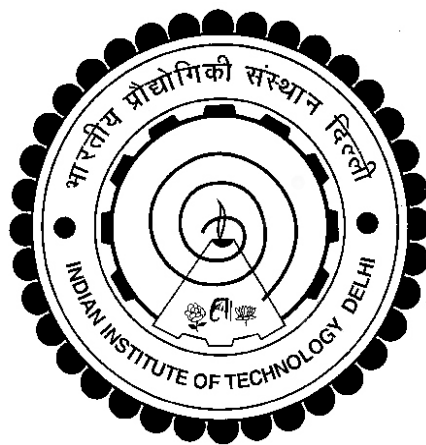


**PERCEIVED ETHICALITY, MEANS-END CHAINS AND
ANTECEDENTS OF EMPLOYEE CYBERLOAFING**

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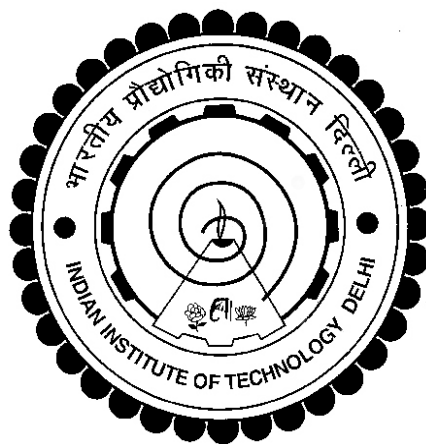
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Submitted

in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
to the



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MAY 2023

This thesis is dedicated to my Parents

Mr. Swapan Kumar Batabyal

&

Mrs. Rita Batabyal

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis titled “**Perceived Ethicality, Means-End Chains and Antecedents of Employee Cyberloafing**”, being submitted by **Mr. Sauvik Kumar Batabyal** to the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)**, is a record of bonafide research work carried out by him. He has worked under my supervision and has fulfilled the requirements for the submission of this thesis, which has attained the standard required for Ph.D. degree of the Institute. The results presented in this thesis have not been submitted elsewhere for award of any degree or diploma.

(Kanika Tandon Bhal)

Research Supervisor

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Date:

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Date:

Sauvik Kumar Batabyal

ABSTRACT

Cyberloafing, the behavior of engaging in non-work related online during scheduled business hours, has emerged as a significant issue in the last two decades. This is relatively a new concept and has evolved considerably over the years as far as the definition, scope and classifications are concerned. This behavior is often seen as counterproductive, with negative impact on an organization's financial performance and potential ethical, moral, legal, security, and sustainability concerns. Additionally, it has been linked to decreased quality and productivity, as well as increased risk for the organization. Therefore, it is crucial to examine cyberloafing from a range of perspectives, including ethics, motivations, and contributing factors, in order to develop effective strategies for regulation or control.

The increasing attention to cyberloafing in published literature reflects a growing recognition of the complex and varied nature of this behavior. However, the social norms surrounding the perceived ethicality and acceptability of cyberloafing among the employees remain unclear. The literature on this topic is also limited in terms of adequately elucidating the relationships between various triggers, online platforms, and consequences of cyberloafing, as well as the end value orientations of employees engaging in these behaviors. Additionally, while prior research has identified stress as a key antecedent of cyberloafing, there has been insufficient investigation in terms of how different stressors may influence cyberloafing differently or how situational constraints may impact this behavior. This research aimed to address these gaps in the existing literature.

The main objectives of this research were a) to explore the perceived ethicality of cyberloafing behavior among employees, b) to uncover the prominent push and pull factors (along with consequences and values) of cyberloafing and reveal their linkages, c) to assess the influence of situational constraints, challenge-hindrane stressors on cyberloafing, along

with investigating the role of mediating and moderating factors. To achieve these objectives, we conducted three studies using a range of methodologies. The first study employed a constructivist grounded theory approach and 19 employees from various organizations were interviewed. The second study used a soft laddering technique, combining the push-pull theory and means-end chain framework, and conducted semi-structured interviews with 21 working participants. The third study adopted a quantitative approach, drawing upon work-frustration aggression theory and challenge-hindrance stressors framework, and tested two models to examine the mediating roles of perceived frustration, attentiveness, and anger, as well as the moderating role of trait mindfulness.

