The Negative Effects of Social Media Usage on Employee Performance – A Conceptual Analysis

Yousef Saeed Rashed Alzaabi[1*], Sultan Mohammed Ali Alshehhi[2]

[1*] Faculty member, Abu Dhabi Police College, UAE.
[2] Faculty member, Abu Dhabi Police College, UAE.

Abstract

In this concept paper, social media use, smartphone addiction, and job performance are linked. This revised study examines the detrimental consequences of Facebook, X (previously Twitter), Instagram, and TikTok on employee productivity, psychological well-being, and organisational health as they become more incorporated into work situations. Thematic analysis of recent scholarly works' secondary data has many themes. Addiction to social media disrupts focus and productivity at work. Due to constant digital connectivity and FoMO, social media use can cause anxiety, depression, tension, and cognitive overload. Determine how this addiction's behaviours, such as frequent social media monitoring and disregarding work, impair professional performance, personal connections, and real-life interactions. The study found that excessive social media use damages teamwork, communication, morale, and culture. Through new findings, this research illuminates complex interactions. Companies must proactively balance social media's benefits and hazards to maintain a healthy, productive, and unified workplace. Executives and workers can learn from this report on digital technology's workplace influence. Organisations must continually study and adapt to the evolving digital world to optimise social media's benefits while avoiding its negative effects on staff performance and well-being.

Keywords: Social Media Addiction, Smartphone Phubbing, Performance, Productivity, Well-being

* Corresponding author Email: yalzaabi9@gmail.com

Introduction

In an era where digital landscapes are continually evolving, the interplay between social media and the workplace has become an increasingly critical area of study. The ubiquitous presence of platforms like Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and TikTok has not only transformed personal communication but has also significantly altered professional interactions and workplace cultures (Carr & Hayes, 2015; Valkenburg, 2022). Recent developments in digital communication technologies and the emergence of new social media platforms have further intensified these changes. For instance, Yu et al. (2023) reveals that the impacts of social media use in work settings extend beyond mere distraction, influencing employee stress levels and overall job satisfaction. The dynamic and ever-evolving nature of these platforms necessitates a continuous reassessment of their role in professional environments. Moreover, recent studies, such as those by Ostic et al. (2021) and Harahap et al. (2023), highlights the growing concern about digital overload and the need for organizations to adapt to these technological advancements while safeguarding employee well-being and maintaining productivity. The primary objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive and current analysis of the adverse effects of social media usage in contemporary work environments, drawing upon the most recent research findings in academic literature.

There are many positive applications of social media in the workplace, such as improving communication channels and creating networking opportunities, but there are also many negative ones (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016; (Tandon et al., 2022). There is fear that employees' productivity and well-being could be negatively affected by excessive personal social media usage, especially with platforms like X and TikTok (Andreassen, 2015). The problem is exacerbated when workers use social media for work-related reasons, which causes the line between their personal and professional lives to blur (Li & Lin, 2019). Aside from the already mentioned complexities, recent studies have provided insight into the complex relationships between social media use, professional stress, and burnout in different types of organisations. Labban and Bizzi (2022) examine the effects of social media on workers' well-being and output, paying close attention to the role that time and place play. The study's authors found that social networking sites have two-pronged effects, producing both beneficial and negative outcomes. The ability to unwind and make new friends is one positive aspect of these networks. However, distraction and stress levels can skyrocket if social media is used inappropriately while at work. Furthermore, research by Khan et al. (2022) highlights the increasing prevalence of social network service addiction among employees, linking it to reduced job engagement and innovative work behaviour. These insights contribute to a more detailed understanding of the complex relationship between social media use and its impact on various aspects of employee performance and organizational culture, emphasizing the need for strategic management of digital habits in the workplace.

