Perceived Ethical Leadership and Cyberloafing on Employee Performance: Evidence from the University of Ghana Health Services

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ABSTRACT

Employees' voluntary use of organizational computers or mobile phones to access the internet for personal purposes during working hours, has received increasing research attention because of its potential consequences for employees' performance. This study examined the relationship between cyberloafing and employee performance, the relationship between ethical leadership and employee performance, and the moderating role of ethical leadership in the cyberloafing employee performance relationship at the University of Ghana Health Services, Ghana. The study employed descriptive correlational research design. Pearson correlation and multiple regression were used to analyse the data. Cyberloafing was negatively and significantly related to employee performance, indicating that higher cyberloafing was associated with lower employee performance. Ethical leadership was positively and significantly related to employee performance. The interaction between moderate cyberloafing and ethical leadership was statistically significant, indicating that ethical leadership moderates the relationship between cyberloafing and employee performance. Therefore, healthcare managers should establish internet-use policies, strengthen monitoring practices, and promote ethical leadership to encourage responsible internet use.

Keywords: Ethical Leadership, Cyberloafing, Employee Performance, Healthcare Sector, Ghana

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era, the work environment changed drastically, requiring tasks to be performed in various locations that involve extensive electronic communication, as well as work that necessitates significant electronic transmission or communication between employees and stakeholders (Osei, Ampofo & Osei, 2022). Therefore, internet-enabled technologies have become an important component of healthcare work because they support timely information exchange, patient-centred care, administrative processes, and the efficient performance of work responsibilities (Reddy et al., 2022; Baturay & Toker, 2015). Healthcare employees increasingly rely on computers, smartphones, electronic systems, internet platforms, and digital communication tools to perform their professional responsibilities. However, these technologies can enhance efficiency and service delivery and create opportunities for employees to engage in internet activities unrelated to their assigned duties (Wahyuningsih, 2026). Thus, the same digital infrastructure that facilitates effective healthcare work can potentially divert employees' time and attention from their responsibilities. This creates an important workplace paradox shift in which

digital technologies may simultaneously support employee performance and provide opportunities for non-work-related online behaviour (Gellmer & Yan, 2023).

Regrettably, there are mixed behaviour seen in the digital environment regarding cyberloafing, which refers to employees' use of internet-enabled technologies during working hours for activities unrelated to their assigned responsibilities. Lim (2002) conceptualizes cyberloafing as the use of organizational internet resources for personal purposes during working hours, particularly when such use constitutes a deviation from expected work behaviour. Similarly, Jandaghi et al. (2015) define cyberloafing as the conscious use of information technology for personal purposes during designated working hours. Cyberloafing can occur through organizational computers, smartphones, and tablets and may include personal messaging, social media browsing, online shopping, entertainment, checking sports websites, searching for alternative employment, and other forms of private internet activity (Askew et al., 2014). Baturay and Toker (2015) indicated that when employees devote excessive work time and attention to non-work-related online activities, employees may have fewer cognitive and temporal resources available for assigned responsibilities. Gellmer and Yan (2023) support the assertion that such behaviour may contribute to reduced productivity, delayed task completion, weakened responsiveness, and inefficient use of organizational resources.

The contradictory findings in previous research support this contextual perspective. Studies have reported negative, positive, and statistically insignificant relationships between cyberloafing and employee performance (Hartanto & Franksiska, 2021; Syed et al., 2020; Aybas & Gungor, 2020; Saleh et al., 2018; Adams et al., 2020; Olajide et al., 2018). Palladan (2018), for example, found a negative moderating effect of lecturers' cyberloafing activity between innovative behaviour and dimensions of lecturers' job performance. Similarly, Owusu et al. (2021) reported that cyberloafing negatively affected graduate students' attention during lectures, although the study did not establish a significant effect on academic performance. Conversely, Mahammed et al. (2018) found a positive relationship between internet leisure and employee productivity.

Several factors may explain these contradictory findings. Olajide et al. (2018), for instance, found that informational and social forms of loafing were negatively associated with performance, whereas leisure loafing had no significant effect. Further, Mahammed et al. (2015) suggest that internet leisure may contribute positively to productivity, potentially because short periods of leisure provide employees with opportunities to recover from work demands. Again, the consequences of cyberloafing may differ according to occupational demands. Employees operate within varying organizational cultures, leadership structures, technology-use policies, monitoring systems, and levels of accountability. Formal internet-use policies, restrictions, monitoring, and sanctions have traditionally been used to manage cyberloafing (Siau et al., 2002; Moody & Siponen, 2013). However, such controls do not necessarily eliminate cyberloafing, particularly because employees increasingly have access to personal smartphones and other internet-enabled devices.

