Manager's Lived Experience in Cyberloafing within Business Organizations

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Abstract: This qualitative descriptive phenomenological study explored how business managers describe their lived experiences as a cyberloafer in the Southern United States. There were eight participants that supervised at least five employees, older than 24 years of age, and had a history of cyberloafing that shared their firsthand experience in a 60–90-minute semi-structured interviews. The framework used Triandis' 1977 theory of interpersonal behavior tri-level cognitive model. Eidetic analysis used Giorgi's five- step descriptive phenomenological approach. The data discovered five general structures of business managers cyberloafing: 1) work-life balance, 2) social norms with internet usage, 3) habits within the organization, 4) productivity, and 5) preventative measures. The findings of this study can build on business management to reduce company cost while promoting positive cyberloafing to creative innovative workplace behaviors, increasing sustainability.

Keywords: Cyberloafing, Internet, Business Management, Triandis' Theory of Interpersonal Behavior, Giorgi's Five-Step Descriptive Phenomenological Approach

1. Introduction

This study explored the lived experiences of business managers as a cyberloafer. In the last few decades, organizations of different sizes have had their resources drained through a deviant behavior called cyberloafing (J-Ho and Ramayah, 2016). Cyberloafing is a type of goldbricking behavior hidden within an organization, allowing employees to stealthily play at work (Jandaghi, Alvani, Matin, and Kozekanan, 2015). This behavior is causing problems in the workplace, leading to degradation in Information Technology (Obeidat, North, Richardson, Rattanak, and North, 2015), increasing employee cost (Chen and Karahanna, 2018), harming work-life balances, and increasing legal liabilities (Ross, 2018). However, there are positive effects of cyberloafing behaviors such as employees recuperating their mental resources, even though cyberloafing is considered a counterproductive work behavior (Lowe-Calverley and Grieve, 2017).

Cyberloafing is a deviant activity within business organizations but can turn into a lifestyle. Lim and Chen (2012) explain that 24% of business employees in 2007 spend about 10 hours a week cyberloafing. While research from Agarwal (2019) found that 62% of employees spend 30% of their day cyberloafing. This activity can be detrimental to business organizations by costing them substantial losses (Jandaghi, et al., 2015). While cyberloafing is an activity done at work; it can be part of someone's lifestyle as they repeatedly check their phones to stay connected with non-work-related activities (Koay and Soh, 2018). These behaviors are activated automatically, without any thought from the employee (Dursun, Donmez, and Akbulut, 2018). This is due to the fear of missing out on new and relevant information in their community or social circle (Dursun et al., 2018).

Cyberloafing activities can create an addiction, where employees need to stay connected (Sampat and Basu, 2017), which can last for long durations (Hadlington and Parsons, 2017). Employees have many different factors that play a part in their cyber deviant behaviors. There are different factors that cause employees to cyber deviant. The different factors that play a part in this deviant behavior, including social norms (Khansa, Kuem, Siponen, and Kim, 2017), an attitude of

cyberloafing (Ezeh, Etodike, and Chukwura, 2018), a person's affect (Soh, Koay, and Chew, 2017), past behaviors (Dursun et al., 2018), and facilitating conditions (Passey, Brown, Hammerback, Harris, and Hannon, 2018). Managers are in the position to control their subordinates' behaviors, which facilitates the need to analyze how business managers describe their lived experiences having been a cyberloafer.

2. Review of the Literature

The themes of the literature review are molded to fit Trinadis's theory of interpersonal behavior and follows four themes: cyberloafing, intentions, habit, and prevention of cyberloafing.

