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The Impact of Psychological Comfort and Perception of Loneliness on Cyberloafing Behaviors in Organizations: A Field Study on Tourism Enterprises

Örgütlerde Sanal Kaytarma Davranışları Üzerine Psikolojik Rahatlık ve Yalnızlık Algısının Etkisi: Turizm İşletmeleri Üzerinde Bir Alan Araştırması

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ABSTRACT

The utilization of technical resources and the internet for personal endeavors by employees during work hours leads to cyberloafing, adversely impacting their productivity and perhaps causing numerous personal and institutional problems. This study seeks to assess the influence of employees' cyberloafing practices on feelings of loneliness and psychological comfort in the hotel industry. We gathered research data from personnel at multiple five-star hotels in Antalya in this regard. Surveys were administered to 290 persons via face-to-face interviews. We eliminated 47 surveys because of incomplete responses, resulting in 243 surveys available for examination. The research analysis indicated that the sense of workplace loneliness positively and significantly influences cyberloafing activities while negatively and significantly affecting psychological comfort levels. To improve understanding and provide new ideas, it is helpful for business managers to look at how employees engage in cyberloafing and identify what makes it worse, so they can create effective strategies and solutions. Furthermore, to mitigate feelings of isolation and the adverse psychological effects associated with cyberloafing, it is advisable to cultivate a robust communication network between employees and management, facilitate collaborative teamwork, and establish conducive environments that promote safety and well-being for employees.

ÖΖ

Çalışanların mesai saatleri içerisinde teknolojik imkânları ve internet ortamını kendi şahsi amaçları için kullanması neticesinde oluşan sanal kaytarma işletmelerde çalışanların çalışma verimini olumsuz etkilemekte ve birtakım kişisel ve kurumsal sıkıntılara sebebiyet verebilmektedir. Bu çalışma otel işletmelerinde çalışan personellerin sanal kaytarma davranışlarının yalnızlık algısı ve psikolojik rahatlama düzeyine etkisini tespit etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu kapsamda araştırma verileri Antalya ilinde bulunan bazı beş yıldızlı otel işletmelerinde çalışan personellerden alınmıştır. 290 kişiye yüzyüze görüşme yöntemiyle anketler dağıtılmış, 47 anket eksik doldurulduğu için kapsam dışında bırakılmış, 243 anket değerlendirmeye alınmıştır. Araştırma analizler neticesinde sanal kaytarma davranışları üzerinde işyerinde yalnızlık algısının pozitif yönde ve anlamlı bir etkisinin olduğu, psikolojik rahatlık düzeyinde ise negatif yönlü ve anlamlı bir etkisinin olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Araştırmada alanyazına katkı sunmak ve yeni bir bakış açısı kazandırma amacıyla uygulayıcılara yönelik katkılar sunma ve öneriler getirmek amacıyla işletme yöneticileri çalışanların sanal kaytarma düzeylerini takip edip sanal kaytarmayı arttıran nedenler tespit edilerek gerekli plan ve uygulamaların geliştirilmesi faydalı olacaktır. Ayrıca sanal kaytarma ile çalışanlarda oluşan yalnızlık algısı ve negatif yönlü psikolojik rahatlık düzeylerinin ortadan kaldırılması için işletme çalışanları ile yöneticiler arasında güçlü bir iletişim ağının kurulması, ortak takım çalışmalarının gerçekleştirilmesi, çalışanların kendilerini daha güvenli ve refah içerisinde hissedebilecekleri konfor ortamlarının oluşturulması önerilebilir.

