

Cyber loafing in the organisation-Gain or Drain

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Abstract

“Employees who are bored or stressed with their work are likely to use cyber loafing as ‘an office toy’ to escape from mundane work,” In such cases, a few minutes of online escapism gives employees a break, allowing them to ‘zone out’ and re-focus their attention on work demands.

Cyber loafing is usage of the Internet at you work place , during working hours, for activities that are not related to work. This includes surfing non-work related websites, using personal emails, online gaming activities , or opening social networking sites. Such activities are performed during periods of time when they are on job and have to perform job related tasks only. The individual is called a cyber loaf(er), while the act is cyber loafing.

The objectives of this research are: to determine the attitude towards cyber loafing; to identify the opportunities through cyber loafing; to underline developments through cyber loafing; and to specify the addiction of cyber loafing.

This emerging research suggests that cyber loafers are more likely to cyber loaf when they are treated unfairly, have certain characteristics like external locus of control or higher work status or acknowledged opportunities; confirmed development and addiction into their lives have positive attitudes toward cyber loafing, or there are norms supporting it. The authors offer directions for future research that include exploring the possibility that cyber loafing can lead to positive outcomes like increased job performance, reduced stress, and work-life balance

Keywords: *Cyber loafing, Internet, Work, Positive and Negative emotion*

INTRODUCTION

The Internet has made a significant impact on work and the personal lives of people working around the world. While access to the Internet has changed the ways work can be carried out, it has also increased the opportunities for people to cyber loaf, while under the guise of doing work. Of late, it is a burning issue owing to its concern with employees’ work culture, productivity, safety and security. ,Computer and internet based functioning has grown very much common in the organizations in recent years. Internet is helping business in many ways through reducing cost, shortening product

cycle times, and by marketing services and products without incurring much cost (Anandarajan, Simmers, & Igbaria, 2000). Since both these facilities computers and internet are playing tremendously important role not only in professional but also personal lives of workers, these things have also generated a considerable problem for management in organizations (Glassman, Prosch, & Shao, 2014) In recent years, abuse of company's Internet resources by employees has received a considerable amount of attention among organisational scholars. Internet access for non-work-related purposes during working hours (Lim 2002). That is known as cyber slacking or cyber loafing i.e. voluntary acts of employees using their companies' Scholars generally conceptualized cyber loafing as a form of workplace production deviance (e.g. Lim 2002, Lim and Teo 2005). This is because these cyber activities (browsing and emailing) which are conducted at the workplace during work time constitute an unproductive use of time and detract employees from completing their work demands. Cyber loafing also termed as cyber slacking (Vitak, Crouse, & LaRose, 2011)(Greengard & Samuel, 2000), personal internet use at work (König & Guardia, 2014).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cyber loafing is the act of employees using their organizations' Internet access for personal purposes during working hours (Lim and Teo, 2005). Also known as cyber slacking, it is employees' non-work related use of internet facility while working in an organization (Lim, 2002). Apart from computer, it also includes the use of cell phone during working hours for personal purposes (Johnson and Indvik, 2004; Mastrangelo et al., 2006; Bock and Ho, 2009). Prevalence and Dimensional Cyber loafing is common in organization (Taylor, 2007). Estimates for the amount of cyber loafing are usually given as a percentage of work time or in hours per week or day. The estimates vary widely depending on the source of the study and population sampled. Some estimates are as low as three hours per week (Greenfield & Davis, 2002), other estimates are as high as two and half hours per day (Mills, Hu, Beldona, & Clay, 2001). The higher estimates tend to be found by firms selling internet monitoring software (e.g., Surfwatch software, Naughton, Raymond, & Shulman, 1999). Regardless of the exact prevalence rate of cyber loafing, the implication is that cyber loafing is prevalent enough to be a major concern to organizations if it does in fact harm productivity (Malachowski, 2005)

