

# Employees' Cyber Loafing And Performance In The Telecom Sector Of Pakistan: The Mediating Role Of Psychological Well-Being And The Moderating Role Of Internal Locus Of Control

Dr. Adeeba Khan<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Naveed (Corresponding author)<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Faryal Raheem<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Faisal Sheraz<sup>4</sup>, Shah Hussain Awan<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>(Department of Business Administration, University of Poonch)

<sup>2</sup>(Department of Management Sciences, Qurtuba University, Peshawar) (Email address: [Naveedtoru97@gmail.com](mailto:Naveedtoru97@gmail.com))

<sup>3</sup>(Department of Management Sciences, Abasyn University, Peshawar)

<sup>4</sup>(Department of Business Administration, Iqra National University, Peshawar)

<sup>5</sup>(Institute of Business Studies and Leadership, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan)

## Abstract

The internet is frequently used in the telecom sector to streamline internal processes and offer real-time services. Conversely, employees in the telecommunications sector are authorized to partake in the act of "cyberloafing," which entails utilizing the internet for personal purposes while on the job. It is becoming more crucial to anticipate and manage those factors because cyberloafing is frequently thought to be hindering industry performance. Can employees' poor psychological well-being have an indirect impact on their performance as a result of their heavy internet usage? On the other hand, those who have a strong internal locus of control (moderator) can maintain their psychological health and enhance worker performance. Our hypotheses are supported by the findings of regression analyses based on three-wave data gathered from 355 telecom workers in Pakistan. This study contributes to understanding of mediating moderating mechanism and provides practitioners with novel approaches for curbing employee cyberloafing in the telecom sector.

**Keywords:** Cyber loafing, Employee Performance, Psychological well-being, and Internal locus of control.

## Introduction

Globally, Covid-19, also referred to as the pandemic, has a significant impact on employee behaviour and organisational performance. Many developed and developing nations experience difficulties both during and after the pandemic. The telecom sector is one of many that faces difficulties. Due to the banking sector's rapid growth, job stress is now a necessary component of banking employees' working conditions (Yang

et al., 2019). Even during working hours, employees use the internet excessively to relieve stress from their jobs. Organizations are putting in place new workplace procedures and favoring remote work over office work. Utilizing the internet and cutting-edge technology, businesses and employers did everything they could to stay competitive in this environment and maintain productivity. Technology advances increase access to important information, speed up task completion, and enhance collaboration in a

number of ways, all of which increase employee productivity (e.g. telecommuting, enabling virtual teamwork). On the other hand, jobs that necessitate easy access to information technology give workers the chance to abuse that technology (Mercado, Giordano & Dilchert, 2017).

Similar results were found in Salary.com's (2014) Squandering Time at Work Survey, which found that 57 percent of employees waste at least an hour each day, accounting for 89 percent of all time wasted at work. While at work, most employees are mostly occupied with online activities and display little interest in their tasks. The productivity of the organisation is negatively impacted by these actions. In keeping with this context, Lim in 2002 investigated cyberloafing. The phenomenon commonly referred to as "IT way of idling on the job" pertains to the deliberate utilisation of an organization's internet access by its employees for non-work related activities during their designated work hours. Employees who use the internet too much at work are engaging in a type of counterproductive behaviour (Varghese & K. Barber, 2017), the notion that excessive web browsing will lower productivity is alluring.

There are two types of cyberloafing behaviour: minor, which involves or is connected to using personal email, and major, which involves or is connected to reading non-work-related websites. On the other hand, harmful cyberloafing activities include using insecure websites that could damage the organization's system (Ahmad & Omar, 2017). Researchers in the past have identified the negative effects of cyberloafing and emphasized the causes of it. Workers who perceive a diminished sense of autonomy in their job are at a higher risk of participating in interactive cyberloafing. The more employees engage in these activities, the worse their performance and productivity at work are (Saleh, Daqqa, Abdul Rahim & Sakallah, 2018). Thus, by incorporating internet developments into all

operational processes, employee performance is increased (Saghih & Nosrati, 2020). Sad to say, people are not exceptionally loyal to their employers, and they take advantage of this, which negatively affects their performance at work. The current study focuses on the negative effects of employee performance in Pakistan's telecom sector. Compared to other forms of workplace malingering, it is believed to be more detrimental to an organization's productivity and employee performance (Sheikh, Aghaz, and Mohammadi, 2019).

