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MY DIGITAL TUG-OF-WAR: BALANCING NORMS, CYBERSLACKING, TECH-SAVVINESS, AND DIGITAL WELL-BEING

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Abstract

Digitization of the workplace has exposed employees to online distractions, resulting in cyberslacking, using the internet during working hours for non-work-related activities. This paper draws on the Social Norms Theory and the Digital Well-Being Framework to explore how normative factors and personal digital resources influence cyberslacking, thereby better understanding the drivers and regulators of this behavior. Particularly, the research explores the impact of descriptive norms (conceptions of the prevalence of a behavior) and injunctive norms (conceptions of social approval) on cyberslacking, including tech-savviness as a mediating variable and digital well-being as a moderating resource. The sample size was 330 employees of the public sector in Pakistan who met specific eligibility criteria. The structural equation modeling results indicate that both descriptive and injunctive norms have a significant effect on promoting cyberslacking behavior. Furthermore, tech-savviness mediates between social norms and cyberslacking, implying that the digital competence of employees enhances their capabilities to respond to normative cues. Notably, digital well-being was expected to buffer the relationship between social norms and cyberslacking, but in our empirical test, it amplified it, suggesting that digital well-being is not only boundary defining resource, but as one that allows more assured, confident, and normalized interactions with technology. The research will contribute to the theory by combining the Social Norms Theory with the Digital Well-Being Framework, which will provide an overview of how external social factors interplay with internal digital self-regulation to influence cyberslacking. In practice, the findings imply that organizations can restructure workplace norms, clarify managerial disapproval, direct tech-savviness to productive purposes, and promote digital well-being by encouraging workplace wellness programs.

INTRODUCTION

The advancement of digital technologies in contemporary organizations has altered communication, productivity, and behavior of employees in the workplace. Although these developments contribute to efficiency, they also give rise to issues such as cyberslacking, the use of organizational internet resources to access personal, non-work-related activities during working hours (Tandon et al., 2022). Cyberslacking or cyberloafing is a behavior that is not only shaped by personal

dispositions but also by social norms at the workplace. Social norms are of two critical forms, descriptive norms, which are perceptions of how common a behavior is and injunctive norms which are perceptions of how acceptable a behavior is by a social group (Blanchard and Henle, 2008). Employees would justify such behavior when they see that others are often involved in cyberslacking, or when they believe that this practice is condoned by the organization (Tandon et al., 2022).

Although the earlier research using the theory of planned behavior demonstrated that social norms could be used to predict cyberslacking (Doğa Koç, 2020), it appears that these relationships are quite conditional. Wohn and Ahmadi (2019) emphasize the necessity to use more holistic models that consider individual and social-level variables and encourage researchers to consider the significance of knowledge regarding digital behaviors. Such variables should be measured in subsequent research and scholars should investigate the ways to minimize the cases of cyberslacking and preserve a digitally sustainable working environment.

Individual-level factors such as the predisposition to technology may either increase or reduce the extent to which the social norms are applied into a cyberslacking behavior. Technologically advanced individuals with greater digital literacy, self-efficacy, and confidence are able to indulge in personal online activities without detection, which cushions the power of the norms on cyberslaking (Yu et al., 2025). Conversely, the digitally incompetent might struggle to react to normative-based pressures due to the technical constraints or fears of harm or violation.

In addition, the concept of digital well-being, a new construct used to refer to the ability to have a healthy relationship with technology, is also becoming a boundary condition. Highly digitally well employees are more self-regulated and less likely to give in to the normative influence that encourages cyberslacking (Vanden Abeele, 2021). Conversely, individuals with less digital well-being are more susceptible to overuse, distraction, and burnout possibilities, which is consistent with the results regarding the moderated mediation effects of the more widespread workplace digital behaviors (Ju and Pak, 2024).

In spite of these observations, major gaps in research still exist. The current literature is almost silent on incorporating both mediating (e.g., tech savviness) and moderating (e.g., digital well-being) variables within a single framework of explanations. Moreover, though the recent reviews consider the relevance of contextual norms, they tend to ignore the role of personal digital competencies as the determinants of the potency of these normative effects (Tandon et al., 2022). Sealing these gaps will give a more refined explanation to why certain employees are prone to normative pressures to cyber-slack compared to others.

Therefore, the paper will also aim at investigating the complex connection between descriptive and injunctive norms, tech savviness as a mediator and digital well-being as a moderator of the decision-making process of engaging in cyberslacking. The present research is part of the body of knowledge on the management of digital behaviour in the workplace to date by integrating personal level digital ability and well-being theoretical frameworks with the theory of social norms. Moreover, the inclusion of dimensions means that the present research will make a contribution to the theory and offer a practical contribution to how less cyberslacking behaviour can be promoted in work environments that are saturated with technology. Moreover, this study will give managers a broad picture of cyberslacking in different theoretical perspectives so that organisations can manage and reduce its effects on the performance of their employees.