Cyber loafing is the misuse of company provided internet for checking personal emails and surfing hours to websites other than work related purpose (Lim & Vivien K., The IT way of loafing on the job: cyber loafing, neutralizing and organizational justice, 2002). "Cyber loafing refers to the organization's internet usage by employees to access and send emails during working hours with a purpose unrelated to work" (Sawitria & Runing, 2012). Another definition is that cyber slacking is the usage of internet and mobile in working hours (Vitak, Crouse, & LaRose, 2011). Cyber slacking is "The use of web pages for personal purposes during working hours" (Andreassen, Torsheim, & Pallesen, 2014). In accordance to the definition cyber loafing was taken as production deviance (Lim & Teo, 2005), one type of workplace deviance while others were property deviance, political deviance and aggression (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). These days' human resources are considered as most important assets in every organization. But the emerging trend of internet usage addiction as social networks, quick access to news and financial sites is transferring this 'allowance of internet use' into internet abuse (Xu, Hock-Hai Teo, & Agarwal, 2010). Also some studies suggest that using company provided internet facility for personal use is sometimes beneficial with respect to reducing boredom, avoiding stress, increasing creativity and job satisfaction (Eastin, Glynn, & Griffiths, 2007; Oravec, 2002; Reinecke, 2009).

CORE VALUES OF JOB CHARACTERISTICS

Skill Variety Skill variety is the extent to which an employee requires a wide range of skills (Katsikea, Evangelia, Theodosiou, Perdikis, & Kehagias, 2011). This characteristic of job requires large variety of expertise to finish a task. In other words, an employee needs to perform various tasks in order to complete a specific job. Skill variety is also defined as the amount of skills needed by employee for the accomplishment of particular work assignment (McKnight, Phillips, & Hardgrave, 2009). Moreover job characteristics affect personal online communication (POC) at work. Employees get engage in cyber loafing when they find their job boring because of limited number of activities or skills. Skill variety and personal online communication at work by the employees is negatively related. Furthermore organizations are facing the costly and constant threat of counterproductive behaviour. One of the job characteristic, skill varieties has direct negative relation with counterproductive behaviour of employees. It is obvious that if a job requires more skills to be done, it keeps the employees away from deviant behaviours (Ansari, V., Mazraeh, & Arab-Khzaeli, 2013). : Skill variety has an impact on cyber loafing of employees.

TASK IDENTITY

Task identity is defined as the degree to which employees believe that the job is specific and well designed (McKnight, Phillips, & Hardgrave, 2009). It means that if the job is well defined in nature, the workers are more motivated towards their assignments and goals. According to another definition task identity is the extent to which workers finish an entire amount of work and recognize the outcomes of their efforts (Katsikea, Evangelia, Theodosiou, Perdikis, & Kehagias, 2011). Higher level of task identity enhances the motivation level of employees and their self-actualization to the work. It booms up the employees' feelings of work accomplishment. Also all core values of job characteristic do not show the same impact on studied the impact on job satisfaction and effective commitment. Among all job characteristic task identity along with task variety showed no impact on either effective commitment or job satisfaction (Ozturk, Hancer, & Im, 2014). Task identity enables an employee to feel his job meaningful which ultimately provides him satisfaction. More the task or job is meaningful perceived by the person, more he will be motivated to perform well. (Lau, Bin, & Huang", 1999). : Task identity has an impact on cyber loafing of employees.

TASK SIGNIFICANCE

Task significance determines the importance of a job. It is defined the as the extent to which a job has a significant impact on the lives and work of other co-workers. This characteristic is about the outcomes of the job that how significantly the job of a worker is affecting the work of another worker. This may have a positive or negative impact on the job of another employee. Task significance is very important characteristic of a job as it has a great impact on the work of other colleagues (Katsikea, Evangelia, Theodosiou, Perdikis, & Kehagias, 2011).Task significance is the extent to which the job or work of one can effect more or less to the lives of other person either in the same organization or in external environment. For example if medical researcher works in a lab to prepare drug to cure some disease, it would influence so many people's lives. In terms of employees of some organization task significance can be assumed as the degree to which the job of one employee contributes towards the achievement of the overall goal of the organization (Lunenbunrg, 2011).Job characteristics are the tool

to measure the performance of employees. Task significance is not considered as much important for salesperson's activities as those of other business and organizational employees have (Becherer, Morgan, & Richard, 1982). : Task significance has an impact on cyber loafing of employees.

