

Why does employees Cyberloafing?

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Abstract: The proposed study delves into the intricate relationship between workplace ostracism and cyberloafing within the context of the University of Central Punjab in Pakistan. It aims to explore how workplace ostracism, emotional exhaustion, and facilitating conditions intertwine to influence cyberloafing behaviors among employees. The research draws upon the Conservation of Resources Theory to understand how employees, facing ostracism at work, might resort to cyberloafing as a strategy to preserve and regain their depleted resources, such as self-esteem and social belongingness.

The study intends to fill the gap in existing literature by examining the correlations between workplace ostracism, emotional exhaustion, and cyberloafing. It hypothesizes that workplace ostracism positively relates to cyberloafing, mediated by emotional exhaustion. Additionally, it explores the moderating role of facilitating conditions—factors that either aid or impede cyberloafing behavior—in the relationship between emotional exhaustion, workplace ostracism, and cyberloafing.

Methodologically, the study will collect self-reported data from University of Central Punjab employees, employing scales to measure cyberloafing, workplace ostracism, emotional exhaustion, and facilitating conditions. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be used for data analysis, with validity checks and common method variance assessments incorporated.

Overall, the research endeavors to contribute significantly to the understanding of how workplace dynamics, particularly ostracism, impact employee behaviors like cyberloafing. By shedding light on these relationships, the study aims to provide insights that could aid organizations in mitigating negative workplace behaviors and fostering a more productive and conducive work environment.

Keywords: Workplace Ostracism, Cyberloafing, Emotional Exhaustion

Introduction

In our day, we cannot imagine a workplace without information communication technologies i.e. computers and the internet. Modern technologies have created an insurgency around the organization like a two-edged sword (Henle, Kohut, and Booth 2009). The importance of these technologies towards modern organizations is irrefutable. All these technologies are interconnected into operational processes of an organization which enhance employee efficiency, raise productivity of the organization, and advance ways of communication (Anandarajan et al., 2000). There is no doubt that these technologies have various advantages, but these also have some drawbacks which are unneglectable. (Baturay and Toker, 2015)

In this modern era, right of entry towards Internet has become communal for workforces in almost each & every organization, which is not only facilitating noteworthy developments in organization, but also bring into being chances of misuse. Employees of an organization use computers and Internet to do their job-related tasks and, in this way, they spend a lot of time while using computers with Internet. While spending a great amount of time on internet for job related tasks, employees also start using the technology for their personal use and this has been increased in topical years (Blanchard and Henle, 2008). Using internet for non-work-related tasks, in general, it is

to be called surfing the net which includes online shopping, gaming, viewing pornography, private emails, visiting entertainment sites, etc. (O'Neill, Hambley, & Bercovich, 2014; Vitak, Crouse, & LaRose, 2011; Lim, 2002). Generally, a term of cyberloafing or cyberslacking has been used in literature to describe behaviors of the employees who are involved in the activities which are not related to their work during working hours. Cyberloafing is demarcated as the employees' voluntary unofficial use of official email and Internet during working hours for their personal use (Askew et al., 2014). It is a form of workplace production abnormality or deviant behavior in which an employee deliberately wastes company's resources & time for non-job-related chores (Lim, 2002).

Another type of deviant behavior is workplace ostracism; it is a submissive form of workplace aggression. Ferris et al., (2008) highlighted that in the situation of workplace ostracism an employee senses that he or she is disregarded or omitted by others at workplace. Literature tells us, workers who are suffering from ostracism show more emotional exhaustion & depressed mood at workplace. And they are engrossed in negative work behaviors i.e. hiding or hoarding of knowledge and counterproductive behavior; which may lead to poor work performance and low job satisfaction (Zhao et al., 2013; 2016; 2017; Liu and Xia, 2016; Wu et al., 2012; Leung et al., 2011). While emotional exhaustion is an essential aspect of burnout concept which talks about depletion of an employee/ individual's emotional resources and his/her feelings (Maslach, 1993). In relation to theory of conservation of resources, an employee has restricted personal resources in form of time and energy, which are not restocked in a short time period. Employees frequently endeavor to uphold and defend these resources by numerous means (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002). When an employee is disregarded or omitted by others in the workplace setting, the personal resources of employees in form of help and support in official work from coworkers are reduced which gives birth to emotional exhaustion of the employee.