Excessive social media use can lead to various negative outcomes in the workplace, ranging from individual productivity loss to broader organizational challenges. Phenomena such as 'phubbing', or ignoring one's environment in favour of smartphone use, are particularly detrimental, affecting not just individual work efficiency but also team dynamics and communication (Al-Saggaf & O'Donnell, 2019). In continuation of this point, current research has thrown light on the more subtle yet widespread repercussions of excessive usage of social media while at work. For instance, Yasin et al. (2023) investigate how supervisor phubbing, a specific type of phubbing, can lead to a drop in employee morale and motivation, which in turn affects overall team performance and cohesion. Phubbing is a form of social engineering. In addition, study conducted by Nanda and Prihatsanti (2023) highlights the influence that phubbing has on the work engagement of employees. Their findings suggest that there is a significant association between addiction to smartphones and lower levels of engagement. These findings are critical for understanding the whole spectrum of the influence that social media has on the workplace. The impact of social media extends beyond the loss of productivity to embrace characteristics of employee engagement, team morale, and organisational culture. The ubiquitous nature of these unfavourable results underscores the importance for businesses and other organisations to not only identify but also actively address the issues that are created by the usage of social media and smartphones in professional settings.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the negative effects of social media usage on employee performance, as documented in existing literature. It focuses on the impact of social media addiction and phubbing on both personal and organizational productivity levels.

This study is based on the premise that employees' performance suffers when they use social media too often and in the wrong way, whether for personal reasons or as part of their job responsibilities. This covers a lot of ground, including problems with team dynamics and overall organisational effectiveness as well as diminished productivity on an individual level.

Literature Review

Social Media Addiction, Phubbing, and Related Topics

Social Media Addiction:

The focus of research in recent years has been on social media addiction, which is defined as the excessive and obsessive usage of social media platforms. According to Andreassen's (2015) extensive analysis, social media addiction is becoming an increasingly serious problem, particularly in the workplace. Symptoms of social media addiction include an inability to control one's desire to log on, an obsession with thinking about social media at all times, and the use of social media as a crutch while dealing with real-life issues. Adzovie et al. (2017) found that employees whose obsessive behaviour includes spending a lot of time on social media sites like Facebook and X (previously Twitter) are less productive overall.

Excessive, obsessive, and mood-modifying social media use are the three dimensions of usage that Cao and Yu (2019) utilise to examine the effects of such use on the workplace. According to their research, these factors greatly impact both professional and personal health. Similarly, Moqbel and Kock (2018) offer a sombre perspective on social media, highlighting the negative effects of addiction on both individuals and businesses, such as diminished job satisfaction and damaged relationships at work.

Phubbing in the Workplace:

The term "phubbing" is derived from the combination of the words "phone" and "snubbing," referring to the act of disregarding one's immediate environment or companions in favour of engaging with a mobile device. The phenomenon of phubbing is frequently observed within professional settings, prompting Al-Saggaf and O'Donnell (2019) to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the underlying factors, consequences, subjective interpretations, and potential indicators associated with this behaviour. Based on empirical findings, it has been determined that the act of phubbing has a notable impact on the social isolation experienced by coworkers, hence diminishing the overall quality of their interpersonal interactions.

Yasin (2021) has undertaken a research study to investigate the effects of supervisor phubbing on staff outcomes. The study indicates that supervisors' phubbing behaviour has a detrimental effect on employee morale, work pleasure, and engagement. Furthermore, the investigation carried out by Talan et al. (2023) explores the influence of smartphone and social media addiction on the phubbing behaviours exhibited by college students. The implications of the research outcomes have potential use in professional settings. Based on their research findings, it has been observed that individuals who exhibit addiction tendencies towards their mobile devices and social media platforms are more likely to engage in the behaviour known as phubbing.

Negative Consequences:

The literature also addresses related topics such as the psychological impacts of social media use and its effects on well-being. Ostic et al. (2021) discuss the effects of social media use on psychological well-being, presenting a mediated model that includes both positive and negative outcomes. They argue that while social media can serve as a stressor, leading to decreased well-being, it can also offer a platform for social support and positive interactions.