The increased availability of internet and mobile technology, coupled with reduced managerial supervision resulting from the pandemic, has facilitated the prevalence of cyberloafing among employees. Cyberloafing refers to the indulgence in personal internet-based activities during work hours (O'Neill et al., 2014). The most recent research highlights how excessive internet use, including cyberloafing and other activities unrelated to work, can lead to employee lowperformance (Syrek et al., 2018). There is evidence from studies that working professionals are addicted to technology. The use of the internet excessively also affects how productive employees are at work, and it's also linked to depressed moods and poorer employee performance (Shrivastava, Sharma, & Marimuthu, 2018). It makes sense that these features and appeals in the real world have fueled the internet's expansion over other forms of communication. Although threats of their misuse are rising along with developments and these applications' growing popularity (Niaei, Peidaei and Nasiripour 2014). According to studies, employees can spend a significant amount of time engaging in personal activities without ever leaving their desks, negating the need for extended absences from the office. Employees are now able to simulate productivity in the tangible realm, while simultaneously navigating the digital realm and accessing websites for

personal comfort and convenience (Wagner, Barnes, Lim and Ferris, 2012).

Moreover, previous studies have shown that using the internet at work has negative effects on one's wellbeing (Barry et al., 2017). For instance, Becker et al. (2013) demonstrated that excessive internet use is linked to lower emotional well-being, which is associated by an increase in depressive symptoms and social anxiety, both of which will lower employee performance. According to extensive research, people who are not in good psychological health and who experience negative emotions frequently use the internet at work (Lennard et al., 2019). Classical theories posit a connection between emotions and behaviours, as evidenced by the works of Beck (1976) and Ellis (1962), who identified a reciprocal relationship between cognitions, emotions, and behaviours. Although limited research has explored Internet usage through a cognitive-behavioral lens, extensive investigation into the impact of social networking on psychological well-being has revealed consistent correlations between extended use of social networking sites (SNSs) and decreased psychological well-being (Metin-Orta & elik-rücü, 2019). Likewise, devoting additional time to social media during work hours has an adverse effect on one's psychological welfare (Cheng & Nhan, 2021).

Employees are not machines that always perform healthy activities on the job while maintaining their psychological well-being. If they are not in good health, their performance will suffer (Koay, 2018). It makes sense to assume that employees who experience negative emotions or a lack of wellbeing as a result of web browsing are less productive and perform worse (Saleh, 2018). The goal of this paper is to investigate the rarely covered relationship between employee performance and poor psychological well-being that exists between cyberloafing and employee behaviour. Employees strive to maintain their

psychological well-being, which is correlated with each person's unique personality and level of self-confidence, at work.

On the other hand, people's beliefs about their capacity or lack thereof to influence daily events and overcome obstacles can have a big impact on a variety of aspects of their well-being. When someone feels they have an internal or external source of control over their lives, this is referred to as their locus of control (Blagojevic et al., 2012). Improved emotional adjustment and greater resilience to psychological dysfunction have been linked to internal locus of control (Llamas & Consoli, 2017). Prior research has found that individuals sustain their wellbeing and become more psychologically resilient when they feel like they have more control over their abilities (Llamas & Consoli, 2018). Individuals' locus of control manages their well-being, boosts their confidence, and perceives more support from others to complete tasks (Strong & Gore, 2019). People who are optimistic about their ability to deal with negative stimuli are less likely to develop psychological problems (Lefcourt, 2014). The term "positive attitudes" is a commonly used phrase that pertains to the psychological concept of locus of control. This concept reflects individuals' perceptions of the causal connection among their own conduct and its consequences. Those with strong self-control tend to minimise negative psychological well-being (Cobb-Clark et al., 2016). The current study aimed to shed light on important factors related to individuals' own personalities that reduce the negative relationship between psychological well-being and employee performance, which has been rarely discussed in previous studies, particularly in Pakistan's telecom sector.

