

CYBERSLOAKING AND CYBERLOAFING – IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN THE WORKPLACE

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Purpose: The main purpose of the article is to review the literature and research results on very important problems like cyberloafing and cyberslacking in the workplace.

Design/methodology/approach: The method used to meet the objective was a critical review of source literature, documents and reports analysis.

Findings: At the beginning of the article, the phenomenon of cyberloafing was discussed, analysing its positive and negative effects on organisations, and then attempting to explain the determinants of cyberloafing in organisations and also the controlling measures it.

Research limitations/implications: The article uses a literature review and secondary research. Research on this problem is planned using quantitative and qualitative methods.

Practical implications: The results showed how employers can take action to mitigate cyberslacking and maintain employee productivity.

Originality/value: The paper provides practitioners with insights into cyberslacking activities at the workplace. Particularly explain how they can decrease cyberslacking activities.

Keywords: social media, cyberloafing, cyberslacking, workplace deviance.

Category of the paper: research paper.

1. Introduction

In recent years, social media has become an integral part of people's daily lives. More importantly, social media has strengthened its role in the professional world. More and more employees are using social media in their workplaces to communicate with colleagues, keep formal and informal relationships with customers and business partners, check information about enterprises, and gain knowledge about the situation in the industry.

Research conducted by Fair (2018) even before the Covid pandemic showed that employees (58%) don't need social media to do their jobs, but they still can't make it through the day without it (Fair, 2018). Though over 40% do have "occasional" work-related activity on social media, three-quarters (76%) have never received training from their employer on using it as

part of their work experience. Among millennials and Gen Z, the ones spending upward of two hours per workday looking at their phones, an astounding 78% say personal activities are more distracting than work-related intrusions. This would seem to undermine the productivity-boosting effects employers hope to see from collaboration and communication tools like Trello, Slack, or Jira, which must compete with the irresistible pull of the smartphone. Across the general populace, 59% agree that personal use of technology is more distracting than work tools, and Facebook is far and away the top attention thief. A whopping 86% described Facebook as a workplace distraction—twice as much as Instagram.

The literature provides evidence of both the positive and negative impacts of social media (SM) in the workplace. In addition to the many benefits of using SM in areas such as work organisation (Labban, Bizzi, 2020), communication and relationship building (Bednarska-Olejniczak, 2018; Huang et al., 2017), motivation and engagement (Boahene et al., 2019; Ewing et al., 2019) there are also risks associated with a decrease in employee productivity (Wushe, Shenje, Jacob, 2019), or the potential risk of employees posting content contrary to organisational policy (Adjei et al., 2020; Lankton et al., 2017; Szwajca, Prandzioch, 2018).

Of course, the dangers of inappropriate social media use can affect not only the employee but also the employer (browsing social media profiles, forcing constant contact with the employer). It, therefore, becomes important to examine what causes inappropriate behaviour among employees. Knowing these determinants will allow for defining some rules/policies for the use of social media in the organisation. A policy defines what online behaviour of an organisation's members is correct and also provides guidelines on data and information security with sanctions.

Research has shown that a majority of employees tend to spend about 2 to 3 h on non-work-related online activities during work hours. Indeed, recent statistics show that cyberloafing can cost companies approximately \$85 billion a year (Andel et al., 2019)

The purpose of the research is to systematize knowledge regarding non-work-related activities of employees and to examine determinants that cause inappropriate behaviour among employees. Literature, as well as documents and reports analysis, will allow answering the research questions: What are the advantages and disadvantages of using social media in the workplace? What factors and circumstances cause employees to waste time browsing social networks instead of working? How organizations can minimize the loss of productivity and decrease cyberslacking activities?

2. Social media in the workplace

Social media (SM) are applications that utilise web technologies and allow users to create and participate in communities through functions such as communicating, interacting, sharing, collaborating, and publishing (Mauroner, 2016). Different social media technologies, like social networking, online forums, wikis, and blogs are becoming reliable platforms for sharing information to target audiences in a contemporary manner (Osatuyi, 2013). In social media networks (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, Google+) or collaborative communities people share experiences and information, which pertain not only to personal interests but also to professional matters.