In this context, ethical leadership represents an important organizational factor. Ethical leadership involves appropriate conduct, fairness, integrity, responsibility, accountability, and the communication and reinforcement of ethical standards (Hattoh, 2026). Ethical leaders establish expectations regarding appropriate use of organizational resources, model responsible conduct,

and reinforce accountability. These practices may encourage employees to exercise greater self-regulation when using digital technologies and to align their behaviour with organizational objectives (Addai et al., 2019; Detert et al., 2007). Ethical leadership is therefore relevant not simply because it may directly enhance employee performance, but because it may influence the conditions under which cyberloafing affects performance.

Specifically, the healthcare context further makes this relationship worthy of investigation. Accordingly, the contextual gap in this study is not simply the absence of research on cyberloafing in Ghana. Rather, the gap concerns the limited empirical examination of how ethical leadership conditions the relationship between cyberloafing and employee performance within a healthcare environment. To the best of the authors' knowledge, the Ghanaian studies identified above have not specifically examined whether perceived ethical leadership moderates the relationship between cyberloafing and employee performance among healthcare employees. The remainder of the study is organized into sections. The section presents introduction, theoretical, methodology, results discussion, practical implications, limitations and areas for future study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.2 Social Learning Theory (SLT)

This study is primarily anchored in Social Learning Theory (SLT) developed by Bandura (1977, 1986), which explains how individuals acquire and regulate behaviour through observation, modelling, imitation, and reinforcement. Employees observe the behaviour of significant others, particularly organizational leaders, and may adopt behaviours that are perceived as appropriate or rewarded. SLT provides an appropriate foundation for examining ethical leadership, cyberloafing, and employee performance because leaders serve as important behavioural models. Ethical leaders demonstrate integrity, fairness, responsibility, and appropriate conduct while communicating and reinforcing organizational standards. Through such modelling and reinforcement, employees learn what constitutes acceptable workplace behaviour and may regulate their use of organizational resources, including internet-enabled technologies. Addai et al. (2019) emphasize that ethical leadership promotes honesty, respect, commitment, values, and fairness, while Detert et al. (2007) indicate that ethical leadership can influence employee behaviour and performance.

From an SLT perspective, employees may observe whether cyberloafing is tolerated, discouraged, or sanctioned within their organization. Where leaders demonstrate responsible technology use and reinforce appropriate behaviour, employees may regulate personal internet activities and focus on assigned responsibilities. Conversely, weak behavioural modelling and limited accountability may make cyberloafing more acceptable. SLT also explains the relationship between cyberloafing and employee performance, as excessive cyberloafing may divert employees' time and attention from their duties and undermine performance. However, limited personal internet use may provide temporary relief or recovery, suggesting that its consequences may depend on the organizational environment. More importantly, SLT provides a theoretical basis for the moderating role of ethical leadership. The attitude of a person relates to his or her good or bad understanding of the outcome of a specific attitude (Askew et al., 2014).

2.3 Concept of Cyberloafing

According to Sheikh et al. (2019), cyberloafing refers to the abuse of internet facilities by employees during working hours to engage in non-work-related and counterproductive activities that may harm the workplace and its stakeholders. Cyberloafing provides employees with opportunities to attend to personal matters while at work, thereby involving themselves in deviant workplace behaviour (Koay et al., 2017). It may also involve using mobile phones and other internet-enabled devices for activities unrelated to assigned duties (Vitak, Crouse, & LaRose, 2011). Employees may engage in cyberloafing to shift attention from their jobs or waste time, and such behaviour may be less noticeable than leaving work early or engaging in unofficial conversations with colleagues. Consequently, employees may appear focused on their duties while spending work time on personal and non-task-related activities (Gallagher, 2009; Pee, Woon, & Kankanhalli, 2008).

Blanchard and Henle (2008) classified workplace cyberloafing into minor and serious forms. Minor cyberloafing involves relatively less disruptive activities, such as checking general news, sports-related websites, or engaging in brief personal communication, which may sometimes be tolerated in the workplace. Serious cyberloafing, in contrast, involves activities that consume considerable work time or are inappropriate, offensive, or potentially illegal, including online gaming, gambling, viewing pornographic materials, and excessive downloading of music or videos (Koay & Soh, 2018). Such behaviours can divert employees' attention from assigned duties, increase time wastage, and potentially undermine employee engagement and organizational productivity.

2.3.1 Antecedent of Cyberloafing

Empirically, studies have examined individual, job-related, and organizational factors that influence cyberloafing. Lower perceptions of organizational justice have been found to increase employees' engagement in cyberloafing (Blau et al., 2006), while perceived unfair treatment by immediate supervisors has also been associated with cyberloafing (Lim & Teo, 2005). Demographic characteristics such as age and gender are associated with cyberloafing, with males and younger employees reportedly engaging more frequently in cyberslacking (Garrett & Danziger, 2008; Everton et al., 2005). However, because age, gender, and organizational justice are not included as explanatory or control variables in the present empirical model, their independent effects on cyberloafing are not tested.

