

# IS SMARTPHONE LOAFING ENERGIZING, CREATIVE, INNOVATIVE AND PRODUCTIVE AT THE WORKPLACE?

**Fouzia Hadi Ali, Hailey College of Commerce, University of the Punjab  
Ahmed Muneeb Mehta, Hailey College of Banking and Finance, University  
of the Punjab**

## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** *The growing trend of smartphone usage nowadays has raised a debate on whether its excessive use is counterproductive or not at workplaces. The present study aims to assess whether smartphone loafing helps to replenish lost energies and enhance employees' performance by improving their creative and innovative work behaviour.*

**Methodology:** *To test this hypothesis a survey was held from 630 employees through a 63-item structured questionnaire. The results were evaluated by testing a sequential model through Smart PLS SEM 3.2 software.*

**Findings:** *The results indicate that smartphone loafing activities reduces job burnout that improves employee performance through enhanced creative and innovative work behaviour.*

**Implications:** *These results suggest the policymakers become understanding while dealing with such non-work related behaviour and introduce a culture that is tolerant to accept short breaks as a norm in the workplace.*

**Originality:** *As studies provide a limited scope on the positive sides of smartphone loafing so this study provides a holistic sequential understanding of the outcomes of such behaviour.*

**Keywords:** Smartphone Loafing (S-Loafing), Job Burnout (JB), Innovative Behavior (IB), Creative Behavior (CB), Employee Performance (EP).

## INTRODUCTION

Various approaches to Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB) are available (Caruana et al., 2001; Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Many focus on the repercussions of CWB of employees on their individual and organizational outcomes (e.g. Alias et al., 2013; Everton et al., 2007; Misbah & Ambreen, 2012). Besides this, a plethora of literature is available that highlights the importance to curtail CWB for enhancing the productivity of the employees in various organizations (Appelbaum et al., 2017; Henle et al., 2005; Spreitzer & Doneson, 2005).

Some studies indicate withdrawal as one of the reasons for employees to involve in CWB (Askew, 2012; Spector et al., 2006). Employees may feel their work stressful and use CWB as a respite to energize themselves (Stoddart, 2016). If this claim is real, then there is a need to assess its outcomes on employees' performance through their creative and innovative work behavior. The present study proposes to uncover such a sequential relationship that can reveal that whether smartphone loafing can help in energizing employees that may affect their innovative and creative behavior which enhances their performance.

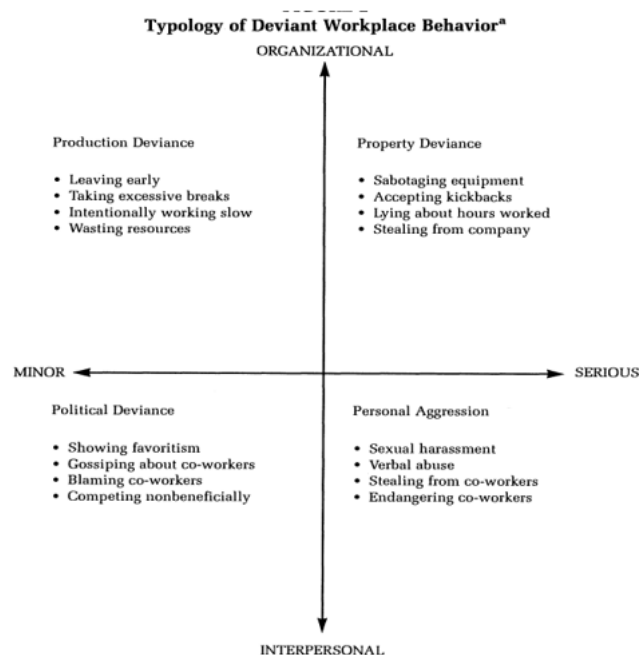
## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Workplace Deviance (WD)

Workplace deviance (WD) refers to the behavior of individuals or groups that puts the well-being and prosperity of the organization at risk (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Scholars use different terminologies to express WD, such as counterproductive behavior (Mangione & Quinn, 1975), and antisocial behavior (Giacalone & Greenberg, 1975). Moreover, researchers claim that the employees indulge in deviant behaviors due to organizational (Henle, 2005) and interpersonal (Henle et al., 2005) factors.