2.1 Cyberloafing

The Internet allows employees to create a deviant behavior called "cyberloafing," anonwork-related activity at work for personal gains, whether at work or in the classroom (Khansa et al., 2017; Koay, 2018). Tony Cummins in 1995 coined the term "cyberloafing" for those that used the World Wide Web for deviant behaviors, and the term grew notoriety when Lim in 2002 used it in his article (Jandaghi, et al., 2015). There are various terms for Internet non-work-related activities called cyberdeviance, cyberloafing, including cyberslacking, cyberslouching, and personal web use (PWU), all having about the same definition in regarding the use of the Internet at work (Alshuaibi, Mohd-Shamsudin, and Alshuaibi, 2015; Jandaghi, et al.,2015; Varol and Yıldırım, 2018). Lowe-Calverley and Grieve (2017) state that cyberloafing is considered a counterproductive work behavior, but that does not make it entirely accurate. Traditional counterproductive workplace behaviors are consciously harmful to an organization, and cyberloafing is different since most users do not intend any harm (Lowe-Calverley and Grieve, 2017). Findings from Koay and Soh (2019) explained that employees tend to "click" harder with their mouse or keyboard while doing non-work-related activities. Cyberloafing is a stealthier way to participate in deviant behaviors than other goldbricking behaviors because it allows an individual to chat with coworkers or surf the web without leaving their workspace (Jandaghi, et al., 2015). Employees can be mischievous by minimizing browsers with a few clicks of a button when a manager or employee comes close to their monitor (Koay and Soh, 2018). Multiple studies have focused on how much and how long individuals cyberloafed. After examining 28 studies, Coskun and Gokcearslan (2019) found that in the last few years, cyberloafing is on the rise and has become accelerated. Al-Shuaibi et al. (2013) follow this trend as 52% of their study participants admitted to cyberloafing in 2008. 60% of online purchases were done work, and in 2012, 64% of participants admitted to the behavior. Studies cannot find an exact percentage of those who participate in cyberloafing. However, there is an estimate that 60 to 80% of employees engage in cyberloafing and that it is very common for low supervision positions (Varghese, and Barber, 2017). A report from Tseng, Lee, Denoue, and Avrahami, (2019) found that employees, on average, spent about 51 minutes a day on cyberloafing activities. When an employee gets interrupted at work, it takes an average of eight minutes to start thinking productively and creatively (Chen and Karahanna, 2018). However, there is a cost of 25 minutes to return to the task by which they were interrupted (Chen and Karahanna, 2018). Employees are trying to balance work-life responsibly, activities, and aspirations when committing cyberloafing activities (Chen and Casterella, 2019).

2.2 Intentions

Attitude is a sublevel to intentions that serves as an antecedent to cyberloafing and other goldbricking activities not related to the Internet (Ezeh et al., 2018). Attitude is defined as the feelings, ideas, and behavioral tendencies of an individual; this could be towards multiple objects or events, which have psychological influencing factors impacting the behavior (Yilmaz and Yurdugul, 2018). The attitude constructs a behavior that defines "the degree to which the person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation," demonstrating that attitude can affect behavioral intentions (Chu et al., 2015). Attitude is critical to analyze when discussing intentions. There is not much research on attitude in cyberloafing (Andreassen et al., 2014). Cyberloafing attitude acts as a "digital water cooler," allowing employees to take mini rest-breaks to relieve pressure and stimulate creativity (Sampat and Basu, 2017). Ghani, Muslim, and Rasli (2018) discovered that most employees do not perceive cyberloafing to be wrong within the organization. Yilmaz and Yurdugul (2018) found that an individual's attitude towards cyberloafing will affect if the employee will cyberloaf or intend to cyberloaf. Mansor et al. (2018) coincide with the findings of Yilmaz and Yurdugul (2018) that different work attitudes can affect an organization by causing work delays, absenteeism, extra breaks, and could influence other members to behave the same way. Jia and Jia (2015) agree that individuals used technology due to their attitudes, beliefs, and cognitions. Li, Luo, Zhange, and Sarathy (2018) found from a study from Salary.com that employees are not motivated enough at their jobs, feeling bored, causing them to perform wasteful time at work. There is a positive relationship between attitudes and cyberloafing, showing that attitude directly affects cyberloafing (Yilmaz and Yurdugul, 2018). Non-Internet loafing participation and attitudes are positively correlated with cyberloafing (Dursun et al., 2018). The overall attitude is