Clearly, individual characteristics have also been linked to cyberloafing. Chen et al. (2008) found that low self-esteem and external locus of control may contribute to internet misuse, while Henle and Blanchard (2008) linked serious and minor cyberloafing to external locus of control. Everton et al. (2005) reported that impulsive and less conscientious individuals are more likely to cyberloaf, whereas Garrett and Danziger (2008) found that stress and low job satisfaction did not significantly affect cyberloafing. These findings provide context for the present study, which focuses on cyberloafing and employee performance.

2.3.2 Ethical Leadership

Northouse (2010) defines leadership as a process through which an individual influences a group to achieve a common objective. Ethical leadership extends beyond general leadership by emphasizing appropriate moral conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). Ethical leaders act as moral people and managers by demonstrating fairness, honesty, integrity, concern for employees, and responsibility while communicating ethical standards and reinforcing appropriate behaviour. Brown et al. (2005) explains that ethical leaders influence employees through social learning, as employees observe and respond to leaders' behaviours. This perspective is relevant because employees may model leaders' ethical conduct and develop corresponding workplace attitudes and behaviours. Oates and Dalmau (2013) similarly explain that ethical leadership involves considering morally justified decisions and their consequences for organizational stakeholders.

Neubert, Wu, and Roberts (2013) argue that organizational failures can highlight the importance of ethical leadership, particularly where inadequate ethical guidance contributes to undesirable employee attitudes and behaviours. Rehman and Scholar (2011) suggest that increasing competition in the global business environment has heightened the importance of ethical behaviour in organizations. Given the growing ethical challenges in contemporary business environments, ethical leadership has become an important concern for organizational leaders (Ung Hee et al., 2013). Treviño and Brown (2005) contend that ethical leadership promotes ethical behaviour by establishing standards and holding organizational members accountable for their actions. Thus, ethical leadership in this study is conceptualized through fairness, integrity, ethical role modelling, communication of ethical standards, and reinforcement of appropriate conduct.

2.3.3 Employee Performance

According to Pattanayak (2005), employee performance refers to an employee's observable and assessable behaviours in relation to assigned job responsibilities. Aguinis (2009) similarly explains that performance concerns the behaviours employees demonstrate while performing their duties rather than the outcomes produced. Therefore, employee performance in this study is conceptualized as job-related behaviours reflecting how effectively employees perform their assigned responsibilities. The questionnaire focusses on completing assigned tasks effectively, meeting work responsibilities, maintaining expected standards, and demonstrating productivity. Usman et al. (2019) similarly found that non-work-related online activities during working hours can negatively influence employees' work-related commitment and performance. Thus, employee performance is interpreted specifically as work-related behaviour, ensuring alignment between the questionnaire and regression analysis.

Ahmad and Shahzad (2011) established that motivational, declarative, and procedural knowledge contributes to quality employee productivity. Huselid (1995) explains that employees' ability to produce desired results is associated with human resource management practices. Mowday, Porters and Steers (2013) further argue that organizations seek to improve productivity, minimize turnover, and increase employee retention, while McColl-Kennedy et al., (2002) emphasize the importance of factors affecting employee performance. Work performance can be grouped into tasks, adaptive, and contextual performance. Task performance involves behaviours that integrate essential job

responsibilities agreed upon by workers and employers (Pradhan & Jena, 2017), while mental ability supports task awareness, talent, and practice.

2.3.4 Cyberloafing and Employee Performance

Many researchers acknowledge that internet use at work is not necessarily harmful and, under certain conditions, may support creativity, flexibility, recovery, and learning (Blanchard & Henle, 2008). However, the effect of cyberloafing on employee performance remains mixed because its consequences may depend on nature, frequency, duration, and purpose of the activity. Some studies argue that cyberloafing reduces productivity through time theft and diversion of attention from assigned duties (Hartijasti, 2016), whereas others report potentially positive effects when brief internet use provides psychological recovery or temporary relief from work demands (Lim & Chen, 2012). Young (2001) similarly suggests that excessive cyberloafing may adversely affect employee performance by reducing customer attention, limiting interaction with colleagues, and increasing difficulties in meeting deadlines. Frequent shifts of attention from work to non-work activities may also increase the likelihood of errors and incomplete tasks. Henle et al. (2009) reported that cyberloafing can reduce employee productivity and consequently impose substantial economic costs on organizations.

Nevertheless, the distinction between cyberloafing as recovery and cyberloafing as time theft is important. However, brief and controlled internet activities may help employees recover from work-related fatigue, whereas prolonged and non-work-related use may consume productive time and weaken task focus. This distinction is particularly relevant in contemporary service organizations, where employees rely heavily on computer technologies and internet connectivity to perform their duties and interact with customers (Huma et al., 2017). Thus, the availability of internet-enabled technologies may simultaneously facilitate legitimate work activities and create opportunities for cyberloafing. Although cyberloafing may produce beneficial effects when moderate and controlled excessive use is more likely to interfere with work responsibilities and performance.

