

## “I am What I ought to Be”: Women Cyberslacking in Ethiopian Public University

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### ABSTRACT

Today, the Gen ‘Y’ (born during 1981-1995) is the world’s largest workforce; and they are employed at digitized workplaces. Cyberslacking (personal use of the internet at the workplace) is the new normal for the recently emerged Ethiopian digital workplace and workforce. Globally, enough cyberslacking studies have been conducted on the losses and the gains; however, no study has been done in the Ethiopian context. This investigation explores how far cyberslacking is beneficial for both the organization (university) and its employees (secretaries) in the Ethiopian setting. The research questions were: what attitudes do the female secretaries have towards cyberslacking? What opportunities do the female secretaries gain through cyberslacking? How far does cyberslacking change the lives of female secretaries? Furthermore, do the female secretaries have an addiction to cyberslacking? To this end, mixed-method design (n=45): questionnaire (n=29) and retrospective interview (n=16) were employed. The triangulation analysis concludes four positive dimensions of women cyberslacking in an Ethiopian university setting: the rationales of cyberslacking (advanced communication, free time, energizer, and legitimization); the opportunities of cyberslacking (gathering information, receiving entertainment, contacting family and friends, and getting day today news updates); the changes attributed to cyberslacking (improvement in English communication skill, knowledge base enhancement, job innovation, and creativity, and modernity); and the low addiction level to cyberslacking (‘prone to be addicted’). Finally, the implications for future practice, policy, and research are explored.

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## INTRODUCTION

Cyberslacking has been hotly debated in the literature and a burning issue for more than two decades. Cyberslacking is the act of using the internet by an employee during working hours for personal gains (Agarwal, 2019; El Din & Baddar, 2019; Mamat & Baqutayan, 2019; Sze et al., 2019). Cyberslacking is a non-work-related engagement at the workplace which includes social networking, e-mailing, downloading, calling, texting, streaming, surfing, gaming, blogging, job hunting, gambling, billing, and booking (Dursun et al., 2018; Mamat & Baqutayan, 2019). Cyberslacking is also known as cyberloafing, cyberbludging, cyberdeviance, online loafing, internet deviance, internet abuse, internet addiction, internet dependency, and junk computing (Abdullahi et al., 2019; Arabaci, 2017; Nwakaego & Angela, 2018; Yildiz et al., 2015). The issue of cyberslacking has been studied extensively across the world from different dimensions like frequency, pattern, nature, gender, age, educational level, occupational status, work autonomy, ethics, guidelines, and the like (Mamat & Baqutayan, 2019).

This plethora of studies is that cyberslacking is significantly related to the time, efficiency, commitment, and effective functioning of the organizations. Cyberslacking has brought forth many organizational issues of the workers, for instance, absenteeism, dishonesty, aggression, rumor-mongering, and misbehaviors (Agarwal, 2019). Cyberslacking has been considered a loss of

billions of dollars per year for organizations wherein employees waste 60–80% of their total working hours (Jandaghi et al., 2015; Mamat & Baqutayan, 2019). According to Oosthuizen et al. (2018), 30–40% of employees are fired every year due to the act of cyberslacking in their organizations. Previously, the issue of cyberslacking was considered an area of business and management studies. However, it has been taken seriously in educational research recently because the internet is abundantly used in educational institutions worldwide (Arabaci, 2017; Dursun et al., 2018).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Conceptual Basis

The term ‘cyberloafing’ was used for the first time by Tony Cummins in 1985 in *New York daily* (Jandaghi et al., 2015). In academic literature, Lim (2002) firstly conceptualized ‘cyberloafing’ as workers’ use of their employers’ internet or, more appropriately, the ‘IT way of idling on the job.’ From 2002–2020, various definitions are cited in the literature; however, all have the same meaning: using the internet during working hours for employees’ gains. Therefore, it is imperative to understand its typologies, antecedents, consequences, controlling mechanisms, and theoretical frameworks to comprehend the issue of cyberslacking thoroughly.