Theoretical background and hypotheses

This study draws from Social Norms Theory (Cialdini et al., 1990) and the Digital Well-Being Framework (Vanden Abeele, 2021), which together provide a solid theoretical framework to explain the fluctuating effects of normative reinforcements, individual skills in digital media, and psychological well-being on cyberslacking behavior in the workplace. Social Norms Theory states that people act in ways highly influenced by perceived social norms, resulting from injunctive norms (perceptions of what is socially endorsed or disendorsed) and descriptive norms (perceptions of what is usually done) (Cialdini et al., 1990). Therefore, cyberslacking is likely to happen if (descriptive

norms) employees perceive it as socially acceptable (injunctive norms, e.g., it is acceptable to cyberslack at work) or if they observe cyberslacking among their peers. According to this theory, employees may engage in cyberslacking to conform to the norms of the social group, seeking approval from or avoiding disapproval from other group members, which can either encourage or discourage cyberslacking in the context of prevailing workplace norms. For example, if employees think that others in their peer group or supervisor do not find fault with cyberslacking, it increases the likelihood of the behavior, since it aligns behavior with perceived social norms (Cialdini et al., 1990; Jacobson et al., 2020).

Social Norms Theory enhances the Digital Well-Being Framework (Vanden Abeele, 2021) by focusing on an individual's psychological and emotional balance concerning technology use. Digital well-being refers to the ability of digital technology not to harm an individual's psychological or social aspects. Then, poor digital well-being can make it worse with high screen fatigue and tech-induced stress as employees use digital distractions to cope. On the other hand, high digital well-being promotes self-regulation, thus promoting efficient control of technology use and lowering the chances of being on non-work-related internet use while working. Building on this work, we predict that digital well-being buffers the relationship between social norms and cyberslacking. Employees who are well-equipped in digital well-being may be less affected by descriptive norms, as they are better at controlling their technology use when desired, even when it comes to cyberslacking. It also relates to the Digital Well-Being Framework, encouraging positive relationships with technology and reducing detrimental use of technology (Vanden Abeele, 2021).

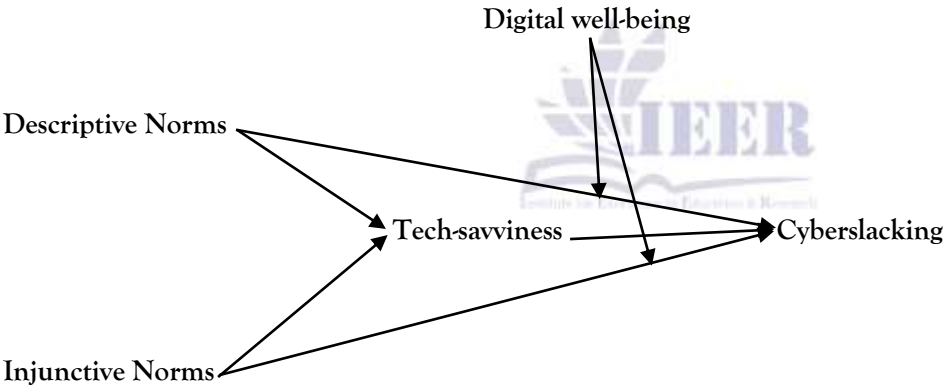


Figure 1. Research Model.

Descriptive Norms and Cyberslacking

Descriptive norms refer to perceptions of what is commonly done in specific situations, guiding behavior by providing evidence of what is likely to be appropriate or effective (Cialdini et al., 1990a). Employees' perceptions of how frequently coworkers engage in a particular behavior are a core predictor of workplace cyberslacking. According to social norms theory, individuals tend to align their behavior with perceived group practices to maintain social conformity (Osei et al., 2022). When cyberslacking appears widespread, it creates a perception that the behavior is implicitly tolerated, reducing personal resistance to such deviance.

Tandon et al. (2022) emphasize that descriptive norms serve as informational signals, which makes employees perceive that non-work internet use is a normal state. They focus on how employees rationalize cyberslacking by noting that other employees also behave in the same way. This is in line with Wu et al. (2023) who opine that cyberslacking is socially learned in workplaces that have weak sanctions and strong peer modeling. Within an organization, individuals are prone to conform to the expectation of others and follow

their colleagues in their respective activities, and their boss respectively (Sykes et al., 2017). In another study, Mihelic, Lim, and Culiberg (2023) discovered that amongst Gen Z employees and students, injunctive norms (approval-based) better predicted cyberloafing compared to descriptive norms.

On the other hand, descriptive norms are a very strong behavioral stimulus in the cases where informal workplace culture encourages tolerance to digital distractions. Sun et al. (2025) discovered that the cybslacking of employees was modified by social norms when workload varied; employees who were in low workload situations were particularly prone to imitating the online behaviors of their peers. In addition, it is significant when it comes to the interaction of descriptive norms and organizational controls. According to Wu et al. (2023), perceived high certainty of sanctions reduced the impact of descriptive norms on cyberslacking, which implied that the norm effect is dependent on formal control systems. Interestingly, cross-cultural evidence shows varying effects of descriptive norms. Osei et al. (2022) demonstrated that in high power distance cultures, descriptive norms were weaker predictors of cyberslacking because employees relied more on managerial directives than peer modeling. In contrast, in low power distance cultures, peer behaviors were stronger behavioral cues, reinforcing descriptive norm effects.