Cyberloafing helps employees recover from work complications (Belanger & Slyke, 2002). Furthermore, the use of mobile phones by employees in the workplace makes it difficult for employers to know whether employees really spend time on their job since sometimes the task they perform demands the use of smartphones at work. Findings from 268 adult employees revealed that cyberloafers experience lower productivity compared to those who do not cyberloaf (Coker, 2011). However, a policy regarding internet use and supervision would reduce employee engagement in cyberloafing and improve organizational performance (J-Ho et al., 2017). When cyberslacking is well managed and monitored, it may lead to higher levels of production. A good strategy on the regulation of internet use will reduce cyberloafing in the organization.

2.3.5 Relationship Between Ethical Leadership, Cyberloafing and Employee Performance

According to Brown et al. (2005), ethical leadership behaviour plays a crucial role in shaping employees' expected behaviours and attitudes. Research has established that ethical leadership is associated with followers' attitudes and behaviours and can reduce deviant workplace behaviour (Mayer et al., 2012). From a social learning perspective, employees observe and model leaders'

behaviour, suggesting that ethical leaders influence employees by demonstrating appropriate conduct, communicating ethical standards, and reinforcing desirable behaviours. Ethical leadership has also been positively associated with employee commitment, ethical behaviour, and employee performance. Ethical leaders emphasize fairness, honesty, open communication, and employee involvement in decision-making, thereby acting as role models (Neubert et al., 2009).

Additionally, ethical leadership focuses on indiscriminate treatment, common values and business conduct. Previous studies have established relationships between ethical leadership, benevolent behaviours, and negative behaviours (Avey et al., 2011). Padash et al. (2010) identified ethical leadership as a leadership style that greatly influences employee task performance. Furthermore, dedication to ethical standards is an essential quality for an efficient leader, as leaders inspire followers to improve their innovative and creative skills and performance resulting to oranizational productivity.

2.3.5 Hypotheses Development

According to Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977, 1986), employees learn and manage their workplace behaviour by observing and imitating influential leaders at their workplaces. Behavioural cues are communicated by ethical leaders through fairness, integrity, accountability, and responsible conduct, which may in turn influence employees' use of organisational resources and work behaviour. Thus, perceived ethical is expected to discourage and curb inappropriate workplace behaviours such as cyberloafing. Employers who are identified as ethical by their employees are most likely to have employees that conform to acceptable organisational standards. Perceived ethical leadership is therefore expected to have a negative relationship with cyberloafing.

Cyberloafing involves employees using organisational internet and electronic resources for non-work-related activities during working hours. Excessive cyberloafing can distract employees, reduce work time, and hinder task completion. It is therefore expected to have a negative relationship with productivity. Social learning theory suggests that employees are most likely to emulate the positive behaviours shown by their employers. Clearly, ethical leadership may influence the extent to which cyberloafing affects employee performance.

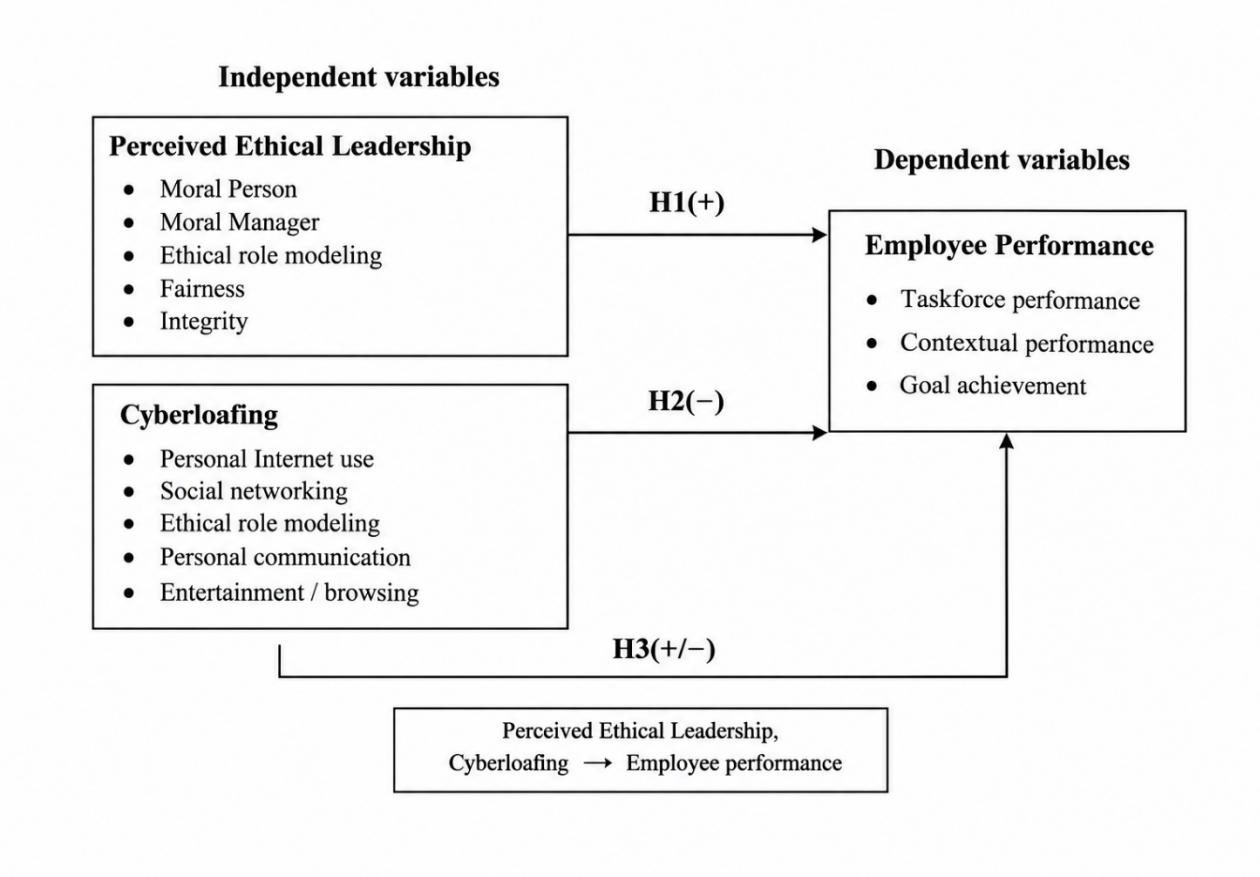
H_1: Cyberloafing has a significant negative effect on employee performance in the University of Ghana Health Services.

