی ورزشی بر دانشجویان در کل ۵۰/۲۰ درصد از کل واریانس را تبیین و ابزار ارزیابی عوامل بروز تنبلی اجتماعی ورزشی بر دانشجویان بر اساس نتایج تحلیل عاملی دارای روایی مناسب می‌باشد. بین عوامل بروز تنبلی اجتماعی ورزشی (طفره‌روی، خودکم‌بینی، ویژگی‌های گروه و خودمداری) در دانشجویان همبستگی معناداری در حد مطلوب وجود دارد ( $P \leq 0/01$ ). همچنین، نتایج تمامی عوامل در مقایسه با میانگین از سطح بالاتری برخوردار هستند. با توجه به اهمیت نسبی هریک از عوامل مورد بررسی در بین دانشجویان ورزشکار، بنظر می‌رسد می‌توان یکی از دلایل مهم این امر را تغییر سبک زندگی و گرایش افراد به استفاده از فناوری‌های روز دنیا دانست که باعث کم‌تر شدن فعالیت افراد جامعه و به‌ویژه قشر جوانان ورزشکار و دانشجو شده است. بسیاری از این افراد، به دلیل حضور پررنگ در فعالیت‌های اجتماعی مجازی، کمتر به انجام کارهای گروهی تمایل نشان داده و بیشتر به انجام اعمال فردی و دستیابی به اهداف شخصی خود می‌پردازند.

**واژه‌های کلیدی:** دانشجویان، گذران اوقات فراغت، تنبلی اجتماعی ورزشی، انسجام

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**ارجاع:** نعیمی، ح؛ عظیم خانی، ا. (۱۴۰۰). بررسی عوامل مؤثر بر بروز تنبلی اجتماعی در گذران اوقات فراغت ورزشی دانشجویان. فصلنامه رویکرد انسانی در مطالعات ورزشی. ۱۶۶-۱۷۶: (۱)۲.

**دریافت:** ۱۰ شهریور ۱۴۰۰**پذیرش:** ۱۵ بهمن ۱۴۰۰**انتشار:** ۲۷ اسفند ۱۴۰۰

این نماد به معنای مجوز استفاده از اثر با دو شرط است یکی استناد به نویسنده و دیگری استفاده برای مقاصد غیرتجاری.