Especially, enterprise social media platforms (ESM), which combine numerous features, such as microblogging and document sharing in one integrated place, can contribute to improving information access and dissemination. Social media usage provides opportunities for employees to collaborate and coordinate work.

Recently social media has been categorised into four main groups (Mao, 2014):

- social networking tools and instant messengers such as Facebook, Skype, Tumbland,
- tools for social publishing, social sharing, bookmarking, and collaborating, including tools like blogs, wikis, Twitter, Delicious, Flickr, Youtube, Picasa, GoogleDocs, Spreadsheets, Slideshare, Dropbox and so on,
- social tools for content management as well as calendars, surveys, and polls such as Moodle or Edmodo,
- virtual worlds and gaming environments such as SecondLife, WeeWorld.

According to Data reportal (2022) there were 5 billion internet users (in Poland 32.86 million). In January 2022, in Poland, there were 27,2 million active social media users (globally 4,65 billion), which constitutes 72% of the population (58,7 globally) (Data reportal, 2022). Year on year their numbers increased by 1,3 million (5%), the last three years by 9,2 million (51%) (Digital Poland, 2022). 22,5 % of respondents use SM for work activities (14,5% in Poland). Interestingly, Kenya is the country where the percentage of social media use in the workplace is the highest at 43,8% and Japan is the lowest at 5,8% (Data reportal, 2022). Currently, in Poland, we can observe the increasingly using of SM by society in the workplace. Another survey showed that as many as 2/3 of respondents (64.5%) use social media during working hours (Pracuj, 2021). Interestingly, only 15% of the respondents use them for business purposes only, and almost half of them use them both for business and private purposes. 47% of Poles have permission from their boss to use social media at work, of which 19% are exclusively for business purposes and 28% also for private purposes. More than one in three respondents (36%) is completely prohibited to use this medium during working hours. Thus, the data may indicate that a significant portion of employees uses social media channels in ways that are not entirely consistent with company policy. Moreover, nearly one in five

respondents (18%) could not answer what attitude their supervisor has toward the use of social media during work hours. The most popular platforms used at work in Poland are Facebook (88%), Youtube (65%), Instagram (39%), LinkedIn (18%), Twitter (18%), Tiktok (12%), Reddit (6%), other (3%) (Figure1).

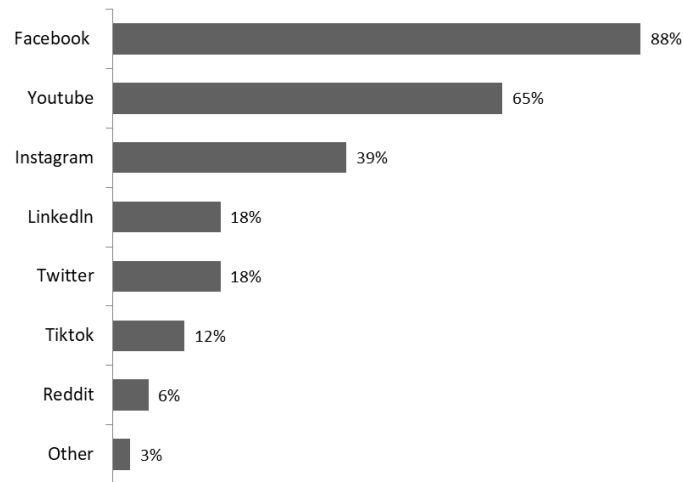


Figure 1. Social media platforms are used professionally at work in Poland.

Source: Own study based on (Pracuj, 2021).

Similar results for the US are presented by Kolmar (2021), in his analyses the most common social media platforms used at work are Facebook (19%), LinkedIn (14%), employer providers (9%) and Twitter (3%) (Kolmar, 2021).

