Journal of International Commercial Law and Technology
Print ISSN: 1901-8401

Website: https://www.jiclt.com/

Article

Employee Cyberloafing Behavior: Insights from Private Sector Organizations in Kerala

Article History:

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How to cite this article:
Kumar D K, *et, al,* Employee Cyberloafing Behavior: Insights from Private Sector Organizations in Kerala. *J Int Commer Law Technol*. 2026;7(1):448–452.

Received: *18-12-2025*
Revised: *02-01-2025*
Accepted: *16-01-2026*
Published: *04-02-2026*

Abstract: The proliferation of digital technologies in contemporary workplaces has significantly reshaped employee work behaviour, simultaneously enhancing efficiency and increasing vulnerability to cyberloafing. Internet Addiction Tendency (IAT), characterized by compulsive and impulsive internet use, has emerged as a critical behavioural antecedent of cyberloafing in organizational settings. This study investigates the influence of Internet Addiction Tendency on cyberloafing behaviour among employees working in private sector organisations in Kerala. Using a structured questionnaire, data were collected from private sector employees and analysed through path analysis. The findings reveal that all Internet Addiction Tendency indicators are statistically significant, with impulsive checking of social media during work hours emerging as the strongest predictor, followed by difficulty resisting online temptations and a strong urge to check the internet while working. The study contributes to the growing literature on workplace cyberloafing by highlighting the behavioural roots of excessive non-work internet use and offers practical implications for organizational policy and digital self-regulation strategies.

Keywords: Internet Addiction Tendency; Cyberloafing; Workplace Behaviour; Private Sector; Kerala.

INTRODUCTION

The integration of internet-enabled technologies into organizational processes has become indispensable for modern workplaces. While digital connectivity enhances communication, efficiency, and flexibility, it has also introduced behavioural challenges, particularly cyberloafing—employees' engagement in non-work-related internet activities during working hours. Cyberloafing has attracted increasing scholarly attention due to its implications for productivity loss, reduced task focus, and organizational inefficiency. In private sector organisations, where performance expectations and competitive pressures are high, cyberloafing represents a subtle yet persistent managerial concern.

Recent studies suggest that cyberloafing is not merely a result of weak supervision or lax policies but is strongly associated with individual behavioural tendencies, particularly Internet Addiction Tendency (IAT). Employees with high IAT experience compulsive urges to check online content, difficulty controlling internet usage, and impulsive engagement with social media, even during task-critical periods. In the Indian organizational context, especially in digitally intensive private sector environments, understanding how Internet Addiction Tendency shapes cyberloafing behaviour is crucial. Hence, this study examines the influence of Internet Addiction Tendency on cyberloafing among private sector employees in Kerala.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Internet Addiction Tendency

Internet Addiction Tendency refers to a pattern of excessive, compulsive, and poorly controlled internet use that interferes with daily activities and responsibilities. Recent reviews emphasize that IAT is not limited to clinical addiction but exists on a behavioural continuum affecting workplace performance and self-regulation (Tandon et al., 2020). Employees exhibiting IAT often report loss of time awareness, impulsive checking of online platforms, and psychological discomfort when disconnected.

Empirical studies have further established that impulsivity and habitual internet use are key dimensions of IAT. Askew et al. (2021) found that employees with high impulsive internet usage were significantly more prone to distraction and non-work-related browsing during office hours. These tendencies are particularly pronounced in technology-driven work environments, making IAT a relevant construct in organizational research.

Cyberloafing at the Workplace

Cyberloafing is defined as voluntary engagement in non-work-related online activities during working hours using organizational internet access. Prior studies categorize cyberloafing as a form of counterproductive work behaviour that negatively affects employee performance and organizational effectiveness (Lim & Teo, 2005). Recent literature, however, adopts a more nuanced view, recognizing cyberloafing as a behavioural outcome influenced by psychological, organizational, and technological factors.

Studies by Kim and Byrne (2019) and Reddy and Rani (2022) reveal that cyberloafing is strongly associated with individual self-control deficits and habitual digital behaviour rather than intentional misconduct. In private sector organisations, constant internet accessibility and smartphone usage further intensify cyberloafing tendencies, particularly among employees with high Internet Addiction Tendency.

Internet Addiction Tendency and Cyberloafing

Recent empirical evidence consistently confirms a positive relationship between Internet Addiction Tendency and cyberloafing behaviour. Tandon et al. (2020) demonstrated that compulsive internet use significantly predicts employees' engagement in non-work-related online activities. Similarly, Cheng et al. (2021) reported that impulsive online behaviour and difficulty resisting digital temptations increase the frequency and duration of cyberloafing episodes.

These findings suggest that cyberloafing is often an unintentional behavioural spillover of internet addiction tendencies rather than deliberate rule violation. Consequently, examining Internet Addiction Tendency provides a stronger behavioural explanation for cyberloafing, particularly in private sector workplaces where digital engagement is unavoidable.

Research Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. Primary data were collected from employees working in selected private sector organisations in Kerala using a structured questionnaire. Internet Addiction Tendency was measured using six behavioural statements reflecting compulsive urges, impulsive checking, loss of time awareness, and difficulty resisting online temptations during work hours. Data were analysed using path analysis to identify the relative influence of each IAT indicator on cyberloafing behaviour.