Brooks (2015) investigates whether personal social media usage affects efficiency and well-being. The study concludes that while moderate use of social media can have positive effects on well-being and efficiency, excessive use leads to the opposite. Similarly, Marsh et al. (2022) provide an integrative review of the digital workplace, emphasizing its dark side, including increased stress and anxiety due to constant connectivity and the expectation to be always available.

Synthesis of Previous Findings

The existing body of literature on social media addiction, phubbing, and their impacts on the workplace provides critical insights while also presenting a few contradictions. The synthesis of these findings offers a nuanced understanding of the complex relationship between social media use and employee performance.

1. **Social Media Addiction**: Studies have consistently shown that social media addiction negatively impacts employee productivity and well-being (Adzovie et al., 2017; Andreassen, 2015). The cognitive-behavioural model and self-determination theory provide a framework for understanding the psychological drivers of this addiction, including the need for social validation and fulfillment of intrinsic needs (Cao & Yu, 2019).

2. **Phubbing**: The phenomenon of phubbing in the workplace is identified as a significant contributor to deteriorating interpersonal relationships and reduced job satisfaction (Al-Saggaf & O'Donnell, 2019; Yasin, 2021). Attachment theory and social identity theory offer insights into why individuals engage in phubbing, highlighting emotional regulation and group identity as key factors (Jamadi et al., 2023).
3. **Dual Impacts**: While the negative aspects of social media use are well-documented, some studies also acknowledge its positive impacts, such as enhanced communication and networking opportunities (Marsh et al., 2022). This dual-factor perspective is crucial in understanding the multifaceted nature of social media in the workplace.

Identification of Research Gaps

After reviewing the research on phubbing, social media addiction, and related subjects, a complicated picture emerges. Despite the many positive aspects of social media for networking and communication, its improper and excessive use at work can have detrimental effects such as addiction, low productivity, phubbing, and psychological issues.

Despite the extensive research, several gaps remain that warrant further investigation:

1. **Long-Term Organizational Impacts**: Most existing studies focus on individual-level outcomes of social media addiction and phubbing. There is a lack of comprehensive research examining the long-term effects of these phenomena on organizational culture, team dynamics, and overall business performance.
2. **Cross-Cultural Perspectives**: Most of the research is centred on Western contexts. There is a need for more studies exploring the impacts of social media addiction and phubbing in diverse cultural settings, considering how cultural differences might influence these phenomena.
3. **Intervention Strategies**: While the problems associated with excessive social media use are well-recognized, there is a dearth of literature on effective interventions and strategies to mitigate these issues. Research focusing on developing and testing intervention strategies would be beneficial for organizations looking to manage social media use more effectively.
4. **Technological Evolution and New Platforms**: As the digital landscape evolves rapidly, with new social media platforms emerging, the existing literature may not fully capture the dynamics of newer platforms like TikTok. Future research should consider these evolving trends and their unique impacts on the workplace.
5. **Quantitative Analysis**: Given the predominantly qualitative nature of the current research, there is a scope for more quantitative studies to statistically validate the findings and theories presented thus far.

Methodology

Interpretivism holds that reality is subjective and created by social interactions and experiences (Coolican, 2017). This research suits interpretivism because it recognises social media use's subjective nature and varied effects on individuals. As the study is qualitative, this philosophical stance emphasises the importance of understanding how people interpret their workplace social media experiences. This study uses an inductive approach to generate insights and theories based on literature observations and data. Unlike deductive research, which tests a hypothesis, inductive research develops new theories and understanding from data (Bernard, 2017). The current study synthesises and interprets existing findings to identify patterns, themes, and potential new insights about social media usage and workplace effects, making this approach appropriate.

A qualitative research approach is necessary to study complex topics like social media addiction and workplace phubbing. Qualitative research explores human behaviour, perceptions, and experiences (Patten & Newhart, 2017). Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research provides deep, comprehensive insights into social processes (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This study uses a qualitative technique to examine how social media use influences employee performance and well-being. Social media addiction and phubbing are examined subjectively to determine their job effects.