In *typology*, Lim (2002) divided cyberslacking for the first time into two: slacking (for instance, news, shopping, and other online activities) and e-mailing. Thereupon, Mahatanankoon et al. (2004)

classified cyberslacking into three: information-seeking, e-commerce, and communication. In 2008, Blanchard and Henle divided cyberslacking into two: serious cyberslacking (for example, pornography, online gaming, online gambling, online investment et cetera) and minor cyberslacking (for example, e-mailing, texting, calling, updating news, social networking, et cetera). Finally, Ramayah (2010) divided cyberslacking based on personal use into four: personal information, personal communication, personal downloads, and personal e-commerce. Later on, Doorn (2011) categorized cyberslacking into four based on activities: social activity (for example, social networking and blogging); information activity (for example, checking news); leisure activity (for example, watching YouTube); and emotional activity (for example, online shopping).

There are three *antecedents* that influence cyberslacking at the individual, organizational, and situational levels (Jandaghi et al., 2015; Simsek & Simsek, 2019). At the individual level, the most important factors that influence cyberslacking are the perception of the cyberslacker, the cognitive and behavioral pattern of the cyberslacker, habits or addictions of the cyberslacker, and the demographic category of the cyberslacker like gender, age, education, background, and income (Hussain & Parida, 2017; Mamat & Batuqyan, 2019). Moreover, there are many factors affecting cyberslacking at the organizational level, for example, nature of job, job satisfaction, commitment

towards work, restriction policy, expected outcome of the internet use, perception of the manager towards cyberslacking, co-workers' cyberslacking behavior, justice to the employee, and attitude towards workplace (Sheikh et al., 2015; Sze et al., 2019). Furthermore, numerous factors affect cyberslacking at the situational level, such as access opportunity, anonymity (namelessness), escape, acceptability, staying extra hours, and uncanny pleasure (Jandaghi et al., 2015; Simsek & Simsek, 2019).

The *consequences* of cyberslacking have been studied extensively, classified into two: negative and positive consequences. The negative consequences of cyberslacking include reduced productivity, work deviation, and non-disciplinary actions (Hartijasti & Fathonah, 2015; Kusumawati & Franksiska, 2018). In addition, it leads to amplified costs, data security, legal issues, malware, and slow network for an organization (El Din & Baddar, 2019; Gokcearslan et al., 2016; Hernández-Castro, 2016). On the other hand, the positive effects of cyberslacking comprise increased performance, stress burst, innovative and creative work behavior, and self-growth (Sen et al., 2016; Varghese & Barber, 2017). This results in efficient technology use, advanced quality of work, motivated and satisfied employees, and cost reduction for an organization (Arshad et al., 2016; Nwakaego & Angela, 2018).

The *controlling mechanisms* of cyberslacking have been debated lengthily in the literature for productivity, security, liability, privacy, and social control for

organizations (Rahiminia & Mazidi, 2015; Sheikh et al., 2015). Literature suggests two mechanisms to control cyberslacking in organizations: internet use policy and monitoring strategy. The internet use policy of an organization encompasses internet use guidelines, code of ethics, deterrence mechanisms, and possible consequences. The monitoring strategy of an organization involves proximity, punishment, internet service provider monitoring, KeyStore logging, e-mail monitoring, screen monitoring, and software monitoring (Arshad et al., 2016; Hussain & Parida, 2017; Kasap, 2019).

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in the following three theories: Theory of Planned Behavior, Social Capital Theory, and the Theory of Interpersonal Behavior. The *Theory of Planned Behavior* posits that an individual cyberslacks according to his or her attitudes toward internet use, acceptance of the cyberslacking norms, and the controlling mechanisms in an organization (Akbulut et al., 2017; Mamat & Batuqyan, 2019). The *Social Capital Theory* suggests that the community turns out to be developed when its individuals have more shared values and features. When it is applied to cyberslacking at the workplace, employees' recreation through the internet results in increased productivity for the organization in which they work (Kasap, 2019). The *Theory of Interpersonal Behavior* postulates that individuals' behaviors are connected to their attitude, perceived social

norms, and professed organizational control. Likewise, cyberslacking studies suggest that an employee's cyberslacking at the workplace is related to his/her attitude, organizational control during working hours, and prevailing norms of acceptance by co-workers (Akbulut et al., 2017; Askew et al., 2014).