## **Literature Review and theory**

### **Cyberloafing and employee's performance**

Although internet technology ought to increase organisational productivity, this is not the case in practice. Internet technologies have many advantages, but they've also opened up new opportunities for unusual types of professional deviance. The utilisation of the Internet for non-work related activities such as sending emails, engaging in social media trolling, and perusing sports, news, entertainment, and video websites during designated work hours has emerged as a novel enticement for employees (Koay & Soh, 2018). Cyberloafing is the term used to describe employees using their personal computers at work (Moody & Siponen 2013). Although the implementation of these organisational strategies may result in behaviours that managers perceive as deviant, the utilisation of resources such as the Internet and other technological advancements has revolutionised businesses and provided managers with novel prospects to employ these organisational methods (Jandaghi, Alvani, Matin, & Kozekanan, 2015). Cyberloafing is a form of deviant behaviour that occurs when employees utilise their company's internet for non-work-related purposes during working hours. This behaviour has been identified as an example of deviant behaviour by Lim and Chen (2012).

The associated risks and costs of cyberloafing, as well as the laws that have been established to prevent it, have also been studied by Jandaghi et al. (2015). Nevertheless, it is common for individuals to utilise it excessively even during periods of physical rest, resulting in a detrimental effect on their work performance. Numerous academic investigations have demonstrated that utilising the internet for cognitive objectives can enhance the job performance of employees. Cyberloafing is commonly perceived by scholars as a form of production deviance in the workplace, which can be classified as abusive and negative conduct. This is particularly true when workers utilise company resources to engage in

personal activities during work hours, thereby causing a diversion from their assigned tasks and a subsequent decrease in their overall performance. (Lim, 2002). (Corngnet, Gonzalez, & Mateo, 2015). While cyberloafing is essential for productive, healthy communication, and innovation, excessive, unethical internet use has been shown to have a negative impact on work results (Syed et al., 2020). According to Baturay & Toker (2015), employees are increasingly engaging in cyberloafing, which lowers their productivity at work. Cyberloafing by employees will have a negative effect on their productivity as a general business issue. However, the organisation frequently lacks specific mechanisms or tactics to control employees' cyberloafing behaviours, which ultimately harms their performance (Ismail, Saim, & Isa, 2021). In conclusion, academics continue to disagree about the impact of cyberloafing on specific work performance. Based on the aforementioned, the current study put forth the following hypotheses:

H1: In Pakistan's telecom industry, employee performance is negatively related with cyberloafing.

### **Psychological well-being (PWB) as a mediator**

The concept of wellbeing is complex and diverse, with objective metrics commonly denoting "standard of living," and subjective metrics encompassing psychological, social, and spiritual aspects, relying on cognitive and affective evaluations of an individual's life, often employed to differentiate wellbeing evaluations (Schulte et al., 2015). They include a variety of psychological components and are frequently referred to as indicators of psychological well-being (such as happiness). The multidimensional construct of Psychological Well-Being (PWB) is a comprehensive framework that encompasses various dimensions, including physical and mental health. It incorporates additional

components, such as perceived stress, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of an individual's overall well-being. (Rector, Wiese & Friedman 2019). Psychology has long placed a lot of emphasis on PWB research. According to Cappellen, Rice, Catalino, & Fredrickson (2018), employees with poor psychological health are more likely to abuse or overuse the internet while at work. It is therefore important to comprehend how people feel about stress at work. The conservation of resources theory states that during Covid-19, employees exhibit intolerance behaviour at work, are generally unwell and engage in counterproductive work behaviours, withdraw from their tasks by using the internet a lot and engaging in cyber-loafing (Reizer et al., 2022), which causes psychological distress and negatively affects their performance. Studies have revealed that self-control is the basis of the ego depletion theory.

Research suggests that both stressful situations and social interactions at work may deplete resources, resulting in feelings of exhaustion and impeding subsequent attempts at regulation. According to Muraven, Tice, and Baumeister's (1998) research, exhaustion is considered a dependable indicator of ego depletion, as asserted by the EDT. The phenomenon of resource depletion occurs when individuals engage in activities that require the consumption of regulatory resources, particularly during periods of recuperation. An example of such an activity is social cyberloafing at the workplace. This behaviour has been found to have a negative impact on the psychological well-being of individuals (Troughakos et al., 2014). Previous research has demonstrated that if an employee's psychological health is inadequate, their performance on the job will suffer. Psychological well-being is a broad concept that includes emotional stability, job fulfilment, and overall happiness (Fotiadis et al., 2019). The emotional stability and psychological health of employees

are impacted by excessive internet use at work, which has a negative impact on how well they perform at work (Obrenovic, Jianguo, Khudaykulov, & Khan, 2020).