Objectives of the Study

To examine the extent of Internet Addiction Tendency among private sector employees.

RESULT&DISCUSSIONS

Path Regression Analysis of Internet Addiction Tendency in Working Place

Abbreviation of Internet Addiction Tendency (IAT)

Abbreviation	Internet Addiction Tendency (IAT)
IAT-1	I feel a strong urge to check the internet even while working
IAT -2	I find it difficult to control my internet usage during office hours
IAT -3	I lose track of time when engaging in non-work internet activities
IAT -4	I experience difficulty resisting online temptations at work.
IAT -5	Habitual internet use increases my likelihood of cyberloafing.
IAT -6	I check social media or online content impulsively during work hours.

Table- 4.1(a): Model Fit Summary

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
Internet Addiction Tendency	0.946[a]	0.895	0.894	0.24898	1.999

a. Predictors: (Constant), IAT6, IAT3, IAT1, IAT4, IAT2, IAT5

The regression model explaining Internet Addiction Tendency demonstrates an excellent overall fit. The multiple correlation coefficient (R=0.946) indicates a very strong positive relationship between the predictor variables 'I feel a strong urge to check the internet even while working' (IAT-1),'I find it difficult to control my internet usage during office hours' (IAT-2), 'I lose track of time when engaging in non-work internet activities' (IAT-3),'I experience difficulty resisting online temptations at work' (IAT-4),'Habitual internet use increases my likelihood of cyberloafing' (IAT-5) and'I check social media or online content impulsively during work hours' (IAT-6) and Internet Addiction Tendency

The R-Square value of 0.895 suggests that 89% of the variance in Internet Addiction Tendency is explained collectively by the six independent variables included in the model, reflecting high explanatory power. The Adjusted R-Square (0.894) is only marginally lower than the R-Square value, indicating that the model remains robust even after adjusting for the number of predictors and that over fitting is minimal. The standard error of the estimate (0. 24898) is relatively low, implying that the predicted values of Internet Addiction Tendency closely approximate the observed values, thereby confirming good predictive accuracy.

Further, the Durbin –Watson statistics of 1.999, which is close to the ideal value of 2, indicates the absence of serious autocorrelation among the residuals. This confirms that the assumption of independence of errors is satisfactorily met. Overall, the model is statistically sound and reliable, demonstrating that the dimensions IAT -1, IAT -2, IAT -3, IAT -4, IAT -5 and IAT -6, significantly and jointly explain variations in Internet Addiction Tendency, making the model suitable for subsequent hypothesis testing and interpretation in the study.

Fig-4.1(a) Path Regression Analysis of Internet Addiction Tendency in Working Place

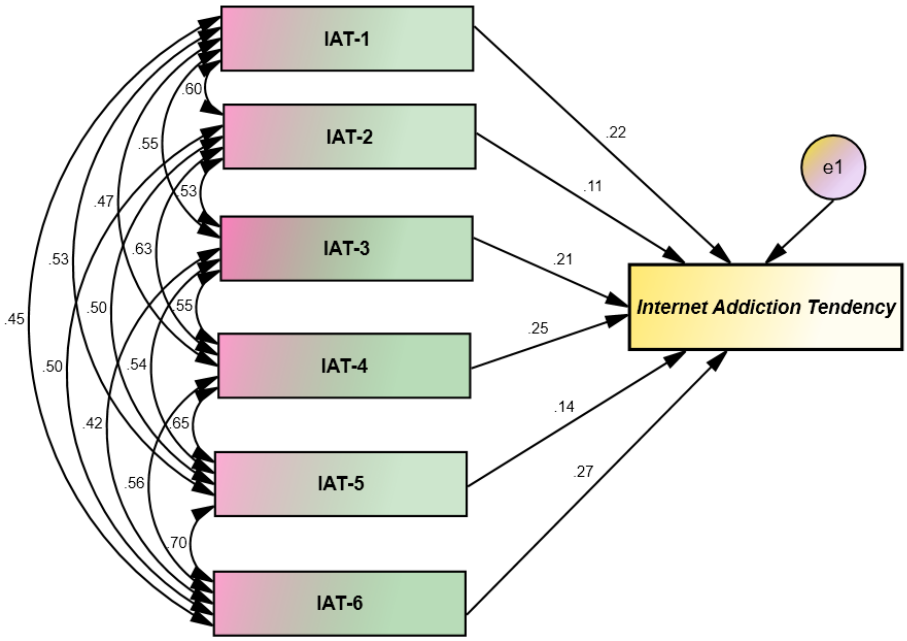

Table- 4.1 (b) Regression Weights for Internet Addiction Tendency in Working Place

Regression Weights	Std. Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-Value
Internet Addiction Tendency <--- IAT-1	0.222	0.016	11.956	0.000
Internet Addiction Tendency <--- IAT -2	0.107	0.018	5.414	0.000
Internet Addiction Tendency <--- IAT -3	0.213	0.015	11.761	0.000
Internet Addiction Tendency <--- IAT -4	0.246	0.018	11.936	0.000

Internet Addiction Tendency <--- IAT -5	0.143	0.018	6.426	0.000
Internet Addiction Tendency <--- IAT -6	0.272	0.014	13.917	0.000

Note: .000 is 1% α -significant level

Interpretation:

The Path diagram represents the independent variables of the Internet Addiction Tendency variables are, highly significant at 1% α -significant level.

