

Article

Addressing job burnout among employees: investigating the impact of job stress and cyberloafing

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Abstract: Burnout is a serious problem in the workplace these days, especially in big cities such as Jakarta, which ranks among the ten cities with the highest prevalence of burnout in the world. Burnout is understood as the outcome of the absence of stress management and underscores the significance of understanding stress-to-burnout behavioral pathways. This study aimed to examine the effect of job stress on job burnout among workers across various industries in Jakarta and to assess the mediating role of cyberloafing between job stress and job burnout. The study uses the Conservation of Resources Theory to strengthen its analysis of personal job burnout. There were 185 respondents in this study. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyze the data. These findings show that job stress and cyberloafing have a significant effect on job burnout. The results demonstrate that job stress significantly increases both cyberloafing and job burnout, while cyberloafing itself positively influences job burnout. Cyberloafing was also shown to mediate the relationship between job stress and job burnout, suggesting that it served as a behavioral pathway linking stress to exhaustion. The findings have theoretical implications by situating cyberloafing within the stress-burnout framework and practical implications for managing digital distractions and stressors to foster employee well-being.

Keywords: job stress; job burnout; cyberloafing; employee well-being; workplace behavior

1. Introduction

Employee wellbeing has become much more apparent in the digital workplace. The problem does not only happen in rural areas, but can be found in the major cities, including Jakarta, in Indonesia. In recent times, Jakarta has become one of the cities with the highest burnout rate in a global study (Sleep Junkie, 2025), which suggests that the workplace is not conducive to mental health and well-being.

Burnout has been formally acknowledged as an occupational issue, highlighting the need for burn-out to be addressed. In May of 2019, World Health Organization (WHO) officially recognized burnout as a condition in its eleventh revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). Burnout is no longer used as a term for a generic emotional response to stress; it's a legitimate burnout syndrome of chronic workplace stress that has not been addressed successfully (Sleep Junkie, 2025). The impacts of these mental health issues are far-reaching. It is estimated that depression and anxiety cost the world approximately 12 billion working days annually, leading to productivity losses of up to USD 1 trillion annually (WHO, 2024).

As job stress and burnout rise, cyberloafing (using the internet at work for non-work-related reasons) increases as well. This is more prevalent in the digital

age nowadays, particularly among youth. For instance, according to data, 56% of employees are distracted by social media at work (Statista, 2019), while 36% of Millennials and Gen Z workers report spending 2 hours or more in a day on their phones for personal use (Udemy, 2018). It takes employees about 56 minutes per day to spend on non-work-related activities on their phones (Atto, 2023). Also, a survey has identified that employees spend over 2 hours a day on their personal phones, which negatively impacts on productivity (Treece, 2024).

Cyberloafing is generally considered counterproductive work behavior, but it also can be a psychological coping mechanism. High levels of work stress can trigger employees to engage in personal electronic use to escape from the job or as a way of managing their stress. But this can have a negative effect. Ironically, excessive cyberloafing may exacerbate employee disengagement from their work, ultimately leading to increased job burnout as incomplete tasks accumulate. Cyberloafing is not only a symptom of stress but also a contributor to stress overload in the workplace and should be studied more in-depth.

While these issues have attracted increasing attention in organizational behavior research, important gaps remain. Previous studies have consistently demonstrated the direct relationship between job stress and job burnout, while cyberloafing has largely been examined either as a counterproductive work behavior or as a temporary coping strategy. However, relatively little attention has been given to explaining the behavioral mechanism through which job stress develops into burnout. In particular, limited research has examined whether cyberloafing functions as an intermediary process that translates psychological strain into emotional exhaustion.

Furthermore, studies grounded in Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory have primarily conceptualized cyberloafing as either a consequence of resource depletion or a short-term coping response. Fewer studies have examined how cyberloafing might influence resource dynamics over time, particularly by shifting an initially helpful coping strategy into a harmful one that accelerates burnout. This is especially significant in environments where digital technology is pervasive, and people are exposed to computers and information at all times that could be used to commit cyberloafing.

To overcome these limitations, this study explores the mediating role of cyberloafing between job stress and job burnout in workers in Jakarta, Indonesia. The present study builds on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory by proposing a sequence of resource depletion. This study also makes a significant contribution to the field of organizational behavior by offering a more detailed theoretical understanding of burnout in digital workplaces and empirical evidence in an emerging-economy context.

2. Literature review

2.1. Job stress and its impact on employee behavior

Job stress is the psychological, emotional, physical and behavioural response to a situation which arises when the work demands of a person are greater than he or she can cope with. It may have many causes (e.g., overtime work, high workload, job insecurity, poor working environment) that have a negative impact on employees' health and performance (Maqsoom et al., 2023; Quynh & Anh, 2025). The changes in the workplace are resulting in increased stress on the job, particularly in urban areas like Jakarta.

Factors contributing to this include heavy workloads, tight deadlines, conflicts

over expectations, and the pervasive presence of digital technology that blurs the line between work and personal life. Job stress can affect employees in several ways, including affecting their job performance, mental health, and organizational commitment. Job stress can lead to counterproductive work behaviors such as decreased productivity and increased absenteeism. This is typically managed by the organization's identification and facilitated through corporate social responsibility activities (Kim et al., 2023). High levels of job stress are closely linked to mental health issues including depression and anxiety. This is particularly evident among Malaysian anti-drug professionals, where coping strategies significantly influence the stress-depression relationship (Nordin et al., 2022). In social work, job stress during the pandemic has been associated with high levels of burnout, particularly due to organizational and work-related factors (Dima et al., 2021).

2.2. Job burnout as an outcome of chronic stress

Job burnout is a psychological syndrome that develops as a consequence of chronic and excessive work-related stress. It encompasses multiple dimensions, including emotional exhaustion, physical fatigue, cynicism, negative attitudes toward work, and reduced professional efficacy, reflecting an employee's depleted capacity to cope effectively with job demands (Angelini, 2023; Zhang et al., 2022). As Jakarta ranks among the cities with the highest levels of burnout (Sleep Junkie, 2025), it becomes critical to examine how stress contributes to this condition. Burnout is not only detrimental to individual mental health but also leads to decreased productivity, absenteeism, and turnover intention.