High levels of psychological stress at work increase the likelihood of technology misuse, which may have an impact on a person's psychological health and ability to perform their job (Sanchez-Moreno et al., 2015). Low levels of psychological well-being limit people's ability to fulfil their potential and reach their goals, which lowers employee performance. Low levels of PWB are linked to low levels of employee engagement at work, which decreases the likelihood of high performance and productivity, according to research studies (Tesi, Aiello, Giannetti, 2019). These studies highlight a fundamental discrepancy in the body of knowledge regarding the effects of cyberloafing on individual employee performance. Additionally, the majority of management studies have concentrated on both good and bad workplace outcomes for employees. The negative effects of poor employee performance and low psychological well-being due to excessive internet use are highlighted by recent research studies. Low psychological well-being is therefore the focus of this study, along with its mediating role, which is proposed as;

**H2: Low psychological well-being mediates in the relationship between cyberloafing and employees' job performance.**

### **Locus of Control as a Moderator**

The psychological construct of locus of control, as defined by Rotter in 1966, pertains to a broad disposition, conviction, or anticipation concerning the underlying causal connection between one's own actions and their outcomes. Rotter's theory posits that individuals with an internal locus of control are inclined to attribute a

significant portion of life's events to their own actions. Conversely, individuals with an external source of control are more prone to attributing life's events to external factors, like luck, chance, fate, or other extrinsic variables. Empirical research has indicated that the locus of control has a significant impact on worker expectations for future advancement, thereby affecting their participation in training programmes (Caliendo et al., 2022). The locus of control has garnered significant attention due to its demonstrated impact on various human capital investment choices. For instance, research has shown that it affects decisions related to health (Cobb-Clark, Kassenboehmer, & Schurer, 2014), schooling (Jaik & Wolter, 2016), job search (Caliendo, Cobb-Clark & Uhlendorff, 2015; McGee, 2015), and internal migration (Caliendo et al). Previous research has indicated that individuals who possess an internal locus of control exhibit a greater propensity to express a personal inclination towards acquiring novel competencies and engaging in job-related professional events. There is a prevailing belief that individuals possessing an internal locus of control are more likely to achieve success compared to those lacking such a trait. Individuals possessing an internal locus of control tend to attribute the outcome of an event to their own actions or behaviours (Asante & Affum, 2019).

The aforementioned behaviours exhibit a favourable influence on the welfare of personnel in the workplace. Individuals with an internal locus of control may have a tendency to perceive their surroundings in a positive light and exhibit a preference for engaging in challenging tasks, which may be linked to an elevated level of employee well-being. (Wang et al., 2010). Beyond that studies have acknowledged how crucial it is for workers to have faith in their capacity to look for greater well-being and increase the likelihood of greater performance. According to Deci and Ryan (1985), people with

an internal locus of control have a strong tendency to believe in their own abilities. These self-assured workers will maintain their level of wellbeing and have a greater chance of achieving high performance. Accordingly, according to Satici et al. (2020), well-being refers to overall life satisfaction, and it also lowers a variety of unpleasant workplace experiences that an employee may encounter (Zheng et al., 2020). Since it appears that stress brought on by improper internet use while at work has a negative impact on the calibre of work and level of performance. Therefore, it is important to consider the level of wellbeing that employees who use the internet excessively report. Early researchers hypothesized that internal locus of control is one of the primary sources of motivation for workers to raise the likelihood of potential workplace outcomes like employee performance.