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Introduction

The significance of the tourist sector is progressively escalating in Turkey as it has evolved since the latter part of the 20th century (Derin and Tuna, 2021, p. 1334). In the tourist industry, characterized by intensive service-oriented operations, the human element is crucial, rendering it imperative for enterprises to address employee-related concerns (Kalıpçı, 2014, p. 1). In the labor-intensive tourism sector (Xu, Dust, and DiRenzo, 2019, p. 441), cultivating favorable employee attitudes and behaviors toward enterprises is a critical factor that will improve business success. Recent technological breakthroughs have impacted the tourist sector, as they have in many industries, making the utilization of technological resources essential for enterprises. In this regard, the technological developments and internet utilization prevalent in tourism enterprises enhance employee efficiency and augment labor productivity, enabling the completion of more activities in a reduced timeframe. This condition also presents specific challenges. Cyberloafing, defined as the utilization of the internet for non-work-related activities within businesses, constitutes a primary concern for organizations (Uzun, 2019, p. 1). Employers, especially in labor-intensive service sector enterprises, must exercise caution regarding this critical matter to prevent any adverse impact on employee motivation and maintain optimal business performance. In this context, firms should endeavor to mitigate issues associated with cyberloafing, regulate employees' psychological well-being and feelings of isolation, and adopt strategies that sustain high levels of employee motivation, which is crucial for labor productivity. The psychological comfort and sensations of loneliness substantially influence employees' cyberloafing practices. It is essential to meticulously oversee these aspects, especially in high-pressure job settings such as the hospitality industry. This study seeks to assess the influence of employees' cyberloafing practices on their psychological comfort and feelings of loneliness within the tourist sector. The impact of cyberloafing on feelings of loneliness and psychological comfort in tourism enterprises has not been the subject of any research. This work is unique and significant since it contributes to the field and proposes novel insights based on contemporary research. This is particularly accurate as technology increasingly plays a vital role in enterprises, with numerous technological items utilized in the labor-intensive tourism sector today.

The study's objectives are delineated, with the concepts of cyberloafing, psychological comfort, and loneliness. Subsequently, some research already conducted on the subject is presented. The study's findings on employees at hotel enterprises in the Antalya region are provided thereafter, along with various recommendations.

Conceptual Framework

Cyberloafing, Psychological Comfort, and Perception of Loneliness

In contemporary society, the internet facilitates the creation of substantial employment prospects and enhances productivity by offering advantages to enterprises in various domains, including accelerated work pace, cost efficiency, and abbreviated product life cycles. It has become an essential component for enterprises. This condition may result in diminished business privacy, reduced productivity, and issues pertaining to corporate responsibility as a direct outcome of online activity (Lim and Teo, 2005, p. 1081). Although internet usage is essential for organizations, providing advantages like enhanced job efficiency and decreased expenses, it may also result in unexpected challenges. In this regard, cyberloafing constitutes a significant challenge for enterprises. Cyberloafing has been extensively studied because of its detrimental effects on workplace productivity.

Cyberloafing is defined as utilizing the company's internet access for personal purposes during work hours (Lim, 2002, p. 677). Cyberloafing refers to the duration individuals engage

online to boost their motivation, unwind, or seek a momentary diversion rather than attending to their work obligations (Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2007). In summary, it entails performing personal duties online during work hours (Blanchard and Henle, 2008, p. 1069). Boswell and Olson-Buchanan (2007) assert that cyberloafing diminishes employees' overall job satisfaction and performance. Employees, affected by workplace stress and pressure, often seek respite by engaging in cyberloafing on social media or other online platforms. Ayyagari, Grover, and Faraj (2011) contend that cyberloafing habits can adversely impact an employee's work-life balance. Research and managerial comments in the hotel sector indicate that cyberloafing may increasingly proliferate in these labor-intensive environments (Erbaşı, 2019, p. 27).