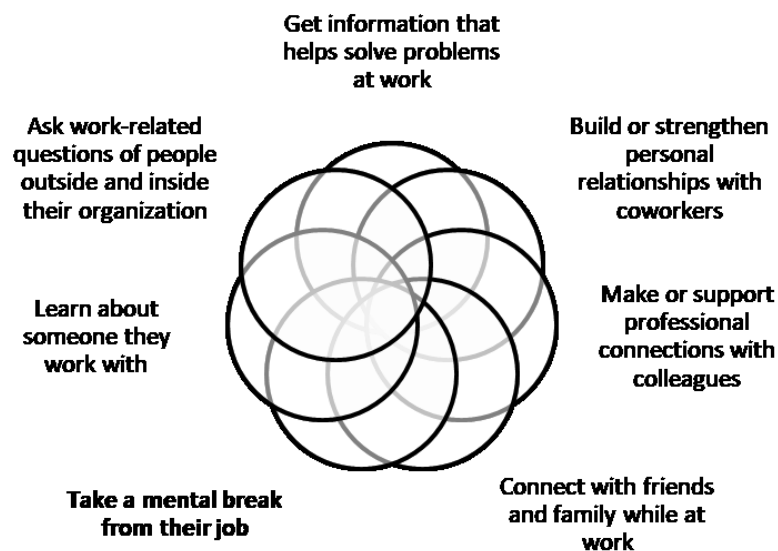


Figure 2. The most common reasons for using social media in the workplace.

Source: Own study based on (Kolmar, 2021; Olmstead et al., 2016).

Employees admit to using social media at work for various purposes (figure 2). The most common reasons that employees use social media at work are to take a mental break from work (34%), to connect with friends and family while at work (27%), to support professional connections (24%), to get information that helps them solve problems in their job (20%),

strengthening their relationship with co-workers (17%), learn more details about a person that they work with (17%) and to ask work-related questions to outside people or inside the corporation (12%) (Kolmar, 2021; Olmstead et al., 2016).

2.1. Pros and cons of using social media in the workplace

Although social media is becoming ubiquitous in the workplace, the use of these technologies has both positive and negative consequences. Studies in the literature report a variety of often contradictory results regarding the impact of social media in the workplace. Research by Mäntymäki and Riemer, (2016) (Mäntymäki, Riemer, 2016) suggested that professional use of social media can support formal and informal communication in the work environment. This is confirmed by the latest Digital (2022) report which indicates that 63,2% of employees daily use social media as communication channels (respondents who use the channel at least once per day during their professional activities). Nowadays, more and more communication takes place online with SM tools which provide constant communication between managers, employee participants of group projects and others. Especially, for younger generations, SM is a common channel of communication (Csobanka, 2016). Therefore, social media provides an opportunity for supporting efficient and effective team communication in organizations and project teams. Improved communication is an increased sense of community and social support which increases employee commitment to work as noted by (Van Zoonen et al., 2017). They confirmed in their study the positive relationship between social media communication and work engagement. An engaged employee is more productive than one who lacks engagement (Ewing et al., 2019; Oksa et al., 2021). Social media allows employees to connect and collaborate more efficiently and also can help employees feel more engaged with their work, leading to higher job satisfaction and morale. Thus, employers who allow using networking sites in the workplace can benefit from increased productivity, employee engagement, and improved overall performance. Moreover, easy and quick communication through social media promotes knowledge sharing within the organization as indicated by studies by Babu et al. (2020) Choi et al. (2014) and Nielsen and Razmerita (2014) (Babu et al., 2020; Choi et al., 2014; Nielsen, Razmerita, 2014). Social media platforms can facilitate more effective knowledge sharing and collaboration within an organization, thereby increasing organizational productivity and competitiveness. Nielsen & Razmerita (2014) indicated that social media platforms are providing benefits, in particular, improving internal communication (41%), increasing knowledge sharing (37%) decrease the number of emails (35%). Other identified benefits are easier to reach colleagues in other departments (34%), employees get a faster response to work-related problems (34%) and it is easier to collaborate on projects (30%) (Nielsen. Razmerita, 2014).

However, there are some limitations to deriving the benefits from communications through social media in an organisation. Madsen (2017) identified four obstacles to motivating employees to use internal social media to communicate (Madsen, 2017):

- employees may not see the professional benefits of using ESM,
- colleagues may not understand the informal nature of communication,
- internal social media was not considered a "natural" part of the daily routine in the organization,
- top managers support internal social media with mostly words, not actions.