H_2: Perceived ethical leadership has a significant positive relationship with employee performance in the University of Ghana Health Services.

H_3: Perceived ethical leadership significantly moderates the relationship between cyberloafing and employee performance in the University of Ghana Health Services.

The framework explains the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. Furthermore, the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Grounded in SLT.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework: hypothesized relationship among moral person, personal internet use and taskforce performance.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design and Context

This study used a cross-sectional correlational research design that is quantitative, which helps provide a vivid presentation on the background of people, events, and how they occur (Creswell, 2014). Cross-sectional correlational/predictive research designs consist of surveys and correlation designs. A survey involves using structured interviews, which may involve or may not involve the interviewer (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Data can be collected using the Likert-type scale responses on surveys, which are then mathematically analyzed to assess the magnitude of the relationship between variables (Boslaugh, 2013).

3.2 Population, Sampling and Data Collection

The population for this study is permanent employees of the University of Ghana Health Services, comprising healthcare professionals, administrative staff, technical staff, and other permanent employees directly involved in health services. The University of Ghana Health Services was chosen since it provides an appropriate setting for examining ethical leadership, cyberloafing, and employee performance within a university healthcare environment where employees use digital technologies in performing their duties, while temporary, contract, casual, and other non-permanent staff were excluded from the study.

According to Singh (2018), sampling techniques are the methods that a researcher adopts in choosing its sample size and determining the accuracy of a research outcome. The two main types of sampling techniques that exist are probability and non-probability sampling. Probability of sampling involves the use of a random sampling approach to determine sample size. To achieve the objective of this study, the researchers used stratified random sampling techniques to ensure that employees from the different departments were adequately represented. The stratified random sampling involved dividing the target population into eight departments, namely administration, Records, OPD, Wards, Laboratory, X-ray, Medical, and Pharmacy, and selected participants randomly from each stratum. The eligibility criteria included permanent employees who had worked in the organization for 10 years while temporary, contract, casual and other non-permanent employees were excluded from the study. Specifically, administration (20), Account office (11) Records (7), OPD (20), Wards (30**),** Laboratory (45), X-ray (12), Medical (11) and Pharmacy (4) respectively.

Sample size is the choosing of an adequate number of preferred people to be examined, while conclusions are drawn from the entire population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Quantitative studies are noted to be asking many individuals the same questions, which are used to draw conclusions on the whole population (Neuman, 2007). A sample size of a population that is accurate and has a degree of absence of bias can be referred to as a good sample. A sample size is preferred due to its cost effectiveness, high level of accuracy, time savings, and presence of population elements (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). In line with Yamane (1967), the study uses the relation given below to estimate the sample size of the study based on a total population of 251 permanent employees and a 4% margin of error (e = 0.04).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(\alpha)^2}$$

Where,

N= population size

n = the sample size

$\alpha =$ is the margin of error, chosen at 0.04%.

$n = \frac{331}{1+330(0.10)^2} = \cong 179$

Data collection is defined by Ritchie et al. (2013) as the specific, step-by-step collection of information that is important to research sub-problems; it can be arrived at using a variety of methods. To enable gathering of data from the field, the researchers sought permission to collect information on respondents, administered structured questionnaires, computed each construct score using mean of its measurement items, reverse-coded negatively worded items where

applicable, treated missing responses using quantitative. A pretest acts as a guideline to examine part of the research and identify if the chosen guidelines will work as expect, while the analysis tested the clarity and understanding of questions and assessed the data for linearity, residual normality, homoscedasticity, independence, and multicollinearity before correlation and multiple regression analysis (Cooper et al., 2014).