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Kabat-Zinn (2005) characterizes psychological comfort as a state of mental and emotional tranquility experienced by individuals in stressful circumstances, whereas Edmondson (1999) defines it as the assurance employees possess that no adverse situations will emerge within the group when they engage in risk-taking with positive intentions. Psychological comfort is characterized as the notion that employees are autonomous individuals unconcerned about adverse consequences (Xu et al., 2019, p. 443). Facilitating psychological comfort in the workplace can augment employees' motivation and job happiness. Kahn and Byosiere (1992) established that psychological comfort positively influences employees' job performance. In the hospitality industry, ensuring the psychological well-being of personnel is crucial due to their constant exposure to consumer demands. Such an environment may mitigate employees' cyberloafing activities. Furthermore, the trust cultivated among employees would foster an impression of security, enhancing their willingness and efficiency in performance. This scenario is believed to augment employees' learning capacities, dedication, and innovation (Newman, Donohue, and Eva, 2017, p. 7). Recent research indicates that psychological comfort enhances work integration (Güçlü Nergiz, 2015, p. 225). In organizations devoid of psychological comfort, employees experience stress, insecurity, silence, instability, and heightened feelings of loneliness, resulting in diminished workforce performance (Dollard, Tuckey, and Dormann, 2012).

Studies Conducted in Tourism Enterprises on the Concepts of Virtual Shirking, Psychological Comfort, and Perception of Loneliness

The literature review examined the perception of loneliness and virtual shirking among individuals employed in tourism firms, along with the correlation between virtual shirking and psychological comfort. No research exists in the local and international literature, especially examining the correlation between virtual shirking and the perception of loneliness in tourism firms. Nonetheless, certain studies in non-tourism sectors have investigated the correlation between virtual shirking and the experience of loneliness. The literature search also indicated a lack of studies examining the correlation between virtual shirking and psychological comfort. Considering the potential similarities and tight associations among these notions, research

investigating the interplay between psychological safety, psychological comfort, and virtual shirking was deemed pertinent.

The pertinent studies are as follows:

Genç et al. (2018): Their research on Abant University students revealed that internet usage had a minimal influence on the experience of loneliness.

Semerci, Ergeneli, and Yılmaz (2020) discovered a favorable correlation between the perception of loneliness and virtual shirking among engineers and designers in their research.

Soyalın (2021): A study on banking sector personnel revealed a significant negative correlation between psychological safety and virtual shirking.

Ahmadi (2022): This study investigated the influence of social media on loneliness experiences and determined that social media addiction significantly exacerbates feelings of loneliness.

Yang, Lin, Chen, and Peng (2022) conducted research on employees in online organizations, revealing a strong correlation between the experience of loneliness and virtual shirking.

Khan, Naveed, Raheem, Sheraz, and Awan (2023) discovered in their study of telecommunications sector employees that virtual shirking adversely affects psychological comfort (well-being).

Pangani and Munyenyembe (2024) conducted research on healthcare professionals, demonstrating a significant impact of virtual shirking on the experience of loneliness.

Research Methodology

Population and Sample of the Study

This study uses a logical methodology to evaluate theoretical claims. It possesses an elucidative characteristic for the assessment of the causal link between variables. This study examines two distinct individual variables-psychological comfort and feeling of loneliness-associated with the virtual shirking behaviors of employees in the tourist sector. The research population comprises around 550 individuals employed in six five-star hotels located in Antalya province. The subsequent formula was employed to ascertain the sample size within this population (Ural and Kılıç, 2013):

$$n = \frac{N.z^2.\sigma^2}{(N-1).H^2 + z^2.\sigma^2}$$

The necessary sample size is 227 individuals, as indicated by a standard deviation (σ) of 0.5, a margin of error (H) of 0.05, a 95% confidence interval (z=1.96), and a population size (N) of 550. A total of 290 questionnaires were distributed to hotel businesses in this survey using a simple random sampling method. Nevertheless, 47 questionnaires were disqualified from the evaluation process as a result of inaccurate or invalid responses. Consequently, we conducted an analysis of the remaining 243 questionnaires. We can infer that the surveys, which were conducted with the participation of 243 individuals, accurately reflect the population.

