Chapter 8
Explaining Cyberloafing Through a Theoretical Integration of Theory of Interpersonal Behavior and Theory of Organizational Justice

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ABSTRACT

Cyberloafing is an issue of growing concern for contemporary organizations. This paper develops an integrated research model which combines the Theory of Interpersonal Behavior and Organizational Justice to provide a holistic examination for cyberloafing behavior. Data was collected from working respondents via on-line questionnaire to test the research model. The results of this study found that the metaphor of the ledger from the organizational justice model was a significant predictor of intent to cyberloaf, while the four types of organizational justice were not significant predictors of the metaphor of the ledger. The effects of constructs from the Theory of Interpersonal Behavior performed as expected with the exception of the direct relationship between facilitating conditions and cyberloafing behavior. Overall, the results suggest that combining these two models provides a rich explanation of antecedents to cyberloafing.

1. INTRODUCTION

Access to the Internet has become common place for employees in many of today's organizations and has facilitated significant improvements in organizational productivity. However, it has also created the opportunity for abuse. Current research has labeled this phenomena cyberloafing and has defined it as,

"the act of employees using their companies' Internet access for personal purposes during work hours" (Lim, 2002, p. 675). Cyberloafing is a personal decision to utilize work time in a non-productive manner and therefore can be considered a deviant workplace behavior. Employee deviance is defined by Robinson and Bennett (1995) as, "voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both" (p. 556). Potential negative impacts of cyberloafing include losses of intellectual property, sexual harassment lawsuits, security threats, and network bandwidth overload (Bock, Park, & Zhang, 2010; Lim, 2002). A number of alarming statistics highlight the impact of cyberloafing in organizations. For example, one study estimates that $759 billion is lost annually to "employees engaging in non-work related activities on the job" (Martin, Brock, Buckley, & Ketchen, 2010).

Two primary forms of cyberloafing have previously been identified: 1) minor – e.g., using personal e-mail at work or surfing the Web for personal reasons; and 2) serious – e.g., online gambling or visiting adult-oriented web sites. Of these two forms, studies have found that employees most often engage in minor cyberloafing behavior (Lim 2002). This is not surprising, as Blanchard and Henle (2008) found that minor cyberloafing is not perceived by employees as a deviant behavior. Furthermore, they suggest that perceptions about the appropriateness of this type of behavior could be influenced by organizations, while serious cyberloafing behavior will not be influenced by a change in employees' perceptions, as these perpetrators are already aware that their behavior is inappropriate. For the purpose of this research we will focus on minor cyberloafing behavior, because it is the most prevalent type of cyberloafing, while also having the potential to be mitigated via organizational actions.

Research has demonstrated that cyberloafing can be managed through means such as the use of Internet monitoring systems (Islam, Anand, & Jaeger, 1997), however, such approaches have been demonstrated to come at the expense of overall employee satisfaction (Urbaczewski & Jessup, 2002). Therefore, it has been suggested that less intrusive measures should be identified for reducing cyberloafing (Pee, Woon, & Kankanhalli, 2008). The purpose of our research is to develop and test a comprehensive model that explains cyberloafing, so practitioners and researchers have a more complete picture of the chain of events contributing to cyberloafing behavior. To accomplish this aim, we integrate two complementary theoretical perspectives. First, we adopt the Theory of Interpersonal Behavior (TIB). Constructs examined in our research relating to TIB include perceived consequences, social factors, and facilitating conditions, as well as affect for cyberloafing, intent to cyberloaf, and habit. The second perspective we adopt is concerned with employees' perceptions of social exchange and organizational justice. Specifically, we examine how the four types of organization justice, distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice, can lead to employees' justifying the decision to cyberloaf through of the metaphor of the ledger. The metaphor of the ledger is a neutralization technique through which the employee posits that on balance their positive actions outweigh their negative actions and therefore may feel that he/she may misbehave without feeling guilty (Minor, 1981).

We believe these two perspectives on why employees choose to cyberloaf provide an important complement to each other, as the Theory of Interpersonal Behavior incorporates socio-psychological aspects of employees (or internal antecedents), while the Theory of Organizational Justice focuses on factors that are external to employees. These two theories have not previously been examined together in the cyberloafing literature and their combined explanatory power may provide insight as to how these deviant behaviors may more effectively be managed by organizations. Therefore, this research addresses the following question: Do the combined models of the Theory of Interpersonal Behavior and the Theory of Organizational Justice complement one another in explaining cyberloafing behavior? While the result-

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