Problem Statement

Literature review suggests that significance of the relationship between workplace ostracism & cyberloafing is not to be tested widely yet. Only a single study has been conducted regarding this which is in the context of United States by Kian Yeik Koay in 2018. Literature suggests that it is an emerging phenomenon of digital age which requires extensive research. That's why; there is a need to check the correlation among workplace ostracism & cyberloafing in the context of Pakistan and also the part of facilitating conditions and emotional exhaustion in the relationship of workplace ostracism and cyberloafing. After reviewing the literature some questions also come into mind e.g. is there any correlation between cyberloafing, workplace ostracism and emotional exhaustion? Is emotional exhaustion mediating correlation among workplace ostracism & cyberloafing? Are helping/facilitating conditions moderate correlation among emotional exhaustion & cyberloafing and workplace ostracism & cyberloafing?

Significance of the study

Therefore to find the answers to the above-mentioned questions, there is a need to test relationship between cyberloafing and workplace ostracism in the context of Pakistan. Proposed scholarship will add to prevailing literature in numerous ways. First of all, available literature regarding cyberloafing will be prolonged by the empathy of a prospective antecedent i.e. workplace ostracism, strengthened with conservation of resources theory. Up till now, only one empirical analysis has been led to inspect the association among workplace ostracism and cyberloafing. In addition, this study will detect that emotional exhaustion has a role of mediation in the association of workplace ostracism and cyberloafing. Last but not least, this study will also detect moderating properties of facilitating conditions in relationship of ostracism & emotional exhaustion with cyberloafing. Keeping in view all the discussed above this study will highlight that workplace ostracism is a forecaster of cyberloafing, to what level workplace ostracism has influence on cyberloafing and how. The verdicts of this investigation will be especially useful for managers to cope with deviant behaviors i.e. workplace ostracism and cyberloafing.

Literature Review

In digital era organizations are using internet more and more to meet business needs and tackling worldwide problems at workplace. The use of internet has wired organizations and transmuted workplace into a global web (Baturay & Toker, 2015). Now internet usage has come to be unavoidable to do organizational operations because it heightens employee's efficiency, productivity and communication (Yan et al., 2015). For that reason, right to use to internet for employees has come to be a routine matter at workplace which offers to employees a different tactic to involve in work avoidance activities known as cyberloafing (Baturay and Toker, 2015).

Cyberloafing

Cyberloafing is comparatively a new topic or new phenomena in theory and practice, as a whole in scientific literature, that's why this is an emerging topic and a subject of emergent anxiety for contemporary organizations as well as for research (Kim and Jeong, 2015). In literature, for cyberloafing, diverse definitions have been used. Some scholars used Non-Work-Related Computing but that was a collective term for two things i.e. cyberloafing and junk computing. On the face value both terms look like same, referring to misuse of organizational computing network or the use of organizational information system resources for personal purpose not for performing organizational tasks but in junk computing employees can use offline computing for their personal use e.g. employees are using only computers or internal network of the organization, they are not using internet while the term of cyberloafing specifically are used for online computing i.e. employees are voluntary using company provided information system resources e.g. computers and Internet for non-job related tasks during working hours (Bock and Ho 2009). In literature, two other terms, Personal Web Use; and Cyberslacking also describe the same i.e. the use of Internet for private purposes. All these three terms bring our attention towards the voluntary use of organizational information system resources (computers and Internet) for private purposes and doing personal activities during working hours (Blanchard & Henle, 2008; Lim, 2002; Polzer-Debruyne, 2008). In general employees of an organization have a preference to do cyberloafing because they think that it is less risky, and others can't detect it easily as compared to other loafing deeds e.g. Personal phone calls, chitchat with coworkers, or taking long breaks for toilet, etc. (Page, 2015). Cyberloafing doings consist of private emails, private internet surfing of social networking websites, news and sports bulletin, entertainment websites, online shopping websites, blogs, etc. (Jia. et al., 2013). Other than these three, numerous terms have been castoff in literature to describe the same phenomenon which includes personal web usage at work, cyberbludging, problematic internet use, internet dependency, internet abuse, internet addiction, internet deviance, internet addiction disorder and on-line loafing but differences/distinctions between these terms do not exist (Kim & Byrne, 2011).