4.ANALYSIS

4.1 Analytical Procedure

Prior to analysis, the data was screened for completeness, missing values, and potential outliers. Items measuring each construct were coded and aggregated using mean scores, while negatively worded items were reverse-coded where applicable. Missing responses were assessed and appropriately treated before analysis (Tanko et al., 2019). The assumptions of Pearson correlation and hierarchical multiple regression were examined, including linearity, normality of residuals, homoscedasticity, independence of errors, and multicollinearity. Linearity and homoscedasticity were assessed using scatterplots, residual normality was examined using relevant diagnostic procedures, independence was assessed using the Durbin Watson statistic, and multicollinearity was evaluated using tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) values. Given the use of same-source self-report data, common-method bias was also considered and addressed through measures including anonymity, confidentiality, clear questionnaire items, and an appropriate statistical assessment (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

To test the moderating ethical leadership on the relationship between cyberloafing and employee performance, hierarchical multiple regression was conducted. Cyberloafing and ethical leadership were entered as the main effects in the first step, followed by the interaction term (cyberloafing & ethical leadership) in the second step. The predictor variables were mean centred before the interaction term was computed to minimize multicollinearity. The moderation effect was determined from the significance of the interaction coefficient, change in explained variance (ΔR^2), and F-change between the regression models (Hayes, 2018).

5. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

5.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

To further understand the results of the analysis, the researchers provided the background characteristics of the respondents in the survey. The demographic characteristics include gender, age, educational qualification, work experience, and department of the respondents. Table 4.1 shows the results. The gender of the respondents was captured to provide an overview of the composition of the sample. It revealed that 107 were females, representing 59.8%, while 72 were males, representing 40.2%. This indicates that there were more females than males in the sample population. The age distribution also showed that 124 respondents were between 25 and 34 years, representing 69.3%, while 40 respondents were between 35 and 44 years, representing 22.3%. Finally, respondents aged between 45 and 54 years and those under 25 years, constituted approximately 8% of the sample. The age distribution provides a descriptive overview of the respondents included in the study. Overall, the results indicate that most respondents were within the 25 to 34-year age category.

Table 4. 1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	107	59.8
	Male	72	40.2
Age Distribution	below 25	12	6.7
	25-34	124	69.3
	35-44	40	22.3
	45-54	3	1.7
Educational Qualifications	Diploma	57	31.8
	First degree	77	43.0
	Masters	39	21.8
	PhD/Doctoral degree	6	3.4
Units	Accounts Office	11	6.1
	Administration	20	11.2
	Laboratory/X-ray	45	25.1
	Medical department	11	6.1
	OPD	14	7.8
	Pharmacy Department	4	2.2
	Records	7	3.9
	Wards	67	37.4
Work Experience	< 5 years	23	12.8
	Between 5 and 10	29	16.2
	Between 11 and 15	47	26.3
	Between 16 and 20	38	21.2
	> 21years	42	23.5

Source: *Field Survey (2025)*

The demographic results indicate that most respondents were adequately educated, with 43% holding a first degree and 31.8% possessing a diploma, while a proportion of 25.2% had master's or doctoral qualifications. In terms of departmental distribution, many respondents worked in the wards (37.4%), followed by the medical laboratory and X-ray departments (25%), indicating that clinical staff constituted the largest proportion of participants. Regarding work experience, most respondents had substantial tenure, with the largest groups having 11–15 years (26.3%), more than 21 years (23.5%), and 16–20 years (21.2%) of experience.

5.2 Measurement of Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability of scales were assessed and reported, displayed on Tables 4.2 and 4.3. The word "validity" relates to an instrument's ability to accurately determine what it intends to measure. We conducted a pilot test at the Valley View University Hospital with 70 respondents to ascertain the validity and reliability of the research questionnaire. The respondents were selected based on their willingness and readiness to complete the questionnaire. The Pearson correlation values reported in Table 4.2 indicate the relationship between the individual questionnaire items and the overall scale, while the 0.456 criterion was used as the minimum value for assessing the item correlations.

Table 4.2 Validity Statistics Using Pearson's Product Moment Value and Coefficients

Variables	Pearson Correlation value	Pearson Product Moment Value	Validity Decision
Employees Performance	0.677	0.456	Valid
Ethical Leadership	0.634	0.456	Valid
Cyberloafing	0.814	0.456	Valid

Source: *Field Survey (2025)*

Table 4.3 below shows co-efficient reliability. Internal reliability was verified using Cronbach's Alpha to ensure that the scale used for data collection is internally reliable. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), reliabilities lower than 0.6 are said to be poor, reliability from 0.7 ranges are acceptable and those coefficients more than 0.8 are considered good. Hence cyberloafing has a Cronbach alpha of 0.834, ethical leadership has a Cronbach alpha of 0.822, and employee performance has a Cronbach alpha of 0.825.