Overall, the literature suggests that descriptive norms indirectly legitimize cyberslacking, but their strength varies based on organizational tolerance for personal internet use, presence of monitoring and sanctions, cultural context (e.g., power distance, collectivism), and personal traits (e.g., moral disengagement, self-control).

H1: Descriptive norms lead to Cyberslacking.

Injunctive norms and Cyberslacking

Injunctive norms refer to perceptions of which behaviors are approved or disapproved by others in a social group. They reflect what people ought to do and operate through social approval or disapproval mechanisms, shaping moral and reputational considerations (Cialdini et al., 1990b). It reflects an individual's perception of what behaviors are socially approved or disapproved within a group or organization. Unlike descriptive norms, which signal what others do, injunctive norms indicate what others ought to do. In the context of cyberslacking, perceived approval or disapproval from supervisors and coworkers significantly shapes behavioral intentions (Osei et al., 2022). Moreover, it is examined how prescriptive social norms (a closely related construct to injunctive norms) influence cyberloafing, finding that employees reduce cyberslacking when they perceive strong disapproval from coworkers (Osei et al., 2022). Interestingly, this relationship was moderated by cultural dimensions such as power distance, suggesting that in hierarchical workplaces, managerial approval carries more weight than peer approval.

Similarly, Wu et al. (2023) have emphasized that perceived informal sanctions and peer disapproval are preventive measures of cyberloafing, whereas workplaces with lax injunctive norms are permissive to deviant digital behaviors. These results highlight the fact that injunctive norms serve as a reputational and moral control system, which strengthens organizational expectations and values. Dang et al. (2024) determined that in a higher-education context, the frequency of cyber-distraction decreased significantly as students perceived the instructors to disapprove of this behavior. This confirms that explicit social disapproval decreases moral disengagement and makes people more conscious of norm violations. In addition, Sun et al. (2025) investigated the interplay of workload and social norms, revealing that injunctive norms intensify the adverse relationship between high workload and cyberslacking, with employees feeling forced to align themselves with collective disapproval in times of work emergencies.

In contrast, when injunctive norms are ambiguous, individuals rely on their moral reasoning and self-justifications. Hanif et al. (2022), using an extended theory of planned behavior, found that weak injunctive norms increase the rationalization of cyberslacking as a harmless behavior, even if organizational policies prohibit it. Cyberslacking, defined as employees' non-work-related use of organizational IT resources, is strongly shaped by social norms, particularly injunctive norms, perceptions of what behaviors are approved or disapproved within a given setting.

In other words, injunctive norms are general rules and standards people should adhere to according to their group membership (Jacobson et al., 2020). These two norm perceptions (descriptive and injunctive) have previously been associated with various behaviors, including socially undesirable behaviors like cyberslacking (Jacobson et al., 2020). Similarly, Askew et al. (2014) also found that injunctive norms significantly shape employees' attitudes toward cyberslacking. According to Venkatesh et al. (2023), injunctive norms (i.e., managerial approval) are more important than descriptive norms in the context of cyberslacking. This indicates that the norms have somewhat different effects, which may lead to behaviors such as cyberslacking.

H2: Injunctive norms lead to Cyberslacking.

Tech Savviness: A Mediating Variable

The research indicated that personnel possessing advanced digital abilities, referred to as tech-savviness, had a greater tendency for digital multitasking, resulting in diminished productivity. Technologically proficient professionals often engage in multitasking, alternating between work and personal duties, which increases the likelihood of cyberslacking (Reinecke et al., 2016).

Cyberslacking has evolved to a point where profiling is as important as tech savviness and proficiency in internet skills and search engines. This helps tech-savvy employees find the internet easily, thus creating more chances of cyberslacking (Sampat et al.,2017). Moreover, such persons possessing superior digital competence not only exhibit greater multitasking abilities but also use internet resources secretly, potentially elevating the propensity for cyberslacking (Vitak et al., 2011). Furthermore, technologically proficient employees might consider using the internet as an integral aspect of their work, resulting in an increased frequency of cyberslacking with less stigma (Gözü et al., 2015).

In addition, employees also excuse cyberslacking when they do not feel valued or overworked, and once again, they use their tech skills to buy their personal web surfing on the clock (V. K. G. Lim, 2002). Similarly, it is revealed that individuals with elevated digital literacy were more inclined to participate in cyberslacking, particularly in work-from-home settings characterized by reduced oversight (Andel et al., 2019). Based on their argument, (Hanif et al., 2023) claim that higher tech-savviness could produce more and less cyberslacking because of the individual's cognitive strategies and the organization's context. Because they are multitasking or being productive, employees with high-tech savviness might rationalize cyberslacking, and employees with skills that could be applied to increased productivity might utilize them for efficient task completion.