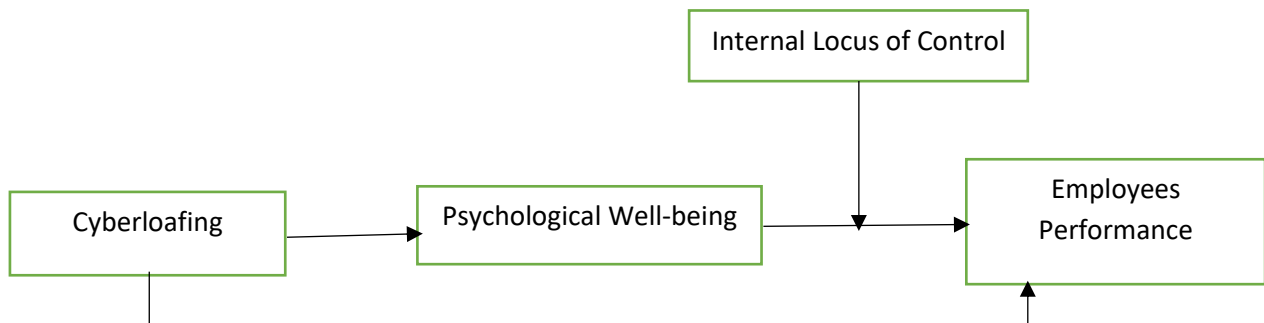
Contrarily, a person's overall well-being is negatively impacted by the lack of social resources, such as inadequate support from friends and family, as this may make them more prone to illness and psychological distress (Jeong, Shin, Kim, Yang, & Park, 2016). Such results may be brought on by employees using the internet excessively at work or by their poor psychological wellbeing. Having a consistent level of locus of control may further help to explain the relationship between psychological well-being and employees' performance because social support is crucial for fostering resiliency (Okpych, Park, Feng, Torres-Garca, & Courtney, 2018). The concept of internal locus of control pertains to an individual's conviction that they possess the ability to exert influence over the occurrences in their life through their own exertion or aptitude. According to Llamas and Consoli (2018), possessing an internal locus of control is linked to improved emotional adaptation and heightened resilience against psychological maladjustment. Furthermore, an

individual's perceptions regarding their ability to handle obstacles and regulate daily occurrences can significantly influence various facets of their overall welfare. Furthermore, the locus of control is also associated with enhanced psychological well-being. According to Solomon and Mikulincer (1990), individuals who adopt an internal locus of control are less likely to experience severe psychiatric disorders, thus enhancing their resistance to psychological dysfunction. Individuals exhibiting an internal locus of control tend to perceive life alterations as prospects rather than hazards, potentially leading to a reduction in psychological distress (Llamas et al., 2017).

As a result, despite certain research suggesting that possessing an internal locus of control could potentially function as a protective factor in the association between psychological factors and work-related stress. According to Reknes et al. (2019), individuals with an internal locus of control orientation are more prone to experiencing psychological strain when exposed to negative behaviours. The internal locus of control acts as a catalyst in this association. The

internal locus of control can potentially moderate the occurrence of inaccurate perceptions and promote positive emotions, thereby sustaining the work performance levels of employees. Our assertion is that the locus of control will significantly impact the job seekers' approach to seeking employment opportunities. This phenomenon can be attributed to the notion that job candidates who perceive themselves as having agency tend to demonstrate heightened vigilance, self-assurance, and tenacity in their endeavour to secure employment. This study contributes to the existing literature by providing a theoretical framework and empirical evidence that supports the differential impact of locus of control, which has been previously explored in other studies. Consequently, it was anticipated that the present investigation would formulate a hypothesis. H3: An internal locus of control that is higher reduces the negative direction between psychological well-being and employees' performance because internal locus of control moderates and weakens the negativity between PWB and employee performance.

### Theoretical Framework



### Methods and data collection procedures

A questionnaire was used to collect data from Pakistan's telecom sector and the state of Azad Jammu. To collect data, the research team used a

convenient sampling method to contact a large number of telecom sector employees in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and throughout the state of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK). From May to

August 2022, the study's sample size was 355 employees. Data on cyber-loafing and demographics were collected at Time 1. (e.g., May 15, 2022). Phase 2 gathered data on employee performance, while Phase 3 gathered data on psychological well-being and internal locus of control. It is worth noting that participant attrition was evident over time: only 410 responses were received in total, with a small number being incomplete. We discarded all of the incomplete questionnaires, leaving 355 for the actual sample of the study, which was used for data analysis.

### Measures

The respondents also offered opinions on the items' wording and the questionnaire's overall structure. Afterward, minor adjustments were made as necessary.

**Cyberloafing.** Cyber loafing in which the (22 items) were included by Lim (2002). Cronbach alpha value for the 22-items of Cyber loafing was .922.

**Psychological well-being .** The questionnaire of mediating variable on Psychological well-being (42 items) was adopted by Carol D. Ryff's, 1989, with Coefficient alpha value .939

**Internal Locus of Control.** The questionnaire of moderating variable Locus of Control (10 items), with coefficient alpha value .829 adopted by J.B. Rotter (1966).

**Employee Performance.** Employee performance which is dependent variable (5 items) the questionnaire was adopted by Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, (2018) with coefficient alpha value .773.