### Negative and Positive Sides of (WD)

Some preliminary work before 1995 by researchers describe WD in isolation based on the situation and consider only the negative behavior to explain deviance. However, Robinson & Bennett (1995) provide a comprehensive definition to explain WD. Robinson and Bennett characterize WD as organizational versus interpersonal and minor versus serious. Organizational WD includes behaviors such as theft, sabotage, lateness, or putting little effort into work (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Moreover, Robinson & Bennett (1995) assert that minor versus serious WD portray the severity of the deviance.



**FIGURE 1**  
**TYOLOGY OF WORKPLACE DEVIANCE ADOPTED BY ROBINSON & BENNETT (1995)**

In a significant advance in the ongoing literature of WD, Robinson and Bennett (1995) developed a chart that further categorizes deviant behavior into four typologies (see Figure 1 above). These four typologies of WD as shown in Figure 1 above are production deviance, property deviance, political deviance, and personal deviance. The segregation of deviant behavior into four typologies that mostly indicate negative behaviors (Geisser, 1974).

In contrast Figure 1 above shows that political and production WD have minor negative consequences in comparison to the property deviance and personal aggression. As

both of the later deviant behaviors are more detrimental to the well-being of the organization and its member. However, before examining the outcomes of WD, it is essential to understand the different types of WD that are prevalent in the present work environment.

## **Types of WD**

The term workplace deviance (WD) also termed as counterproductive work behavior describe different types of counterproductive work behaviors such as absenteeism, theft, leaving workplace before time, favoritism, withdrawal (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Moreover, other critical factors in shaping the likelihood of deviant behavior within the organizations that may include discriminating treatment, organizational culture, and climate, as well as supervisory behavior (Caruana et al., 2001). The preliminary work in this field focused primarily on cyber loafing, or cyber slacking (Blanchard & Henle, 2008; Lara, 2007). Cyber loafing refers to the use of internet at the workplace for personal reasons. Cyber loafing includes activities such as sending and receiving non-work-related emails, playing online games, checking social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Whatsapp), visit adult-oriented websites (Askew, 2012; Liberman et al., 2011).

The Theory of Planned Behavior presented by Ajzen (1991) claims that an individual's attitude, behavioral control, and social norm influences his/her intention to cyber loaf. Moreover, the findings of Sheikh et al. (2015) claim that individuals are more likely to involve in cyber loafing activities using smartphones as compared to desktop computers or laptops. So, the present study proposes that carrying mobile phones has become a social norm. That is why employees do not consider attending non-work-related calls, checking personal emails, playing games or purchasing online as deviant behaviors. This study proposes to examine WD in the context of cyber loafing through mobile phones (Zhou & George, 2001).

## **Mobile Loafing (M-Loafing)**

Since 2012 a paradigm shift is witnessed in the cyber loafing activities at workplaces. Askew (2012) claim that individuals are more likely to cyber loaf using a smartphone rather than desktop computers and laptops. The present study proposes to examine the impact of Smartphone loafing (S-Loafing) that is a broader term than mobile phone loafing (M-Loafing) as the former has many additive functionalities that are more addictive (Salehan & Negahban, 2013). Moreover, in this study, we intend to unveil the effect of S-Loafing as a remedy to reduce burnout at work that may prove as a catalyst to boost employee innovative and creative behavior and resultantly improves employee performance (Stone, 1974).

## **Impact of S-Loafing on Job Burnout**

The current study adopts a three-stage model developed by Maslach (1993) that characterizes job burnout as emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion refers to a state of emotional draining, and a lack of physical ability for the individuals to perform an assigned task (Aghaz & Sheikh, 2016).