However, technological proficiency amplifies access to possible interruptions; it simultaneously improves an individual's time management skills, reducing unnecessary cyberslacking (Askew et al., 2014). In the same way, in businesses with stringent oversight, even technologically proficient individuals were less inclined to engage in cyberslacking, indicating that overall environmental factors are crucial (V. Lim et al., 2009). Therefore, the dual role of tech-savviness constitutes a potential mediation in the norms' cyberslacking relationship. Based on this, we can build our third and fourth hypotheses.

H3: Tech-savviness mediates the relationship between descriptive norms and cyberslacking.

H4: Tech-savviness mediates the relationship between injunctive norms and cyberslacking.

Digital Well-being: A Moderating Influence

Digital well-being is the ability of a person to have a healthy and balanced relationship with technology, reducing digital overuse, and maximizing the goodness (Vanden Abeele, 2021). Digital well-being in the context of workplace cyberslacking moderates the strength of the translations between social norms and actual cyberslacking behavior.

The recent research points at the buffering nature of digital well-being. As an example, Dang et al. (2024) discovered that students who had high digital self-control, which is a key element of digital well-being, were less prone to peer pressure to engage in cyber-slacking. On the other hand, poor digital well-being increased susceptibility to social influences, resulting in increased distraction and reduced performance. As people use digital distractions as coping mechanisms, poor digital well-being, for example, high screen fatigue or tech-induced stress, can exacerbate cyberslacking behaviors (Vanden Abeele,

2021). In line with this, grayscale smartphones can also reduce screen time and make users feel more in control over their digital lives, indirectly reducing cyberslacking (Dekker et al., 2023). In addition, encouraging digital well-being allows organizations to create an environment that discourages gadget use and pushes for productive work (N. M. Thomas et al., 2022). However, digital well-being strategies can significantly decrease cyberslacking, but some people may not stop being addicted to a digital aspect even if the decrease is high enough, therefore requiring continuous support and intervention. Despite the possibilities of using technology, there is an ongoing debate about how much technology use affects personal well-being (T. Thomas & Bradley, 2023). Similarly, Mishra and Tageja (2022) suggested that mindfulness and digital well-being act as personal resources that protect employees from stress-induced cyberslacking. In workplaces where descriptive norms signaled frequent cyberslacking, individuals with strong digital well-being were better able to self-regulate and resist such normative pressures.

Kwala et al. (2024) stated that planned cyberloafing possibly enhances well-being by providing brief mental detachment. However, they noted that employees with higher baseline digital well-being moderated this effect, they engaged in cyberslacking in a controlled way that didn't spiral into problematic overuse, even if social norms tacitly approved it. Sun et al. (2025) also highlighted that social norms interact with individual traits like time management and well-being to influence cyberslacking. Employees with strong digital well-being treated cyberslacking as a short, purposeful recovery activity rather than a habitual norm-driven behavior.

Meanwhile, Mihelič et al. (2023) in their research on Gen Z cyberloafing, emphasized that psychological outcomes such as stress and fatigue mediated by digital overuse could be reduced when individuals prioritized digital well-being practices (e.g., scheduled disconnection). This suggests digital well-being not only moderates norm-behavior links but also mitigates the adverse downstream effects of norm-driven cyberslacking.

In organizational settings, Karimi Mazidi et al. (2020) demonstrated that well-being policies within organizations indirectly influence cyberslacking norms by fostering a healthier digital culture. When employees perceive that the organization supports digital well-being, they feel less compelled to conform to peer cyberslacking norms.

H5: Digital well-being moderates the relationship between descriptive norms and cyberslacking.

H6: Digital well-being moderates the relationship between injunctive norms and cyberslacking.

Methodology

Procedure and sampling

The data used in this study were gathered using surveys that were given to the employees in the Pakistani government sector. Among the reasons the authors choose to use public-sector organizations in Pakistan, there are high rates of digital transformation through e-governance, digitization of services, and the growth of computer-mediated communication between employees (Jabeen et al., 2024; Li, 2025). In order to be consistent in the workplace conditions and digital experience, the respondents needed to fulfill three qualifying criteria. First, they were required to work in government sector under a supervision of a manager or supervisor. Secondly, they had to be able to access a personal computer or smartphone with a working Internet connection at the workplace, so that all participants would also have to be presented with a similar technological environment. Thirdly, to ensure that the respondents could relate to and understand the notion of digital well-being, they were required to be familiar with digital well-being applications (e.g., screen time trackers, usage monitors, or digital wellness dashboards) on their smartphones or laptops.

These three screening questions were designed to appear first in the survey to ensure eligibility. Those respondents who failed to satisfy these requirements could not continue with the questionnaire. Moreover, prior to the actual data collection, the survey instrument was pretested by two academic experts and two doctoral students to provide clarity of content, readability, and contextual appropriateness of the survey. The results of this pretest stage were used to revise the questionnaire in order to make it easier to understand. To collect the primary data, online survey link was sent through personal contacts and professional networks to access

specific employees in the public sector. Following data screening 330 valid responses were retained to be analyzed.