The findings showed that employees utilize nine different logics while perceiving cyberloafing as not unethical and those are based on the notions of free time, work-life balance, condoning through majority, refreshment needs, self-interest, integral nature of social media, unavoidability, work from home or working beyond scheduled hours and necessity. However, perceiving cyberloafing as unethical happens on the grounds of six different normative logics, described as negative impact to efficiency or productivity, injustice to company remuneration, accessing offensive content, prolonged engagement with non-offensive content, risks to safety or security and unfair free-riding in teams. The perception of ethicality surrounding cyberloafing is based on various combinations of these logics instead of applying just any one. In our second study, the hierarchical value map prepared through LadderUX showed that in the context of cyberloafing among employees, there are seven prominent means-end chains, with respective techno-behavioral push factors, digital online-pull factors, with layered set of consequences matching with respective end value orientations of the employees. It also proposed that cyberloafing could be better conceptualized in a continuum; from serious-destructive to minor-positive to facilitative-productive. The third study which utilized PROCESS Macro in SPSS revealed that when

employees experience situational constraints in their work, they may experience frustration and subsequently engage in cyberloafing. Moreover, results showed that not all forms of stressors effect cyberloafing in a similar fashion. When employees face challenge stressors, it can increase attentiveness and reduce the likelihood of cyberloafing. In contrast, when employees encounter hindrance stressors, it can lead to feelings of anger and increase the likelihood of cyberloafing. Additionally, the moderation and moderated mediation analysis in this study found that trait mindfulness can act as a buffer against the negative influence of hindrance stressors on anger and the indirect effect of hindrance stressors on cyberloafing through anger.

This research has important theoretical and practical implications for understanding and addressing the issue of cyberloafing among employees. It has found that the use of personal data-enabled smartphones and devices for cyberloafing has become a reality, and that the cognitive processes and justifications for this behavior can involve various ethical considerations and ego-defense mechanisms. Moreover, the cognitive logics and justifications invoke various schools of thought from ethics like consequentialism, deontology, fairness and justice to name a few. This research also examined cyberloafing through the lens of push-pull theory and means-end chain framework. It uncovered the facilitative productive side of employee cyberloafing along with other themes of minor-positive kinds. Human resource managers and organizations must take into account different layers and nuances of employee cyberloafing and need to keep a balanced approach while formulating the policies. They must take appropriate action to remove situational constraints from the organizational processes. Moreover, they need to ensure that employees are challenged optimally to ensure attentiveness and employees do not experience hindrances while performing their jobs. Lastly, corporations could introduce various mindfulness related interventions to improve the trait mindfulness of the employees, which in turn can deter them

from cyberloafing and could bring other potential benefits. Despite the limitations surrounding the studies, this research will encourage future studies to further explore the complexity of employee cyberloafing and use additional techniques and theoretical bases.

Keywords: *Cyberloafing, cyberslacking, constructivist grounded theory, push-pull theory, means-end chain theory, soft laddering, situational constraints, work frustration-aggression theory, challenge-hindrance stressors, mindfulness, human resource management, organizational behavior*

सार

साइबरलोफिंग या निर्धारित व्यावसायिक समय के दौरान ऑनलाइन गैर-काम से संबंधित व्यवहार, पिछले दो दशकों में एक महत्वपूर्ण मुद्दे के रूप में उभरा है। इसकी परिभाषा, दायरा और वर्गीकरण संबंधी बातें समय के साथ बदलती रही हैं। इस व्यवहार को अक्सर अनुत्पादक के रूप में देखा जाता है, जो संगठन के वित्तीय प्रदर्शन, नैतिक, कानूनी, सुरक्षा और निरंतरता से संबंधित समस्याओं की उत्पत्ति का कारण हो सकता है। इसके अलावा, इसे गुणवत्ता और उत्पादकता में कमी लाने और संगठन के लिए बड़े जोखिम से जोड़ा गया है। इसलिए, साइबरलोफिंग के कई पहलुओं जैसे नैतिकता और योगदान कारकों को देखना महत्वपूर्ण है ताकि नियामक या नियंत्रण के लिए प्रभावी रणनीतियों का विकास किया जा सके।

