

The Effect of Creativity and Job Stress on Employee Performance With Cyberloafing Behaviour As Mediation At Banda Aceh Tax Office

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to investigate the impact of creativity and job stress on employee performance at the Banda Aceh Tax Office, with cyberloafing behavior as a mediating variable. The study population consisted of 101 civil servants working at the Banda Aceh Tax Office. Data were gathered using questionnaires with Likert scale ratings, and the entire population served as the sample (census sampling). The research model was analyzed using SmartPLS. Descriptive analysis results indicate that creativity, job stress, cyberloafing, and employee performance were all rated favorably. The findings from the direct effect analysis indicate that creativity positively and significantly influences cyberloafing, job stress positively and significantly affects cyberloafing, and creativity positively and significantly impacts employee performance. Additionally, cyberloafing exerts a positive and significant influence on employee performance. Meanwhile, the results of the indirect path analysis reveal that cyberloafing serves as a partial mediator in the relationship between creativity and employee performance, demonstrating a positive and significant effect. Likewise, cyberloafing partially mediates the relationship between job stress and employee performance in a positive and significant manner.

Keywords: Creativity, Job Stress, Cyberloafing, Employee Performance

Introduction

The activities of an organization are inherently dependent on the active role of human resources (HR), as individuals serve as planners, decision-makers, and key actors in achieving organizational goals. To succeed and grow sustainably, organizations require high-quality human resources. One critical factor in attaining organizational objectives is employee performance, which refers to how employees execute their tasks, fulfill their roles, and contribute to the organization's overall success (Kaltiainen & Hakanen, 2020).

The use of information technology, particularly the internet, in daily work has significantly contributed to organizations' ability to achieve their goals more effectively and efficiently, allowing them to remain competitive. However, the internet presents both positive and negative impacts. On one hand, it enhances organizational performance by serving as a valuable tool for improving employee productivity. Internet-based software enables employees to complete tasks more quickly and efficiently (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). On the other hand, improper internet use can negatively affect employee performance. Engaging in non-work-related activities, such as browsing social media, can reduce focus and diminish work effectiveness (Lim, 2002).

One factor that influences employee performance is creativity. Creativity serves as a catalyst for innovation and problem-solving, thereby enhancing overall employee performance. Individual creativity is positively associated with both task and contextual performance, indicating that creative employees are more likely to engage actively and contribute to the work environment, ultimately leading to improved

performance (Öngel et al., 2024).

Another factor influencing employee performance is job stress. Unlike creativity, job stress can negatively impact employee productivity and overall performance. From a psychological perspective, job stress affects an employee's mental state, which in turn influences their workplace effectiveness (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008). Common sources of job stress include heavy workloads, time pressures, and unhealthy work environments, making it a critical issue that organizations must address.

With the advancement of digital technology, the internet has become an integral part of both personal and professional life. Internet facilities provided by organizations significantly assist employees in completing tasks efficiently. However, these resources can also be misused, as employees may access the internet for non-work-related activities during working hours. This behavior is known as cyberloafing.

Cyberloafing in an organization can stem from various factors, one of which is job stress. Employees may engage in cyberloafing as a coping mechanism to alleviate workplace stress (Andel et al., 2019). On the other hand, the creative process often requires internet usage to generate new ideas and innovative solutions, which can inadvertently lead to cyberloafing behavior. In this context, cyberloafing may facilitate creative thinking and problem-solving in the business environment (Akar & Karabulut Coskun, 2020).

As a vertical unit under the Directorate General of Taxes, Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia, the Banda Aceh Tax Office plays a crucial role in securing state revenue. It is responsible for achieving the tax revenue targets set in the State Budget. To fulfill this responsibility, Tax Office of Banda Aceh requires employees to demonstrate optimal performance in order to meet these targets. However, the high targets and heavy workload may contribute to job stress among employees. At the same time, employees must exhibit strong creativity to efficiently complete their tasks. Both job stress and creativity can potentially trigger cyberloafing behavior in the workplace.