Social media at the workplace can also be an excellent way for employees to take a break from their work and relax. This can lead to increased productivity and a more positive attitude towards work. According to survey research "Social Media and the Workplace", 34% ever use social media while at work to take a mental break from their job (Olmstead et al., 2016). Social media can help reduce stress by providing an outlet and a healthy distraction from work, which is helpful when tasks are feeling overwhelming. Logging into social media accounts can also help employees feel more connected to their colleagues and friends, leading to a more positive work environment.

The opposite position regarding the impact of social media in the workplace is presented by Yu et al. (2018), who argue that exhaustion is related to excessive use of social media (information and communication overload) and significantly reduces work productivity (Yu et al., 2018). Employees must learn how to navigate and use the massive amount of information afforded by the addition of social media to internal communication (Ewing et al., 2019). Additionally, security and privacy risks for organizations are critical concerns from using social media. Buettner (2015) argued that concerns about privacy, as well as perceived usefulness and ease of use, can negatively impact employees' intentions to use internal social media. Bizzi (2018) in his survey discovered a downside of employees using social media at work (Bizzi, 2018). He found that 76% of employees using social media for work took an interest in other organizations, compared to 60% of employees using social media only for leisure. Thus, employees using social media at work are more engaged and more productive, but they are also more likely to leave the company. Managers can solve this problem in two ways. In the first place, managers should implement solutions that neutralize the retention risk caused by social media. They can use social media training to keep employees focused on positive social media behaviors, such as collaboration, which can increase satisfaction and attachment by counteracting the risk of rotation. Second, managers can create social media groups in which employees will be more cooperative and less willing to share their withdrawal intentions or discuss external employment opportunities (Bizzi, 2018).

Moreover, other studies suggest that the use of social media in the workplace leads the employee to misuse organizational resources and may stimulate undesirable behaviour among employees and employers (Oksa et al., 2021) such as cyberloafing, (Lim, P.K. et al., 2021; Lim, V.K.G., 2002; Van Zoonen et al., 2017), cyberslacking (Alharthi et al., 2021), cybervetting

(Anatoliy et al., 2020; Berkelaar, Harrison, 2016), cyberbullying (Ozler, Polat, 2012). Which also results in a delay in normal organizational processes and a reduction in employee performance.

2.2. Cyberloafing and cyberslacking

Many often the term cyberslacking or cyberloafing has been used interchangeably. There are used to describe voluntary acts of employees using their companies' Internet access for non-work-related purposes during working hours (Lim, V.K.G., 2002). Generally, any time that employees waste on the Internet can be termed as cyberslacking or cyberloafing, problematic internet use, online loafing internet abuse, workplace internet deviance, and internet addiction disorder (Venkatesh et al., 2023). Cyberslacking can be defined as spending unproductive time on the Internet. Online shopping, surfing, engaging in social media, job searching, sending and receiving personal emails, and downloading non-work-related material are some examples of cyberloafing behaviors.

In this article, cyberloafing or cyberslacking is understood to be employees' use of ICT technologies, including devices (e.g. laptops, desktop computers and smartphones) and the Internet (provided by the organization) to access social media and other websites during work hours for personal or non-work reasons (Venkatesh et al., 2023). There is a nuanced difference between cyberloafing and cyberslacking but the common thread between these terms is that they all describe unproductive use of the Internet in the workplace.

Cyberloafing is associated with not only lost productivity but also other undesirable negative consequences (Koay et al., 2022). Vulnerability to security weaknesses, violation of privacy, employee Internet abuse, and Internet addiction are a few of the challenges facing businesses of all sizes as they venture into cyberspace. As access to the Internet has become more common for employees, so has their propensity to use the Internet for entertainment and other non-work purposes on the job. Organisations may suffer legal liabilities when employees engage in any illegal online activities (e.g., online gambling, illegal downloading, and hacking) using companies' Internet resources. Moreover, employees may accidentally download some unsecured files (e.g., viruses, spyware, or malware), increasing the risks of security breaches. Cyberloafing is usually presented as negative behavior leading to loss of productivity and income. However, engaging in short periods in non-work-related tasks can also have positive effects, including relief from boredom or fatigue, reducing job stress, stimulating creative thinking, enhancing job satisfaction, increasing well-being, recreation and recovery. Furthermore, several studies showed that cyberloafing is a good way to replenish personal resources (e.g., mental energy, self-esteem, and self-control) (Lim, P.K., et al., 2021; Ozler, Polat, 2012) and temporarily detach from work duties, which can potentially lead to better mental health (Koay et al., 2022).

