Chapter 5

The Positive and Negative Impact of COVID–19 Smartphone Dependency on Employee Job Performance

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ABSTRACT

A smartphone is a gadget with a variety of features that reside in the capacity of a machine. It is a gadget that can be described as a minicomputer due to its specific size and its different features, such as a PC or a computer device. The objectives of this chapter are to discuss the positive and negative impact of COVID-19 smartphone dependency on employees' job performance at the workplace. Job performance can be defined as the "total expected value" to the organisation of the discrete behavioural episodes that an individual carries out over a standard period of time. The positive and negative impact of COVID-19 smartphone dependency will be discussed and demonstrated using the Ishikawa diagram.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last few decades, technological advancements have made it possible to transition from basic communication tools like the telephone to advanced wireless mobile devices, also known as 'smartphone' (Cheever, Rosen, Carrier & Chavez, 2014). A smartphone is a gadget with a variety of features that reside in the capacity of a machine. It is a gadget that can be described as a minicomputer due to its specific

size and its different features, such as a PC or a computer device. Users can use different software, such as online searching, emails, downloads, gaming and more (Carroll & Heiser, 2010; Razzaq et al., 2018 cited in Anshari et al., 2020). Today, it is considered unusual for one to not have a smartphone in this digital era where people worldwide are virtually connected (Anshari & Lim, 2017). One could send a text message from across the world, and it would be delivered in a matter of seconds so long as the phone has an internet connection. Smartphones offer great resources and convenience to people while at the same time, facilitating the accomplishment of tasks and achieving widespread success in today's society (Bartwal & Nath, 2019).

With smartphones being ubiquitous, it has become a norm to bring one's smartphone to the workplace as individuals develop dependency on their devices. Such dependency has long raised the question by researchers and employers on whether smartphones provide employees benefits or harm in the workplace (Anshari et al., 2019a; Mulyani et al., 2019). The number of smartphone users drastically increased with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic due to restricted mobility in society in order to contain the spread of the virus. For some employees around the world, working from home was the ideal solution to make ends meet in the midst of the pandemic. As a result, they rely more on their smartphones to perform work matters especially for those with limited access to a laptop or personal computer. For some period of time, working from home became a norm and organizations adopted different strategies and methods in helping employees perform and deliver their work. Today, most employees have gone back to physical work with lockdown restrictions being lifted. However, employees' dependency of smartphones during the lockdown period may still be apparent and persist as it has become a norm, embraced into their daily routine (Anshari et al., 2019b; Razzaq et al., 2018). The dependency can be argued to impact employees' working lives as they bring their smartphones with them back to work.

Thus, the aim of this paper is to discuss the positive and negative impact of COVID-19 smartphone dependency on employees' job performance at the workplace. Job performance can be defined as the 'total expected value to the organization of the discrete behavioral episodes that an individual carries out over a standard period of time' (Motowidlo & Kell, 2012). Also, the positive and negative impact of COVID-19 smartphone dependency will be discussed and demonstrated using the Ishikawa diagram.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term 'Smartphone' was coined several years ago, but its definition has evolved. It started when people only had mobile phones, also known as cellular phones.

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