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Task Solver or Socializer? The Impact of Camera Usage on Social Loafing in Hybrid Virtual Meeting Context

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Research-in-Progress Paper

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Abstract

Virtual meetings afford brainstorming teams to collect attendees from anywhere. However, virtual brainstorming meetings suffer from social loafing— individuals' tendency to exert less effort when working in teams compared with working alone. The current paper identified a unique hybrid context in virtual meetings, during which some attendees with the camera on while others are off. Existing literature recognized camera usage and task difficulty as critical determinants of individuals' participation. Grounding on distraction conflict theory, we investigate the mechanisms of camera usage and task difficulty on both audio and video attendees' social loafing in hybrid virtual meetings. Online experimental results confirmed the interaction effects of camera usage and task difficulty on attentional conflict. The more attentional capacity devoted to the task or emotional display, the less social loafing was performed. This paper will provide important academic implications for research on social loafing and virtual meetings and practical instructions on matching the camera feature with meeting tasks in virtual meetings.

Keywords: hybrid virtual meetings, social loafing, camera usage, task difficulty