Several criteria were used to ensure completeness, credibility, and relevance when choosing previous articles for this study:

1. **Relevance:** Phubbing, social media addiction, and its effects on the workplace were the main criteria for article selection. With this standard in place, we knew that the literature had to answer our study questions.
2. **Credibility**: Priority was given to peer-reviewed articles published in reputable journals. This ensured the reliability and academic rigor of the sources.

3. **Recency**: To make sure the study is up-to-date with the latest social media trends and advances, we focused on recent articles.
4. **Methodological Diversity**: Articles employing various qualitative methodologies were included to provide a broad range of perspectives and insights.
5. **Theoretical Contributions**: Articles that provide substantial theoretical contributions or present new insights into the phenomena of interest were prioritised.

The researchers employed thematic analysis as a methodological approach to synthesise the chosen articles. Qualitative research utilises thematic analysis to find, analyse, and describe patterns or themes within the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This involved carefully reading and rereading the articles to identify social media addiction and workplace phubbing themes and patterns. To gain a complete understanding of the topic and identify research gaps, the themes were synthesised.

Analysis and Discussion

The thematic analysis of the selected articles reveals several key themes regarding the impact of social media use and smartphone addiction on employee performance.

1. **Reduced Productivity and Efficiency**: The negative impact of social media addiction on employee productivity is a widely acknowledged theme in contemporary research. Adzovie et al. (2017) and Cao and Yu (2019) provide substantial evidence of the correlation between excessive social media use and reduced workplace efficiency. This is further supported by studies like that of Moqbel and Kock (2018), which discuss the personal and work-related consequences of social networking site addiction, particularly highlighting the distractions it poses, leading to decreased job performance. Furthermore, Khan et al. (2022) provide insights into how social network service addiction adversely affects employees' job engagement and innovative work behavior, illustrating the broader organizational implications of reduced employee productivity and efficiency due to social media overuse.
2. **Impact on Mental Health and Well-being**: The psychological effects of prolonged social media use, including increased stress and anxiety, are extensively discussed in the literature. Andreassen (2015) and Brooks (2015) have highlighted how excessive social media engagement can lead to feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, and depression. Building on this, Ostic et al. (2021) provide a mediated model explaining the effects of social media use on psychological well-being, illustrating both the positive and negative outcomes. Harahap et al. (2023) further emphasize the impact of digital technology on employee job stress, noting that constant connectivity and the expectation of being always available can exacerbate work-related stress and anxiety, thereby affecting mental health and overall work performance.
3. **Alteration in Workplace Dynamics**: Phubbing has an effect on team communication and cohesiveness in the workplace that goes beyond just individual efficiency. In their 2019 article, Al-Saggaf and O'Donnell explore the ways in which phubbing behaviour can cause communication breakdowns and contribute to team members feeling isolated. Studies that investigate the causes of supervisor phubbing and show how it lowers morale and strains relationships at work lend credence to this idea (Yasin et al., 2023). Phubbing in the workplace is negatively impacted by employees' lack of engagement, as shown by Nanda and Prihatsanti (2023). This highlights the complex ways in which excessive use of smartphones and social media can affect not just individual performance but also team dynamics and orgnaisational culture.

Excessive social media use and smartphone addiction can have far-reaching implications for employee performance. These behaviours often result in:

1. **Distraction and Lack of Focus**: The issue of distraction and diminished attention within contemporary work environments, which can be ascribed to the excessive utilisation of social media platforms and the addictive nature of cell phones, is a matter of significant importance. Zivnuska et al. (2019) believe that the combination of regular notifications and the appeal of shared content on social media presents a significant challenge to employees' ability to maintain focus on their assigned tasks. This challenge is further compounded by findings from Yasin et al. (2023), who suggest that phubbing, or the act of ignoring one's environment in favor of smartphone use, exacerbates this lack of focus, particularly during meetings and collaborative projects. Additionally, Ostic et al. (2021) argue that the resultant stress and cognitive overload from continuous digital engagement can further diminish an employee's capacity for sustained attention and effective decision-making, impacting not just individual tasks but also broader team dynamics and problem-solving abilities.