dependent on if the employee participates in cyberloafing or not (Sampat and Basu, 2017). Discovering why employees have individual attitudes toward this activity is essential. Attitudes tend to vary depending on the groups in society regarding cyberloafing activities (Moningkey and Franksiska, 2020). Lim and Chen (2012) found that men tend to be more confident in Internet usage, while women feel less confident, determining their Internet use attitude. The higher a person's confidence with the Internet, the more likely their attitude will be positive with Internet use in various ways (Lim and Chen, 2012). Yilmaz and Yurdugul (2018) found a positive correlation between cyberloafing behaviors and attitudes towards computers. Individuals with favorable computer attitudes will most likely use an office computer for personal usage, linking favorable attitudes to cyberloafing (Sampat and Basu, 2017). There is a positive association with attitude on cyberloafing with the male gender, education level, and work autonomy (Andreassen et al., 2014). Employees' attitude toward cyberloafing is positive because it recharges employees, increasing value creation and innovation, giving the organization the ability to stay competitive and create sustainability (Abdullahi et al., 2019). Generational differences show extreme differences in work values, attitudes, career experiences, and personalities, suggesting that the younger generation does not center their lives around work (Tamunomiebi and Adim, 2019). However, a higher priority in leisure is needed for the younger generation than the older generations (Kim, 2017). As these generations are getting older, more and more of these generational types are mixed at the managerial and employee levels. Social norms play a significant factor in organizations' intentions (Chu et al., 2015). For instance, minor cyberloafing is generally tolerated at work because it is considered a subjective norm (Dursun et al., 2018). According to Baskin and McKee (2019), if a group of individuals shares the same perception of processes and behavioral expectations, it significantly impacts individual behaviors, directing the impacting performance, efficiency, and manager-employee interactions. In a different study, Koay and Soh (2018) determined that social norms set a precedent for humans, including how they should act or respond to triggers. Lowe-Calverley and Grieve (2017) discovered that the perceived ability to deceive is influenced by the acceptable behavior at work. Most of the nonwork-related cyberloafing was due to social interactions (Durak and Saritepeci, 2019). Workplace gamification increases the likelihood of these behaviors (Lowe-Calverley and Grieve, 2017). Non-conforming behaviors harm employees and organizations (Venkatraman et al., 2018). If a group of individuals shares the same perception of processes and behavioral expectations, it significantly impacts individual behaviors, directly impacting performance, efficiency, and manager-employee interactions (Baskin, and McKee, 2019). Affect is the last sublevel of intentions. Affect is defined as the feelings or emotions surrounding a behavior or object, such as the topic of cyberloafing (Soh et al., 2017). Employees with negative emotions towards their company will tend to use the Internet to cope (Koay et al., 2017). While the employees use the Internet to cope, it can cause detrimental psychological effects, harming productivity and colleagues (Mansor et al., 2018). Cyberloafing may be enjoyable to the employee (Soh et al., 2017), it can become aversive and disruptive (Sonnentag et al., 2017). Typical research discusses the adverse impact of cyberloafing but the behavior can positively impact employee work (Lowe-Calverley and Grieve, 2017). Employees can gain knowledge from surfing the web while also sharing the information with their colleagues (Yilmaz and Yurdugul, 2018). Additionally, cyberloafing can prevent occupational burnout by reducing stress (Durak and Saritepeci, 2019).

2.3 Habits

Past behaviors are considered habits and are a significant predictor, for example, if individuals did not participate in deviant behavior in the past, then their future behaviors will not be deviant and vice versa (Khansa et al., 2017). The antecedents of past behaviors that significantly increase cyberloafing are Internet addiction, attitude towards cyberloafing, habits, procrastination, personality, sleeping habits, and boredom (Koay et al., 2017). Dursun et al. (2018) found that past personal beliefs and motivation with current variables of subjective norms and attitudes predicted cyberloafing behaviors. Individuals can create habitual habits without being conscientious or deliberate, but rather due to their excessive behavior in the past (Koay and Soh, 2018). If a person faces a threat, they may change their past behaviors to avoid punishments or harm (Khansa et al., 2017). Individuals may need to practice self-regulation to prevent habits from being created at work. Self-regulation, such as metacognitive strategies and cognitive strategies, is a means to control habits (Yilmaz and Yurdugul, 2018) and plays a vital part in cyberloafing by reducing temptations (Kim et al., 2015). Practicing self-control behaviors has helped reduce temptations, like cyberloafing, but those that have not practiced self-control will become high offenders of counter-work behaviors (Li et al., 2018). The self-interest of their own goals will have individuals conduct deviant acts to gratify themselves, believing this behavior is rational (Li et al., 2018). Employees' past cyberloafing behaviors have cost companies $183 billion a year due to them spending about six hours a week just surfing the Internet (Jandaghi, et al., 2015). Employees that had a habit of low motivation increased their use of nonproductive activities, like chatting with friends, messaging, or surfing the web (Yilmaz and Yurdugul, 2018), and routinely used cyberloafing to replenish their emotions from work (Reina et al., 2018). When employees feel