In a social media age not only do employees abuse digital communication but also employers are now turning to use publicly accessible social media data to screen job applicants. This phenomenon is called cybervetting. Cybervetting can be described as the acquisition and use of online information to assess the suitability of a person or organization for a specific role. Information targets can be individuals, groups or organizations. Cybervetting uses information that is becoming more and more accessible and easily accessible by regular and popular uses of internet technologies, especially social media. While often considered in terms of new hires or staff selection, cybervetting can also include online sourcing and the use of information to evaluate a potential or current customer, employee, employer, romantic partner, roommate, tenant, customer, or other relationship partners (Berkelaar, Harrison, 2016).

It is not enough for employers to know what the good and bad sides of using social media are, also it is necessary to know what causes employees to engage in digital deviant behaviours.

3. Determinants of cyberloafing in organisations

Organizations that want to reduce cyberslacking should explore the causes of digital distraction among employees. It is important to understand what factors and circumstances cause them to waste time browsing social networks instead of working. According to the firm's Udemy online survey chatty coworkers (80%) and office noise (70%) were cited as the top distractors. (Fair, 2018). Millennials and Gen Z are the most likely age group to describe themselves as distracted at work. 74% of them report being distracted, and of those, 46% say it makes them feel unmotivated, and 41% say it stresses them out. The young generations have a smartphone problem because more than a third of millennials and Gen Z (36%) say they spend two hours or more checking their smartphones during the workday. That adds up to at least 10 hours every week when they're doing something outside their job responsibilities. This behavior isn't limited only to junior workers either; overall, just under two-thirds of survey respondents (62%) spend about an hour per day looking at their phones. Meanwhile, a third of Baby Boomers claim they never engage with their devices at work (Fair, 2018).

Based on the literature review and according to the different theoretical perspectives author identified dominant factors that contribute to cyberloafing behaviors in organizations. The factors are divided into three main categories (figure 3): organizational, situational and individual factors (Ozler, Polat, 2012).

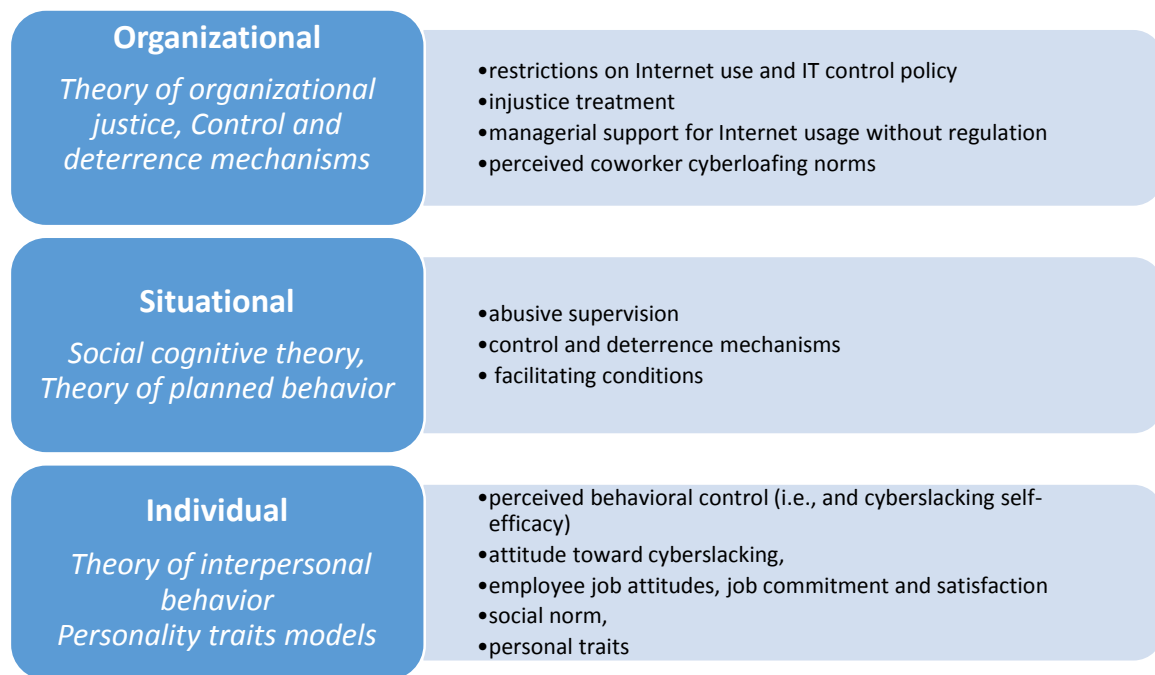


Figure 3. Dominant factors that contribute to cyberloafing behaviors in organizations.