### Ethiopian Context

There are an explosion of research on cyberslacking nature, causes, and effects in different parts of the world; however, the issue is little known and not studied in Ethiopia. Internet formally began in Ethiopia in the year 1997. Presently, it ranks 139 out of 144 countries regarding internet penetration rate (Yilma & Abraha, 2015). Unlike before, Ethiopia is currently attempting a broad expansion of access throughout the country. The current penetration rate of the internet in Ethiopia is 15.4% (Internet World Stats: Usage and Population Statistics, 2020). Although the country has the second largest population in Africa, the rate of penetration is prolonged. For instance, the rate of internet penetration in Morocco is (51%), Egypt (37%), Nigeria (28%), Kenya (28%), and Sudan (19%). The average African penetration rate is 15.6%. Of the total internet user base, almost half of the internet users are on the university campuses of Ethiopia. The frequent interruptions in the connectivity, the fluctuations of internet speed, and prolonged network, mostly 2G and 3G (4G in classified places only), are the major barricades of Ethiopian internet (Atnafu, 2014).

While the world is perturbed because of cyberslacking issues like reduced productivity, work deviation, information security, legal issues, and non-disciplinary actions (El Din & Baddar, 2019; Hartijasti & Fathonah, 2015; Kusumawati & Franksiska, 2018), the female secretaries of Ethiopian public universities have been autonomously cyberslacking during their working hours. This study explores how far the cyberslacking of the female secretaries is beneficial both for themselves and their university. This study will help the university authorities critically evaluate the gains and benefits of cyberslacking in the Ethiopian context. If the need arises, cyberslacking policies, ethics, and guidelines can be developed. This study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: What attitudes do the female secretaries have towards cyberslacking at Madda Walabu University?

RQ2: What opportunities do the female secretaries gain through the cyberslacking in Madda Walabu University?

RQ3: How far does cyberslacking change the lives of female secretaries at Madda Walabu University?

RQ4: Do the female secretaries have an addiction to cyberslacking at Madda Walabu University?

## **METHODS**

This study is based on one of the mixed-method designs called ‘sequential explanatory design,’ which combines a questionnaire with a retrospective interview

(Creswell et al., 2003). The rationale to use this design is that questionnaire data usually reveals very shallow aspects of the issue under investigation but adding a follow-up retrospective interview can remedy the weaknesses. Furthermore, the mixed-method designs have more acceptability and validity in dealing with complex issues, which can greatly help the researcher get patterns, thereby adding flesh to the bones (Dorneyi, 2010).

This study was conducted in Madda Walabu University (MWU), in Robe town, Ethiopia (Figure 1). Robe is one of the fastest-growing towns in the Bale zone of the Oromia regional state in Ethiopia. This town is stretched over a total area of 80,240 km<sup>2</sup>. This ‘B’ ranked town is located 430 km towards the South-east of Addis Ababa. Robe is situated between 7<sup>07</sup>’ N Latitude and 40<sup>00</sup>’ E longitude. The town has four kebeles with a population of more than 500 000. It is a hub of different social, economic, government, and non-government institutions (Hussain & Parida, 2017). Founded in 2006, MWU is one of Ethiopia’s fastest-growing public higher education institutions regarding student registration, program expansion, and campuses. Today, the university has 849 academic and 1600 non-academic staff members. At the moment, more than 13,254 students are pursuing their education in 43 undergraduate and 14 postgraduate programs, which are offered in regular, weekend, extension, summer, and in-service modes in five campuses. MWU has produced approximately 11,735 graduates so far (Madda Walabu University, 2021).