Workplace ostracism

Workplace ostracism is one of the subtle forms of deviant behavior and it is also an emerging metaphor in the literature which can be seen crossways organizations and hierarchical levels. It is a perception of an individual employee, or it can be said that a person notices that he/she is being unnoticed or omitted by other employees or by his colleagues in the organization or workplace setting. Silent treatment perceived from the coworkers and being left out from conversations or important information regarding work is one of the examples of workplace ostracism. Workplace Ostracism is experienced worldwide, some employees either ostracized by others and sometimes they are ostracized by themselves (K. D. Williams & Zadro, L. 2001; Ferris et al., 2008). Ostracism activates the social pain just like the physical pain, that's why some sufferers of ostracism may try to suck up themselves from those who are doing ostracism while some strike back aggressively (Eisenberger et al., 2003).

Theory of conservation of resources

In relation to theory of conservation of resources, an employee has restricted personal resources in form of time and energy, which are not restocked in a short time period. Employees frequently endeavor to uphold and defend these resources by numerous means (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002). When an employee is disregarded or omitted by others in the workplace setting, the personal resources of employees in footings of help and support in official work from coworkers are reduced which gives birth to emotional exhaustion of the employee. According to conservation of resources theory an employee or individual is always care for his/her resources, they attempt to preserve the current resources as well as procure new resources so that he/she can expand the puddle of resources (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002). There are four different types of resources which an individual wants to retain and acquire i.e. personal, physical, and conditional and energy resources. Self -esteem is related to personal resources, home, clothes and food are allied to physical recourses while work status and financial security is linked with conditional resources and energy resources refer to time and knowledge. Emotional exhaustion is foreseen to arise when an employee or an individual is in danger of being short or possible loss of his/ her acquired resources. An individual or an employee is presumed to be intrinsically motivated to accumulate that resources, he/she do his/her utmost towards preservation current resources and make sure to enhance his /her capabilities to produce new resources (Hobfoll, 2001).

Keeping in view the conservation resource theory, literature review tells us that workplace ostracism is an interpersonal stressor which becomes the grounds of resource reduction. According to many scholars, workplace ostracism has positive and negative relationships like positive relationship with psychological distress (Wu et al. 2012) and intention to leave (Zheng et al., 2016) while negative relationship with service performance (Leung et al. 2011) and a curvilinear relationship with knowledge hoarding (Zhao et al., 2017).

Four basic needs of the employees, who are suffering from workplace ostracism are at stake, i.e. association needs, personal control needs, needs to maintain self-esteem and existence needs are of. That's why employees may effort to safeguard their needs of being worn out and stab to reduce the effects of workplace ostracism by adopting several strategies (Williams, 2001, 2007; Zheng et al., 2016; Zhao et al., 2017). Keeping in view the previous studies, this study proposed that cyberloafing is used by the employees as an avoidance approach to safeguard their needs and resources which are being reduced by workplace ostracism.

In an organization when an employee is become a victim of work place ostracism, his/her significant presence in the work place is in danger which gives birth to frustration, then an employee try to do cyber loaf because in this way he/she can pretend that he/she is busy in his/her work which ultimately helps the employee to restore his/her resources i.e. self-esteem, private control and nous of significant belongingness. Therefore, a hypothesis is hypothesized: Workplace ostracism is positively related to cyberloafing (Hypothesis 01)

Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion is an important dimension of burnout which talks about depletion of an employee/ individual's emotional resources and his/her feelings (Maslach, 1993, pp. 20-21). According to the literature review emotional exhaustion has been studied previously with many workplace behaviors e.g. organizational citizenship behavior and emotional exhaustion (Shih et al., 2013), emotional exhaustion and turnover intention (Tourigny et al., 2013), job performance and emotional exhaustion (Maslach et al., 2001) and organizational commitment performance and emotional exhaustion (Cropanzano et al., 2003). But in this study the phenomenon of emotional exhaustion will be confirmed with workplace ostracism with the lens of conservation resource theory.