The past studies reveal that cyber loafing activities are beneficial for the well-being of the employees (Eastin et al., 2007; Henle & Blanchard, 2008; Reinecke, 2009) as such activities are related to positive emotions. Moreover, cyber loafing activities tend to help to safeguard from the effects of boredom at work (Eastin et al., 2007) and have a negative relationship with work drain (Reinecke, 2009; Dodge, 1985).

In light of the discussion above the present study posits that S-loafing can be treated as a coping strategy (Roth & Cohen, 1986) and Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll

& Shirom, 1989). Roth & Cohen (1986) define coping strategy as a temporal disengagement or short breaks from a stressful situation. While the Theory of Conservation of Resources claims that employees possess a limited amount of mental and physical resources that they use to cope with different situations (Hobfoll & Shirom, 1989). So, we propose that S-loafing help employees to regain their lost energies while taking short breaks at the workplace that tends to decrease job burnout by restoring the employees' energy.

### **The Relationship between Burnout and Employee Creativity and Innovation**

Innovative work behavior refers to the work role with the aim to create and implement new ideas for the benefit of the organization or a particular group (Janssen, 2000). In other words, innovative work behavior refers to the individual's capability to bring new and creative ideas to develop new products; enter into new markets; and develop new processes (Dhar, 2015). Moreover, to develop innovative work behavior among employees, creativity is considered as the prerequisite skill (Kessel et al., 2012; Hurrell et al., 1998).

Most importantly, the findings of Derin & Gökçe (2016) reveal that negative deviant behavior (i.e., cyber loafing activities) enhances positive deviant behavior such as employee creativity, and innovative work behavior. Moreover, the Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 2001; Hobfoll & Shirom, 1989) asserts that cyber loafing activities reduce job burnout among employees by restoring the energy level. So such restoration of energy makes employees feel happier and empowered. Such empowerment, in turn, enables employees to break out from the stagnant mindset to bring and implement creative and innovative ideas (Spreitzer & Doneson, 2005). Such innovative and creative ideas generated can resultantly improve employee performance.

### **Impact of Creativity and Innovation on Task Performance and Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

Employee performance refers to the

*'Scalable actions, behaviors, and outcomes that are linked with and contribute to organizational goals'* (Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000).

Many indicators are available that are capable of measuring employee performance such as objective indicators (i.e., sales output) and subjective ratings by the supervisors. Moreover, extant literature is available that suggest several stand-alone dimensions of employee performance such as, task performance, and organizational citizenship behavior (Campbell, 1990; Reaves, 2015; Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000).

Task performance refers to the employee proficiency to perform an assigned task, mentioned in the job description (Borman et al., 1991; Campbell, 1990). While Organ (1997) assert that organizational citizenship behavior is a type of performance that leads to creating an environment in the workplace that creates ease to accomplish assigned tasks. The underlying assumption to use the dimensions of employee performance (i.e., Task performance organizational citizenship behaviors) is to support and facilitate one another.

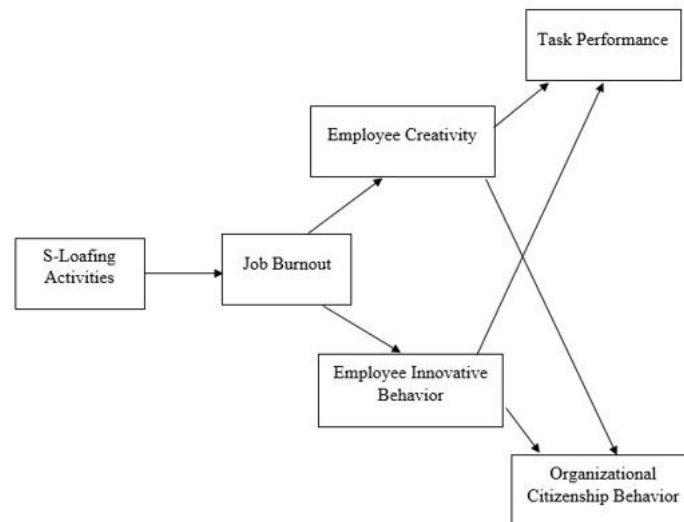
#### **Connecting the Disconnect through a Sequential Mediation**