प्रकाशित साहित्य में साइबरलोफिंग पर बढ़ता ध्यान इस व्यवहार की जटिल और विविध प्रकृति की बढ़ती मान्यता का प्रतिबिम्ब है। हालांकि, कर्मचारियों के बीच साइबरलोफिंग के अनुमोदन और नैतिकता के सामाजिक मानदंड स्पष्ट नहीं हैं। इस विषय पर शोध सीमित है, जैसे साइबरलोफिंग के विभिन्न प्रेरकों, ऑनलाइन प्लेटफॉर्मों और परिणामों के बीच संबंध तथा इस व्यवहार में शामिल कर्मचारियों की मूल्य अभिविन्यास। इसके अतिरिक्त, पूर्व अनुसंधान में तनाव को साइबरलोफिंग के मूल कारणों में से एक माना गया है, लेकिन यह स्पष्ट नहीं है कि विभिन्न प्रकार के तनाव साइबरलोफिंग को अलग-अलग प्रभावित करते हैं या स्थितिगत बाधाएं इस व्यवहार को कैसे प्रभावित कर सकती हैं। इस शोध का उद्देश्य इस स्पष्टता को प्राप्त करना है।

इस शोध के मुख्य उद्देश्य थे: ए) कर्मचारियों के बीच साइबरलोफिंग की नैतिकता को खोजना, बी)

साइबरलोफिंग के प्रमुख पुश और पुल फैक्टरों को (साथ ही परिणाम और मूल्यों को) उजागर करना और उनके संबंधों को प्रकट करना, सी) स्थितिगत प्रतिबंधों, चुनौती-अवरोधक तनावों के साइबरलोफिंग पर प्रभाव का मूल्यांकन करना, साथ ही मध्यस्थ और संयोजन तत्वों की भूमिका की जांच करना। इन उद्देश्यों को पूरा करने के लिए, हमने तीन अध्ययनों का आयोजन किया जिसमें विभिन्न तकनीकों का उपयोग किया गया था। पहला अध्ययन एक रचनावादी आधारित सिद्धांत दृष्टिकोण का था जिसमें विभिन्न संगठनों के उन्नीस कर्मचारियों से साक्षात्कार लिए गए। दूसरा अध्ययन MAY पुश-पुल सिद्धांत और साधन-अंत श्रृंखला सिद्धांत को जोड़ने वाली

सॉफ्ट लैंडिंग तकनीक का उपयोग करते हुए इक्कीस कर्मचारियों से साक्षात्कार लिए गए। तीसरा अध्ययन एक मात्रात्मक दृष्टिकोण अपनाता है, कार्य-थकान-आक्रोश सिद्धांत और चुनौती-अवरोध तनाव संरचना पर आधारित होता है, और मन में मान्यता, तत्परता और क्रोध के माध्यम से संबंधों की मध्यस्थता की भूमिका की जांच करने के लिए दो मॉडलों का परीक्षण किया गया था, साथ ही ट्रेट माइंडफुलनेस की नियामक भूमिका की जांच भी की गई।

