Reducing Cyberloafing Behaviors among Followers: Important Roles of Supervisor Communication Styles and Meaningful Work

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Abstract

The current study aim was to investigate the link between meaningful work and supervisor communication styles with employees cyberloafing activities. For this, data from employees working in banking organizations operated in Sothern region was collected using structured questionnaire. Through purposive sampling, the study selects 300 employees to participate. Finally, the study received 256 actual responses from the respondents. Using multiple regression model, it was found that assertive communication style and meaningful work are negatively related to cyberloafing. on the other hand, passive and aggressive styles are positively related to cyberloafing. Based on the results of the current study and past literature, the study recommend that leaders of the firms not only practice assertive communication style but also find ways how to engage their followers in meaningful work-related activities. Study implications and future avenues of research are also discussed.

Keywords: Cyberloafing, Supervisor Communication Styles, Meaningful Work, Multiple Regression, Pakistan

1. Introduction

After Internet invention, a considerable change was observed both in our official work as well as social gathering. Regardless of their positive impact on our economic lives, the Internet brings a lot of dramatic changes to our lives both in the shape communication and what we behave (de Vass et al., 2018). The Internet facility not only increased our productivity, but it has also saved us money. Nowadays, life without mobile applications namely Android, iPad, Smart Phone, and I Phone is almost impossible and incomplete. In the recent technological era, life without Internet is seems incomplete. Despite its negative consequences, the usage of Internet for official purpose not only save our precious time but also drastically improve organizational as well as individual productivity (Lim, 2002).

Even though beside its countless benefits, Internet is also used as a double-edge sword. These drawbacks affect not only personal and organizational life but also adversely affect individual as well as organizational efficiency and productivity (Usman et al., 2019). Due to consistent and free availability of Internet drag people to involve in cyberloafing activities (a behavior where people use organization internet for their personal use as well as surf different websites and playing games during official hours) (Agarwal, 2019). Searching non-job related any websites or usage of office Internet during work hours comes under the broad spectrum of cyberloafing (Khattak et al, 2020; Koay, 2018). It comes under the umbrella of deviant behaviors or dysfunctional behaviors because such practices violate organizational rules and regulations and drastically adversely affect organizational productivity (Hussain et al., 2017). It not only impact organizational but also individual efficiency and well-being. Unfortunately, a very little attention has been paid to this important issue (Mercado et al., 2017). In the present study, the aim is to identify factors that may reduce cyberloafing activities in an organization.

2. Literature Review

Communication is the cognitive process that involves micro-behavior in order to make macrolevel decisions (Raynes, 2001). It is made up of both verbal and nonverbal messages. Verbal messages include the words chosen, as well as the tone sound, tome speed, tone volume, voice tonality, and speech rate, whereas nonverbal clues include body gestures and postures, eyes contact, facial expression, body movements (cited in Agarwal 2019). The main aim of both verbal and non-verbal communication is to deliver a message to their followers to complete the

tasks. Without affective verbal and non-verbal communication, it is very difficult to convey message to the followers and get things done from it. However, it is very important to use an acceptable communication style that may not only convey message to the followers but also convenes them to do it.

According to Penney and Spector, (2005), supervisors having aggressive behavior or style are less preferable both in organizational as well as social settings. Similarly, Conservation of Resources theory (COR) also argued that employees are the most important and valuable resource of any organization, and its proper utilization make organization able to get competitive edge. On the other hand, COR also suggests that when leaders behave their employees aggressively that may heart employees and motivate them towards withdrawal behaviors or to reduce efforts as expected from them. On the same vein, if a leader of organization is too much passive, their employee's involvement in dysfunctional activities is high. Thus, leaders of the organizations must be pro-active and keenly observe their followers' activities instead to passively manage the organizations (Norman et al., 2010). On the other hand, as rightly noted by Agarwal (2019), if supervisors assertively communicate with their followers, listen their views and suggestions, and engage them in organizational decisions not only improve intrinsic motivation of their followers but also augment their involvement in positive work-related behaviors (Bushra et al., 2011). Therefore, we expect that assertive style of communication discourage dysfunctional behaviors among followers and hence negative impact on cyberloafing.