Chronic stress that leads to burnout can cause an allostatic load, which is the wear and tear on the body from ongoing stress. This physiological imbalance can increase the risk of non-communicable diseases. (Konlan et al., 2022). Burnout is associated with various mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and suicidality. Physicians who participated in the systematic study indicated a significant relationship between burnout and these psychological morbidities and that chronic stress could result in severe mental health issues (Ryan et al., 2023).

2.3. Recognizing cyberloafing and its mixed characteristics

Reizer et al. (2022) define cyberloafing as the use of the internet for personal activities during work hours, which can include browsing social media, shopping online, or other non-work-related internet activities. It is regarded as a form of workplace withdrawal behaviour, particularly prevalent in workplaces where monitoring is less frequent and is remote.

Cyberloafing is believed to reduce productivity and efficiency in organizations because employees spend time on non-work activities instead of their assigned tasks. It is viewed as a form of work deviation which may obstruct the attainment of organizational objectives and cause loss of valuable working time (Reizer et al., 2022). The presence of cyberloafing can also impacted team dynamics, especially in remote work settings where coworker engagement is essential for maintaining performance levels (Van Der Lippe & Lippényi, 2019).

Although it has negative meanings, cyberloafing can act as a coping strategy for employees coping with uncertainty and stress, such as during the pandemic. The Conservation of Resources Theory suggests that people engage in cyberloafing as a way to conserve their personal resources and manage stress, especially when they face high levels of uncertainty and fear. This behavior can help employees relieve work stress, recharge, and possibly bring renewed energy to their tasks (Reizer et al., 2022).

3. Theoretical framework

Figure 1 shows the proposed theoretical framework tested in this study. The proposed theoretical framework was developed to address the gap in the literature on job burnout and to draw on the Conservation of Resources Theory. Conservation of Resources Theory is a psychological model that defines how individuals attempt to acquire, retain, and protect their resources, which are essential for their well-being and functioning. It suggests that losing resources has a more substantial impact than gaining them, motivating people to protect their resources to prevent further loss.

COR Theory highlights that losing resources has a more substantial psychological impact than gaining them. This is evident in situations like the pandemic, where losses in financial stability, health, and social connections are related to increase levels of anxiety and depression (Lee et al., 2023; Toh et al., 2023; Yu et al., 2023). Individuals engage in behaviors to protect their current resources and recover what they have lost. For example, procrastination can be seen as a resource-protection behavior, where individuals delay tasks to avoid further resource depletion (Huang et al., 2023). Also, social support and organizational practices can help support individuals to recover and reduce resource loss (Santos et al., 2024).

In this study, job stress is the independent variable. While job burnout is the dependent variable. The study also tested cyberloafing as a mediating variable in the relationship between job stress, and job burnout. In this study, job stress is proposed to have direct influence on job burnout and cyberloafing. While, cyberloafing is expected to mediate the relationship between job stress and job burnout.

Job stress refers to a situation where workforces feel that their resources (e.g., energy, time, attention, or emotional capacity) are being threatened or drained by excessive demands. As a response, employees may engage in cyberloafing to temporarily recover or protect their depleted resources. Cyberloafing, in this study, is seen as an effort to handle stress and conserve individual energy by temporarily disengaging from tasks in the workplace. But COR Theory also cautions that over time, these dysfunctional coping mechanisms can result in additional loss of resources. Excessive cyberloafing can cause workflow disruption, delay task completion, and cause stress, which then can result in emotional fatigue and job burnout.

The current research on COR Theory has been limited to either the perspective of workplace deviance or coping to the lack of resources. This study aligns with this perspective and suggests that “cyberloafing” may actually contribute to resource depletion, especially when individuals aim to conserve resources. It is not just a stress response, but has been defined as being a mediator between stress and burnout. This approach extends COR Theory by providing an example of a coping mechanism that is beneficial in the short term but detrimental in the long term and is linked to the depletion of psychological resources at work.

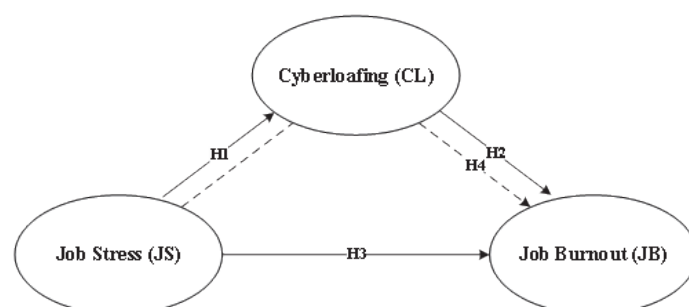


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

4. Hypotheses development

4.1. Job stress and cyberloafing

An important predictor of cyberloafing is the level of stress an employee experiences at work. Employees who face high levels of stress in their work may seek relief through stress reduction in non-work-related internet activities during working hours. Cyberloafing, a type of workplace deviance, is impacted by numerous stressors. These stressors may contribute to cyberloafing being a coping mechanism for employees to deal with stress. Past research indicates that stress mediates the relationship between various stress-inducing characteristics and cyberloafing. Loneliness in the workplace can be a factor in cyberloafing, as it can lower self-control. Loneliness is also likely to decrease employees' self-control and cause cyberloafing as a way of coping with emotions (Yang et al., 2023). The pandemic brought uncertainty and fear, leading to increased stress and, in turn, increased cyberloafing as employees sought to manage it online by engaging in non-work-related activities (Reizer et al., 2022).

