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Cyberloafing Behaviour In The Digital Workplace: A Study Of Social Media Use Among Private Sector Employees In Kerala

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KEYWORDS

Social Cyberloafing, Workplace Behaviour, Social Media Use, Private Sector Employees, Kerala

ABSTRACT

The pervasive use of social media and instant messaging applications has significantly reshaped employee behaviour in contemporary workplaces, particularly in private sector organisations. While digital connectivity facilitates communication and collaboration, it has also intensified social cyberloafing behaviour, wherein employees engage in non-work-related social media activities during working hours. The present study examines the influence of selected social cyberloafing behaviours among employees working in private sector organisations in Kerala. Using structured questionnaire data and regression-based analysis, the study evaluates key dimensions of social cyberloafing, including personal social media use, messaging behaviour, task switching, and online social interaction during work time. The findings reveal that all selected social cyberloafing indicators are statistically significant, with distraction from work responsibilities due to social media use emerging as the strongest predictor. The study contributes to the cyberloafing literature by empirically identifying dominant social cyberloafing behaviours and offers practical implications for managing digital distractions in organizational settings.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of social media platforms and mobile communication technologies has profoundly influenced workplace dynamics. Employees increasingly rely on digital tools not only for work-related tasks but also for maintaining social connections during office hours. While moderate personal internet use may offer short mental breaks, excessive engagement in social media and messaging applications during work hours has led to the emergence of social cyberloafing as a critical organizational concern. Social cyberloafing refers to employees' use of social networking sites, instant messaging platforms, and online social interactions for personal purposes during designated working time.

In private sector organisations, where performance targets, efficiency, and competitiveness are emphasized, social cyberloafing poses challenges related to productivity loss, task distraction, and reduced work engagement. Previous studies suggest that cyberloafing is not merely a rule-breaking activity but a behavioural outcome influenced by habitual digital use and psychological dependence on online social interaction. In this context, examining the specific behavioural dimensions of social cyberloafing becomes essential. Accordingly, the present study investigates key social cyberloafing behaviours among private sector employees in Kerala and identifies the most influential factors contributing to this phenomenon.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Cyberloafing for Social Media Usage

Cyberloafing has been conceptualized as employees' voluntary engagement in non-work-related internet activities during work hours (Lim & Teo, 2005). Within this broader construct, social cyberloafing specifically refers to the use of social networking sites, messaging applications, and online social interactions unrelated to job tasks. Recent studies highlight that social cyberloafing is the most prevalent form of cyberloafing due to the widespread adoption of smartphones and social media platforms (Askew et al., 2021).

Empirical research indicates that social cyberloafing is closely linked to distraction, multitasking behaviour, and attentional fragmentation. Kim and Byrne (2019) observed that frequent task switching between work duties and social media

platforms significantly reduces task efficiency. Similarly, Reddy and Rani (2022) found that employees who frequently respond to personal messages during work hours exhibit higher levels of work disengagement and time mismanagement.

2.2 Social Media Use and Work Distraction

Social media platforms are designed to capture attention through notifications, updates, and interactive features, making them particularly disruptive in work environments. Studies suggest that excessive social media use during work hours leads to cognitive overload and reduced focus on assigned responsibilities (Cheng et al., 2021). Responding to personal messages, interacting with friends online, and impulsively checking social media platforms contribute to fragmented work patterns and productivity decline.

Recent organizational behaviour research emphasizes that social cyberloafing is often habitual rather than intentional misconduct. Employees may unconsciously check social media or messaging applications in response to notifications, boredom, or stress (**Tandon et al., 2020**). This behavioural perspective highlights the need for empirical assessment of specific social cyberloafing activities rather than treating cyberloafing as a uniform construct.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. Primary data were collected from employees working in selected private sector organisations in Kerala using a structured questionnaire. Social cyberloafing behaviour was measured using six statements reflecting personal social media use, messaging behaviour, online interaction, multitasking, and work distraction during office hours. Statistical techniques including multiple regression analysis were employed to examine the influence of these variables on overall social cyberloafing behaviour. Multicollinearity diagnostics such as Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance values were used to ensure model adequacy.