enthusiastic and excited about the company, they are less likely to quit (Reina et al., 2018) and have extreme burnout (Durak and Saritepeci, 2019). Addiction to the Internet is a serious habit that employees and employees need to break to prevent cyberloafing activities (Choi et al., 2019). Individuals can be addicted to the Internet because of their daily habit/use, making it hard to remove the addiction (Alshuaibi et al., 2015). Habitually being addicted to the Internet harms individual mental health through always needing to be "wired in" (Alshuaibi et al., 2015). Addiction to the Internet comes from fundamental cognitions, core beliefs, schemata, automatic thoughts, and attributions (Andreassen et al., 2017). Internet addiction has many different subtypes, such as information overload, computer addiction, cybersexual addiction, net compulsions, and social media addiction (Andreassen et al., 2017). There is a fine line between addiction and non-addiction. Addiction is the need or impulse to repeatedly check the Internet while non-addiction is the opposite (Andreassen et al., 2017). Those that have procrastination and compulsiveness issues will more likely have addictive and risk-taking behaviors (Hadlington and Parsons, 2017). Those two behaviors are linked to Internet addiction and severe information security issues (Hadlington and Parsons, 2017). Employees who are more flexible with technology at work are positively associated with after-hours work (Chen and Casterella, 2019). If someone has a habit of engaging in a high load of after-hours work, they will have more job involvement, ambitions and perceive the Internet as useful (Chen and Casterella, 2019). However, they will also engage in blurred and overlapping behavior between work and life domains (Chen and Casterella, 2019). There are serious social problems when users are addicted to the Internet, causing intolerance, preoccupation, withdrawal, and restlessness in the individual without the Internet (Alshuaibi et al., 2015). In the past decade, Internet-connected devices have increased and so has cyberloafing, making it more tempting for employees to disengage from work (Hadlington and Parsons, 2017).

2.4 Prevention of Cyberloafing

It is essential to understand the organizational structures and the perceptions of these structures to reduce negative cyberloafing behaviors while promoting positive cyberloafing activities (Soral et al., 2020). The workforce is embracing digitization by using human resources software to recruit, perform performance appraisals, supply/demand forecasting, job description, evaluation, analysis, training, career planning, and succession planning, such as using chat-bots to screen these premium candidates or having smart offices that connect to social networking sites (Gupta et al., 2019). Whether good or bad, the perception of work is based on an employee's assessment and cognitive interpretation, leading employees to produce different behavior (Koay et al., 2017). In an organization, it is essential to analyze workplace norms, Internet usage policies, perceptions of injustice, telecommuting, management, and punishment (Jia and Jia, 2015). Companies need to minimize the heavy use of cyberloafing; employers should rotate or enrich employees' jobs to get them out of mundane, slow, and fragmented work tasks (Andreassen et al., 2014). Companies have policies to reduce social network site use that are negatively related, aligning with other studies that policies reduce cyberloafing behaviors (Soral et al., 2020). Organizational policies can positively or negatively influence cyberloafing; the more transparent the policy, the more effective in reducing the habit (Jandaghi, et al., 2015). Employees tend to have strong resistance against their employers when there are attempts to block any websites, believing that the Internet is their right (Tseng et al., 2019). Policies play an essential role in business organizations and deviant behaviors. Social network addiction happens at work. It should be monitored to help the person and the organization by setting up a monitoring system, removing abusive supervision, removing bullying, and self-regulating mechanisms (Choi et al., 2019). Employees can use social media or YouTube to spread rumors, and managers need to contain the momentum of the rumors due to the potential damage they can cause just at a click of a mouse (Baerjee and Singh, 2015). Terminating employees for cyberdeviance is potentially more costly than the misuse of company time because they now have to train new employees (Hadlington and Parsons, 2017). Instead, organizations should hold seminars or workshops to reduce the addictive behavior (Hadlington and Parsons, 2017). Accountability and precise controls have effectively reduced cyberloafing behaviors (Khansa et al., 2017). New formal controls that prevent cyberloafing decrease the behavior due to employees' rational thinking, protecting their job security (Khansa et al., 2017). Formal controls monitor, set penalties, rules, and regulations on cyberloafing (Soral et al., 2020). If these controls are too stringent, they could upset employees by increasing anger and the perception of injustice that can cause a rebellion against new controls, making the intention to cyberloaf increase (Khansa et al., 2017). Organizations that want to create a conducive work environment should focus on respect, teamwork, trust, hard work recognition, and development of skills; this would make more people more enthusiastic about work and the ability to avoid deviant Internet use (Liao, Zhou, Guo and Li, 2019). Company cultures need practical and competent leadership to inspire others (Alshuaibi et al., 2015). Leadership is pivotal for decreasing deviant behaviors, and ethical leadership can take an organization in the right direction (Erkutlu and Chafra, 2018). Supervisors usually are not in the position to change an organization's rules and regulations, but they can treat their employees well by showing them respect, dignity, and truthfulness and these behaviors can influence an employee's habits (Agarwal, 2019).