As more people have become dependent on digital platforms during the shift to remote work, this dependence can cause technostress. This stress can lead to mental fatigue and make employees feel worse, which may encourage them to engage in cyberloafing to alleviate the difficulties of working remotely. (Singh et al., 2022). Excessive use of digital tools while working remotely can lead to information overload, increasing stress and reducing job satisfaction. This environment may also encourage cyberloafing, as employees struggle to handle the excessive amount of information (Martin et al., 2022). Building on the above discussion, a hypothesis was put forward:

H₁: Job stress positively impacts cyberloafing.

4.2. Cyberloafing and job burnout

There is a complex link between cyberloafing and job burnout. It is commonly viewed as negative behavior and is referred to as cyberloafing. This is the act of using the internet for personal reasons during work time. However, it can also serve as a response to work-related stress and burnout, offering workers a temporary escape from work pressures.

Cyberloafing is perceived as a way of stress reduction; the employee can temporarily escape from work-related stress. The short break offered can help alleviate employees' stress and reduce the risk of burnout by giving them time to unwind from work-related pressures, as Reizer et al. (2022) explained. Cyberloafing can be associated with ego depletion, in which employees participate in non-work activities to replenish their mental resources. This implies that cyberloafing could be a mechanism to prevent burnout by decreasing cognitive load and emotional exhaustion from constant work (Reizer et al., 2022).

Cyberloafing is typically defined as nonconformity in the workplace which may negatively impact organizational effectiveness and/or efficiency. This can contribute to increased job burnout if it causes a pile-up of work or extra stress from late work. Organizations are concerned about cyberloafing because it takes away from their work tasks and can lead to burnout if they are behind schedule (Reizer et al., 2022). This two-fold nature suggests that cyberloafing might have both positive and negative influences on job burnout, depending on the context and individual circumstances. Thus, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H₂: Cyberloafing positively impacts job burnout.

4.3. Job stress and job burnout

Job burnout encompasses emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and a sense of reduced personal achievement, which can occur following prolonged contact with work-related stress. Job stress has a long-standing association with burnout, with stress being a major contributing factor. There are several studies that highlight the direct connection between job stress and job burnout. For instance, the perceived stress among healthcare workers has been reported to have a positive correlation with job burnout, showing that stress is one of the predictive factors of job burnout (Jiang et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2024). In the nursing job, the effects of occupational stress on job-related emotional states can be demonstrated to directly affect emotional well-being, and are closely associated with compassion fatigue, a process that is linked to burnout (Falatah & Alhalal, 2022). Based on the foregoing identifications, the following hypothesis may be proposed:

H₃: Job stress positively impacts job burnout.

4.4. Cyberloafing as a mediator

The relationship among job stress, job burnout, and cyberloafing is complex. Cyberloafing, defined as using the internet for personal activities during work hours, is often viewed as a coping mechanism for stress. Although previous studies do not explicitly identify cyberloafing as a mediator between job stress and burnout, they offer relevant insights into the dynamics of stress, burnout, and coping strategies in workplace settings.

Cyberloafing is identified as a form of workplace deviance that employees might engage in to cope with stress and resource depletion, as seen during the pandemic (Reizer et al., 2022). In other study on workplace loneliness and cyberloafing has suggested that cyberloafing may serve as a response to emotional depletion, which is a form of stress management (Yang et al., 2023). Although the direct mediating role of cyberloafing between job stress and burnout has not been clearly studied, observing cyberloafing as a stress-coping mechanism proposes a possible indirect link. Employees may turn to cyberloafing to manage stress, which can provide temporary relief but might not avoid burnout over time (Reizer et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2023). Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H₄: Cyberloafing mediates the relationship between job stress and job burnout.

5. Methodology

5.1. Research design

This study employed a quantitative research design, which enables the testing of relationships between variables through statistical analysis. In this study, the unit of analysis is at the individual level. The respondents' perceptions about the job stress and cyberloafing became the basis for understanding their influence on job burnout. Therefore, an individual was considered suitable as the unit of analysis to test all the variables shown in the theoretical framework. The study was conducted in a natural environment with minimal researcher interference. Following that, a cross-sectional design was used, with data collected at one point in time, because the design was simple and inexpensive and allowed data collection in a relatively short period.

5.2. Data collection and participants

The primary data for this study were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to full-time employees working in various industries in Jakarta, Indonesia. Before completing the questionnaire, all participants received an information sheet

explaining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. The completion and submission of the questionnaire were considered as informed consent to participate in the study.

A total of 185 valid responses were collected and included in the analysis. The sample size is considered adequate for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), as it exceeds the minimum sample size recommended for models of similar complexity (Hair et al., 2022). Furthermore, the proposed model includes a maximum of two structural paths directed at a single endogenous construct, indicating that the sample also satisfies the widely accepted 10-times rule for PLS-SEM. Accordingly, the sample provides sufficient statistical power to estimate the proposed structural relationships and test the research hypotheses.

All respondents participated voluntarily and represented employees from various industries in Jakarta. The anonymized dataset has been made publicly available through the Zenodo repository: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16890069>.

5.3. Measurements

Job stress was measured using nine items adapted from Teleş (2021) which comprehend a psychological condition that occurs when job demands are seen as exceeding a person's ability to cope effectively, thereby threatening their physical and mental health (Brunner et al., 2019). Cyberloafing was measured using 12 items adapted from Lim and Chen (2012) to comprehend a form of productivity-deviant behavior among employees, characterized by their participation in online activities (e.g., browsing the internet and sending emails during work hours), which is seen as an unproductive use of time in the workplace (Lim & Teo, 2024). Job burnout was measured using 10 items adapted from Maslach & Jackson (1981) to comprehend a syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, which frequently occurs among individuals working in fields that involve intensive interaction with other people (Tetrick et al., 2023). In this study, participants rated their degree of agreement with the statements based on five-point scale whereby, 1 = strongly disagree, and 5 = strongly agree.