This study proposes to examine the link between S-loafing (as a type of WD) and employee performance (i.e., task performance and organizational citizenship behavior) through the sequential mediation of burnout and innovative and creative behavior. Such a proposition will help in understanding the holistic mechanism that whether S-loafing helps in regaining energy that enhances or reduces employee innovative and creative behavior which resultantly enhances or reduces employee performance. Based upon the conceptual model

(see Figure 2 below) the following hypotheses are presented:

*H<sub>1</sub>: S-loafing has an indirect effect on task performance and organizational citizenship behavior through the sequential mediation of job burnout and employee creative work behavior.*

*H<sub>2</sub>: S-loafing has an indirect effect on task performance and organizational citizenship behavior through the sequential mediation of job burnout and employee innovative work behavior.*



**FIGURE 2**  
**CONCEPTUAL MODEL**

## METHODOLOGY

This study intended to examine the cause-effect relationship of S-loafing and employee performance with a sequential mediation of job burnout and employee creative and innovative work behavior. Figure 1 shows the conceptual model hypothesized to describe the possible effect of S-loafing activities on employee performance.

### The Participants

This study focused on collecting data from employees irrespective of the sector they work in. Moreover, as S-loafing has been underexplored, so we initially conducted a focus group discussion (FGDs) with eight members (Jong & Hartog, 2010). The findings of the FGDs reveal that employees involve in S-loafing activity as a stress coping strategy that in turn boosts their energy level. The demographic characteristics of the data show that majority of respondents were male (70.2%) and 12.4% females. Moreover, most of them fall under the age of 18 to 28 years of age (37.3%), then followed by 29 to 30 years of age (27.8%). Only 0.6% of respondents were above 58 years old.

### Data Analyses

Initially, the researchers calculated the value of Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR) and Outer loadings to assess the convergent validity of proposed measurement model (Hair et al., 2013). Table 1 below shows the values of AVE, CR and Outer Loadings for accessing convergent validity.

<b>Items</b>	<b>Outer Loadings</b>	<b>AVE</b>	<b>CR</b>
S-Loafing		0.54	0.78
SL10	0.738		
SL12	0.743		
SL8	0.727		
Job Burnout		0.40*	0.75
Cynicism			
C4	0.614		
C5	0.673		
C7	0.599		
Reduced Personal Efficacy			
RPE3	0.58		
RPE4	0.589		
Employee Creative Behavior		0.6	0.866
EC1	0.754		
EC2	0.791		
EC3	0.815		
EC4	0.728		
Employee Innovative Behavior		0.49	0.87
EB1	0.704		
EB2	0.675		
EB5	0.698		
EB6	0.713		
EB7	0.729		
EB8	0.721		
EB9	0.662		
Task Performance		0.56	0.833
TP1	0.687		
TP2	0.752		
TP3	0.788		
TP4	0.751		
Organizational Citizenship Behavior		0.48	0.847
OC11	0.747		
OC12	0.772		
OC13	0.747		
OC14	0.651		
OC15	0.646		
OC6	0.588		

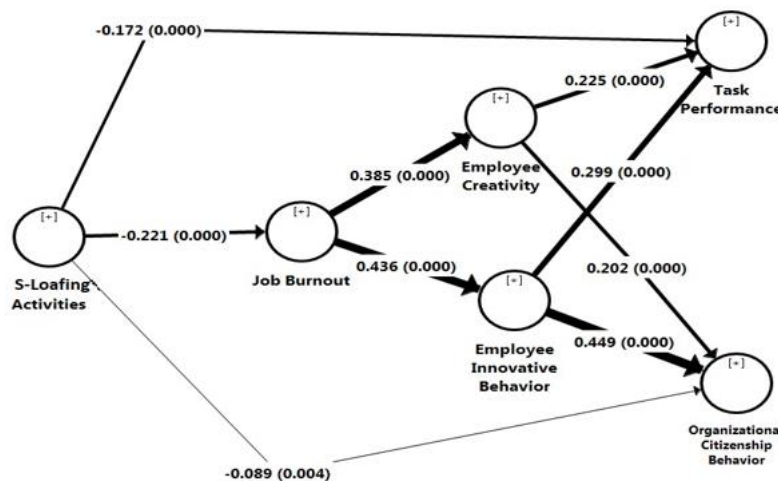
The value of AVE, CR and Outer Loadings should be higher than 0.50, 0.70 and 0.60 (Chin et al., 2008; Hair et al., 2014). Moreover, the value of AVE should not be less than 0.40 as recommended by Diamantopoulos & Siguaw (2000). Table 1 above indicates that convergent validity is established as the value of AVE, CR, and Outer loading fall within the range of acceptable region. Table 2 below depicts discriminant validity.