Khattak et al. (2020) examined the link between meaningful work and supervisor communication styles with cyberloafing directly and indirectly via psychological safety. Their findings suggest that communication styles of the leaders have greater impact on their follower's engagement in the behaviors that is not accepted to the organization. Moreover, they also found that meaningful work is negatively related to dysfunctional behaviors.

Similarly, a study conducted by Luo, Qu, and Marnburg (2013) align meaningful work with social loafing with this argument that positive work-related activities like meaningful work increase employee's intrinsic motivation and commitment which in turn help organizations to reduce engagement of their employees in dysfunctional activities. That why, in this study we attempted to empirically investigate whether meaningful work help to revoke intrinsic

motivation which alternatively help to overcome cyberloafing behaviors among organizational employees.

In the present study, based on Michaelson et al. (2014) recommendations, our study advances the previous researchers' theories, and provide recent theoretical development about how meaningful work helped organizations to safeguard their employees from cyberloafing activities. Based on Sheikh et al. (2019) suggestions, we proposed that meaningful work adversely affect cyberloafing activities such that employee's intrinsic motivation may be increased and when an employee has strong intrinsic motivation, he/she is more engaged in productive work outcomes. Oosthuizen et al. (2018) also have the same findings regarding meaningful work and social loafing relationship.

Based on the above relevant literature support, we developed the following conceptual framework and hypotheses to test the proposed model.
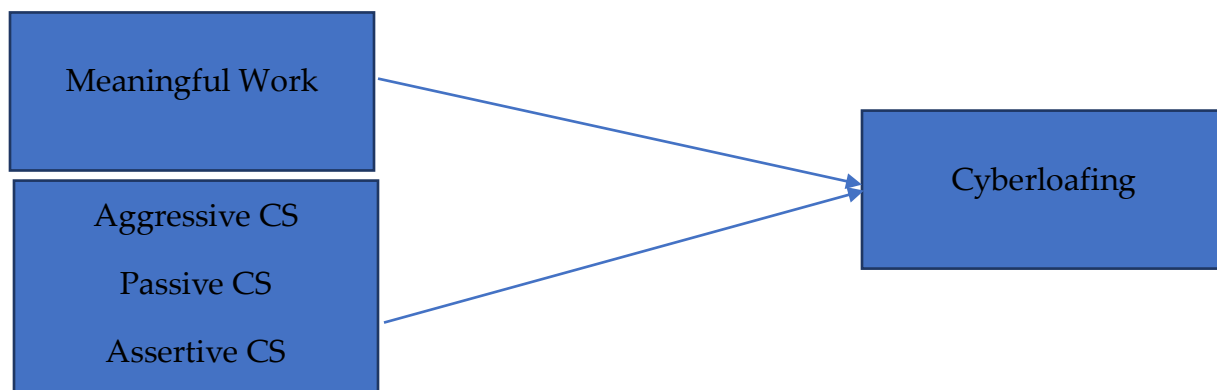
H_1: Supervisor Aggressive Communication Style (SACS) is positively associated with Subordinate Cyberloafing.

H_2: Supervisor Passive Communication Style (SPCS) is positively associated with Subordinate Cyberloafing.

H_3: Supervisor Assertive Communication Style (SAssCS) is negatively associated with Subordinate Cyberloafing.

H_4: Meaningful work is negatively associated with Subordinate cyberloafing.

3. Methods

3.1. Population and Sample

The purpose of the present research is to link supervisor communication styles with subordinate's cyberloafing behaviors at workplace. For this reason, we choose banking employees with this notion that in such organization there are huge work pressure because of the involvement of huge financial transactions. In such scenario, there are more chances that supervisors may use different communication styles with their subordinates to smoothly operate their organizations. The study selects banking organizations operated in South region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Through purposive sampling, we select 300 employees to participate in the study. Respondents were asked to fill the survey questionnaire that was scaled with 5-point Likert scale. The scale used in the present research was adapted from established literate. The details from where the scale was adapted was reported in the coming part. After survey, we received 256 responses having a response rate of 85.33 percent.

3.2. Measures

Perceived supervisor communication styles fall into three categories: assertive, aggressive, and passive. The current study adapted and applied a Brigham Young University scale (2004). This scale has 24 items, with each dimension measured using an eight-item scale. This scale has also been used in previous studies (e.g., Khattak et al., 2020). To assess cyberloafing, a scale originally developed by Lim (2002) consists of 11 items was used. Likewise, meaningful work was assessed using Dik and Duffy's (2012) scale having 09 items. The items of each scale were assessed using a Likert type scale measured through 1 accounted for strongly disagree and 5 accounted for strongly agree.