Research Model and Hypotheses

Addressing research issues and establishing the appropriate methodologies enhance the clarity and resolution of variable linkages, underscoring the significance of selecting a research model in studies (Karasar, 2014, p. 75). Different research methods include surveys and experiments, frameworks that look at cause and effect or relationships, and studies that seek to

find or ignore connections. We employed the relational survey model among the survey models utilized in this investigation. Figure 1 illustrates the research model as a symbolic depiction and delineates the research hypotheses.

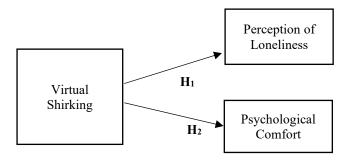


Figure 1: Symbolic Representation of the Research Model

H₁: There is a significant positive effect of perception of loneliness at the workplace on cyberloafing behaviors in organizations.

H₂: There is a significant negative effect of psychological comfort perception on cyberloafing behaviors in organizations.

Data Collection Tools

The survey technique, a quantitative research instrument, was implemented to accumulate data for the investigation. This investigation employs a two-part questionnaire. In the initial section, open-ended inquiries are posed to ascertain the demographic characteristics of the participants. The second section consists of scale items that pertain to the participants' psychological comfort levels, loneliness perception, and cyberloafing patterns. The statements in the scales related to the variables specified in the study were evaluated using a 5-point Likert-type scale. In addition, the Mersin University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee ethically approved the contents and questionnaire forms for the research prior to the data collection procedure, as evidenced by the decision dated 02.05.2023 and numbered 32.

- Virtual Shirking Scale: The instrument created by Yıldız et al. (2015) comprises 14 statements and encompasses two dimensions. The significant dimension of cyberloafing comprises eight statements, while the trivial activity dimension encompasses six statements.
- Loneliness in Work Life Scale: The instrument created by Wright et al. (2006) comprises 16 statements and encompasses two dimensions. The emotional deprivation dimension comprises nine statements, while the social friendship dimension includes seven statements.
- Psychological Comfort Scale: The scale created by Yener (2015) was employed to assess the psychological comfort levels of the participants. The scale comprises a single dimension and seven statements. The instrument created by Yıldız et al. (2015) comprises 14 statements and encompasses two dimensions. The significant dimension of cyberloafing has 8 statements, while the trivial activity dimension consists of 6 statements.

Research Findings

A survey was administered to 243 participants in a study conducted to investigate the impact of employees' psychological comfort levels and perceptions of loneliness on their virtual procrastination behaviors. The descriptive analyses that were conducted as a result of the survey revealed that 71% of the participants were male, 29% were female, 48% were married, 52% were single, 69% were aged between 21 and 36, 51% had a bachelor's degree, 20% had a high

school diploma, 17% had a graduate degree, 8% had a middle school education, and 4% had an elementary school education. Furthermore, it was found that 38% of the respondents had been employed for a total of 4–6 years, 48% for 1–3 years, 10% for more than 6 years, and 4% for less than 1 year. In their organizations, 8% had been employed for over six years, 36% for four to six years, 40% for one to three years, and 16% for less than one year.

The research dataset's normal distribution was assessed by examining the kurtosis and skewness values of the questions. The dataset is considered to exhibit normal distribution characteristics if the kurtosis coefficient is between -10 and 10 and the skewness coefficient is between -3 and 3 (Kline, 2015). The kurtosis values range from -2.134 to 8.312, while the skewness coefficients range from -1.773 to 2.871. These statistics indicate that the dataset exhibits properties of normal distribution.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) coefficient and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were examined to assess the factor analyses and structural validity of the scale items within the dataset. The Bartlett's test evaluates the adequacy of relationships in correlation matrices for factor analysis (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2014). The KMO coefficient must exceed 0.5. A larger coefficient indicates greater suitability of the dataset for factor analysis (Çiçeklioğlu, 2023).