	<b>HTMT Ratio</b>
Employee Innovative Behavior -> S-loafing	0.137
Employee Creativity -> S-loafing	0.111
Employee Creativity -> Employee Innovative Behavior	0.914
Job Burnout -> S-loafing	0.465
Job Burnout -> Employee Innovative Behavior	0.576
Job Burnout -> Employee Creativity	0.529
Organizational Citizenship Behavior -> S-loafing	0.19
Organizational Citizenship Behavior -> Employee Innovative Behavior	0.739
Organizational Citizenship Behavior -> Employee Creativity	0.689
Organizational Citizenship Behavior -> Job Burnout	0.613
Task Performance -> S-loafing	0.296
Task Performance -> Employee Innovative Behavior	0.596
Task Performance -> Employee Creativity	0.605
Task Performance -> Job Burnout	0.633
Task Performance -> Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.734

The value of HTMT ratio should be less than 0.90 and Table 2 above shows that discriminant validity is established as the value of HTMT ratio is less than 0.90 as recommended by in Table 2.

### RESULTS

To examine the proposed hypotheses bootstrapping procedure was applied using Smart PLS-SEM 3.2. Bootstrapping is a nonparametric procedure that allows examining the statistical significance of the structural models such as model fit, path modeling, and R<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, Bootstrapping procedure calculates the value of Standardized Root Mean Square (SRMR) to access the model fitness. The value of SRMR ranges from 0 to 1, and less than 0.08 is considered a perfect fit (Hooper et al., 2008). The calculated value of SRMR was 0.121 that is considered acceptable. Figure 2 below shows the model extracted through bootstrapping procedure.



**FIGURE 3  
PLS-SEM MODEL**

Figure 3 above shows the indirect impact of S-loafing activities on task performance and organizational citizenship behavior through the sequential mediation of job burnout and

employees creative and innovative behavior. The width of the path lines shows the significance of path coefficients. Moreover, Figure 3 above shows the direct effects of S-loafing activities that reveals a negative impact on both of the dimensions of employee performance, i.e., task performance ( $\beta=-0.172$ ,  $p=0.000<0.01$ ) and organizational citizenship behavior ( $\beta=-0.089$ ,  $p=0.005<0.01$ ). The results show that S-Loafing activities have a negative and highly significant impact on job burnout ( $\beta=-0.221$ ,  $p=0.000<0.01$ ).

Resultantly, job burnout has positive and highly significant impact on employees' creative ( $\beta=0.385$ ,  $p=0.000<0.01$ ) and innovative ( $\beta=0.436$ ,  $p=0.000<0.01$ ) work behavior that in turn enhance employees' performance i.e. task performance ( $\beta=0.225$ ,  $p=0.000<0.01$ ;  $\beta=0.299$ ,  $p=0.000<0.01$ ) and organizational citizenship behavior ( $\beta=0.202$ ,  $p=0.000<0.01$ ;  $\beta=0.449$ ,  $p=0.000<0.01$ ) respectively. Furthermore, the calculated value of S-loafing indirect effect on TP ( $\beta=-0.019$ ,  $p=0.020<0.05$ ;  $\beta=-0.029$ ,  $p=0.006<0.01$ ) and OCB ( $\beta=-0.017$ ,  $p=0.019<0.05$ ;  $\beta=-0.043$ ,  $p=0.001<0.01$ ) shows that both Hypothesis 1 and 2 are accepted. Therefore, the above results reveal that smartphone loafing reduces burnout that helps employees to regain lost energy and make them feel happier. Moreover, employees with such positive energy tend to show more creative and innovative work behavior that ultimately enhances their TP and OCB.