5.4. Data analysis

The descriptive statistics reveal important information about the respondents' demographic characteristics (**Table 1**). It is noted that 64.32% of the 185 participants in this survey were females. Most of the participants (50.81%) were between 28 and 43 years old. In terms of years with the organization, most of the participants surveyed (34.05%) have been with their organization between 4 and 6 years. In terms of academic qualifications, most participants (50.81%) were degree holders. Finally, most participants (14.59%) were involved in information technology (IT), followed by purchasing (13.51%).

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the help of SmartPLS software. PLS-SEM was chosen because it is effective for exploratory theory testing and is suitable for small to medium sample sizes, allowing for the management of complex models with mediators.

The data analysis process consisted of two main phases. First phase, Measurement Model Evaluation, which included assessing reliability (Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha), convergent validity (Average Variance Extracted or AVE), and discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion). Second phase: Structural Model Evaluation, which involved analyzing R^2 values, path coefficients, significance levels and testing for direct-indirect effects.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Demographic	Criteria	Total	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	66	35.68%
	Female	119	64.32%
Age	18 - 27 Years old (Gen Z)	47	25.41%
	28 - 43 Years old (Millennials)	94	50.81%
	44 - 59 Years old (Gen X)	37	20.00%
	60 - 78 Years old (Baby Boomer)	7	3.78%
	< 1 Year	18	9.73%
Tenure	1 - 3 Years	40	21.62%
	4 - 6 Years	63	34.05%
	7 - 9 Years	35	18.92%
	10 - 12 Years	10	5.41%
	> 12 Years	19	10.27%
Education	Diploma	19	10.27%
	Bachelor	94	50.81%
	Master	29	15.68%
	Doctorate	9	4.86%
	High School	33	17.84%
	Below High School	1	0.54%
Work Functions	Business/Sales	22	11.89%
	Finance	14	7.57%
	General Affair	6	3.24%
	Human Resource	24	12.97%
	Information Technology (IT)	27	14.59%
	Marketing	21	11.35%
	Operation	9	4.86%
	Other/lain-lain	17	9.19%
	Product Management	20	10.81%
	Purchasing	25	13.51%

6. Results

6.1 Measurement model evaluation

A measurement model was evaluated to check the validity and reliability of the constructs in this study. This includes tests of convergent validity, which focused on the factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each variable,

such as Job Stress, Cyberloafing, and Job Burnout.

6.1.1. Convergent validity: factor loadings and AVE

However, the preliminary results of the convergent validity test revealed that the loading factor values of all the items within the Job Stress construct and Job Burnout construct were greater than 0.70, except for the item (JB1). Some of the loading factors for items under the Cyberloafing construct were below 0.70, and those for three items (CL6, CL8, and CL9) were below 0.40, suggesting poor reliability. So these items were dropped from the model to increase the validity of the measures.

The indicators for each construct showed improved measurement quality after the items were removed. The revised results are presented in **Table 2** and **Figure 2**.

Table 2. Factor Loadings and AVE

Variable	Item	Loading Factor	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Job Stress (JS)	JS1	0.892	0.773
	JS2	0.930	
	JS3	0.806	
	JS4	0.902	
	JS5	0.831	
	JS6	0.915	
	JS7	0.880	
	JS8	0.878	
	JS9	0.872	
Cyberloafing (CL)	CL2	0.783	0.574
	CL4	0.724	
	CL5	0.764	
	CL7	0.796	
	CL10	0.746	
	CL11	0.731	
Job Burnout (JB)	JB2	0.818	0.692
	JB3	0.831	
	JB4	0.795	
	JB5	0.892	
	JB6	0.783	
	JB7	0.855	
	JB8	0.792	
	JB9	0.877	
	JB10	0.838	

Based on **Table 2**, all retained items for each construct have loading factor values ≥ 0.70 and AVE values > 0.50 , indicating that convergent validity is well established (Fattah et al., 2025; Hamid & Anwar, 2019a; Haryono, 2016). The results confirm that each construct explains a sufficient proportion of variance from its indicators and that the items are internally consistent in representing their respective latent variables.

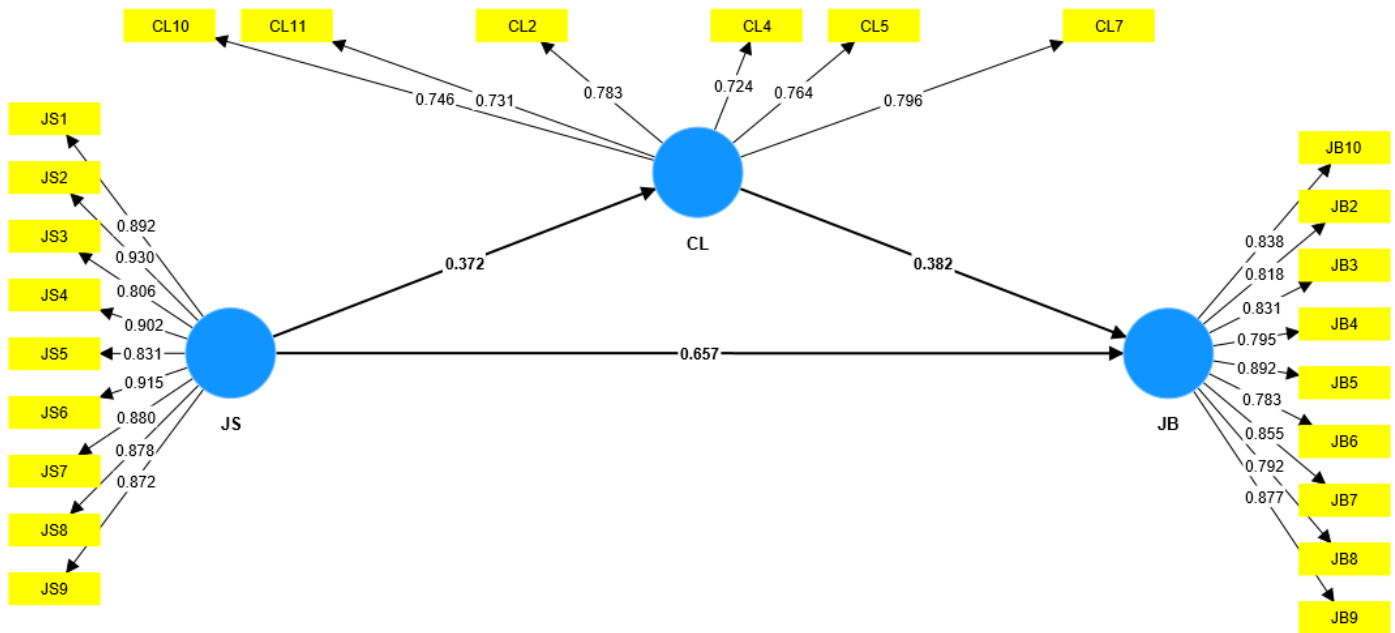


Figure 2. Convergent Validity

6.1.2 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using two methods: the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) and the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