निष्कर्षों से पता चला है कि कर्मचारी साइबरलोफिंग को अनैतिक नहीं मानने के लिए नौ विभिन्न तर्क प्रयोग करते हैं, जो खाली समय, कार्य-जीवन संतुलन, बहुमत के द्वारा स्वीकृति, ताजगी की आवश्यकताएं, स्वयं के हित, सोशल मीडिया की अभिन्य प्रकृति, अपरिहार्यता, घर से काम या अनुसूचित समय से अधिक काम और आवश्यकता पर आधारित हैं। वहीं, साइबरलोफिंग को अनैतिक मानने के लिए छह विभिन्न नॉर्मेटिव तर्क होते हैं, जिनमें दक्षता या उत्पादकता पर नकारात्मक प्रभाव, कंपनी के पारिश्रमिक के साथ अन्याय, आपत्तिजनक ऑनलाइन साइटें तक पहुंच, गैर-आपत्तिजनक ऑनलाइन साइटें के साथ लंबे समय तक लगे रहने, सुरक्षा या सुरक्षा के जोखिम और टीम में अन्यायपूर्ण फ्री-राइडिंग का उल्लेख किया गया है। साइबरलोफिंग के आसार की नैतिकता इन तर्कों के विभिन्न संयोजनों पर आधारित होती है। हमारे दूसरे अध्ययन में, लैडरयूएक्स के माध्यम से तैयार की गई पदानुक्रमित मूल्य मानचित्र ने दिखाया कि कर्मचारियों के बीच साइबरलोफिंग के संदर्भ में, संबंधित तकनीकी-व्यवहारिक पुश कारकों, डिजिटल ऑनलाइन-पुल कारकों, स्तरित परिणामों और कर्मचारियों के मूल्य उन्मुखीकरण से युक्त सात प्रमुख साधन-अंत श्रृंखलाएं हैं। यह भी प्रस्तावित करता है कि साइबरलोफिंग एक निरंतरता में बेहतरीन ढंग से अवधारित किया जा सकता है; गंभीर-विनाशात्मक से लेकर सूक्ष्म-सकारात्मक और सहायक-उत्पादक तक। तीसरे अध्ययन से पता चला कि जब कर्मचारी अपने काम में स्थितिगत प्रतिबंधों का अनुभव करते हैं, तो वे हताशा का अनुभव कर सकते हैं और बाद में साइबरलोफिंग में संलग्न हो सकते हैं। इसके अलावा, परिणाम दिखाते हैं कि सभी प्रकार के तनाव साइबरलोफिंग को समान रूप से प्रभावित नहीं करते हैं। जब कर्मचारियों को चुनौतीपूर्ण तनाव का सामना करना पड़ता है, तो उनकी ध्यानता बर सकती है और साइबर लोफिंग की संभावना को कम कर सकती है। इसके विपरीत, जब कर्मचारियों को बाधा तनाव का सामना करना पड़ता है, तो इससे क्रोध की भावना पैदा हो सकती है और साइबर लोफिंग की संभावना बढ़ सकती है। इसके अतिरिक्त, इस अध्ययन में मॉडरेशन और मॉडरेटेड मीडिएशन विश्लेषण में

पाया गया कि ट्रेट माइंडफुलनेस क्रोध पर बाधा तनाव के नकारात्मक प्रभाव और क्रोध के माध्यम से साइबरलोफिंग पर बाधा तनाव के अप्रत्यक्ष प्रभाव के खिलाफ बफर के रूप में कार्य कर सकती है।