The demographic composition of the sample showed that 191 respondents (57.9%) were male and 139 respondents (42.1%) were female. Detailed demographic information of the participants, including age, education level, and job tenure, is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographics of the Respondents (N = 330)

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	191	57.90%
Female	139	42.10%
Age		
upto 25	144	43.60%
26-35	116	35.20%
Above 35	70	21.20%
Education		
Bachelors	147	44.50%
Masters	115	34.80%
Doctorate	24	7.30%
Others	44	13.30%

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Measures

We adopted all the scales from previous literature. Cyberslacking is measured using the three-item scale devised by Moody & Siponen (2013). This scale has been widely used in past studies. For example, a sample item was "I use the Internet for non-work-related purposes at work in general." In the same way, a three-item scale from the Normative Beliefs Scale (Ajzen, 1991) measured descriptive norms. One of the items is "Most of my coworkers use the internet for non-work-related purposes during working hours." For the Injunctive norms, we adopted the same three-item scale from the Normative Beliefs Scale (Ajzen, 1991). For example, a sample item is "My supervisor does not like employees to use the internet for personal use during working hours." A scale of four items by Parasuraman (2000) was used to measure tech-savviness (Parasuraman, 2000). An item to illustrate included, "I can generally work out high-tech products without support." Digital well-being was evaluated using a 4-item scale derived from the Digital Life Balance scale by Duradoni et al. (2022). This scale assesses employees' perceived capacity to effectively manage and derive benefits from digital technology in a balanced manner. One example item is: "I currently have a good balance between the time I spend online and the time I have available for offline activities." This scale has been validated in various studies examining healthy digital habits.

Data analysis

Using AMOS 25, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was assessed to evaluate the measurement and structural models using the collected data. We employ a two-step approach to evaluate our measurement model using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), thereby verifying its reliability and

validity. To check common method bias, SPSS 25 was utilized.

Common method bias

Because our data for the current study came from self-reported survey responses at a single point in time, it was important to consider the potential threat of common method variance to the study's validity (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). Common method variance was examined by means of Harman's one-factor test. In particular, all measurement items were factor analyzed using principal component extraction, a forced 1-factor solution, and no rotation (Podsakoff et al., 2003). If VAF > 50%, the common method variance should be tested. The first factor in this research demonstrates 23.81% of the variation, less than 50%, showing the CMB is not a major threat to the validity of the results.

Measurement model

Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR) were used to determine the reliability of the constructs. The internal consistency of the two measures was in substantial agreement, as both measures exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70. In particular, the Cronbach's Alpha values of Cyberslacking (0.738), Descriptive Norms (0.797), Injunctive Norms (0.809), Tech-savviness (0.802), and Digital Well-being (0.799) also confirm their reliability. Furthermore, the Composite Reliability (CR) values for all constructs were greater than 0.75, thereby confirming the reliability of the measurement model. Tables 2 and 3 present details on the reliability of the constructs.

Table 2. Factor Loadings and Reliabilities

Constructs	Items	Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
Cyberslacking	CS1	0.825	0.738	0.757	0.515
	CS2	0.737			
	CS3	0.567			
Descriptive Norms	DN1	0.623	0.797	0.808	0.589
	DN2	0.863			
	DN3	0.796			
Injunctive Norms	IN1	0.787	0.809	0.81	0.587
	IN2	0.753			
	IN3	0.757			
Tech-savviness	TS1	0.539	0.802	0.804	0.513
	TS2	0.654			
	TS3	0.828			

		TS4	0.804			
Digital Well-being		DWB1	0.682	0.799	0.805	0.582
		DWB2	0.878			
		DWB3	0.713			

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was used to assess convergent validity. An item from digital well-being (DWB4) was removed due to its impact on low AVE, which significantly improved AVE. This removal of the item is consistent with the guidelines by Hair et al. (2021). The items measured their respective constructs well, as all constructs had AVE values above the standard threshold of 0.50. All the constructs are also found to be able to explain quite well the variance in their indicators, which is reflected by the AVE values for Cyberslacking (0.515), Descriptive Norms (0.589), Injunctive Norms (0.587), Tech-savviness (0.513), and Digital Well-being (0.582). Table 3 presents details of convergent validity. Moreover, MSV and HTMT analysis confirmed the discriminant validity. It is found that the constructs are separable. All the MSVs of the constructs were below their respective AVEs, which ensured adequate discriminant validity. Additional HTMT values further confirm the discriminant validity, as the HTMT values were lower than 0.85. Tables 3 and 4 present details of discriminant validity.

Table 3. Correlational matrix.