### Predictive Accuracy

To predict the accuracy of proposed hypotheses PLS-Bootstrapping procedure was employed to calculate the value of  $R^2$ . In the current study, endogenous variables, i.e., job burnout, employee creativity, innovative employee behavior, task performance and organizational citizenship behavior have the value of  $R^2$  0.270, 0.049, 0.148, 0.190, 0.278 and 0.389. The value of  $Q^2$  for M-Loafing activities, job burnout, employee creative and innovative behavior, task performance and organizational citizenship behavior is 0.017, 0.084, 0.088, 0.145 and 0.177 respectively. As the values of  $Q^2$  are  $>$  Zero, so this establishes the predictive relevance of the structural model.

Constructs	$R^2$	Adjusted $R^2$	$Q^2$	Effect Size*
Employee Innovative Behavior	0.19	0.189	0.088	Small
Employee Creativity	0.148	0.147	0.084	Small
Job Burnout	0.049	0.047	0.017	Small
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.389	0.386	0.177	Medium
Task Performance	0.278	0.275	0.145	Medium

\*Small:  $0.0 < Q^2$  effect size  $< 0.15$ ; Medium:  $0.15 < Q^2$  effect size  $< 0.35$ ; Large:  $Q^2$  effect size  $> 0.35$

Bootstrapping procedure also calculate the value of  $f^2$ . The size of  $f^2$  value shows the substantial impact of the latent variable on the endogenous variable. In the current study, the effect size of  $f^2$  varies from small to medium (See Table 4).

Models	F Square	Effect Size
M-Loafing -> Job Burnout	0.051	Small
M-Loafing -> Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.013	Small
M-Loafing -> Task Performance	0.041	Small
Employee Innovative Behavior -> Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.151	Medium



Employee Innovative Behavior -> Task Performance	0.057	Small
Employee Creativity -> Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.03	Small
Employee Creativity -> Task Performance	0.032	Small
Job Burnout -> Employee Innovative Behavior	0.235	Medium
Job Burnout -> Employee Creativity	0.174	Medium

\*Small:  $0.0 < Q^2 \text{ effect size} < 0.15$ ; Medium:  $0.15 < Q^2 \text{ effect size} < 0.35$ ; Large:  $Q^2 \text{ effect size} > 0.35$

The current study aims to assess the sequential mediation of job burnout, employee creativity and innovative behavior between the relationship of exogenous (S-Loafing activities) and endogenous (task performance and organizational citizenship behavior) variables.

Table 5 calculates the value of Variance Accounted For (VAF) to assess the mediation effect. The mediation analysis reveals that only job burnout and innovative employee behavior shows a complementary and partial sequential mediation between the relationship of S-Loafing activities and organizational citizenship behavior.

<b>Table 5</b>				
<b>MEDIATION ANALYSIS: JOB BURNOUT, EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY, AND INNOVATIVE BEHAVIOR</b>				
	<b>Indirect Effects</b>	<b>Total Effects</b>	<b>VAF</b>	<b>Mediation</b>
<b>Sequential Mediators: Job Burnout and Employees Creativity</b>				
M-Loafing Activities -> Organizational Citizenship Behavior	-0.017*	-0.149**	0.12	No <sup>a</sup>
M-Loafing Activities -> Task Performance	-0.019*	-0.220**	0.09	No
<b>Sequential Mediators: Job Burnout and Employees Innovative Behavior</b>				
M-Loafing Activities -> Organizational Citizenship Behavior	-0.043**	-0.149**	0.29	Partial <sup>b</sup>
M-Loafing Activities -> Task Performance	-0.029**	-0.220**	0.13	No