The retrospective interviews have been conducted based on the snowball sampling technique. First, the respondent who was the best in in-depth forwarding information was the first to interview. After that, the following participants were referred by the previous ones in the chain till the saturation point was achieved. The snowball sampling is justified when a researcher has a list of key respondents who are then asked to recruit further participants in some respect central to the investigation (Dorneyi, 2010). Next, the interview data is analyzed through thematic codes of the responses. Finally, both the quantitative and qualitative data are integrated to triangulate the results.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Respondent Profile

The respondents' profile is shown in Table 1.

### Rationales for Cyberslacking

The results of secretaries' rationalizing cyberslacking are shown in Table 2 (item 1-5). A review of questionnaire data reveals

that most secretaries *agreed* and *strongly agreed* on the rationales for cyberslacking. They regarded cyberslacking as an advanced medium of communication (100%) which is officially allowed (above 86%). In addition, they viewed cyberslacking as an important tool for official communication and work (about 96.5%). Further, they justified that they cyberslack due to less workload and free time (about 86%), and they regard cyberslacking as a refreshing activity during office hours (above 89%).

In the interview of secretaries, seven out of eight respondents rationalized that cyberslacking is justifiable for them. In contrast, two secretaries responded that it was unjustifiable at working place.

One secretary (S4:03/01/2020) highlighted:

*Frankly, cyberslacking is a stress buster for me during working hours as I text, call, search, listen, and watch my favorites whenever I get free time. I entertain and refresh myself sitting for long*

Table 1  
Respondent profile of secretaries and managers (n=45)

| Variables          | Number of secretaries<br>(For survey) | Number of key secretaries<br>(For interview) | No. of managers (For<br>interview) |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Age (years)        |                                       |  |                                    |
| 22–28              | 13                                    | 4  | 2                                  |
| 29–35              | 13                                    | 3  | 3                                  |
| 36 & above         | 3                                     | 1  | 3                                  |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>29</b>                             | <b>8</b>                                     | <b>8</b>                           |
| Experience (years) |                                       |  |                                    |
| 1–5                | 10                                    | 3  | 2                                  |
| 6–10               | 17                                    | 3  | 3                                  |
| 11 & above         | 2                                     | 2  | 3                                  |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>29</b>                             | <b>8</b>                                     | <b>8</b>                           |

Table 2  
 Frequency values of respondents for the 'rationalization' and 'opportunities' of cyberslacking (n= 29)

| Statements   | Responses     |               |              |              |              |
|--|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|  | 1             | 2             | 3            | 4            | 5            |
| 1. I use the office internet because it is advanced communication.   | 48.3%<br>(14) | 51.7%<br>(15) | -            | -            | -            |
| 2. I use the office internet because it is allowed by my office.   | 44.8%<br>(13) | 41.4<br>(12)  | 10.3%<br>(3) | 3.5%<br>(1)  | -            |
| 3. I use the office internet for office communication & work.  | 51.7%<br>(15) | 44.8%<br>(13) | -            | 3.5%<br>(1)  | -            |
| 4. I use the office internet because of less workload & free time.   | 41.4<br>(12)  | 44.8%<br>(13) | -            | 6.9%<br>(2)  | 6.9%<br>(2)  |
| 5. I use the office internet as a refreshing break during work.  | 41.4<br>(12)  | 48.3%<br>(14) | 10.3%<br>(3) | -            | -            |
| 6. I use the office internet for accessing & sharing information.  | 48.3%<br>(14) | 48.3%<br>(14) | 3.5%<br>(1)  | -            | -            |
| 7. I use the office internet for entertainment as and when time allows through movies, drama serials, etc. | 51.7%<br>(15) | 41.4<br>(12)  | -            | 3.5%<br>(1)  | 3.5%<br>(1)  |
| 8. I use the office internet to be in touch with my friends & family.                                      | 37.9%<br>(11) | 44.8%<br>(13) | -            | 10.3%<br>(3) | 6.9%<br>(2)  |
| 9. I use the office internet for sharing & exchanging ideas.   | 41.4<br>(12)  | 37.9%<br>(11) | 3.5%<br>(1)  | 6.9%<br>(2)  | 10.3%<br>(3) |
| 10. I use the office internet to be up-to-the-minute through news & other updates.                         | 58.6%<br>(17) | 37.9%<br>(11) | 3.5%<br>(1)  | -            | -            |