### Data Analysis techniques

**Reliability analysis:** The preceding table T1 demonstrates the research variables' reliability , demonstrating that all relevant items consistently meet the cutoff values and are used in further processing.

Table1: Reliability Analysis, Cronbach's Alpha

Sr#	Variable	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Cyberloafing	22	.90
2	Psychological Well-being	42	.91
3	Internal Locus of Control	10	.86
4	Employee Performance	05	.76

### Measurement Model

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) technique is employed to examine the measurement model. Cyberloafing, psychological well-being, internal locus of control, and employee performance are the four latent variables that make up the model. The

adequacy of the model fit was assessed through the utilisation of various fit indices, including but not limited to the (RMSEA), (TLI), (CFI), chi-square model, and (IFI). Table 2 presents the outcomes of the measurement model, which demonstrate favourable results with respect to the following indices: (IFI) = 0.926, (TLI) = 0.906, (CFI) = 0.88, and (RMSEA) = 0.032. The four-



factor model's CFA results were consistent. The variable factor loadings values show that they were perfectly loaded. Strauss et al., (2000) established 0.05 as the ideal criterion for testing

RMSEA, with a value less than 0.05 considered the best fit and the value of RAMSEA as 0.032 is accurate

Table 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Model	Factor	X2	df	RMSEA	IFI	TLI	CFI
	Four Factors	422.829	341	.032	.926	.906	.887

### Correlation Analysis

The objective of the present study is to conduct a correlation analysis to investigate the association between cyberloafing and employee performance. Additionally, the study aims to explore the mediating effect of psychological well-being (PWB) and the moderating effect of internal locus of control and perceived organisational support. The sample mean for the phenomenon of Cyberloafing is 3.90, accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.37. EP has a mean value of 3.89 and a standard deviation of 0.21. PWB's mean and standard deviation are 3.84 and 0.17, respectively. The mean of

ILOC was 4.00, with a standard deviation of 0.16. The values in correlation table T3 shows a positive and negative correlation between them. The objective of this research is to conduct a correlation analysis to investigate the association between cyberloafing and employee performance. Additionally, the study aims to explore the mediating impact of psychological well-being (PWB) and the moderating effect of internal locus of control and perceived organisational support. The statistical analysis indicates that the average Cyberloafing score is 3.90, with a corresponding standard deviation of 0.37.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis (r)

Sr. No	Variables	Means	SD	1	2	3	4
1	Cyberloafing	3.90	0.37	1			
2	PWB	3.84	0.17	-.455**	1		
3	ILC	4.00	0.16	-.232*	.652**	1	
4	EP	3.89	0.21	-.365*	.564**	.422*	1

p\* < .01 & p\*\* < .05, CL = Cyberloafing, PWB = Psychological well-being, ILC = Internal Locus of Control, EP = Employee performance.

### Regression Analysis

The analysis of correlation indicates the existence of an association between variables, but it does not establish the causation of the relationship. The study employed correlation analysis to validate the presence of a connection between the

variables. Nonetheless, this level of information is inadequate for the research objectives, thus necessitating the utilisation of regression analysis. Regression analysis is a statistical method used to determine the degree of association between two variables. This validates the interdependence of variables. Hayes &

Preacher (2013) used the regression analysis method for moderating and mediating variables. The impact of psychological well-being as a moderator was investigated using mediation analysis. Model 1 of Hayes & Preacher (2014) is used to test the moderating effect of ILC.

Table 4: Mediation Analysis

Sr#	Variables	$\beta$	SE	P-value
1	CL $\longrightarrow$ EP	-.455	.070	.000
2	CL $\longrightarrow$ PWB	-.547	.075	.003
3	CL $\longrightarrow$ PWB $\longrightarrow$ EP	-.588	.083	.008

**Note:** Bootstrap sample size 5000. LL = lower limit; CI = confidence interval; UL = upper limit; CL= cyberloafing, PWB= Psychological well-being, ILC=internal locus of control, EP=employee performance

**Interpretation:** The table above depicts the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Beta and P-values revealed apposite significance between them, as well as a PWB between cyberloafing and employee

performance. Hypotheses 1 and 2 are thus accepted.