The chi-square value for Bartlett's test of the virtual procrastination scale was $x^2(119) = 1873.331$; p < 0.05, and the KMO coefficient was 0.773 (77.3%). The analysis of loneliness within the work-life scale yielded a Bartlett's Test Chi-Square value of $x^2(86) = 1042.294$, with a significance level of p < 0.05. The KMO coefficient was determined to be 81.2% (0.812). For the psychological comfort perception scale, the Bartlett's Test Chi-Square value was $x^2(69) = 1027.002$; p < 0.05, and the KMO coefficient was 72.7% (0.727).

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted, revealing that the factor loadings for the virtual procrastination scale ranged from 0.52 to 0.79, for the perception of loneliness in work life, from 0.43 to 0.61, and for the psychological comfort perception scale, from 0.73 to 0.78. The values of goodness-of-fit were satisfactory. The confirmatory factor analysis indicates that the data align with the scale structures. The findings indicated that the virtual procrastination and perception of loneliness in work-life scales comprised two factors, while the psychological comfort perception scale consisted of one. The analysis of Cronbach's alpha values (Table 1) assessed the internal consistency among the scales measuring virtual procrastination, feelings of loneliness at work, and perceptions of psychological comfort. The reliability values exceeding 0.70 suggest that they surpass the accepted thresholds in social sciences, thereby confirming the reliability of the scales (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2014:305).

Scales Used	Number of Statements	Alpha Coefficients
Virtual Shirking	14	,832
Important Virtual Slacking	8	,776
Insignificant Activity	6	,791
Loneliness at Work	16	,812
Emotional Deprivation	9	,769

,803

,841

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

Social Friendship

Psychological Comfort

Correlation and Regression Analysis Results

Correlation analysis was employed to examine the relationships between the dependent variable (cyberloafing) and the independent variables (psychological comfort and feelings of loneliness at work) (Table 2). A notable positive correlation exists between cyberloafing and perceptions of workplace loneliness (r = .491; p < 0.01). Additionally, we observed minor but significant correlations among the sub-dimensions of cyberloafing. A

significant negative correlation was observed between cyberloafing and psychological comfort (r = -0.302; p < 0.05).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Virtual Shirking (1)	1						
Important Virtual Slacking (2)	,379**	1					
Insignificant Activity (3)	,314**	,248**	1				
Loneliness at Work (4)	,491**	,433**	,411**	1			
Emotional Deprivation (5)	,478**	,372**	,401**	,443**	1		
Social Friendship (6)	,325*	,293*	,317*	,361*	,272*	1	
Psychological Comfort (7)	-,302*	-,347*	-,286*	,078	,006	,014	1
*p<0.05; **p<0.01, n=243							

Table 3: The Effect of Perception of Loneliness at Workplace on Cyberloafing Behavior

	Dependent Variable		
Independent	Virtual Shirking		
Variable			
\mathbb{R}^2	,214		
F	27,131		
Loneliness at Work	_ β ,271		
	p ,001	•	

In accordance with the research assumptions, we used regression analysis to assess the impact of independent factors on their dependent variables. We performed a linear regression analysis to evaluate the hypothesis that workplace loneliness elevates the likelihood of cyberloafing (Table 3). Twenty-four percent (R^2 =0.214) of the variance in cyberloafing activities can be attributed to workplace loneliness, as revealed by the findings. The investigation indicated that the degree of workplace loneliness substantially affected the length of cyberloafing (F=27.131). The " β " values demonstrated that cyberloafing increased by 0.271 units for every one-unit rise in the percentage of individuals experiencing workplace loneliness. The researchers determined that the initial hypothesis, which posited that "perceived loneliness in the workplace significantly positively influences cyberloafing behaviors in organizations," was correct.

Table 4: The Effect of Psychological Comfort Perception on Cyberloafing Behavior

	Dependent Variable		
Independent	Virtual Shirking		
Variable	_		
\mathbb{R}^2	-,178		
F	19,645		
Psychological Comfort	β ,102		
-	p ,002		

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the hypothesis that the impression of psychological comfort adversely influences cyberloafing practices (Table 4). The independent variable, psychological comfort assessment, accounts for 17.8% of the variance in cyberloafing behaviors ($R^2 = 0.178$). The findings indicated that psychological comfort exerted a statistically significant influence on cyberloafing (F=19.645). The " β " values indicated that for each one-unit increase in psychological comfort, cyberloafing diminished by 0.102 units (p<0.01). The hypothesis that H₂ aimed to test, stating, "There is a significant negative effect of psychological comfort perception on cyberloafing behaviors in organizations," was confirmed to be accurate.