Table 4.3 Reliability of all variables

S/N	Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
1.	Cyberloafing	20	0.834
2.	Ethical leadership	10	0.822
3.	Employee performance	12	0.825
		4.2	**2.481**

Source: *Field Survey (2025)*

6. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Effect of Cyberloafing on Employee Performance

The first objective of the study was to examine the effect of cyberloafing on the performance of employees in the University of Ghana Health Services. To achieve the first objective of the study, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used. From Table 4.6, the regression analysis found

that cyberloafing significantly predicts employee performance in the University of Ghana Health Services ($R^2 = 0.339$, $F = 90.704$, $t = -9.524$, $\beta = -0.582$, $p < .05$). This implies that 33.9% of the proportion of employee performance among these workers can be explained by cyberloafing. From Model 1 in Table 4.6, cyberloafing was also found to be statistically significant in predicting the relationship between the study variables, as shown by the F-statistics in Table 4.7. The coefficient for cyberloafing ($\beta = -0.582$) implies that every unit change in cyberloafing elicits a change in employee performance of about $\beta = -0.582$. The significance value for testing the estimates was $p \leq 0.05$. The study, therefore, concludes that cyberloafing has a significant negative effect on employee performance at the University of Ghana Health Services. This therefore supports the hypothesis that cyberloafing will have a negative significant effect on employee performance. This result collaborates with the findings of the following works that had negative and significant effects (Kausar et al., 2021; Adams et al., 2020).

6.1 The Relationship Between Ethical Leadership and Employee Performance

The second objective of the study was to examine the relationship between ethical leadership and employee performance in the University of Ghana Health Services. This objective was achieved using correlation analysis. From Table 4.5, the output of this analysis indicated that there is a positive relationship between ethical leadership and employee performance ($r = 0.559$, $p < 0.05$). This basically means that higher levels of ethical leadership are associated with higher levels of employee performance. This finding collaborates with the findings of (Obicci, 2015; Zaim et al., 2021; Dust et al., 2018; Ullah et al. 2021), which also had positive relationships between the variables.

6.2 The Moderating Effect of Ethical Leadership Style on the Relationship between Cyberloafing and Employee Performance

The third objective of the study was aimed at examining the moderating effect of ethical leadership on the relationship between cyberloafing and employee performance. Hypothesis 3 predicted that ethical leadership will positively moderate the relationship between cyberloafing and employee performance. This hypothesis was analyzed using hierarchical regression analysis. From Table 4.7, cyberloafing was entered into the first model, after which ethical leadership was entered in the second model to envisage employee performance. Table 4.7 demonstrates that cyberloafing and ethical leadership significantly predict employee performance ($b = -0.582$, $p < 0.05$) and ($b = 0.342$, $p < 0.05$), respectively. From Table 4.6, the value of the R-squared changed in Model 2 to 0.420. This implies that ethical leadership accounts for an additional 8.1% variance in employee performance.

The findings of the study on perceived ethical leadership and cyberloafing on employee performance are discussed in relation to the adopted theory and the Ghanaian healthcare setting. The study also focused on determining the moderating perceived ethical leadership on the relationship between cyberloafing and employee performance. Data was collected from a sample of 179 respondents in University of Ghana Health Services. The results of the study are discussed with reference to the study objectives, while considering the observed level of cyberloafing, possible alternative explanations, and the contribution of the findings beyond previously established associations.

6.3 Effect of Cyberloafing on Employee Performance

The findings of this objective revealed that cyberloafing had a negative relationship but was statistically significant with employee performance. This means that when cyberloafing increases, employee performance decreases. The findings of this research agreed with the findings of Hartanto and Franksiska (2021), which revealed that there is a significant influence of cyberloafing on productivity; to add to the above, findings of research on 268 working adults confirm that in organizations where employees cyberloaf, they experience low productivity. Also, Henle et al. (2009) reported that cyberloafing among employees in the United States results in over 30% decrease in organizational productivity. In addition, Owusu et al. (2021) findings collaborate with the result of the first objective of the study by stating that cyberloafing has a negative effect on performance. However, the same study could not find a significant relationship between cyberslacking and academic performance. Stanton (2002) revealed that the frequent use of the internet at work may even contribute to higher employee output as compared to those who use the internet rarely or not. Also, Olajide et al. (2018) research in the banking sector in Nigeria confirmed that both informational and social loafing have significant negative effects on employee performance, which agreed with the findings of this objective of the study. However, their results revealed that leisure loafing has no significant effect on performance, which is contrary to the findings of the first objective of this study. Also, similar findings of Aybas and Gungor (2020) revealed that there was no relation between cyberloafing and employee performance. This implies that cyberloafing has neither a positive nor negative relationship with employee performance, hence zero correlation between the variables. These divergent findings may be explained by differences in the type and duration of cyberloafing, the extent to which internet use provides recovery from work demands.