### Moderation Analysis

Table 5: Moderation Analysis

Sr#	Variables	$\beta$	SE	P-value
1	PWB $\longrightarrow$ EP	0.547	.075	.003
2	ILC $\longrightarrow$ EP	0.432	.066	.062
3	Int_Term $\longrightarrow$ ILOC	0.331	.083	.008

Based on unstandardized regression analysis, the above-mentioned table revealed that ILC acts as a moderator between psychological well-being and employee performance ( $\beta = .333$ ,  $P = .008$ ). As a result, H3 is accepted.

### Discussion on Findings

The objective of this research was to investigate the potential influence of cyberloafing on employees' job performance. The study employed path analysis to investigate the mediating role of mental health in the relationship between cyberloafing and suboptimal employee performance in Pakistan, with a focus on their

negative association. The findings suggested that employee performance levels may be lowered as a result of cyberloafing. Our findings suggested that workers' performance at their place of employment was declining, which was in line with findings from earlier studies (Yang et al., 2019; Mercado, Giordano, & Dilchert, 2017). Cyberloafing refers to the habitual behaviour of individuals spending a significant amount of time on the internet, participating in activities that are not work-related. Consequently, the productivity of workers is negatively impacted by excessive internet usage. The lack of interpersonal interaction and bonding among employees during leisure hours may lead to reduced engagement in the workplace as a consequence of cyberloafing. Rather than engaging in productive activities, individuals allocate their time towards viewing videos on YouTube, perusing content on Facebook, or participating in internet-based gaming. (Yeik Koay & Soh, 2018). All of these activities undermine an employee's ability to perform well and their desire to do so. Does cyberloafing affect employees' performance? was the current research question, and the majority of earlier findings were in line with it.

Furthermore, employees who abuse internet usage don't just lower the likelihood of subpar work. Poor performance as a result of unfavourable workplace behaviour must be connected by a few interrelated factors. Additionally, numerous studies have shown a connection between excessive internet use and psychological wellbeing (e.g. Barry et al., 2017; Becker et al., 2013; Kross et al., 2013). People who lack self-control and spend more time online and on their phones for purposes unrelated to work are the main cause of subpar performance (Wu, Mei, Liu, & Ugrin, 2020). Prior studies have identified indications of addiction to technology among individuals employed in professional settings. The phenomenon of excessive internet use has been found to have a significant impact

on work productivity, as well as being linked to negative mood states and suboptimal employee performance in the workplace (Shrivastava, Sharma, & Marimuthu, 2018). This finding is in line with current research, which suggests that low psychological well-being serves as a key mediating factor in the relationship between cyberloafing and poor employee performance.

Moreover, despite the potential effectiveness of cyberloafing as a means of employee recovery, it carries the risk of causing considerable harm to the organisation. It is imperative for employers to consider strategies for discerning between valid and invalid forms of cyberloafing. If cyberloafing is considered a beneficial form of break, it can be effectively regulated through the implementation of organisational protocols and penalties, similar to other types of work breaks. The efficacy of laws, rules, and regulations in curbing such behaviours may be limited. It may be dependent on the individuals involved in such activities. If he or she can manage negative emotions through personality traits, he or she will be able to maintain their low workplace wellbeing. Similarly, current empirical findings suggest that people with a high internal locus of control may be able to manage their psychological well-being. These findings were consistent with previous findings (Llamas & Consoli, 2018; Lefcourt, 2014). Individuals who possess robust self-regulation abilities tend to mitigate adverse psychological states. This constructive mindset is often associated with the concept of locus of control, a psychological construct that pertains to individuals' perceptions of the causal link between their actions and their outcomes (Cobb-Clark et al., 2016). The presence of an internal locus of control is associated with the maintenance of individuals' well-being, even in instances where they engage in non-productive activities. Additionally, it serves as a buffer for the positive relationship between psychological well-being and employees' performance, which

may have been negatively impacted by cyberloafing.

### **Theoretical Implications of Study**

First, by identifying employee cyberloafing in Pakistan's telecom sector, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on cyberloafing and offers a preliminary empirical examination of the root causes of the practice in the sector. We know relatively little about those factors that not only considered the reason for cyberloafing but also identified some factors that became the source of cause and effect of employees' cyberloafing behaviour, Mercado et al., (2017). Although previous studies have investigated several individual and situational factors that contribute to cyberloafing, such as personality traits, self-regulation, stressors, and organisational policies, this gap in knowledge remains substantial. As per the COR theory, a rise in cyberloafing leads to the depletion of resources among employees, ultimately causing a decline in their performance (e.g., declining psychological capital, rising job stress; Agarwal & Avey, 2020; Lim et al., 2021).