Conclusion, Discussion and Recommendations

This study seeks to assess the impact of hotel employees' cyberloafing practices on their perceptions of loneliness and psychological comfort levels. We examined the correlations among cyberloafing, perceptions of loneliness, and degrees of psychological comfort. The primary objective was to (a) elucidate the impact of cyberloafing on the perception of loneliness among employees in the hotel industry. (b) Examine the impact of cyberloafing on the psychological well-being of employees in the hospitality industry.

A correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between the dependent variable (cyberloafing) and the independent variables (psychological comfort and feelings of loneliness at work). These analyses revealed a moderate, positive, significant relationship between cyberloafing and the perception of loneliness at work (r = .491; p < 0.01). Furthermore, the analysis revealed that the sub-dimensions of cyberloafing exhibited low-level significant relationships with one another. A low-level negative significant relationship was identified between cyberloafing and psychological comfort (r = -0.302; p < 0.05). We performed regression analysis to investigate the impact of independent variables on dependent variables, consistent with hypotheses H₁ and H₂. The independent variable of feeling lonely at work accounts for 21.4% (R²=0.214) of the variation in cyberstalking behaviors. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that cyberloafing was significantly influenced by individuals' feelings of loneliness in the workplace (F=27.131). The "β" coefficients indicated that for each one-unit increase in perceived loneliness, cyberloafing rose by 0.271 units (p<0.01). Consequently, the findings supported H₁, which posited that perceived loneliness in the workplace has a significant positive effect on cyberloafing behaviors in organizations. The results align with findings from several studies in the literature (Genç et al., 2018; Semerci et al., 2020; Ahmadi, 2022; Yang et al., 2022; Pangani and Munyenyembe, 2024). We employed simple linear regression analysis to evaluate hypothesis H₂. Individuals' psychological comfort accounts for 17.8% of the variation in cyberloafing behaviors (R=-.178). The findings indicated that psychological comfort significantly influenced cyberloafing (F=19.645). The "β" values indicated that a one-unit increase in psychological comfort corresponded to a decrease in cyberloafing by 0.102 units (p<0.01). The results confirmed H₂, which aimed to test the hypothesis that psychological comfort perception has a significant negative effect on cyberloafing behaviors in organizations. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Khan et al. (2023) in the existing literature.

This research seeks to enhance the literature and offer practitioners insights and recommendations from a novel perspective. In this respect, it would be advantageous for corporate managers to assess employees' degrees of virtual procrastination and ascertain the elements that exacerbate it, thus formulating requisite strategies and implementations. To mitigate feelings of loneliness and adverse psychological comfort stemming from virtual procrastination, it is advisable to cultivate a robust communication network between employees and managers, facilitate collaborative team activities, and establish conducive environments that promote safety and well-being for employees. We anticipate that this situation will improve perception levels and positively impact task productivity. Furthermore, enterprises may provide restricted network connectivity internally to reduce virtual procrastination. We can alleviate employees' virtual procrastinating tendencies in this manner. An analysis of the literature reveals a scarcity of studies on this topic in both national and international contexts, suggesting that this research may contribute to addressing the existing gap in the literature. Researchers examining this topic may utilize a bigger sample size across various accommodation service providers and other sectors of tourism in diverse places, both nationally and internationally. Research conducted in this manner may facilitate broader participation and yield more generalized outcomes applicable across various geographies. Furthermore, incorporating concepts such as job satisfaction, job performance, and job stress into the study and analyzing their interrelations with the research issue may enhance the depth of analysis and interpretation.

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