With reference to conservation resource theory emotional exhaustion arises when emotional resources are worn out or depleted which gives birth to workplace ostracism. Employees try to develop social relationship with their colleagues at workplace and want work support from them which is critical at workplace (Zhao and Xia, 2017). When employees are unable to develop healthy social relations with their coworkers then they feel emotionally disconnected and this is the loss of emotional resources of an employee (Fiset et al., 2017). Furthermore, employees also become a prey of workplace ostracism when they got negative emotional reactions from the coworkers and gain hurting and adverse experiences that subsequently bring to mind destructive emotional reactions i.e. stress and sorrow (Taylor, 1991). Therefore, a hypothesis is hypothesized: Workplace ostracism is positively related to emotional exhaustion. (Hypothesis 02)

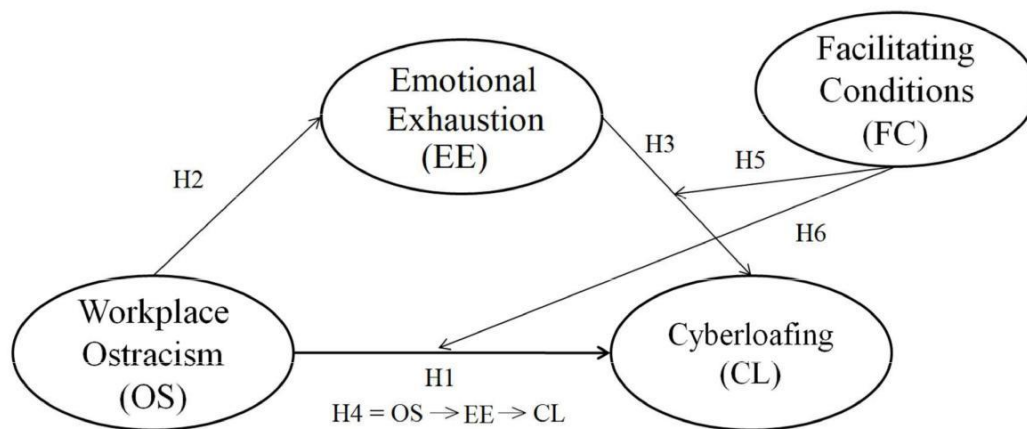
Consistent with conservation resource theory when resources of an individual/employee are used up or in danger thru potential loss, he/she may possibly feel emotional exhaustion and then he/she try to overcome that situation quickly. Literature review tells us that workplace ostracism is a form of personal stressor which reasons emotional exhaustion (Wu et al., 2012). The affected employees of ostracism adopt remedial strategies to overwhelm such stresses; sometimes in a critical situation an individual/employee may possibly commit crimes (Agnew, 2009). Henceforward, this scholarship postulates that an individual/employee does cyber loaf and he/she take this as a form of remedial strategy to overcome emotional exhaustion which awakened caused by workplace ostracism (Koay et al., 2017). Some scholars take cyberloafing as a counter-productive work behavior while according to some; cyberloafing is used by the individuals/employees to get rid of from work place stress (Ivarsson and Larsson, 2011) and some individuals/employees generally take a short break by doing cyberloafing to release the work place stress (Lim and Teo., 2005).According to literature review cyberloafing has a noteworthy positive correlation with job stress (Koay et al., 2017) and with emotional exhaustion (Aghaz and Sheikh, 2016). Thus, based on literature review, a hypothesis is hypothesized: Emotional Exhaustion is positively related to cyberloafing. (Hypothesis 03)

On the subject of conservation resource theory, in a workplace setting an employee/individual, when become a prey of ostracism he/she loses his/her resources, then he/she suffer from emotional exhaustion. Employees/individuals who are suffering from emotional exhaustion show negative attitudes concerning with because of their emotional exhaustion and keep them away emotionally and cognitively from their work (Maslach et al., 2001). Consequently, effected employees of ostracism are struggle more to preclude more reduction of their personal resources thru cyberloafing. By means of doing cyberloafing an employee/individual can redeem self-esteem and sense of social control. In cybernetic world, employees/individuals who are suffering from ostracism can indulge themselves in multiple cyberloafing activities (Baccus et al., 2004). Therefore, it can be said that employees/individuals who are suffering from workplace ostracism, use cyberloafing activities to eradicate negative emotions which come from emotional exhaustion. Thus, based on literature review, a hypothesis is hypothesized: Emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and cyberloafing. (Hypothesis 04)