4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter describes and finds out to the Cyberloafing Behaviour in working place. Here the following dimensions are belongs to Cyberloafing Behaviour dimensions like, (i) Social Cyberloafing, (ii) Informational Cyberloafing, (iii) Entertainment Cyberloafing and (iv) Minor vs. Serious Cyberloafing. In the study to finds out through the Path Analysis, which dimension is most impact to Cyberloafing Behaviour in working place?

Objective-1: To assess the extent and patterns of Cyberloafing behaviour among employees working in private sector organisation

4.1: Social Media - Cyberloafing in Working Place

Table-4.1 Multiple Regression Analysis of Social Cyberloafing in Working Place

Abbreviation	Cyberloafing on Social Media Usage (CSM)
SC-1	I check social media platforms during working hours for personal reasons
SC-2	I use messaging applications (e.g., WhatsApp, Telegram) during office hours
SC-3	I respond to personal messages while I am supposed to be working
SC-4	I spend work time interacting with friends or family online
SC-5	I frequently switch between work tasks and social networking sites
SC-6	Social media use distracts me from my assigned work responsibilities

Table- 4. 1(a): Model Fit Summary

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
Cyberloafing - Social Media	0.944[a]	0.892	0.890	0.26298	1.877

Predictors: (Constant), SC6, SC1, SC4, SC3, SC2, SC5

Dependent variable: Social Cyberloafing

The regression model explaining **Social Cyberloafing** demonstrates an excellent overall fit. The multiple

correlation coefficient (**R = 0.944**) indicates a very strong positive relationship between the predictor variables 'I check social media platforms during working hours for personal reasons' (SC-1), 'I use messaging applications (e.g., WhatsApp, Telegram) during office hours' (SC-2), 'I respond to personal messages while I am supposed to be working' (SC-3),'I spend work time interacting with friends or family online' (SC-4),'I frequently switch between work tasks and social networking sites' (SC-5) and 'Social media use distracts me from my assigned work responsibilities' (SC-6) and Social Cyberloafing.

The **R-Square value of 0.892** suggests that **89.2% of the variance in Social Cyberloafing** is explained collectively by the six independent variables included in the model, reflecting high explanatory power. The **Adjusted R-Square (0.890)** is only marginally lower than the R-Square value, indicating that the model remains robust even after adjusting for the number of predictors and that over fitting is minimal. The **standard error of the estimate (0.26298)** is relatively low, implying that the predicted values of Social Cyberloafing closely approximate the observed values, thereby confirming good predictive accuracy.

Further, the **Durbin–Watson statistic of 1.877**, which is close to the ideal value of 2, indicates the absence of serious autocorrelation among the residuals. This confirms that the assumption of independence of errors is satisfactorily met.Overall, the model is statistically sound and reliable, demonstrating that the dimensions SC-1, SC-2, SC-3, SC-4, SC-5, and SC-6 significantly and jointly explain variations in Social Cyberloafing, making the model suitable for subsequent hypothesis testing and interpretation in the study.

Table- 4. 1-(b): ANOVA[a]

Cyberloafing - Social Media	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	323.153	6	53.859	778.790	.000[b]
Residual	39.281	568	0.069		
Total	362.435	574			

a. Dependent Variable: Social Cyberloafing

b. Predictors: (Constant): SC6, SC1, SC4, SC3, SC2, SC5

The F-ratio in the ANOVA table interprets the overall regression model, which is a normal fit for the data. The result of F (6,568) = 778.790 and 'p' value 0.000 is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), the regression model is a good fit for the data; therefore, this model is a linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

Table- 4.2.1-(c): Relationship between a linear combination of Social Cyberloafing in Working Place

Cyberloafing - Social Media	Unstd Coefficients		Std Coefficients	t	Sig. P-Value	95% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance (>0.2)	VIF (<5)
(Constant)	0.183	0.058		3.176	0.002	0.070	0.296		
SC-1	0.154	0.014	0.192	10.867	0.000	0.126	0.182	0.609	1.641
SC-2	0.183	0.017	0.215	10.984	0.000	0.150	0.216	0.498	2.008
SC-3	0.176	0.015	0.228	11.620	0.000	0.146	0.206	0.496	2.014
SC-4	0.149	0.016	0.188	9.465	0.000	0.118	0.180	0.483	2.072
SC-5	0.135	0.017	0.164	8.150	0.000	0.103	0.168	0.472	2.119
SC-6	0.177	0.014	0.235	12.896	0.000	0.150	0.204	0.575	1.738