6.1.2.1 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

HTMT values below 0.90 indicate that constructs are sufficiently distinct from one another (Hair et al., 2019; Kiswanto et al., 2024). All HTMT values between the latent variables are below the threshold of 0.90, as shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio

Constructs	Cyberloafing (CL)	Job Burnout (JB)	Job Stress (JS)
Cyberloafing (CL)	—		
Job Burnout (JB)	0.685	—	
Job Stress (JS)	0.381	0.829	—

These results confirm that discriminant validity is established with the use of the HTMT criterion.

6.1.2.2 Fornell-Larcker Criterion

The Fornell-Larcker method evaluates discriminant validity by comparing the square root of AVE for each construct with the correlation between constructs. A construct should share more variance with its indicators than with other constructs.

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker

Constructs	Cyberloafing (CL)	Job Burnout (JB)	Job Stress (JS)
Cyberloafing (CL)	0.758		
Job Burnout (JB)	0.626	0.832	
Job Stress (JS)	0.372	0.799	0.879

The square roots of AVE for Cyberloafing (0.758), Job Burnout (0.832), and Job Stress (0.879) are all higher than their respective inter-construct correlations, as shown in **Table 4**. This displays that the constructs are distinct and confirms that discriminant validity has been satisfied based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Haryono, 2016; Kiswanto et al., 2024).

6.1.3 Construct Reliability

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). Both indicators should exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Fattah et al., 2025; Hamid & Anwar, 2019; Haryono, 2016). **Table 5** summarizes the reliability scores for all constructs below.

Table 5. reliability scores

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Job Stress (JS)	0.963	0.968
Cyberloafing (CL)	0.853	0.890
Job Burnout (JB)	0.944	0.953

Since all values surpass 0.70, the results indicate that each construct has good internal consistency and overall reliability.

6.2 Structural model evaluation

After the reliability and validity of the measurement model were verified, the structural model was tested to examine the relationship between variables, the explanatory power of the model, and the mediation effect.

6.2.1 Coefficient of determination (R^2)

R^2 value represents the proportion of the variance in the dependent constructs that is explained by the model. The results of the study are summarized in **Table 6**.

Table 6. Coefficient of Determination

Endogenous Variable	R^2 Value
Cyberloafing (CL)	0.139
Job Burnout (JB)	0.764

The R^2 value of Cyberloafing (CL) is 0.139, which means that Job Stress (JS) accounts for 13.9% of the variance in cyberloafing, and the rest of the variance (86.1%) is accounted for by the non-measured factors of the model. The value R^2 of Job Burnout (JB) is 0.764, which means that the Job Stress and Cyberloafing variables accounted

for 76.4% of the variance in Job Burnout, while the remaining 23.6% was explained by other variables not measured in the present study (Fattah et al., 2025; Haryono, 2016). These values indicate that the model has moderate to substantial explanatory power, specifically for the burnout construct.

6.2.2 Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

The Q^2 value was used to determine the predictive relevance and was calculated as:

$$\begin{aligned} Q^2 &= 1 - (1 - R_1^2)(1 - R_2^2) \\ &= 1 - (1 - 0.139)(1 - 0.764) = 1 - (0.861)(0.236) = 1 - (0.861)(0.236) \\ &= 1 - 0.20396 = 0.796804 \end{aligned}$$

The resulting Q^2 value of 0.797 suggests that 79.7% of the variance in the data can be predicted by the model, indicating high predictive relevance. Factors outside the model influence the remaining 20.3%. Overall, the model shows a good level of fit and predictive capability study (Fattah et al., 2025; Haryono, 2016).

6.2.3 Hypothesis testing

6.2.3.1 Results of direct hypotheses testing

There are four hypotheses in this study—three direct effects and one mediating hypotheses. P and T values are used to determine whether the paths are significant. It is because statistical t-values that are significantly different from 0 are almost always considered to be statistically significant though this depends largely on the degree of freedom, confidence interval, and directionality of the hypothesis (Hair et al., 2014). The PLS bootstrapping resampling was performed using the 5000 bootstrapping samples recommended by Hair et al. (2011) to acquire the statistical t-values and the standard error. The bootstrapping sample is thought to be sufficient.

The measurement model assessment process also utilized the PLS standard algorithm to calculate the path coefficients and determine if the association was positive or negative. The outcomes of the direct hypothesis testing are presented in **Table 7** and **Figure 3**. The results showed that job stress have significant effect on cyberloafing ($\beta = 0.372$, $t = 5.802$, $p < 0.01$) and the results support hypothesis (H1). Similarly, cyberloafing was also found to have significant effect on job burnout ($\beta = 0.382$, $t = 7.563$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, the hypothesis (H2) was supported. Also, job stress was found have significant effect on job burnout ($\beta = 0.657$, $t = 15.324$, $p = 0.346$). Therefore, hypothesis (H3) was supported.