Helping/facilitating conditions

Helping situations play significant part in defining a behavior, either favorite behavior can be performed efficaciously or not (Triandis, 1980). Helping conditions speak of personal environmental elements which help a specific behavior to be carried out with no trouble in an organization (Pee et al., 2008) while anti-helping conditions in an organization might comprise efficiency measurement, firm punishments, policies regarding use of internet, forward-thinking Internet observing system, minute workplace confidentiality and confidence awareness campaigns with respect to Internet usage. These anti-helping settings at workplace serve as a hurdle for employees to do cyberloafing while facilitating settings at workplace motivate employees and give an opportunity to them to cyber loaf without any limitations at workplace. Literature review tells us that there is a substantial positive correlation between cyberloafing and anti-helping conditions (Koay et al., 2017; Huma et al., 2017). Anti-helping conditions put a barrier in front of employees to do cyber loaf, but ostracized individuals/employees adopt substitutional approaches for resources preservation and try to defend their existing resources from being exhausted more. Ostracized individuals/employees do cyberloafing just to secure or redeem their personal resources. Though, when they find that their cyberloafing activities are being noticed by the other coworkers, they will not take part in cyberloafing activities while that can hide their cyberloafing activities and they can do that in a better way, they continue to do cyber loaf (Triandis, 1980; Askew et al., 2014). Thus, based on literature review, hypotheses are hypothesized: Helping/facilitating conditions moderate the relationship between emotional exhaustion and cyberloafing, such that the relationship is weaker when unfavorable helping/facilitating conditions are high. (Hypotheses 05) Helping/facilitating conditions moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and cyberloafing, such that the relationship is weaker when unfavorable helping/facilitating conditions are high. (Hypotheses 06)

Research Model



Methodology

Procedures

The study design is a correlational study design in which I will assess the relationships between dependent, independent, mediating and moderating variables and also their impact on each other. Data will be self-collected and self-reported within a specific timeline; in other words, it will be cross sectional study.

Data collection

Participants for this survey will be the permanent employees of University of Central Punjab, henceforth UCP, from both divisions i.e. academic and managerial/administrative side. UCP's online portal will be used to conduct the survey. An online questioner will be sent to the employees by using portal. Duplication of responses will be prevented by using unique employee ID to open the survey questioner which will also be codified systematically to avoid biasness. There will be no missing values in the dataset because all respondents will require answering of all the questions otherwise it will be considered as incomplete. To become aware of the inattention of the questioner

filler, a single attention check will be the built-in feature of the questionnaire e.g. the responding personal will be requested to select the option of strongly agrees, for a specific question, if he select that option that is fine otherwise, he will be excluded in the dataset. Furthermore straight-lining responses and outliers will also make the data usable (Keith et al., 2017).

Measures

Moody and Siponen (2013) developed 3 items to measure cyberloafing; Ferris et al. (2008) introduced 10 items for measuring workplace ostracism; Schaufeli et al. (1996) measured emotional exhaustion by developing 5 item scale; Betts et al. (2014) measured facilitating conditions by developing 6 item scale; I will use above mentioned scales to measure cyberloafing, workplace ostracism, emotional exhaustion and facilitating conditions. Gender, age and internet skills will be used as control variables (Blanchard & Henle, 2008; Betts et al., 2014; Anandarajan et al., 2000; Baturay & Token, 2015)

Data Analysis

To check the validity of measurement model, there is a need to check internal consistency of measurement model, convergent and discriminant validity of measurement model (Hair et al., 2017). After validation structural equation modeling (SEM) will be used to test the proposed hypotheses in the study. Moreover, model fit of measurement model will be checked by standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). Because the data will be self-collected and self-reported within a specific timeline then there may be chances of common method variance which may affect the validity and reliability of the study. That's why; to test common method variance Harman's one-factor test will be used (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986; Tehseen et al., 2017)

Conclusion

Proposed study will amplify prevailing literature by explaining a less explained topic i.e. workplace ostracism and cyberloafing with conservation of resources theory. Moreover, this study will also detect the mediation role of emotional exhaustion in workplace ostracism & cyberloafing and moderating properties of facilitating conditions in relationship of ostracism & emotional exhaustion with cyberloafing. This study will divulge that due to workplace ostracism an employee suffers from emotional exhaustion which leads him to do cyber loaf and he takes that as managing tactic. With the perspective of resource base view, employees as well as technology both are the VARIN resources, owing to which an organization can get competitive advantage in a dynamic environment or we can say that in our time. To prevent the cyberloafing and workplace ostracism in an organization is very important because both are multidimensional factors which lead an employee towards many other negative behaviors not only at workplace but also it become the part of a personality, due to which it may also be harmful to the overall society. That's why I can say that my proposed study not only beneficial for the workplace but also it has significance for the society.

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