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	CS	TS	DN	IN	DWB
CS	0.757	0.515	0.214	0.792	**0.718**				
TS	0.804	0.513	0.173	0.838	0.415***	**0.716**			
DN	0.808	0.589	0.214	0.841	0.463***	0.327***	**0.767**		
IN	0.81	0.587	0.162	0.811	0.403***	0.326***	0.250***	**0.766**	
DWB	0.805	0.582	0.078	0.84	-0.016	0.129†	0.279***	0.271***	**0.763**

References Significance of Correlations: (Gaskin, J. & Lim; J., 2016)
† p < 0.100
* p < 0.050
** p < 0.010
*** p < 0.001

The model fit was examined to ensure overall fit with key fit indices. The CMIN/DF of the results is at 2.293 (< 3), CFI at 0.937 (> 0.90), SRMR at 0.055 (< 0.08), RMSEA at 0.063 (close to good cutoff of 0.06) and PClose at 0.03. Together these indices indicate that the model does a good job with this data. Table 5 carries details of model fitness. Finally, the measurement model satisfies all such reliability and validity requirements and ready for structural model testing.

Table 4. HTMT analysis.

	CS	TS	DN	IN	DWB
CS					
TS	0.432				
DN	0.507	0.337			
IN	0.437	0.342	0.296		
DWB	0.001	0.159	0.348	0.267	

(CS=Cyberslacking, TS= Tech-savviness, DN= Descriptive norms, IN= Injunctive norms, DWB= Digital well-being)

Table 5. Model fit measures.

Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN	215.536	-	-
DF	94	-	-
CMIN/DF	2.293	Between 1 and 3	Excellent
CFI	0.937	>0.95	Acceptable
SRMR	0.055	<0.08	Excellent
RMSEA	0.063	<0.06	Acceptable
PClose	0.03	>0.05	Acceptable

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The findings indicate that both descriptive norms and injunctive norms significantly influence cyberslacking behavior among employees. Descriptive norms, which reflect perceptions of how common a behavior is among peers, demonstrated a strong positive effect on cyberslacking ($\beta = 0.313$, $t = 6.492$, $p < .001$), supporting H1. This suggests that when employees observe their colleagues frequently engaging in cyberslacking, they perceive the behavior as normal and are more inclined to imitate it. This result aligns with social norms theory, which posits that individuals conform to observed group behaviors (Tandon et al., 2022; Wu, Song, & Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara, 2023). Similarly, injunctive norms, which denote the level of social approval or disapproval associated with a behavior, also showed a significant positive effect on cyberslacking ($\beta = 0.281$, $t = 5.151$, $p < .001$), supporting H2. When cyberslacking is perceived as socially acceptable, employees feel less constrained by organizational policies and moral considerations (Osei et al., 2022). It also aligns with social norms theory.

The study further revealed that tech-savviness acts as a significant mediator in the relationship between social norms and cyberslacking. Specifically, both descriptive norms ($\beta = 0.272$, $p < .001$) (H3) and injunctive norms ($\beta = 0.234$, $p < .001$) (H4) indirectly increased cyberslacking through their effect on tech-savviness, supporting H3 and H4. This shows that normative pressures positively contribute to the levels of confidence and digital competence of the employees, which consequently promotes cyberslacking. This result confirms the findings of earlier studies by Yu et al. (2025), who established that digital self-efficacy mediates the relationship between perceived social norms and technology-related behaviors and that individual digital competence amplifies norm-guided behaviors.

The moderation test has given us a fascinating insight. The researchers presumed that the impact of social norms on cyberslacking would be less in the presence of digital well-being because more self-controlled and digitally minded individuals would be more resistant to peer-induced actions. The results, however, give the opposite, as the digital well-being reinforces the relationships between the descriptive norms (H5), the injunctive norms (H6), and the cyberslacking, meaning that it facilitates and does not protect it. This contradictory result is in line with the new thinking that frames digital well-being as no longer necessarily limiting, but as one that allows more assured, confident, and normalized interactions with technology (Vanden Abeele, 2021; Burr et al., 2020). In the context of descriptive norms, individuals with high digital well-being might interpret peers' cyberslacking not as deviant, but as a socially acceptable form of digitally balanced behavior , a perspective supported by Lian et al. (2017), who found that self-regulated individuals often engage in digital leisure strategically to manage stress or maintain productivity. Thus, higher digital well-being could enhance conformity to social norms by legitimizing controlled cyberslacking as part of one's digital wellness routine (β =0.164, $p < .001$). Similarly, Lukoff et al. (2023) argue that digital well-being encompasses the ability to integrate technology meaningfully, rather than limiting its use, suggesting that individuals with higher well-being may feel more comfortable engaging in non-work digital activities when such behaviors are socially modeled or approved.

Regarding injunctive norms (H6), the finding that digital well-being amplifies the effect of perceived social approval on cyberslacking resonates with the idea that digitally healthy individuals experience lower guilt and moral strain when conforming to socially approved digital behaviors (Smits et al., 2022). When people perceive cyberslacking as acceptable within their social environment, those high in digital well-being may engage more readily, viewing it as harmless or even restorative micro breaks (β = 0.116, p = 0.010). N. M. Thomas et al. (2022) also reframe digital well-being as the "positive management of digital engagement," which may encourage balanced forms of technology use consistent with social expectations.

Within Social Norms Theory, this result suggests a contextual reinterpretation: rather than functioning as a buffer, digital well-being moderates the salience of social norms by shaping how individuals cognitively and emotionally evaluate digital behaviors. In cases where the digital well-being is high, people are better placed to act the way they consider as normative, particularly when cyberslacking is perceived to be harmless or acceptable in society. Therefore, the positive moderation observed is theoretically consistent with the evolving view that digital well-being facilitates norm-congruent digital behavior, not merely self-restraint.