AUTONOMY

Autonomy is the extent to which an employee has a liberty to schedule, prioritize and perform his job in his own way (Katsikea, Evangelia, Theodosiou, Perdakis, & Kehagias, 2011). An employee has freedom to make his choices of work priorities. Autonomy provides the employees an opportunity to schedule their work in accordance to their conveniences. Autonomy decreases the work exhaustion by permitting self-redirection of the endeavours of employees. Job autonomy is considered as a basic tool to develop the sense of responsibility in employees (Lunenburg, 2011). Furthermore a study was conducted to investigate the effect of job characteristic on personal online communication (POC) of employees at work. This study revealed that employees having high level of job autonomy are usually more engaged in personal online communication. Positive relationship between job autonomy and POC shows that this does not affect productivity in any negative way. And also POC to some extent helps employees to refresh their minds (Jian, 2013). : Job autonomy has an impact on cyber loafing of employees.

FEEDBACK

Feed back is the response from the supervisor regarding the quality of work done by the employees. Managers communicate to the employees that how efficiently they have performed their job (McKnight, Phillips, & Hardgrave, 2009). According to another definition feedback is a way of getting the clear and complete information and remarks about one's performance of the work or tasks that are assigned to him. It can be positive and negative as well. Feedback should occur on frequent basis rather on delayed time lag to avoid any negative circumstances in final performance evaluation procedure (Lunenburg, 2011). When an employee is satisfied with his job, he will be committed to the organization and his work. Impact of feedback on effective commitment and job satisfaction was studied. Studies revealed that there is significant affect of feedback on job satisfaction and effective commitment (Ozturk, Hancer, & Im, 2014). In addition, while determining various predictors of counterproductive work behaviour of employees. It was found that feedback is not a reason for deviant behaviour of employees at (Ansari, V., Mazraeh, & Arab-Khazaeli, 2013).So it is possible that employees engage in cyber loafing when they are not receiving any feedback and they are free to do whatever they want without considering the outcomes in the form of negative feedback. : Feedback has an impact on cyber loafing of employees.

ROLE STRESSORS

A role stressor can be defined as the pressure experienced by an individual as a result of organizational and job-specific factors in the form of demands and constraints that have been placed on them (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964).Previous studies show that stress faced by employees affect them not only mentally but also physically. A study showed that if employees experience stress at workplace it affects their physical as well as mental health which ultimately

influence employees' turnover intentions and job performance (Hang-yue, Foley, & Loi, 2005). Role stressors can be divided into three types that are: role overload, role conflict and role ambiguity.

ROLE AMBIGUITY

Role ambiguity occurs when an individual does not have clear information about the expectations of his or her role in the job or organization (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). Role ambiguity could be measured by investigating the amount of information provided to him in relevance with his or her job. It may occur either due to role of employee at organization or just because of surrounding or organizational culture around him (Bedeian & Armenakis, 1981). A person becomes doubtful when he does not know his legal limits at his workplace that affects his as well as organizational performance. there are two perspectives of role ambiguity; one related to the personal or role tasks and activities needed to accomplish goals while the other is considering with the other is concerning with feedback for his performance (Fisher & Gitelson, 1983). Insufficient knowledge for fulfilling the organizational rationales may be termed as role ambiguity (Luthans & Thomas, 1989). And this is due o poor flow of communication among supervisors and sub ordinates or employees' inadequate training and unclear role expectations. Furthermore role ambiguity has positive relationship with cyber loafing (Blanchard & Henle, 2008). : Role ambiguity has an impact on cyber loafing of employees.