4. Results

Before applying regression and mediation analysis, we first confirm the scale reliability using Cronbach's alpha procedure. The table reported below shows the values of reliability statistics and it is evident that the scales used in this study is reliable.

Table 1
Alpha Statistics

Scale	Alpha	No. of Items	Accepted Range
Supervisor Communication Styles	0.87	24	< 0.6
Cyberloafing	0.91	11	< 0.6
Meaningful Work	0.89	09	< 0.6

As reported in the Table highlighted above, all the three scales used in the study has good reliability values. Thus, it is confirmed that the scales used in our study is highly reliable. As the right corner of the Table highlight the threshold level which stated that the Alpha value should be more than 0.6, however, some researchers recommended that Alpha value should be above 0.7. In our case the values of Alpha for all scales are above 0.7 as well, thus, assured the scale reliability.

After confirming the reliability of the scale, we apply multiple regression and mediation analysis to test the study hypothesis. The detail of multiple regression is reported in Table 2.

Table 2

 Multiple Regression

	Un Std. beta	Std. Error	t	p
MW	-.204	0.066	-3.046	0.000
ACS	-.360	0.076	-4.643	0.000
AggCS	.266	0.048	5.436	0.000
PCS	.804	0.054	14.493	0.000

As depicted in the Table, a significant and negative relationship was observed between meaningful work (MW) and cyberloafing. That shows that when organizations improve or increase their employee's engagement in different word related tasks, the chances of their involvement in cyberloafing activities will be reduced. Similarly, when supervisor communicate assertively with their followers, the chances is more that their followers will less involve in cyberloafing activities. on the other hand, if the communication style of the supervisor is aggressive and passive, there are more chances that their followers will be engaged in different

deviant behaviors including cyberloafing. The results of this study are consistent with studies conducted in recent past (Khattak et al., 2020) as they also found that communication styles of supervisors significantly affect followers' behaviors and their involvement in different work-related activities.

5. Conclusion

The current study, based on conservation of resources theory, sought to empirically investigate the relationship between communication styles of their immediate boss including passive, aggressive and assertive along with meaningful work to the followers cyberloafing behaviors. To achieve the study objectives, a data from 256 employees from banking organizations were selected. The findings suggests that meaningful work and assertive communication are negatively related to employee's involvement in cyberloafing activities. Moreover, it is also found that passive and aggressive styles of communication are positively related to cyberloafing activities. That shows that when leaders of the organizations deal with their followers in aggressive ways or passively manage the organization, their employees are more engage in dysfunctional activities like cyberloafing. Based on findings of the present research, all the study hypotheses are accepted. We concluded that cyberloafing activities are harmful to organizations and there are ways to organizations how to overcome it.

5.1. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study in hand, we suggest certain guidelines to banking organizations in order to improve their working environment and reduce their employees' deviant behaviors at workplace.

1. It is recommended that leaders of the organizations should engage their employees in different task-related activities so that their involvement in different dysfunctional activities will be reduce.

2. It is also recommended that leaders of the organizations should practice assertive style of communication with their employees that will not only motivate them to work for their organizations but also reduce their engagement in dysfunctional behaviors.

3. It is suggested that organizations leaders did not practice aggressive and passive communication styes as both these motivate followers to engage in dysfunctional activities including cyberloafing.

5.2. Limitations and Future Directions

There are few limitations of the study as well, that need to be addressed. First, the study is limited only to banking organizations, so we cannot generalize the study findings. Thus, for generalizability of the findings, it is suggested for future researchers to used diverse nature of organizations. Second, the sample size of this study is 300 which is quite adequate in social sciences context, however, a large sample may batter represent the case. Therefore, we believe that a sample of around 1000 will gives a clear picture. Third, we check the direct link between communication styles of the leaders and meaningful work with cyberloafing, however, we fail to check the indirect link between them as past literature recommended that certain contextual variables like psychological safety, organizational citizenship behavior and organizational climate might affect employee's engagement in cyberloafing behaviors.

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