Table 7. Results of Direct Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Relationship	Std. Beta	Std Error	T-value	P-value	Decision
H ₁	Job Stress → Cyberloafing	0.372	0.064	5.802	< 0.001***	Supported
H ₂	Cyberloafing → Job Burnout	0.382	0.050	7.563	< 0.001***	Supported
H ₃	Job Stress → Job Burnout	0.657	0.043	15.324	< 0.001***	Supported

*Note: Values are calculated using PLS bootstrapping routine with 185 cases and 5000 samples (one tailed). ***indicates the item is significant at $p < 0.01$ level, ** indicates the item is significant at $p < 0.05$ level, and * indicates the item is significant at $p < 0.1$ level*

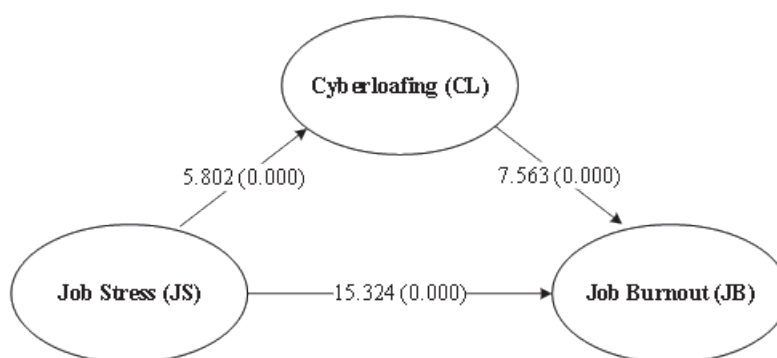


Figure 3. Direct Effect Model

6.2.3.2 Results of Mediating Hypothesis

In this study, cyberloafing is the mediating factor that will test the mediating effect on the relationship between job stress, and job burnout. As shown in **Table 8** and **Figure 4**, cyberloafing mediated the relationship between job stress and job burnout ($\beta = 0.142$, $t = 5.392$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, hypothesis (H4) was supported.

Table 8. Testing the Mediating Effect of Cyberloafing

Hypothesis	Mediation path	Std Beta	Std Error	T-value	P-value	Confidence Interval		Decision
						Lower limit (5%)	Upper limit (95%)	
H ₄	Job Stress → Cyberloafing → Job Burnout	0.142	0.026	5.392	< 0.001***	0.103	0.189	Supported

*Note: Values are calculated using PLS bootstrapping routine with 185 cases and 5000 samples (one tailed). ***indicates the item is significant at $p < 0.01$ level, and * indicates the item is significant at $p < 0.1$ level. The hypotheses are supported based on t-statistic and p-value distributed at ($t = 1.282$, $p < 0.1$), ($t = 1.645$, $p < 0.05$) and ($t = 2.326$, $p < 0.01$) in accordance to the table of Ott and Longnecker (2010, p. 1172).*

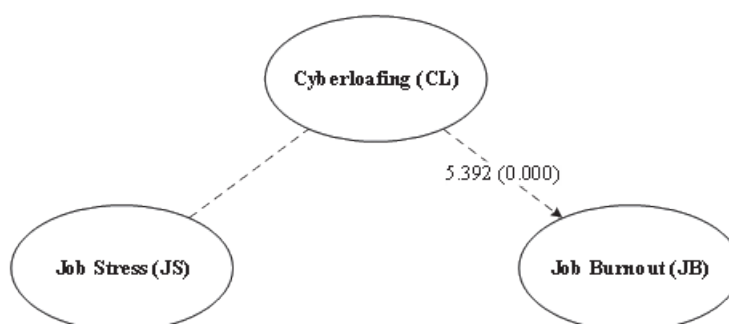


Figure 4. The Mediating Role of Cyberloafing

7. Discussion

7.1 Job stress and cyberloafing

The current study found that job stress was significantly positively related to cyberloafing indicating that employees under high levels of stress tend to disengage from their tasks and redirect their attention to non-work-related online activities

during work hours. The findings indicate that cyberloafing, while often categorized as a form of workplace deviance, can be understood as a coping mechanism employed by employees to manage stress and regain temporary psychological relief. The current finding provide support for previous studies that identify stress as an essential antecedent of cyberloafing (Martin et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2022).

Logically, employees who experienced workload pressure, role ambiguity, or interpersonal conflicts may turn to the internet as a way to escape. Greater reliance on digital platforms may sometimes increase technostress, which triggering psychological strain and lowering overall well-being. As argued by Singh et al. (2022), employees who experience technostress often choose to cyberloaf to escape work pressures mentally. Apart from that, those who are experiencing high psychological distress due to fear and uncertainty may also led to more cyberloafing as employees tried to cope with their emotions through non-work-related internet use. This was found by Reizer et al. (2022) study especially during the pandemic. Similar goes to information overload from excessive use of digital tools which tend to decreases job satisfaction, and increase job stress, and leads employees to cyberloafing as a coping mechanism approach (Martin et al., 2022).

The findings indicate that job stress not only directly reduces employee well-being but also indirectly impacts behavior by encouraging disengagement through cyberloafing in the workplace. From the perspective of COR Theory, cyberloafing is understood as an effort to conserve or rebuild depleted psychological resources. However, although it may offer short-term relief, such behavior can become challenging if not managed, as it hinders productivity and can lead to additional tensions over time in the workplace.

7.2 Cyberloafing and job burnout

In this study, cyberloafing was found significantly positively related to job burnout suggesting that although employees often use cyberloafing as a temporary way to escape stress, frequent or extended participation in this activity can lead to high burnout. The upside of cyberloafing is that it can be used as a coping mechanism in the workplace. In brief participation in non-work-oriented online activities, employees can temporarily take a break from high-stress work activities, thereby lowering their cognitive burden and emotional stress. As mentioned in previous research, these micro-breaks can be used as a stress reliever to allow workers to re-energize their psychological resources and stave off burnout right away (Reizer et al., 2022). Cyberloafing can help to reduce the immediate impact of stress and stave off burnout in these ways.