The significant variables are comparing with estimated values, the resulted that the first influenced Internet Addiction Tendency variable is 'I check social media or online content impulsively during work hours' (IAT-6) and the estimate value is 0.272. The second influenced variable is, 'I experience difficulty resisting online temptations at work' (IAT-4), and the estimate value is 0.246. The third influenced variable is 'I feel a strong urge to check the internet even while working' (IAT-1) and the estimate value is 0.222

Inference:

The study concludes the Internet Addiction Tendency is 'employees check social media or online content impulsively during work hours' and 'they experience difficulty resisting online temptations at work' then 'they feel a strong urge to check the internet even while working'.

Table-4.1 (c) Covariance for Internet Addiction Tendency in Working Place Variables

Covariance	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
IAT-2 <--> IAT -6	0.438	0.041	10.664	0.000
IAT -6 <--> IAT-3	0.399	0.043	9.191	0.000
IAT -6 <--> IAT -4	0.517	0.044	11.630	0.000
IAT -6 <--> IAT -5	0.690	0.050	13.732	0.000
IAT -4 <--> IAT -5	0.553	0.042	13.097	0.000
IAT -3 <--> IAT -4	0.472	0.042	11.366	0.000
IAT -2 <--> IAT -5	0.401	0.037	10.708	0.000
IAT -3 <--> IAT -4	0.457	0.039	11.598	0.000
IAT -2 <--> IAT -4	0.478	0.037	12.783	0.000
IAT -2 <--> IAT -3	0.414	0.037	11.194	0.000
IAT -6 <--> IAT -1	0.407	0.041	9.836	0.000
IAT -5 <--> IAT -1	0.440	0.039	11.291	0.000
IAT -4 <--> IAT -1	0.364	0.036	10.149	0.000
IAT -3 <--> IAT -1	0.442	0.038	11.542	0.000
IAT -2 <--> IAT -1	0.440	0.036	12.285	0.000

The above table interprets covariance relationship of Internet Addiction Tendency variables, all relationships are significant and the significant relations are comparing with estimate values IAT -6 <--> IAT -5, IAT -4 <--> IAT -5 and IAT -6 <--> IAT -4 relationships are highly significant at 1% level. The estimate values are 0.690, 0.553 and 0.517 respectively.

Table- 4.1 (d) Correlations for Internet Addiction Tendency in Working Place Variables

Correlations	Estimate
IAT-2 <--> IAT -6	0.497
IAT -6 <--> IAT-3	0.415
IAT -6 <--> IAT -4	0.555
IAT -6 <--> IAT -5	0.699
IAT -4 <--> IAT -5	0.653
IAT -3 <--> IAT -4	0.539
IAT -2 <--> IAT -5	0.500
IAT -3 <--> IAT -4	0.553
IAT -2 <--> IAT -4	0.631
IAT -2 <--> IAT -3	0.528
IAT -6 <--> IAT -1	0.450
IAT -5 <--> IAT -1	0.534
IAT -4 <--> IAT -1	0.468
IAT -3 <--> IAT -1	0.550

IAT -2 <--> IAT -1	0.597

The above table interprets Correlation's relationship of Internet Addiction Tendency variables, all relationships' are positive correlated. Among the relationship the high correlated variables are IAT -6 <--> IAT -5, IAT -4 <--> IAT -5 and IAT -2 <--> IAT -4 the correlation values are 0.699, 0.653, and 0.631 respectively.

Findings

The results indicate that all Internet Addiction Tendency variables are statistically significant at the 1% level. Among the variables, *impulsive checking of social media or online content during work hours* emerged as the most influential factor (β = 0.272). This is followed by *difficulty resisting online temptations at work* (β = 0.246) and *a strong urge to check the internet even while working* (β = 0.222). These findings highlight that behavioural impulsivity and self-control limitations are the primary drivers of cyberloafing behaviour among private sector employees.

Suggestions

Organizations should adopt a balanced approach combining policy control and behavioural intervention. Clear internet usage policies, digital wellness programmes, and awareness training on responsible internet behaviour can help employees manage online temptations. Additionally, task redesign, monitored internet access, and employee counselling may reduce compulsive internet use and cyberloafing behaviour.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Internet Addiction Tendency significantly influences cyberloafing behaviour among private sector employees in Kerala. Employees who impulsively engage with online content and struggle to regulate internet usage during work hours are more likely to cyberloaf. Addressing cyberloafing therefore requires recognizing its behavioural roots and implementing preventive, supportive organizational strategies. The study contributes to the cyberloafing literature by positioning Internet Addiction Tendency as a key antecedent and offers practical insights for managing digital behaviour in contemporary workplaces.

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