Note: 1 = Strongly agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = undecided, 4 = Disagree and 5 = Strongly disagree

*hours on my seat. It makes my life easier, sociable, and stress-free.*  
(S4:03/01/2020)

In the same fashion, another secretary (S6:14/02/2020) argued:

*The university has not put any restriction or limitation on cyberslacking because the internet is necessary today for all types of official communication. In this digital era, everything is online, and the postal and courier services are of no use for official communication.*  
(S6:14/02/2020)

In the managers' interview, six out of eight rationalized that cyberslacking

is justifiable at the workplace for the secretaries to date as the university has not formulated any internet use policy. According to one manager (M2:10/01/2020) who highlighted:

*Today, cyberslacking is a known and inevitable reality. I am not against cyberslacking in free hours in a university context. The secretarial job is a long-sitting job wherein you need some refreshing breaks. It is a better deal and desirable too than hanging out or going for a coffee.*  
(M2:10/01/2020)

Another manager went further and suggested:

*Cyberslacking is good as long as it is not a distractor enabling procrastination and delays in office works. I know through my proximity and controlling mechanisms that mostly secretary staffs practice minor cyberslacking, and it is their basic virtual right. Since they don't go for major cyberslacking (online gaming, gambling, investments, pornography, etc.), which can harm productivity, there is no point in being negative. (M8:10/02/2020)*

Similar results were found by Dursun et al. (2018) and Kuschnaroff and Bayma (2014), who concluded in their study that cyberslacking is the communication and socialization needs at the workplace, and employees do it as a resting mechanism. Likewise, Yogun (2015) has reported in his study that a cyberslacker can also do hard work as they are not the one who is physically absent for lunch, rest, or hang out. He also underlined that cyberslacking employees are more information-rich than others, leading to innovative work behavior. El Din and Baddar (2019) highlighted in their study that there was no delay and procrastination by employees in their performance due to cyberslacking. Belanger and Van Slyke (2002) reported in their study that cyberslacking could prompt an enhanced comprehension of extant information.

### **Opportunities of Cyberslacking**

The results of secretaries' opportunities for cyberslacking are shown in Table 2 (item

6–10). An examination of questionnaire data shows that most of the secretaries were both *agreed* and *strongly agreed* on the opportunities of cyberslacking. They found ample opportunities in cyberslacking for accessing and sharing information (about 97%); for entertainment through movies, drama serials, et cetera (about 93%); for touching base with friends and family (about 93%); for accessing and exchanging ideas (above 79%); and for staying updated with news and other happenings (about 97%).

When asked about opportunities, seven out of eight secretaries responded that they get diverse opportunities due to cyberslacking. According to one respondent who emphasized:

*To me, cyberslacking has tremendously multiplied the range of my information accessing and sharing. The use of the internet in the office is related to my competitive intelligence and job satisfaction. I don't feel like working in a place where there is no internet. (S3:20/01/2020)*

In the same vein, one of the secretaries (S8:27/02/2020) contended:

*Internet is the modern and digital medium of communication, and it is important for me to be well connected to the rest of the world. I work in a university, and I shouldn't be like a 'frog in the well.' Cyberslacking helps me work with peace of mind because I stay connected with my family, friends,*

*and even with my boss. It helps the organization too, where I work.* (S8:27/02/2020)

In the managers' interview, seven out of eight considered that cyberslacking has many positive gains and should be facilitated to the secretaries working under them. According to one manager who highlighted:

*Cyberslacking in the office provides many benefits both for the employees and the organizations. It depends on the way they use it. The important thing is that it is a big resource for an employee to understand, use and manage for overall well-being. Equally, the internet has empowered organizations also by changing the concept of time, space, and resource in these digital and global workplaces.* (M1:24/01/2020)