2. **Time Mismanagement**: Time mismanagement due to social media use is another significant issue impacting employee performance. The time spent on social media platforms during work hours, as Marsh et al. (2022) point out, often leads to delays in task completion and missed deadlines. This is echoed in the work of Harahap et al. (2023), who identify digital technology's role in disrupting time management strategies, leading to a domino effect on project timelines and overall productivity. Khan et al. (2022) further elucidate this issue by linking social network service addiction to decreased job engagement, suggesting that employees excessively engaged in social media are less likely to be involved and proactive in their work responsibilities, thus affecting not only their performance but also the collaborative efficiency of their teams.

3. **Reduced Quality of Work**: The impact of social media and smartphone addiction on the quality of work is a significant concern. Labban and Bizzi (2022) emphasize that as employees divide their attention between work and social media, the quality and accuracy of their output can significantly decline. This perspective is reinforced by Moqbel and Kock (2018), who assert that the personal and work-related consequences of social networking site addiction can manifest in reduced work quality, with errors and suboptimal outcomes becoming more prevalent. Furthermore, studies by Nanda and Prihatsanti (2023) demonstrate that workplace phubbing not only diminishes the quality of individual work but can also lead to a breakdown in communication and collaboration, further exacerbating the decline in overall work quality and team performance.

Examination of Psychological, Behavioral, and Organizational Outcomes

1. **Psychological Outcomes**: The psychological impact of excessive social media use is profound and multifaceted. Employees grappling with high levels of social media engagement often face increased anxiety and depression, adversely affecting their mental health and job satisfaction (Ostic et al., 2021). In addition, there's the added pressure of having to be online all the time and dealing with the ubiquitous FOMO (fear of missing out). Researchers like Harahap et al. (2023) have dug more into this topic, looking at how social media and digital technologies lead to increased stress and burnout on the job. While there are certainly benefits to social media use, the research by Valkenburg (2022) shows that there is also a complex relationship between the two, with the negative consequences, especially in the form of psychological distress, being serious and unavoidable in the workplace.

2. **Behavioural Outcomes**: The behavioural consequences of social media use extend beyond the workplace, often manifesting in addiction-like symptoms, such as compulsive checking of social media sites and neglect of work responsibilities (Andreassen, 2015). Personal relationships and day-to-day functioning are impacted by this addicted habit. As an example, Labban and Bizzi (2022) talk about how when and where people use social media greatly affects how it affects their behaviour and productivity. Khan et al. (2022) found that people who are addicted to social media services are less invested in their jobs and less likely to come up with creative solutions to problems. This suggests that these habits can really hold people back from advancing in their careers.

3. **Organizational Outcomes**: At the organizational level, excessive social media use can significantly impact productivity, as noted by Yasin (2021), who highlights how phubbing behavior, particularly by supervisors, can lead to deteriorated team dynamics and a weakened sense of community. Addiction to social media might reduce job engagement and innovation, which promote organisational growth and success, according to Khan et al. (2022). Researchers Moqbel and Kock (2018) found that social media addiction's personal effects, such as job dissatisfaction and workplace conflict, can create a toxic workplace that affects employee retention and recruitment. Labban and Bizzi (2022) found that workplace social media use timing and context affect organisational outcomes. Inefficient workflow and team collaboration might result from improper social media use. The findings suggest that organisations must create comprehensive methods that balance social media's benefits and threats to maintain a healthy, productive, and cohesive workplace.

The analysis and discussion of the secondary data from selected articles indicate that excessive social media use and smartphone addiction have multifaceted impacts on employee performance. These range from individual psychological and behavioural effects to broader organizational consequences. Understanding these impacts is crucial for developing effective strategies to manage social media use in the workplace and promote a healthy, productive work environment.