WORK OVERLOAD

Work overload is being presented as imbalance in the requirement of task, and the time allowed and at the availability of resources to fulfill the task requirements (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). This problem of work overload is faced when the work role of an employee is followed by more work, shortage of time, sharp deadlines coupled with less resources required for the performance of duties, the tasks due and the work role related responsibilities (Glazer & Beehr, 2005). Studies show that role overload does not directly cause the employees to cyber loaf but it's the internet experience that moderates the relationship between role overload and cyberloafing (RuningSawitria, 2012).Furthermore in another study it was seen that role overload does not force employees to involve in cyber loafing whereas other kinds of role stressors (role ambiguity and role conflict) do (Blanchard & Henle, 2008). : Role overload has an impact on cyber loafing of employees.

ROLE CONFLICT

“Role conflict refers to the incompatibility in communicated expectations that impinge on perceived role performance.” (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). Like role overload, role conflict also influences employees in many ways. (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970) in their study demonstrated that role conflict and role ambiguity are two constructs negatively correlated with each other and job outcomes. These two concepts of role stressor are discussed together in various researchers and found to be significantly related with productivity, employee turnover frequency and absenteeism (Onyemah, 2008). Employees are more willing to cyber loaf when they feel that there exists role conflict. When the employees are not clear about their duties and tasks or when they do not aware of the procedure necessary to accomplish these tasks they cyber loaf to avoid this role stressor(Blanchard & Henle, 2008). Moreover a study conducted on all three types of role stressor and cyber loafing shows that role

conflict and cyber loafing has direct positive relationship among them (RuningSawitria, 2012). : Role conflict has an impact on cyber loafing of employees.

CYBERLOAFING CONSEQUENCES

Antecedents of cyber loafing have been frequently studied. However, research into the consequences of cyber loafing are much less common. The concept of task performance is a particular concern Cyber loafing can cost a company more than just lost employee time. Recreational internet usage at work can also eat up valuable bandwidth if many employees engage in resource-intensive activities, for example streaming basketball games in HD or running torrents which could affect network performance and degrade user experience for everyone else.since cyber loafing could potentially have an extremely negative impact on productivity. Despite the lack of research conducted on the influence of cyber loafing on task performance, there has been much written speculation. This has led to the development of four competing perspectives.

The first perspective is that cyber loafing results in lower task performance through lost work time. In this regard, time spent on cyber loafing is time that would have been spent on work. Here, any loss of work time is expected to translate into lost productivity. If this perspective is correct, one should expect a negative relationship between cyber loafing and task performance (Vitak & LaRose, 2011).

The second perspective is that certain types of cyber loafing behaviours are either harmful or more harmful to productivity than other cyber loafing behaviours. Lim and Chen (2009) believe that social behaviours are more harmful to productivity. This is because relationship building nature of these activities requires more energy, time and cognitive resources. Lim and Chen (2009) also argue that these demands make it harder for an employee to switch back to work-related tasks compared to non-social behaviours, e.g., web browsing. Blau et al. (2004) made a similar argument for interactive behaviours which include social behaviours and online games. If this perspective is true, we should consider interactive and social behaviours to have negative associations with task performance. Moreover, these behaviours should more strongly relate to lower task performance than behaviours like browsing the web (Askew, 2012).

The third perspective has more positive associations with cyber loafing. It suggests that cyber loafing can provide a respite from work and boost productivity when the employees return from work. The boost is assumed to be sustained enough to overcome any loss in productivity incurred during the cyber loafing session itself. The mechanism for this effect is one of recovery. Cognitive resources are drained during work-related tasks. Engaging in cyber loafing recovers these resources, allowing employees to become more productive. If this perspective is correct, there should be a positive relationship between cyber loafing and task performance. Furthermore, the amount of cyber loafing one does in short breaks should be associated with an increase in productivity (Weatherbee, 2012).

