

Social Facilitation and Its Effects on the Errors of Commission in a Vigilance Task

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Vigilance is known as sustained attention over a prolonged period of time in which respondents are required to respond to critical signals. Vigilance is crucial in a variety of settings and situations. However, when placed on a simple and repetitive task, such as security detail scanning bags or watching a radar in an airport control tower, performance on these vigilance tends to decline with time spent performing the task continuously. This pattern is referred to as the vigilance decrement. In addition to the decrement, errors of commission, or “false alarms”, occur more frequently as time on task increases. In the current study, the effect of social facilitation was evaluated on a vigilance task. Social Facilitation is a phenomenon where an individual performs a simple, or well-known, task better while in the presence of another person. This was extended to manipulate the effect of a supervisory role. It was hypothesized that the presence of a supervisor would result in fewer errors of commission, as well as decrease the time it took participants to respond to a critical signal.