Implications

The conclusions of this study have major repercussions, both for organisations and for individuals, in terms of comprehending and effectively regulating the usage of social media in the workplace.

1. **Awareness and Education**: The possible harmful effects of excessive social media use should be the primary focus of organisations' efforts to raise awareness. The effects of social media addiction on mental health and productivity should be made clear to employees through education (Andreassen, 2015).

2. **Work-Life Balance**: Encouraging a healthy work-life balance is essential. Organizations can achieve this by setting clear expectations regarding social media use during work hours and promoting practices that help employees disconnect from work-related digital communication outside office hours (Brooks, 2015).
3. **Policy Development**: There needs to be a thorough policy on the using of social media at work. According to Al-Saggaf and O'Donnell (2019), these policies ought to specify proper usage, offer advice on how to balance personal and professional use, and deal with problems such as phubbing.

In addition, recommendations for policy and practice include the following.
1. **Implementing Usage Guidelines**: Organizations should implement guidelines that limit non-work-related social media use during work hours. This could include designated breaks for personal social media usage or restricting access to certain platforms while on the job (Cao & Yu, 2019).
2. **Monitoring and Feedback**: Employees can better understand their usage patterns and the influence it has on their performance if their social media use is monitored on a regular basis and they are given feedback on it. Nevertheless, this should be addressed in a way that both protects individuals' right to privacy and builds trust (Marsh et al., 2022).
3. **Employee Support Programs**: Organizations could offer support programs for employees struggling with social media addiction, including counseling services and resources for managing digital consumption (Labban & Bizzi, 2022).
4. **Encouraging Positive Use of Social Media**: In addition to addressing the adverse consequences, it is imperative for organisations to foster constructive utilisation of social media platforms, including but not limited to professional networking, knowledge dissemination, and team cohesion (Zivnuska et al., 2019).

The findings of this study underscore the necessity for organisations and employees to exhibit greater awareness and consideration about the utilisation of social media within the professional setting. Organisations can cultivate a healthier and more productive work environment by comprehending the potential adverse consequences and establishing efficacious rules and practises.

Conclusion

The exploration of the negative effects of social media usage on employee performance has unearthed several key findings that hold significant implications for both the individual and the organizational context. Workplace productivity, employee well-being, and organisational dynamics are all negatively affected by excessive social media use, which includes behaviours like addiction and phubbing, according to the study. A review of the research found that using social media for long periods of time while at work decreases productivity, causes attention to become disorganised, and lowers the quality of work produced. Stress, worry, and strained relationships at work are only some of the psychological effects of this phenomena, which go well beyond problems with productivity. The study also brought attention to the fact that company culture and rules are very important when it comes to controlling and reducing the negative consequences of social media use at work.

Reflecting on the research aim and objectives, this study has successfully synthesized existing knowledge to provide a comprehensive understanding of the detrimental side of social media usage in the workplace. The study examined the intricacies of social media addiction and phubbing and their effects on work performance. The analysis confirmed current findings and revealed important gaps in the literature, notably on long-term organisational impacts and intervention strategy efficacy. A qualitative, interpretivist approach allowed a deeper understanding of these phenomena that quantitative methods could have missed. This approach underscored the subjective experiences of employees and the contextual factors influencing social media behavior in the workplace.

In conclusion, this study underscores the broader significance and urgency of addressing the challenges posed by social media in professional environments. As digital platforms continue to evolve and permeate deeper into the fabric of workplace culture, understanding their impact becomes increasingly crucial. This research contributes to a growing body of knowledge that seeks to navigate the delicate balance between leveraging the benefits of social media for professional purposes and mitigating its potential disruptions to employee performance and organizational health. The findings and insights presented in this study serve as a foundation for future research, policy formulation, and practice, aiding organizations in fostering healthier digital environments conducive to both employee well-being and organizational productivity.

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