कर्मचारियों के बीच साइबर लोफिंग के मुद्दे को समझने और संबोधित करने के लिए इस शोध के महत्वपूर्ण सैद्धांतिक और व्यावहारिक निहितार्थ हैं। यह पाया गया है कि साइबरलोफिंग के लिए व्यक्तिगत डेटा-सक्षम स्मार्टफोन और उपकरणों का उपयोग एक वास्तविकता बन गया है, और इस व्यवहार के लिए संज्ञानात्मक प्रक्रियाओं में विभिन्न नैतिक विचार शामिल हो सकते हैं। इसके अलावा, संज्ञानात्मक तर्क नैतिकता से विचार के विभिन्न विचारधारा को लागू कर सकता है जैसे कि परिणामवाद, कर्तव्य निष्ठा, निष्पक्षता और न्याय। इस शोध ने पुश-पुल सिद्धांत और साधन-अंत श्रृंखला रूपरेखा के माध्यम से साइबरलोफिंग की भी जांच की। इसने मामूली-सकारात्मक प्रकार के अन्य विषयों के साथ-साथ कर्मचारी साइबरलोफिंग के सुविधाजनक उत्पादक पक्ष को उजागर किया। मानव संसाधन प्रबंधकों और संगठनों को कर्मचारी साइबरलोफिंग की विभिन्न परतों और बारीकियों को ध्यान में रखना चाहिए और नीतियां बनाते समय और नीतियां तैयार करते समय एक संतुलित दृष्टिकोण बनाए रखना चाहिए। उन्हें संगठनों से स्थितिजन्य बाधाओं को दूर करने के लिए उचित कार्रवाई करनी चाहिए। इसके अलावा, ये सुनिश्चित करना चाहिए कि कर्मचारियों को उनके काम को करते समय उचित रूप से चुनौतियों का सामना हो, जिससे ध्यान बना रहे और वे अवरुद्ध न हों। कंपनियाँ कर्मचारियों की ट्रेट माइंडफुलनेस में सुधार करने के लिए माइंडफुलनेस संबंधी विभिन्न हस्तक्षेप शुरू कर सकती हैं, जो बदले में उन्हें साइबर लोफिंग से रोक सकता है और अन्य संभावित लाभ ला सकता है। अध्ययनों में सीमाओं के बावजूद, यह शोध भविष्य के अध्ययनों को कर्मचारी साइबरलोफिंग की जटिलता का पता लगाने और विभिन्न तकनीकों और सैद्धांतिक आधारों का उपयोग करने के लिए प्रोत्साहित करेगा।

प्रमुख शब्द: साइबरलोफिंग, साइबरस्लैकिंग, रचनावादी आधारित सिद्धांत, साधन-अंत श्रृंखला सिद्धांत, पुश-पुल सिद्धांत, कार्य हताशा-आक्रामकता सिद्धांत, ट्रेट माइंडफुलनेस, मानव संसाधन प्रबंधन, संगठनात्मक व्यवहार

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CL	Cyberloafing
AET	Affective Events Theory
ANG	Anger
ATTEN	Attentiveness
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
BFT	Big Five Theory
BOT	Boundary Theory
BT	Border Theory
CA	Cronbach's Alpha
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CHAL	Challenge Stressors
CME	Circumplex Model of Effect
CMIN/DF	Chi-Square Fit Statistics/Degree of Freedom
COR	Conservation of Resources Theory
CR	Composite Reliability
CT	Control Theory
DST	Dual Systems Theory
EDT	Ego Depletion Theory
ERM	Effort Recovery Model
ET	Equity Theory
FAM	Frustration-Aggression Model
FR	Perceived Frustration

FTNC	Focus Theory of Normative Conduct
GDT	General Deterrence Theory
GFI	Goodness-of-Fit Index
GST	General Strain Theory
GTC	General Theory of Crime
HIND	Hindrance Stressors
IJT	Interaction Justice Theory
JDRM	Job Demands-Resources Model
MBM	Maslach's Burnout Model
NOR	Norm of Reciprocity
NT	Neutralization Theory
PJFT	Person-Job Fit Theory
PJT	Procedural Justice Theory
PRAF	Personal Resource Allocation Framework
RLT	Role Theory
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
RT	Reactance Theory
SBT	Social Bonding Theory
SCNT	Self-Consistency Theory
SCT	Social Cognitive Theory
SD	Standard Deviation
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
SET	Social Exchange Theory
SIT	Situational Constraints
SLT	Social Learning Theory

SMSC	Strength Model of Self-Control
SMT	Sociometer Theory
SNT	Social Norms Theory
SRDT	Relative Deprivation Theory
SRT	Self-Regulation Theory
ST	Set Theory
TAT	Trait Activation Theory
TIB	Theory of Interpersonal Behavior
TLI	Tucker Lewis Index
TMST	Transactional Model of Stress Theory
TPB	Theory of Planned Behavior
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
TTFT	Task-Technology Fit Theory
UGT	Users and Gratification Theory
UMT	Uncertainty Management Theory
WFBT	Work/Family Border Theory