Taken together, these results provide robust support for an integrated moderated-mediation framework, where social norms directly and indirectly influence cyberslacking through tech-savviness. At the same time, digital well-being has a positive impact on the strength of these relationships. The findings extend social norms theory by highlighting the importance of individual differences in digital competence and self-regulation. The structural model details are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Path / Effect Tested	β	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	Descriptive norms → Cyberslacking	0.313	6.492	<0.001	Supported
H2	Injunctive norms → Cyberslacking	0.281	5.151	<0.001	Supported
H3	Descriptive norms → Tech-savviness → Cyberslacking (mediation)	0.272	0.313	<0.001	Supported
H4	Injunctive norms → Tech-savviness → Cyberslacking (mediation)	0.234	0.281	<0.001	Supported

Hypothesis	Path / Effect Tested	β	t-value	p-value	Result
H5	Digital well-being × Descriptive norms → Cyberslacking (moder.)	0.164	3.540	<0.001	Supported
H6	Digital well-being × Injunctive norms → Cyberslacking (moder.)	0.116	2.580	0.010	Supported

Note. β = standardized path coefficient. P-values < 0.05 indicate statistical significance.

Implications and discussion

Theoretical implications

The present research advances the existing literature by examining the impact of descriptive and injunctive norms on slacking in cyberspace, with tech-savviness as a mediator and digital well-being as a moderator.

The first hypothesis, that descriptive norms influence cyberslacking, is well-supported by the results and the literature. Employees who frequently encounter cyberloafing in their surroundings are more likely to engage in it (Venkatesh et al., 2023). Furthermore, descriptive norms act as a distal cause of cyberslacking, meaning that when employees perceive their coworkers engaging in cyberslacking, they are more likely to act similarly (K. L. Askew et al., 2018). Theoretically, this result supports the notion that organizational behavior cannot be comprehended outside of the social context, since employees can employ peer behaviors as indicators to decide whether or not cyberslacking is acceptable. Further, H2 is supported by the fact that the injunctive norms were the most effective predictors of cyberslacking, proving that both normative and injunctive norms forecast cyberslacking. A workplace that has a high level of disciplinary norms and monitoring policies has a lower rate of cyberslacking as compared to firms with a relaxed atmosphere, where the rate of cyberslacking is higher (Tandon et al., 2022). The results have shown that norms that are very strict prevent cyberslacking habits, but on the contrary, when the norms are lenient, a permissive environment is created. The result, therefore, reinforces the perception of the work environment concerning the determination of what is acceptable and what is deviant online conduct.

The mediation analysis proves that tech-savviness partially mediates the connection between norms and cyberslacking. It implies that the power of descriptive and injunctive norms is high to influence cyberslacking without being tech-savvy.

Nevertheless, the relationship is enhanced by tech-savviness. Technologically-minded employees are more apt to engage in cyberslacking as they will possess more multitasking and bypassing possibilities. Nevertheless, these effects can be mitigated by training the organizations appropriately (Crocco, E., 2022). In his article on online learning of students during COVID-19, MacLean (2022) emphasizes that tech-savviness mediates the perceptions of students to the norms of online education, such as cyberslacking. The more technologically inclined the students were, the more they adhered to the descriptive rules of online distractors. Theoretically, this mediation moves us forward by demonstrating that social norms are not the sole causes of cyberslacking; rather, they affect the confidence and perceived comfort of participating in deviance, which consequently leads to the behavior.

Most importantly, the positive moderating effect of digital well-being (H5 and H6) does not support the traditional idea that digital well-being is only a protective factor, which has a buffering effect on excessive and maladaptive use of technology. In contrast to the expectations, the digital well-being reinforced the connection between social norms and cyberslacking. This implies that people who have greater digital well-being might be more sensitive and receptive to the normative signals in their digital space, and not avoid social pressures. In line with the new scholarship, digital well-being is to be considered as a contextually adaptive concept enabling balanced and socially oriented engagement with technologies instead of merely limiting it (Burr et al., 2020; Lukoff et al., 2023; Vanden Abeele, 2021). Therefore, this paper can be considered an extension of the SNT as it will show that the impact of social norms on digital

behaviors depends on the regulatory and cognitive orientation of individuals to technology.

Overall, the findings contribute to the Social Norms Theory by incorporating technological self-efficacy and digital well-being as important processes that moderate the effect of social influence on cyberslacking. This theoretical extension emphasizes that digital behavior is not just a result of normative pressure but also of the interplay of social learning, technological capability, and self-regulation.