Companies that want to have a sustainable competitive advantage over their competitors will desire their employees to become innovative through proper Internet usage (Abdullahi et al., 2019). Innovative work behavior can include surfing the web for educational purposes, which will help the company gain competitive advantages through efficiency and an increase in organizational performance (Abdullahi et al., 2019). Human resource managers can promote positive behaviors (Gramberg et al., 2014).

3. Statement of the Problem

There is a lack of management research regarding cyberloafing, and managers are in a vital position in the organization to curb the behavior (Venkatraman et al., 2018). This study addresses the gap in the literature to allow a better understanding of cyberloafing within organizations. As younger generations join the workforce, they will have more impact on this behavior in the workplace (Chen and Karahanna, 2018). Furthermore, this study helps develop better strategies to combat negative cyberloafing behaviors and promote more innovative workplace behaviors while cyberloafing.

4. Research Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological study was to explore how business managers describe their lived experiences as a cyberloafer in the Southern United States. The managers worked for an organization that is considered small to medium-sized enterprise, with fewer than 250 employees. The target population of interest was all business managers that oversee at least five employees in the Southern United States. The unit of analysis was lived experiences of general participants. The general participants were business managers who are cyberloafers that supervise five individuals with access to the Internet while at work. The theory of interpersonal behavior, which was created by Triandis (1977), served as the model for the theoretical foundation of this research. This is a cognitive model that integrates intentions, habits, and facilitating conditions to determine behavior. Knowing that cyberloafing is multifaceted, this tri-level model helped create the interview questions (Moody and Siponen, 2013).

4.1 Research Question

RQ1: How do business managers describe their lived experiences as a cyberloafer.

4.2 Research Design

This study used a descriptive phenomenological design, which analyzed eight managers that supervise at least five employees in the Southern United States. This design aligned with this study because it explored lived experiences of business managers and created a sense of epoché, removing biases by capturing individual natural attitudes of the phenomenon (Giorgi et al., 2017).

4.3 Instruments

The first instrument was the qualifying questionnaire used to identify those who would qualify for the study. The qualifying questionnaire was developed for general purposes to follow the inclusion criteria. The second instrument was the interviewees questionnaire. An interview protocol was developed that described the invitation process, inclusion criteria, exclusion criteria, interview setup and location, ethical considerations, interview overview, and a demographic questionnaire. Three expert panelists reviewed the interview protocols. A field-test was completed, which identified functional or unfunctional while interviewing the participants, allowing for needed changes (Seidman, 2013).

4.4 Data Collection

The main interview question was: Tell me about your experiences as a cyberloafer? This question was followed by probing questions for additional information on each question to dive deeper into one's lived experiences (Burns, 1989, Giorgi, 2012). A five-steps of qualitative phenomenological analysis were used to achieve eidetic reduction (Giorgi et al., 2017). These steps include bracketing, phenomenological reduction, delineating units of meaning, transform the meanings extracted, and making general structure and synthesizing (Giorgi et al., 2017).