One of the managers reasoned as follows:

*If my secretary and office are well connected to the internet, I am accessible to the world for information and communication. If not, I cannot cope-up with the whole range of work assigned to me by the top management. We are a university, and our scope of operation is not on an island; rather, we exist in the universe.* (M6:24/02/2020)

These findings are in line with Simsek and Simsek (2019), who reported in their study that cyberslacking provided job

satisfaction and made life easier and socialized for employees. The study conducted by Rushya and Tolani (2018) suggested that cyberslacking offered a short break for employees because continuously working might create strain and fatigue for them. It helped employees zone out and re-focus on work. Henle and Blanchard (2008) also show that cyberslacking is a coping strategy that supports employees temporarily distancing themselves from job pressure. Eastin et al. (2007), Oravec (2000), and Reinecke (2009) also pointed out in their study that when employees cyberslack, they overcome boredom, task monotony, work stress; and achieve mental renovation and mood upliftment. The findings of Beugre and Kim (2006) are also in line with this study which evidenced that cyberslacking was an opportunity to escape the monotonous organizational tasks, which reduced the anxiety level.

### **Changes in Life due to Cyberslacking**

The results of 'change in life' due to cyberslacking among secretaries are shown in Table 3 (item 11-15). A review of questionnaire data depicts that most of the secretaries were both *agreed* and *strongly agreed* on the significant life changes emanated from cyberslacking: English language development (about 83%); knowledge enhancement (100%); creativity and innovation (62%); job competence (about 66%); and modernity and trendiness (above 93%).

In the interview of secretaries, six out of

Table 3

Frequency values of respondents for the 'change in life' and 'addiction' due to cyberslacking (n= 29)

| Statements  | Responses     |               |               |              |              |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
|   | 1             | 2             | 3             | 4            | 5            |
| 11. Through the office internet, I improve my English language.           | 27.6%<br>(8)  | 55.2%<br>(16) | 17.2%<br>(5)  | -            | -            |
| 12. Through the office internet, I enhance my knowledge base.             | 48.3%<br>(14) | 51.7%<br>(15) | -             | -            | -            |
| 13. Through the office internet, I become creative & innovative.          | 31%<br>(9)    | 31%<br>(9)    | 13.8%<br>(4)  | 17.2%<br>(5) | 6.9%<br>(2)  |
| 14. Through the office internet, I improve my job competence.             | 20.7%<br>(6)  | 44.8%<br>(13) | 17.3%<br>(5)  | 10.3%<br>(3) | 6.9%<br>(2)  |
| 15. Through the office internet, I have become modern & trendy.           | 34.5%<br>(10) | 58.6%<br>(17) | 6.9%<br>(2)   | -            | -            |
| 16. When there is no internet, I get boredom.                             | 27.6%<br>(8)  | 20.7%<br>(6)  | 10.3%<br>(3)  | 20.7%<br>(6) | 20.7%<br>(6) |
| 17. When there is no internet, it affects my off-line working efficiency. | 48.3%<br>(14) | 41.4<br>(12)  | -             | 10.3%<br>(3) | -            |
| 18. Even if there is no internet, I feel normal and contented.            | 3.5%<br>(1)   | 10.3%<br>(3)  | 34.5%<br>(10) | 27.6%<br>(8) | 24.1%<br>(7) |

Note: 1 = Strongly agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Disagree and 5 = Strongly disagree

eight secretaries reported that they received major changes and developments in their lives due to cyberslacking. As one secretary (S1:03/01/2020) reflected:

*Cyberslacking has completely changed my personality, and now I am a modern and trendy person in all walks of my life, such as thinking, language, education, dressing, cooking, health care, safety, security, and religion.*  
(S1:03/01/2020)

In the same way, one of the secretaries among the respondents maintained:

*Cyberslacking increases my knowledge base because the internet is an ocean of knowledge. When I doubt work, either I google or I YouTube, and get a solution. It*