Source: Own study based on (Koay et al., 2022; Lim, V.K.G., 2002; Ozler, Polat, 2012).

From an organisational perspective, employees may engage in cyberstalking when they feel they have been treated unfairly by the organization (Venkatesh et al., 2023). Lower organizational justice has a significant impact on cyberloafing. Lim (2002) tested the role of three justice-based variables in predicting cyberloafing and found that all three forms of justice (distributive, procedural and interactional) were negatively associated with cyberloafing (Lim, V.K.G., 2002). By limiting employees' use of work computers, whether through policy, technological deterrents, or both, employers reduce the benefits of using the Internet for non-work purposes while promoting employee self-regulation. Conversely, employees who would face stronger penalties for engaging in deviant behaviors were less likely to cyberloaf (Ozler, Polat, 2012). Managerial support for Internet usage at work without specifying how to use the internet is likely to increase forms of Internet use among employees for both business and personal reasons. This support may be misinterpreted by employees as an endorsement of all types of Internet use, including cyberloafing. Research showed that employees look to other coworkers as potential role models in the organization and that cyberloafing is learned through copying the behaviors that they see by individuals in their organizational environment (Ozler, Polat, 2012). Individuals, who observed cyberloafing behaviours in their colleagues, were more likely to engage in those behaviours themselves.

The second group of factors focuses on situational aspects. Facilitating conditions are important because people performing a certain activity may not be able to do so because their environment prevents them from performing the activity. Control and deterrence mechanisms such as monitoring, IT control policy, punishment, organizational policies and sanctions, can effectively mitigate cyberslacking (Alharthi et al., 2021; Andel et al., 2019). Moreover, Koay

et al (2022) examined the relationship between abusive supervision and cyberloafing from the lens provided by the conservation of resource theory (Koay et al., 2022). Their study supports the positive relationship between abusive supervision and cyberloafing, indicating that abused employees are more inclined to retaliate against their supervisors by engaging in cyberloafing behaviour. As engaging in overt, direct retaliatory behaviours may put their job at risk, employees resort to more covert means of retaliation by engaging in cyberloafing in response to their abusive supervisors (Koay et al., 2022).

The last group of determinants, which can affect the vulnerability in cyberslacking, is associated with the individual, human factors. Perception and attitudes towards cyberloafing, personal traits, habits and Internet addiction, demographic factors, intention to engage in cyberloafing social norms and personal ethical codes about internet use and cyberloafing are mentioned among the antecedents of cyberloafing behaviour (Ozler, Polat, 2012). People who perceived their Internet use as beneficial to their overall job performance were more likely to engage in cyberloafing than others (Vitak et al., 2011). In addition, individuals' personal normative beliefs (i.e., that cyberloafing is morally wrong) reduced intentions to engage in cyberloafing (Vitak et al., 2011). Job commitment and job satisfaction are also individual factors that might play a powerful role in shaping personal internet use at work. Acts of workplace deviance like cyberloafing could be an emotional response to frustrating job experiences. Employees who are emotionally attached to their work organization will find personal internet use to be less compatible with work routines than those who are not (Kelly, James, 2008). Individuals more committed to their work should be less likely to engage in personal Internet activities during work. There are a number of studies that explore how personality traits, can influence the way people use social media (Özgülven, Mucan, 2013). Personal traits like shyness, loneliness, isolation, self-control, self-esteem, and locus of control may affect the patterns of internet usage. Individuals that are low in self-control seem to have a greater history of cyber-loafing. Employees with a high external locus of control (i.e., they believe their fate is in other people's hands) and those with low self-esteem reported diminished self-control Internet use which in turn affected their level of Internet abuse at work (Vitak et al., 2011).