Dependent Variable: Social Cyberloafing

The above table shows the independent variables of the Social Cyberloafing variables like, 'I check social media platforms during working hours for personal reasons' (SC-1), 'I use messaging applications (e.g., WhatsApp, Telegram) during office hours' (SC-2), 'I respond to personal messages while I am supposed to be working' (SC-3),'I spend work time interacting with friends or family online' (SC-4),'I frequently switch between work tasks and social networking sites'

(SC-5) and 'Social media use distracts me from my assigned work responsibilities' (SC-6) are highly significant; the p-values are less than 0.01.

It can be seen that the values of VIF of all the predictor constructs are less than 5. The tolerance values the constructs are also more than 0.2. The VIF and Tolerance values are well within the stipulated limits as suggested in the extant literature. Hence, it can be inferred that there is no substantial level of multi collinearity among independent variable, which indicates that multi collinearity is not a problem in this model.

95% Confidence Interval for B's Lower Bound and Upper Bound, both values are positive or both values are negative; it is influence on Lower Bound and Upper Bound, here all variables Lower Bound and Upper Bound both values are positive, so it is significantly influence on Lower Bound and Upper Bound.

Interpretation:

The above table derives the equation of Social Cyberloafing dependent variables like

Social Cyberloafing = 0.183 *(β0)+β1(*0.154*)+β2(*0.183*)+ β3(*0.176*) + β4(*0.149*) + β5 (*0.135*) + β6(*0.177*)*

The significant variables are comparing with Standardized Coefficients β-values; the resulted that the first influenced Social Cyberloafing variable is 'Social media use distracts me from my assigned work responsibilities' (SC-6) the β-value is 0.235. The second influenced variable is 'I respond to personal messages while I am supposed to be working' (SC-3), the β-value is 0.228. The third influenced variable is 'I use messaging applications (e.g., WhatsApp, Telegram) during office hours' (SC-2), the β-value is 0.215.

Inference:

The study concludes most influenced Social Cyberloafing concept is 'Social media use distracts them from their assigned work responsibilities' and 'employees respond to personal messages while they are supposed to be working', then 'they use messaging applications (e.g., WhatsApp, Telegram) during office hours'.

5. FINDINGS

The regression results indicate that all selected social cyberloafing variables—checking social media platforms for personal reasons (SC-1), using messaging applications during office hours (SC-2), responding to personal messages while working (SC-3), interacting online with friends or family (SC-4), frequent task switching (SC-5), and work distraction due to social media use (SC-6)—are statistically significant at the 1% level. The p-values for all variables are less than 0.01, confirming their strong influence on social cyberloafing behaviour.

The VIF values for all predictor constructs are below 5, and tolerance values exceed 0.2, indicating the absence of multicollinearity in the model. Additionally, the 95% confidence intervals for the regression coefficients show positive lower and upper bounds for all variables, confirming their significant contribution. Based on standardized beta coefficients, *social media use distracting employees from assigned work responsibilities* (SC-6) emerged as the most influential factor (β = 0.235), followed by *responding to personal messages during work* (SC-3; β = 0.228) and *use of messaging applications during office hours* (SC-2; β = 0.215).

6. SUGGESTIONS

Private sector organisations should develop clear and balanced digital usage policies that acknowledge the realities of modern work environments while discouraging excessive social cyberloafing. Awareness programmes focusing on digital self-regulation and attentional control can help employees recognize the impact of habitual social media use on work performance. Organizations may also consider redesigning work tasks to reduce monotony, implementing notification management strategies, and promoting focused work practices to minimize digital distractions.

7. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that social cyberloafing is a significant behavioural issue among private sector employees in Kerala, primarily driven by distraction from work responsibilities, impulsive message responding, and frequent use of messaging applications during office hours. The findings suggest that social cyberloafing is less a matter of deliberate rule violation and more a consequence of habitual digital engagement and attentional fragmentation. Addressing social cyberloafing therefore requires behavioural, preventive, and supportive organizational strategies rather than purely punitive controls. The study contributes empirical evidence to the cyberloafing literature and offers practical insights for managing digital behaviour in contemporary workplaces..

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