*has also enhanced my competence in computer and other job skills. Moreover, cyberslacking has improved my accuracy, and my boss is satisfied with my performance.*  
(S5: 07/02/2020)

In the managers' interview, seven out of eight noticed that cyberslacking secretaries are smarter than others regarding productivity, knowledge, learning behavior, language at creativity. As one manager who emphasized:

*Given a choice between a cyberslacking secretary and a non-cyberslacking one, I will choose the former. The reason behind this is that an internet literate employee is more talented and smarter with improved English*

*communication skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. It gives her an added advantage over others.* (M4:10/02/2020)

Similarly, one more manager underlined:

*I believe that an employee capable of cyberslacking has an improved understanding of knowledge, positive capacity of learning, enhanced comprehension of creativity, and significant competitive intelligence at the workplace. These altogether contribute to higher productivity for both the employee and the organization.* (M7: 24/01/2020)

The above results support Simsek and Simsek (2019), who found that cyberslacking provides greater chances of change and development while studying the beneficial effects of cyberslacking at the workplace. Keklik et al. (2015) and Belanger and Van Slyke (2002) have also reported in their study that cyberslacking has positive organizational learning capacity, which leads to employees' improved understanding of knowledge. Furthermore, Al-Shuaibi et al. (2013), Henle and Blanchard (2008), Case and Young (2002), Coker (2013), Greenfield and Davis (2002), Lim (2002), and Mills et al. (2001) conclude in their studies that digital employees possessed the ability to work cannier, increase their work speed and consequently their compound productivity. Similar evidence came from Reinecke (2009), Eastin et al. (2007), and Oravec (2002), who inferred in their

study that cyberslacking was beneficial for creativity and job satisfaction.

### **Addiction to Cyberslacking**

The results of addiction to cyberslacking among secretaries are shown in Table 3 (item 16-18). An analysis of questionnaire data represents that approximately half of the respondents revealed their boredom in the absence the of internet and cyberslacking. About 90% of the secretaries agree that it affects even their offline working efficiency when there is no internet. Only 14% of respondents either *strongly agree and agree* that when there is no internet, they feel normal and contented. More than half of the respondents reported that they did not feel normal and contented when there was no internet. Above on-third respondents could not decide whether they felt normal and contented or not in the absence of the internet. Therefore, one can argue here that the level of addiction to cyberslacking is not very severe, and in addiction studies, this situation is called as "prone to be addicted" category.

In the interview, six out of eight secretaries confessed that they either feel lockdown or become blank if they cannot cyberslack for a long interval. According to one secretary respondent:

*I feel bored at a workplace where I can't check my e-mails, social networking sites, news websites, or videos. I feel uneasy and unfit at working place without the internet.* (S2:15/01/2020)

On the same note, one of the secretaries mirrored:

*I get irritation if I can't cyberslack in the absence of the internet network. I can't survive at a workplace where I can't cyberslack because it is as necessary as the food and drink. And, it is not one-way; rather, it is good for both the employee and the employer. (S2:21/02/2020)*

In the managers' interview, seven out of eight agreed that secretaries are not addicted to cyberslacking and have not noticed any sign of addiction until now. According to one manager who argued:

*I feel that secretaries are 'likely to be addicted' but not yet addicted to cyberslacking. If there is an addiction, it is a 'very low' type as they do not show any serious negative psychological behavior. Unlike developed countries, here secretaries are not involved in major cyberslacking that leads to addiction. That is not possible because of the slow and fluctuating network. (M3:24/02/2020)*

In a similar vein, the most experienced manager suggested:

*First of all, I disagree with the notion that secretaries are addicted to cyberslacking; however, they are habituated to it. There is no "quick fix" to solve the issue of cyberslacking; nevertheless, managers can reduce it through mentoring, constant dialogue,*

*counseling, and proximity. Cyberslacking may also be reduced by increasing workload, assigning varieties of work, classifying offline works, and regulating time. (M5:10/01/2020)*