Some studies indicate that occupational status, perceived autonomy in the workplace; income level, education and gender were significant predictors of cyberloafing (Kelly, James, 2008). Well-educated individuals often engage in online information searches, while those who received less education often participate in online gaming. Personal Internet use at work is an activity that is more often performed by men who are well educated and work in high-status fields such as management, finance or business. Gender can affect the frequency and duration of cyberloafing, as well as the types and perceptions of cyberloafing. Some studies have suggested that men have cyberloafing more often and for longer than women (Lim, P.K. et al., 2021) Being younger and male significantly predicted both the amount and frequency of cyberloafing (Vitak et al., 2011). Research shows that because younger people are more

accepting of technology and more likely to use the Internet, they tend to build a habit that leads from the Internet (Venkatesh et al., 2023). However, some studies contradict these findings. Ugrin et al. (2008) found that demographic differences do not result in a greater likelihood of cyberloafing. Men and women abuse the internet equally.

4. Conclusion

Cyberloafing and cyberslacking are growing phenomenon in today's organisations. Reports on the cost of cyberloafing show organisations the importance of controlling internet misuse behaviour in the workplace. The negative effects of cyberloafing on organisations cannot be ignored. Therefore, the necessary measures should be taken to control and manage cyberloafing in organisations. The organisational and psychological research literature presents two main strategies to control employee abuse, such as cyberloafing-oriented self-regulatory strategies; and externally-oriented coercive strategies; where employees' behaviour is enforced by external circumstances in their environment (Ozler, Polat, 2012). To reduce the negative effects of cyberloafing as well as maintain the positive ones, organisations should:

- educate and inform employees,
- define policies for the use of social media,
- create monitoring systems,
- enforce through penalties.

Frequently, to be successful in controlling efforts, these methods should be used in combination. Especially, a formal social media policy is a necessity. Employers do have the right to prohibit any personal use of company computers and block employee access to social media sites, but such a prohibition is not likely to yield optimal results if employees won't be educated and informed. No methods can be effective unless they are adequately managed and translated into the improvement of awareness or perception of their values (Ozler, Polat, 2012). Awareness of the negative consequences of the behavior diminishes habit strength (Vitak et al., 2011). Electronic monitoring systems may be used to combat cyberloafing behaviors of employees in the workplace. It is found that monitoring mechanisms that either track or deny access to sites along with monitoring emails reduced cyberloafing. These are even more effective on individuals who have a higher propensity for cyberloafing (Ugrin et al., 2013). Sometimes control systems are ineffective in deterring cyberloafing unless being followed up by punitive consequences (Ozler, Polat, 2012) noted that for efficient cyberloafing management to take place, "monitoring activities need to be followed up with disciplinary actions". It is found that individuals that were aware of others receiving punishment for cyberloafing had a lower propensity to cyberloafing (Ugrin et al., 2013).

Although all of these mechanisms impact cyberloafing, they do not come without costs. For example, monitoring systems have both monetary costs and costs of reduced employee morale and job satisfaction (Ugrin et al., 2013). Strategies that place more power in the control of the employees while providing them with feedback about their Internet use may be more readily adopted and may help employees develop healthier (and more productive) habits related to their use of the Internet while at work (Vitak et al., 2011). Since deterrence mechanisms come with other consequences. It seems important to not only examine the importance of deterrence mechanisms alone but also how different deterrence mechanisms work relative to one another as well as to understand the relative impact of deterrence mechanisms (Ugrin et al., 2013).

Moreover, while some organizations entail strict control and monitoring strategies to curb cyberloafing, some employers believe that the brief detachment from work resulting from loafing can allow employees to relax momentarily, which would yield better results in the long term (Stokel-Walker, 2020).

The literature review highlights the frequency of the use of social media by employees and also presents the risks and challenges of using social media in the workplace. The study shows a clear need to understand the risks as well as the benefits of employee social media usage in the workplace. The literature revealed several possible approaches to the implementation of social media in the workplace. Furthermore, the research showed that when social media is used as a “communication tool” as opposed to simply being viewed as a workplace distraction, it can even be beneficial.

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