6.4 The Relationship Between Ethical leadership and Employee Performance

The findings from this study revealed that ethical leadership is positively related and statistically significant with employee performance. This implies that as ethical leadership increases, employee performance also increases. Detert et al. (2007) indicated that ethical leadership assists employees in identifying and polishing the roles they play towards the attainment of the goals of the organization. The study shows that ethical leadership is more likely to lead to an increase in employee performance, which agrees with the outcome of the findings of the study. The study outcome is in line with the conclusions by Obicci (2015) that employee performance is greatly influenced by ethical leadership. Also, the findings from Zaim et al. (2021) established that ethical leadership is positively associated with leadership effectiveness and team performance. Neubert, et al., (2013) stated that the failure of organizations clearly explains the relevance of ethical behavior. Treviño and Brown (2005) suggested that ethical leadership promotes ethical behavior through practicing as well as managing ethics and making everyone answerable for it. This is because the absence of ethical behavior in organizational practice is possible to cause damage to the morale of employees. The current study findings agreed with the findings of Sarwar et al. (2020), who examined the mediating effects of organizational ethical culture on the relationship between ethical leadership, work engagement, employees' well-being, and performance. Also, the study found that ethical leadership and ethical culture have positive impacts on employee well-being, work engagement, and financial performance.

7. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that cyberloafing is significantly and negatively associated with employee performance among employees of the University of Ghana Health Services. This finding suggests that higher levels of cyberloafing are associated with lower levels of employee performance. The study also establishes that ethical leadership is positively and significantly associated with employee performance, indicating that employees who perceive higher levels of ethical leadership tend to report better performance. These findings highlight the importance of responsible internet use and ethical leadership in promoting employee performance within the healthcare sector. However, given the cross-sectional and self-reported nature of the data, the findings should be interpreted as associations rather than definitive causal effects. Although the study initially proposed a moderating role for ethical leadership, this conclusion should only be retained if the hierarchical regression analysis demonstrates a statistically significant cyberloafing and ethical leadership interaction term. This study contributes to understanding how workplace internet use and ethical leadership are associated with employee performance.

8. IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Theoretical Implications

The findings contribute to the understanding of employee performance by demonstrating that cyberloafing is negatively and significantly associated with employee performance, while ethical leadership is positively and significantly associated with employee performance. The findings provide empirical support for the relevance of ethical leadership in explaining employee performance within the University of Ghana Health Services. In relation to the adopted theoretical framework, the findings suggest that employee behaviour and workplace conditions are relevant to understanding performance outcomes. However, the findings should be interpreted within the limits of the cross-sectional design and self-reported data, and the study does not establish causal effects. The findings therefore extend existing understanding by providing evidence from a Ghanaian healthcare setting on the association between ethical leadership, cyberloafing, and employee performance.

8.2 Policy Implications

The findings suggest that managers at the University of Ghana Health Services should strengthen ethical leadership practices, as ethical leadership was positively and significantly associated with employee performance. Leadership development programmes may therefore emphasize ethical decision-making, fairness, accountability, role modelling, and responsible treatment of employees. Since cyberloafing was negatively and significantly associated with employee performance, the organisation should establish clear and proportionate guidelines distinguishing legitimate work-related internet use from non-work-related internet use during working hours. Such guidelines should communicate acceptable digital behaviour while recognising that internet access may be necessary for employees to perform their duties effectively. Any monitoring of internet use should be proportionate to the organisational purpose, respect employee privacy, and comply with applicable workplace and data-protection requirements. Job design and workload should also be considered when developing digital-use policies, particularly where employees require internet access to perform their duties or where work demands may influence internet-use behaviour. These implications are primarily relevant to the University of Ghana Health Services and should be applied cautiously to other healthcare institutions.

9. LIMITATION AND FUTURE STUDY

Several methodological limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. Sampling exclusively from a single site the University of Ghana Health Services limits generalizability across other public healthcare institutions, private facilities, or non-healthcare sectors with different organizational cultures and administrative governance. Future research should recruit multi-center samples from diverse institutions to enhance external validity.

The cross-sectional design introduces temporal ambiguity, preventing definitive causal claims regarding the relationships between cyberloafing, leadership practice, and performance. This cross-sectional setup, paired with potential unobserved confounders (e.g., workload intensity, job stress, IT policies), may also distort the observed moderation dynamics. Future work should adopt longitudinal or multi-wave panel designs to establish temporal precedence and test conditional process models robustly.

To reduce these biases, future studies should use multi-source designs pairing employee self-reports with supervisor ratings of performance or incorporate objective measures such as IT network logs.

Finally, integrating qualitative methods (e.g., interviews or focus groups) alongside quantitative surveys in a mixed-methods approach would capture rich contextual nuances.

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