The findings of this study also support the detrimental effect of cyberloafing, which is seen when it is excessive at work. Significant time may be spent on personal Internet usage, causing employees to fall behind on deadlines, build up unfinished work or pressure on performance when returning to work. These outcomes can increase stress levels, create feelings of guilt or inefficacy, and eventually accelerate emotional exhaustion—one of the hallmarks of burnout. Organizations view cyberloafing as a form of workplace deviance precisely because it undermines collective productivity and can indirectly heighten individual stress levels, rather than alleviate them (Reizer et al., 2022).

Remarkably, this study found that the role of cyberloafing in the workplace is indeed dualistic, as evidenced by empirical findings. While it offers a quick way to save mental energy, overusing or poorly managing it can lead to long-term burnout. The negative influence of cyberloafing appears more pronounced, as it was positively

associated with burnout. For company leaders, this reinforces the importance of stress prevention, not just stress control, by dealing with the underlying causes of stress.

The findings also indicate that the impact of cyberloafing is related to the degree, frequency, and reason for cyberloafing. In some cases, cyberloafing can be a positive coping mechanism when used carefully as a mental break from job-related stress, allowing employees to recharge depleted cognitive resources and get back to work. In these scenarios, cyberloafing can be compared to other micro breaks, which could foster short-term wellbeing and performance. The negative effects of cyberloafing gain more influence, however, when the behavior is frequent, long term, or used as a repeated work escape. Cyberloafing leads to task delay, workload accumulation, loss of self-efficacy, and more pressure of time, and ultimately causes further emotional exhaustion and job burnout. So, it is not about adaptive versus maladaptive cyberloafing, but rather about the nature of the dependency on cyberloafing as a coping mechanism for stress in the workplace. Therefore, cyberloafing should not be considered as positive or negative. Instead, the effects are related to whether it is a short-term recovery routine or develops into a habitual avoidance routine that disrupts productivity and work resource recovery.

Cyberloafing is still adaptive from a Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory perspective only if it temporarily replenishes existing resources without causing further resource loss. After the behavior has led to greater resource depletion and poor functioning, it becomes a dysfunctional behavior.

7.3 Job stress and job burnout

As predicted, job stress was found positively related to job burnout confirming that prolonged exposure to stress is a major precursor of burnout. The findings provide support for past studies where consistently identifies stress as one of the most critical predictors of burnout across various occupational settings (Jiang et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2024) and the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory assumption. Employees under prolonged stress lose energy, emotional stability, and motivation, all of which are essential psychological resources. Without replenishment, this depletion culminates in emotional exhaustion and reduced efficacy, two core components of burnout.

Previous research among healthcare workers has found that perceived stress is positively associated with burnout, which means that workers who feel stressed are more susceptible to burnout and disengagement from their work (Jiang et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2024). In the nursing environment, the negative effects of work-related stress on affective well-being and the emergence of negative states such as compassion fatigue have been noted, which is closely related to burnout (Falatah & Alhalal, 2022). The results found in the current study were consistent with this, in that the heavy workload, emotional demands and organizational pressures lead to a direct consequence of the burnout.

In the context of various industries in Jakarta, Indonesia, this study suggests that stressors experienced by the employees might be due to Jakarta's fast-paced and competitive work environment. This stands out as one of the city's defining characteristics, an environment with a high prevalence of burnout that reflects the high levels of stress caused by the hyperconnectivity of the digital world and the work environment. This combination of working to strict deadlines, working around changes and being constantly available, all contribute to the accumulation and speeding up of the burnout process.

Thus, the current results support the conclusion that work-related stress is not

only a cause of burnout in Jakarta but also in other organizations. Practitioners should recognize that burnout results from stress, and focusing only on burnout treatment is insufficient. Effective prevention entails managing stress by adjusting workloads, clarifying roles, and offering recovery time.

7.4 The mediating role of cyberloafing

The study examined direct relationships between variables and the mediating role of cyberloafing. The results show that cyberloafing has a significant role in the relationship between job stress and job burnout. In particular, the coping mechanism of cyberloafing is more closely related to job stress levels: employees with greater job stress are more likely to engage in cyberloafing, which, in turn, puts them at higher risk of job burnout.

Cyberloafing, job stress, and burnout are intricate and complex matters. Cyberloafing is a form of workplace deviance defined as using the internet for personal use during working hours. It is also considered a coping mechanism to deal with stress and emotional burnout among employees. The previous literature indicates that during the pandemic, rising fear and uncertainty led to distress and increased cyberloafing, as employees turned to online activities for relief (Reizer et al., 2022). Similarly, the work-related loneliness literature indicates that loneliness can lead to cyberloafing by undermining self-control and elevating emotional depletion as a preferred stress-management strategy (Yang et al., 2023).

Although the coping strategy of cyberloafing has been studied before, few studies have explored how cyberloafing mediates the relationship between job stress and burnout. The results indicated that cyberloafing is not a helpful recovery strategy and more of a maladaptive coping mechanism. While employees may start using cyberloafing as a temporary escape from stress at work, it's not meant to solve the problem of the stress itself. Instead, there are no resolutions to work responsibilities, and they often pile up until employees return to work under more pressure. Thus, when this adaptation strategy is used to save psychological resources, it can over time become maladaptive, with remaining work, low self-efficacy, and increased time pressure all contributing to greater emotional exhaustion and job burnout. Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory can be used to explain this pattern of behavior.

The results of this study support the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory's propositions. If employees are stressed, then they believe their mental reserves are low and begin to 'cyberloaf' to conserve their energy. This practice might help protect psychological resources initially, but in the long term, when persons persist in such behaviors, they will experience poor task performance and an erosion of self-efficacy, leading to further depletion of psychological resources and a greater risk of job burnout. This finding not only validates the mediating role but also extends the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory by arguing that cyberloafing can be not only an effect of resource depletion but also a behavioral process that affects the resources afterward. Most traditional uses of COR Theory have focused on the direct effects of prolonged resource depletion from high job demands as the cause of burnout. In contrast, this study uncovers that employees try to replenish exhausted resources by cyberloafing, but overuse of the coping mechanism actually leads to further resource depletion and emotional exhaustion. This research builds on COR theory by identifying a serial process of resource loss as an initial adaptive coping style gradually turns into a maladaptive coping style in digitally connected workplaces.