In a similar qualitative study, Hussain and Parida (2017) reported that about half of the respondents got bored at the workplace without cyberslacking. About a quarter of them managed their working hours without cyberslacking by doing some specifically designed offline works. Again, about 25% of the respondents claimed that it did not matter for them. Likewise, Yogun (2015) has also suggested in his study that banning cyberslacking during working hours is not recommended today as the digital work culture is the key for organizations to survive and develop in the current digitized workplace.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The key conclusions and recommendations from this study are presented as follows:

The findings of rationalizing cyberslacking reveal that most respondents regarded cyberslacking as an advanced communication medium, which is officially allowed. They view the cyberslacking skill as an important craft in this digital era, which also helps them for official communication and work. Further, they justify that they cyberslack due to less workload and free time; and they consider cyberslacking a refreshing activity during office hours. Therefore, it is recommended that the

managers check whether they are satisfied with their secretaries' work productivity. The performance (working load analysis, efficiency report, target accomplishment, the achievements of the deadlines, behavior with colleagues, et cetera.) can be observed by the concerned manager during working hours. If an individual secretary is competent enough to equilibrium cyberslacking and her work performance, there is no reason to stop her cyberslacking during working hours. However, if a secretary is lagging in her work performance and cyberslacking penetratingly, she should be allowed for it with limited time allocation.

Two, the findings regarding the opportunities of cyberslacking show that most of the respondents found ample opportunities in cyberslacking for accessing and sharing information; for entertainment through movies, drama serials et cetera; for touching base with friends and family; for accessing and exchanging ideas; and for staying updated with news and other happenings. Since both the 'time wasting' and 'time using' opportunities are available on the internet, the managers should motivate secretaries to use e-learning opportunities, advance secretarial training, and communication workshops for their professional growth. Even then, if the secretaries get some additional free time to cyberslack, it should be accepted as the reality of the digital work culture.

Three, the findings regarding the 'changes in life' due to cyberslacking, most secretaries reported remarkable achievements like development in the English language, knowledge enhancement,

creativity and innovation, job competence, and modernity and trendiness. Therefore, it is recommended that the manager should reconfirm the claim. If the mode of cyberslacking is mostly positive (informative and educative), there should not be any reason to stop it. However, if the claim is not so, controlling measures (KeyStore logging, screen monitoring, software monitoring, and internet service provider monitoring) must be taken to ensure the organization's productivity.

Four, the findings regarding the cyberslacking addiction showed that in the absence of the internet, about half of the secretaries do not feel bored, and an equal proportion of them feel normal and contented. Moreover, the above one-third of secretaries were still 'undecided' about their behavior without the internet. In cyberslacking studies, it is an initial stage of addiction called the 'prone to be addicted' category, which needs careful attention. Therefore, it is suggested that managers should assign task variety, balanced workload, and some offline works to engage the secretaries properly. Moreover, time regulation, motivation, and counseling are also mechanisms to minimize cyberslacking. The policy decisions about cyberslacking practices must be taken now to avoid losses to the university in the times to come keeping the future in mind. This cyberslacking policy should clearly explain the internet use guidelines, code of ethics, deterrence mechanisms, possible consequences, health and safety concerns, and intellectual property rights.

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Cyberslacking is an issue of great attention in the Ethiopian academic setting. Despite a mixed-method design, this study does not stand without limitations. However, the findings of the current study have contributed to some extent to the literature on cyberslacking. Since the research issue is fast-changing, this cross-sectional study should be verified through longitudinal replication studies. This study is positive-oriented. The harmful effects of cyberslacking must be studied systematically to compare the phenomena in the Ethiopian academic setting. This study, due to its affordability, is only limited to the secretaries of MWU. The other communities like students, teachers, and other staff should also be studied thoroughly. The question of generalizability is also fair as the findings of this study were limited to one setting. Hence, in the future, more empirical cyberslacking studies are required in the Ethiopian context based on which the policy on cyberslacking can be formulated.

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