The fourth perspective is that cyber loafing only impacts task performance in certain cases. According to such a perspective, people have a certain amount of work to accomplish and they resort to cyber loafing when they have the time to do so. It does not mean that any one is equally productive; it suggests that each employee has ascertain standard of work they aspire to and they put enough work in to obtain that standard and engage in cyber loafing with some of the leftover time. If this perspective is correct, then there should be no relationship - or a small relationship - between cyber loafing and

task performance. Moreover, it is also the case that cyber loafing is only harmful if done in excess. Frequent long duration of cyber loafing should negatively predict task performance (Askew, 2012).

Exhaustion is another consequence of cyber loafing. Studies indicate that high cyber loafing exhausts people, leaving them with a lack of focus on their next job. Consequently, exhaustion impacts their work. On the other hand, some researches show that, when there is a high volume of work, recovery is needed to prevent exhaustion. Cyber loafing can have a positive effect on the well-being of an employee. Thus, cyber loafing in relation to exhaustion can serve as a micro break. Hence, low and controlled cyber loafing can help to create better morale as a recreational time. At the same time, high and uncontrolled cyber loafing can exhaust employees and yield to their inefficiency (Doorn, 2011).

CYBER LOAFING MANAGEMENT IN ORGANIZATIONS

Concerning organizational justice, organizations should pay more attention to motivational mechanisms in the workplace. An emphasis should be particularly made on organizational justice in distributive, interaction oriented and procedural sections. This is because perceived injustice by employees is an important factor of cyber loafing.

Likewise, organizations should plan on establishing a constructive and positive culture in their organization - a culture based on mutual trust and respect which expounds values. In an organization where the right culture of Internet usage is institutionalized, it would ultimately yield to such processes as self-management among employees and behaviours in line with values which would prevent any problems in this regard.

CONCLUSION

Organizations can measure traits (e.g., consciousness, internal locus of control, altruism) in their hiring of employees and selection of people for sensitive and critical positions, or those positions which need a strong relationship with clients. It is important to note that young forces that are incrementally entering organizations are fully familiar with the Internet. Thus, organizations should contemplate for a precise planning on effective management of such phenomenon to prevent productivity fall and organizational huge costs due to cyber loafing. With regard to jobs, the human resource management should act more sensitively and consider suitable quantity of personnel for each unit based on work volume. In other words, there should be proper job designs in order to minimize role conflict and to prevent cyber loafing. With regard to organization, as mentioned, companies should clearly proclaim their policies on staff's Internet usage so that employees are made aware of the very clear. Employees should be aware that using the Internet system in work hours and navigating websites for personal aims that have no relation to their work, as well as checking personal emails, are, inter alia, included in such policies. Lack of attempts in preventing cyber loafing may leave organizations with huge losses. Despite companies using control mechanisms and policies to combat cyber loafing, it is still being observed among employees. Likewise, employees should have an appropriate understanding of controlling initiatives and security mechanisms. Information on punishments should be clear and such information should be disseminated among employees. Managers should resort to disciplinary procedures and sanctions from the beginning. Overall, it is impossible to fully eliminate cyber loafing activities. With regard to current statistics, it is not surprising that companies have a serious fight in order to adopt Internet use laws. Organizations should find an effective way for proper management so

that their employees use available tools in the best manner. However, effective management of cyber loafing requires a set of techniques and utilizing one method alone is not effective.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Cyber loafing is a recent phenomenon and despite its rapid spread; it is there to an unexplored research terrain. Therefore, further researches are needed to evaluate different impacts of cyber loafing behaviour on employees' productivity and efficacy. More researches may be conducted in future.

The further study may certainly pave the way to assess the issue deeply, make policy decisions, and arrive upon the regulation as to what extent and how much cyber loading's allowed for its employees. This must be informed from the organizations so that organisations may operate smoothly with the rest of the digital affairs.

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