In order to further this line of inquiry, we look at the paradoxical relationships between employees' cyberloafing behaviour and other problematic behaviours that have been identified as significant negative behaviours in the telecom industry. These results support Shrivastava, Sharma, and Marimuthu's (2018) finding that employees' resource states may be negatively impacted by their psychological well-being, which could lead to poor performance. The study also advances our understanding of the conditions under which employees' strong personality traits and self-assurance increase psychological well-being and influence the performance of succeeding employees by validating the moderating role of internal locus of control. According to academic research, people who work in the telecom industry have higher internal loci of control (ILOC), which is more consistent

with expecting and achieving desired results (Cobb-Clark et al., 2016).

### **Practical Implications**

Our findings have a number of ramifications for telecom industry management procedures. First, leaders should be aware that their actions may have unintended consequences for their team members, giving them the tools to strategically avoid any negative consequences that may result from delegation, which may increase cyberloafing. The telecommunications industry workforce may encounter comparatively more arduous and stressful work circumstances than their counterparts in other industries due to the unpredictable nature of service scenarios, which may involve excessively demanding and unreasonable service requests. In situations where staff members are faced with excessively challenging circumstances, it is imperative for leaders to provide them with precise directives in order to alleviate any potential role ambiguity.

If service staff believe their leaders have abandoned their responsibilities and expect them to handle issues on their own, they are more likely to become confused and act with withdrawal. Second, given that free and excessive internet use negatively affects psychological well-being, which in turn negatively affects cyberloafing, we advise the telecom industry to improve employee PWB and reduce ambiguity in order to manage cyberloafing. This industry could set up a feedback system so that the organisation can acknowledge constructive criticism in order to improve PWB. Employees in this system should receive rewards for their ideas or opinions that have significantly benefited the company, including monetary rewards like bonuses and free travel as well as non-cash rewards like honorary titles and public acclaim.

By doing this, the telecom sector can improve employees' opinions of their own value within the

context of the company, thereby fostering the growth of their PWB. Organizations should offer more beneficial resources to help staff members work independently in order to lower low PSWB. For instance, businesses can cultivate a customer-focused culture to give staff members the confidence to work independently of management. Additionally, the telecom industry can promptly offer more information (such as customer feedback) to employees so they can better understand the outcomes of their independent decisions. This will help each person develop a strong personality on their own. Strong personalities and internal loci of control help people manage their psychological health and perform better than expected even when using non-work-related applications. As a result, we advocate for more sophisticated management techniques, such as personality assessments for telecom workers by organisations or leaders. Employees with strong personality traits can be given autonomy and given a voice in decision-making. Maintain strong personality traits for telecom employees with a higher internal locus of control to prevent laborious but pointless actions.

### **Limitations and directions for future research**

There are three notable restrictions. We were unable to conduct longitudinal research to yield more fruitful results, despite using a (time-lagged) design. We suggest that future research adopt an alternative strategy to rigorously test the causal relations (such as an experimental design). Second, because this study only examined one personality trait (internal locus of control), we are unable to extrapolate the results to other traits. But we think that our conclusions ought to apply to ILC. We entice researchers to investigate whether the big five personality traits and internal vs external locus of control can replicate our findings. Thirdly, we whittled down our attention to the role of psychological health as a mediator between online behaviour and workers'

productivity. Future research could take into account some potential mediators that aren't currently taken into account, as well as overall organisational performance. We advise researchers to expand their study of the research framework by looking at self-esteem, anxiety, and job stress as new mediators.

### **Conclusion**

In this study, we compiled an expanding body of research on workplace cyberloafing. Our findings point to a number of significant factors that may have an impact on these generally undesirable behaviours, such as the mediating role of psychological health and the moderating influence of personality traits like internal locus of control. Investigations into cyberloafing are still in their infancy, and more thorough study is required to understand these employee actions and the results. Preceding the current study, individual investigations on cyberloafing have formulated a novel framework utilising a limited set of variables that are linked to a solitary foundational theory, such as the theory of planned behaviour. Although additional research is necessary to advance this field of literature, we anticipate that these discoveries will aid scholars in constructing more comprehensive frameworks and identifying variables that are pertinent to the targeted relationship, based on empirical support. The present statistical findings may serve as a foundation for a more evidence-based strategy in constructing models.

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