<sup>a</sup> No mediation:  $0.00 < \text{VAF} < 0.20$ ; <sup>b</sup> Partial:  $0.20 < \text{VAF} < 0.80$ ; <sup>c</sup> Full Mediation:  $0.80 < \text{VAF} < 1.0$ , \*\* Significant at the level of 1% or 0.01, \* Significant at the level of 5% or 0.05

## DISCUSSION

The findings of the current study reveal that S-Loafing activities help in decreasing the job burnout that assists employees to be more creative and innovative and consequently enhance their task performance and organizational citizenship behavior. The use of smartphones at the workplace help employees access non-work-related emails, online shopping websites, playing online/offline games, and adult-oriented sites.

Through the above discussion, we can infer that employees who involve in S-Loafing activities reduce chronic job stress, i.e., job burnout. Moreover, such a reduction in burnout helps employees to be more creative and innovative in the workplace. The findings of the current study also confirm the results of Derin & Gökçe (2016) that cyber loafers are more creative and innovative in behavior. However, the recent study covers the missing link between S-Loafing activities and employee creativity and innovative behavior by identifying the job burnout as a mediator.

In light of the above discussion the results of the present study significantly contribute to the existing literature on employee performance as it empirically testifies the sequential

mediation of job burnout and employee creativity and innovative work behavior between the impact of S-Loafing activities on task performance and organizational citizenship behavior respectively. Moreover, the findings also implicate that S-Loafing activities prove to be an anodyne for both task performance and organizational citizenship behavior. In the light of the above discussion, the present study has several theoretical and practical implications.

### **Theoretical Implications**

The findings of the current study significantly contribute in the existing theory by identifying the missing link of sequential mediation of job burnout with employee's creativity and innovative behavior between the relationship of S-Loafing activities and employee performance (both task performance and organizational citizenship behavior). Derin & Gökçe (2016) reveal that cyber loafers are more innovative in behavior. The results of the current study also confirm that cyber loafers are more creative and innovative in behavior as the employees who involve in S-Loafing activities can reduce job burnout that in turn positively influence their creativity and innovation.

The present study successfully examined the impact of M-Loafing activities on task performance and organizational citizenship behavior. Additionally, findings reveal that S-loafing activities more likely to enhance employee's organizational citizenship behavior. S-loafing activities enable employees to take short breaks during work hour. Short breaks at workplace enable employees to restore their depleted energy that in turn increases employees innovative work behavior. Employees with innovative work behavior tend to facilitate other co-workers in the workplace.

### **Practical Implications**

The drastic increase in the number of smartphone users and the availability of internet facilities has paved the way for employees to involve in S-Loafing activities. Moreover, carrying smartphones anywhere including workplaces has become a social norm. Furthermore, the ease of internet access through smartphones provides a way for employees to escape the assigned task and duties. Many past research studies have indicated an adverse influence of such deviant activities on performance (Chung & Kim, 2017; Kemp, 2017).

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of the study also reveal that most of the employees tend to involve three types of S-Loafing activities, i.e., sending/receiving non-work-related emails, online shopping, and visiting adult-oriented websites. We implicate that not all kinds of S-loafing activities are dysfunctional. Instead, some S-loafing activities enable employees to regain depleted energy levels that, in turn, improve employee productivity. Based on the above discussion, we suggest the following recommendations to HR managers and policymakers. The excess of anything is bad in the long run. Therefore, too much involvement of employees in S-Loafing activities may reduce the positive outcomes in the long term. Additionally, there is a need to develop a culture within the organization that welcomes short breaks but, at the same time, assures their performance by introducing incentives. Such a culture of taking short breaks will enable the employees to replenish their depleted energies and hence be able to perform better than those employees who do not make such breaks.

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Firstly, the current study employed a questionnaire to collect the data. So future research should use other research methodologies to evaluate the current model. Secondly, the research paper proposed that job burnout and employee creativity and innovative behavior reduce the negative relationship between S-Loafing activities and employee performance.

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