4.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis procedure consisted of reading transcripts multiple times while practicing bracketing. The process allowed the researcher to obtain a phenomenological attitude to understand each participant's experience. The phenomenological attitude allowed the researcher to identify the meaning units and highlight psychological meanings through imaginative variation to create essences. The researcher then used this phenomenological reduction to synthesize the psychological structure of lived experiences of business managers. Five constituents were created through the process. The five constituents follow: 1) work-life balance, 2) social norms with internet usage, 3) habits within the organization, 4) productivity, and 5) preventative measures.
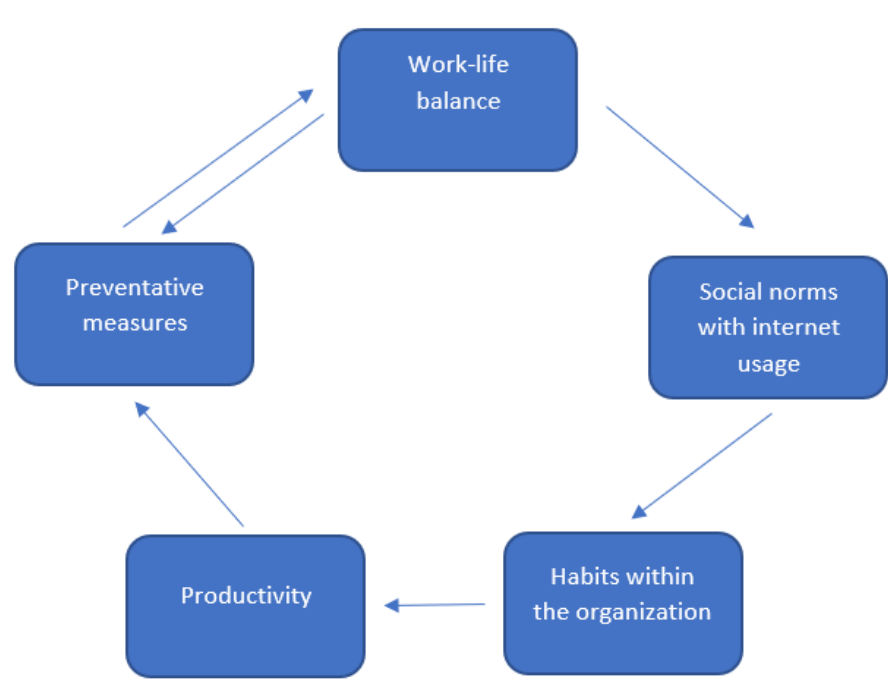
Figure 1: Constituent's map of business managers as a cyberloafer.

5. Results

The findings of this study will increase business management literature on cyberloafing behaviors in organizations. From the data collected participants agreed that employees deserve some work-life balance while at work through the usage of the internet. Each participant mentioned that there should be limitations to internet usage when it harmed the organization, customers, and productivity. All the participants mentioned staying in contact with friends and family as the main reason employees cyberloafed. Even with harsh preventative measures, employees would still try to cyberloaf regardless of the consequences. Tseng et al. (2019) found that employees strongly resist preventative measures and will still find a way to cyberloaf while at work. Business managers and human resource managers should focus on rules and regulations deemed fair for employees to create a better work-life balance while also making sure heavy use of cyberloafing is reduced. Employees should have some say in the policies to find the social norm within the organization that they deem fair. These results from business managers' cyberloafing behaviors can inform organizations on how to make better rules and regulations to maximize the curvilinear relationship. The policies should focus on work-life balance, understanding the social norms, limiting bad habits, and productivity. The results of the study can be transferable to other groups or settings since cyberloafing happens between different domains and individuals since teachers perform cyberloafing (Durak and Saritepeci, 2019) and so do employees in businesses (Braukmann et al., 2018). There are many business organizations that range from small to medium across the globe that have access to the internet or employees that have personal devices that have access to the internet (Soh et al., 2017). As the global connection expands through the internet, other countries that are developed or developing can experience cyberloafing behaviors from their business managers through these devices. This study gives insight to other business managers that cyberloaf across the globe to think about work-life balances, social norms with internet usage, habits within the organization, productivity, and preventative measures.

6. Conclusion

Cyberloafing is a growing phenomenon in business organizations. The problem of cyberloafing started in the 1990s but became an increasing issue in the 2000s as the Internet became more popular through organizations (Lim and Chen, 2012). As use of the Internet increases, it creates a culture of using the tool for deviant behavior, especially among millennials, since they were born into the digital world (Kim, 2017). This study investigated how business managers describe their lived experiences as a cyberloafer in the Southern United States. There were gaps in the literature that focused primarily on employees and not on business managers. Managers are in a position to change behaviors within an organization, whether positively or negatively. Palladan (2018) stated there is a "need" for this research due to the lack of management in the literature. Soral et al. (2020) align with Palladan (2018), stating the need to analyze managers and policymakers, which this study did. The findings of this study suggest that organizations should create a dialogue with managers for policies and procedures since they are in direct contact with their subordinates. Furthermore, this study filled the gap in the literature by analyzing how business managers describe their lived experiences as a cyberloafer in the Southern United States.

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