Practical implications

This research has a number of important practical implications for organizations, teachers, and policy makers who are interested in controlling cyberslacking in technology-intensive settings. To begin with, the direct effects of descriptive and injunctive norms on cyberslacking behaviour (H1, H2) are strong, which means that the influence of social norms is more dominant than the influence of self-control on digital behaviour. It means that the attempt to reduce cyberslacking cannot be limited to the individual-level intervention, like surveillance or punitive actions, but should rather be centered on developing positive digital norms at the team, department, or classroom levels. As an example, managers and educators can model proper use of technology, express their expectations of proper online behavior, and promote peer responsibility to redefine the perceived suitability of cyberslacking. The development of shared digital norms to focus on responsible use can decrease the belief that such actions are socially approved or non-hazardous.

Second, tech-savviness (H3, H4) plays a mediating factor, which emphasizes the importance of a higher level of digital competence, facilitating unintentional cyberslacking unless it is managed through the ethical and productivity-focused norms. This observation implies that organizations and schools ought to implement a combination of digital skills education with digital citizenship education, such that the acquisition of technological competence is supplemented by information about responsible and purposeful use of technology. The digital competence of employees or students can be redirected to positive outcomes instead of being distracted by encouraging them to focus their use of technology on solving problems, innovation, or sharing knowledge.

Above all, the positive moderating effect of digital well-being (H5, H6) is unexpected, which provides a subtle practical implication: the promotion of digital well-being does not necessarily decrease cyberslacking. Rather, digitally balanced and in-control people might be more likely to participate in cyberslacking selectively and deliberately when it does not violate social norms. This does not mean that the digital well-being programs must be aimed at limiting the time spent on screens or repressing the use of technology, but instead encouraging the conscious use and awareness of situations. An example is that organizations can create online well-being initiatives to teach their employees the distinction between productive micro-breaks and unstructured Internet distractions. In line with this, managers ought to be aware that some instances of cyberslacking can be a way of digital rejuvenation or cognitive renewal, which, when moderated, can improve overall performance and well-being.

In practice, these findings imply a more moderate management approach incorporating the strategy of social influence, development of digital skills, and conscious interaction with technology. Organizations can develop conditions in which digital competence is used ethically and supports productivity as well as well-being by reinforcing healthy digital norms, encouraging ethical use of digital competence, and reconfiguring digital well-being as a context-sensitive capability instead of a restrictive ideal. Finally, the results of the study challenge practitioners to acknowledge that cyberslacking should not be viewed as a deviation, but a digital phenomenon, which is rooted in the social environment and can be positively addressed with the help of informed, culturally sensitive, and human-based digital policies.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Work

Although the present study provides insight into these aspects, some limitations exist. On the other hand, the data were cross-sectional, and no cause-and-effect relationship between variables could be established. In future research, longitudinal designs may help to untangle the temporal order of social norms concerning digital well-being and cyberslacking (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Second, the majority of the measures used in the study are self-reported and therefore may be affected by social desirability. The other limitation that could potentially influence the result is that the cyberloafing was measured by self-reports because respondents may not tell the truth and lie due to social desirability, which depends on fitting in with social norms (Fisher, 1993). The tracking system should be implemented on personal computers and mobile devices to track employees' real cyberloafing activities, which can better represent cyberloafing.

However, this approach can be difficult because it is invasive and violates respondents' privacy. We did not measure the time spent on cyberloafing either. This interesting issue certainly deserves attention in future research. In future research, objective measures (e.g., internet usage pattern monitoring) could be included, as evidenced in past work (e.g., Chang et al., 2021). The sample also may not reflect a diversity of workplace environments. For example, future research could examine how cyberslacking varies in different industries or cultural contexts (Liang et al., 2021). In addition, although the current study described the mediating role of tech-savviness, some other psychological variables, such as self-control and job engagement, can be investigated for a complete picture of cyberslacking (Wu et al., 2020). Although we introduced normative antecedents (descriptive and injunctive norms) of cyberslacking in this paper, many other potential antecedents are yet to be identified in the future. Additionally, there is a strong need to categorize both potential and identified antecedents into psychological and environmental categories, and to examine how these categories influence the intensity of cyberslacking. Similarly, during the development of this paper, it was found that the consequences of cyberslacking have received less attention. It is important to address this gap by exploring its immediate and long-term impacts on employees and organizations. Cyberslacking is a complex phenomenon that requires untangling through an understanding of its multifaceted relationships, utilizing various potential mediators and moderators.

The findings can be triangulated and strengthened through greater theoretical variety, diversity, and methodological sophistication, and a wide array of future research efforts will hopefully confirm and extend these conclusions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we incorporate into our analysis some of the causal variables of cyberslacking: descriptive norms and injunctive norms, tech savviness, and digital well-being. This study adds to the development of the research theory and implications by furthering the role of social norms theory in the study of digital behavior. The measurement model also demonstrates reliability and validity, as it substantiates the strength of the findings. Digital well-being amplified the impact of social norms on cyberslacking behavior, as presented in this work. This knowledge will allow us to look for other possible variables that may moderate this relationship, such as mindfulness and strict workplace culture. Researchers can conduct an inquiry into examining new variables in the development of cyberslacking behavior to suit various workplace scenarios. Lastly, this provides the discourse view of cyberslacking that is both a theoretical and a real-world issue.

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