The results of this study also advance the organizational behavior literature by placing cyberloafing within a new stress-response framework as a behavioral reaction rather than merely counterproductive workplace behavior. Cyberloafing has been previously studied as a negative behavior of employees that reduces organizational efficiency and productivity. However, the present results indicate that cyberloafing may also be an individual's coping strategy to manage psychological strain in response to high job demands. This approach goes beyond cyberloafing to focus on organizational factors that can lead to stress-related coping responses. Cyberloafing can thus be seen as both a behavioral problem and an early sign of employee stress and psychological resource depletion in digitally heavy environments.

The outcomes emphasize the importance of organizations adopting a more nuanced method to cyberloafing. Rather than considering cyberloafing solely as a productivity problem, organizations should identify it as a potential signal of employee disengagement and stress. Stress intervention programs should focus on the factors that contribute to stress and encourage healthier coping strategies, involving activities related to taking micro-breaks, adjusting workload and seeking peer support. By addressing the primary sources of stress rather than merely restricting cyberloafing, organizations can break the cycle of resource depletion, reduce the risk of burnout, and promote a healthier and more sustainable working environment.

7.5 Implications

7.5.1 Theoretical implications

This study offers several contributions to the literature on employee well-being and workplace conduct. It extends Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory by demonstrating that cyberloafing functions not just as a response to resource depletion but also as a behavior impacting future resource availability. Findings show that an initially adaptive coping strategy can turn maladaptive over time, thereby expanding COR Theory to include a sequential model of resource loss within digital workplaces.

Secondly, this study extends the cyberloafing literature by exploring its role as a mediator between job stress and burnout. It demonstrates that cyberloafing serves as a coping mechanism and a form of counterproductive work behavior, helping to explain psychological strain and emotional exhaustion. While previous research has primarily viewed cyberloafing as either a counterproductive work behavior or a coping strategy, this perspective offers new insights into how different behaviors and their intensities contribute to the development of burnout.

Third, the findings contribute to broader research on organizational behavior by offering a new viewpoint on cyberloafing, framing it as a stress response rather than solely an improper work behavior. This research emphasizes that cyberloafing is not just an employee misconduct leading to productivity loss but could also be a visible sign of stress and psychological resource depletion. This more holistic perspective encourages future studies to examine employee well-being alongside discipline and performance when examining cyberloafing.

This study has examined stress and coping theories within a digitally focused work environment in Jakarta, Indonesia, thereby making the findings applicable to similar workplaces across Southeast Asia. As reliance on digital technology grows, the results offer valuable insights into how employees respond to work-related stress amid rapid urbanization and the tough working conditions typical of emerging economies.

7.5.2 Practical implications

This study's findings hold practical importance for managers and HR professionals aiming to foster healthier and more sustainable workplaces. Since job stress is closely linked to burnout, organizations should proactively address its root causes to prevent severe psychological exhaustion among employees. HR teams are encouraged to regularly assess employees' well-being, implement Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), provide resilience and stress management training, and prioritize routine check-ins with supervisors to detect early signs of mental strain.

To ensure equitable workload distribution, organizations should regularly assess individual workloads, clearly articulate job roles and expectations, and adjust overly demanding jobs. These initiatives can reduce work pressure and limit negative coping behaviors like cyberloafing. Additionally, findings suggest that cyberloafing may be a risk indicator for stressed and disengaged employees, not just a productivity issue. Instead of focusing solely on disciplinary measures, organizations should adopt supportive interventions that promote healthier coping strategies. HR managers should consider implementing digital wellness policies (e.g., scheduled micro-breaks, guidelines for healthy technology use, awareness campaigns on responsible internet habits, and clear boundaries for after-hours digital communication). Such programs can help employees manage work-related stress and reduce excessive cyberloafing as a maladaptive coping strategy.

Importantly, leadership plays a critical role in preventing burnout. Organizations need to equip leaders with skills to recognize early warning signs (such as changes in behavior like increased cyberloafing, reduced engagement, emotional withdrawal, and declining performance) and respond promptly through coaching, workload adjustments, flexible work options (where suitable), job redesign, or professional counseling. By integrating stress management, digital wellness initiatives, and early burnout interventions into HR practices, organizations can safeguard employee well-being, prevent burnout, and sustain performance over time.

7.6 Limitations and future research

There are some limitations to this study. First, the cross-sectional design considers associations only at a single time point, thereby restricting causal inference. Future studies should use a longitudinal or experimental approach to better investigate the changing relationships between job stress, cyberloafing, and burnout. Second, the number of samples was large enough for PLS-SEM, but there was a slight limitation: it may not have been comprehensive enough to represent the diversity of employees working in different organizational settings. Lastly, since the study focused solely on employees in Jakarta, the results should be applied to other contexts cautiously. Future studies should strive to include larger & more heterogeneous samples across regions, industries, and cultures to increase the generalizability of results.

8. Conclusion

This study examined how job stress, cyberloafing, and job burnout are interconnected, focusing on cyberloafing's mediating role among employees in Jakarta, Indonesia. The results showed that job stress significantly influenced both cyberloafing and job burnout, with cyberloafing also significantly predicting burnout and serving as a mediator between stress and burnout. The findings imply that although cyberloafing may help employees manage psychological stress, excessive use can result in increased emotional exhaustion and burnout.

The study emphasizes the importance of addressing the psychological and

behavioral elements of employee well-being in digital work settings. Viewing cyberloafing as workplace deviance and an indicator of underlying stress and resource depletion can enable organizations to adopt a more proactive and supportive approach to managing burnout. These findings enhance understanding of digital workplace behaviors and offer practical advice for fostering a healthier, more resilient, and sustainable work environment.

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