Literature Review

Employee Performance

Government Regulation Republic of Indonesia No. 30 of 2019 on Civil Servant Performance Assessment defines performance as the work outcomes achieved by each civil servant within an organization or unit, in accordance with the Employee Performance Targets and Work Behavior. Performance refers to both the actions undertaken and the manner in which they are executed (Wibowo, 2017). It reflects an individual's ability to carry out tasks and responsibilities effectively, achieving the expected outcomes or goals. In the context of work performance, it pertains to the extent to which an individual or group successfully completes tasks in accordance with predetermined standards (Robbins et al., 2019).

Furthermore, performance is closely linked to productivity, which serves as a key measure for identifying the most effective ways to achieve optimal output levels (Hasibuan, 2003). High performance can be attained when individuals demonstrate dedication, possess relevant experience and skills, and manage their time efficiently. Work performance, both in terms of quality and quantity, represents the achievements of a civil servant in fulfilling their assigned duties and responsibilities (Mangkunegara, 2016). Government Regulation Republic of Indonesia No. 30 of 2019 on Civil Servant Performance Assessment stipulates that employee performance is measured based on the following indicators: (a) Quantity – The volume of work completed. (b) Quality – The standard of work produced. (c) Time – Efficiency in completing tasks within set deadlines. (d) Cost – The ability to optimize resources effectively. (e) Service Orientation – Commitment to delivering quality public services. (f) Commitment – Dedication to organizational goals and responsibilities. (g) Work Initiative – Proactiveness in performing tasks and solving problems. (h) Cooperation – The ability to collaborate with colleagues and stakeholders. (i) Leadership – The capacity to guide, influence, and manage teams. (j) Integrity – Adherence to ethical standards and principles.

Cyberloafing

The term "cyberloafing" first appeared in 2002 in a study by (Lim et al., 2002) titled "How Do I Loaf Here? Let Me Count the Ways." Cyberloafing refers to the voluntary behavior of employees who use the company's internet during working hours to access websites and emails (both sending and receiving) that are unrelated to their job responsibilities (Lim et al., 2002).

Cyberloafing behaviors encompass various non-work-related online activities conducted during work hours. These activities include browsing social media, online shopping, streaming videos, playing online games, and engaging in personal messaging or emails. While often perceived as counterproductive, some studies suggest that moderate cyberloafing can serve as a mental break, potentially enhancing creativity and reducing job stress, ultimately contributing to improved employee performance. (Lim & Teo, 2005), Cyberloafing behaviors encompass various non-work-related online activities conducted during work hours, such as online shopping, playing online games, watching online videos, and browsing social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. While often considered a form of workplace distraction, research suggests that moderate engagement in cyberloafing can serve as a mental break, helping employees manage stress, regain focus, and even enhance creativity, ultimately influencing job performance (Askew et al., 2014) and (Lieberman et al., 2011).

Cyberloafing essentially refers to the use of workplace computers and the internet for non-work-related activities during working hours, often disguised as job-related tasks. This behavior includes activities such as browsing social media, online shopping, watching videos, or engaging in personal email correspondence. While cyberloafing is often viewed as counterproductive, some studies suggest that moderate engagement in such activities may serve as a coping mechanism for stress relief and mental recovery, potentially enhancing overall employee performance (Blanchard & Henle, 2008). According to (Lim et al., 2002), cyberloafing behavior is categorized into two main activities (a) Browsing Activities: (1) sports sites; (2) news; (3) online stores for personal use; (4) entertainment; (5) sites unrelated to work; (6) sites for downloading information unrelated to work; (7) investment sites; and (8) adult sites. and (b) E-mail Activities : (1) Open and check email, (b) -Send and receive email

Creativity

Creativity, or the creative process, refers to the ability to generate ideas or products that are not only novel but also useful and relevant within a specific context (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). Engagement in the creative process is essential for both individuals and organizations to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing environment. Creativity extends beyond individual efforts, requiring the active involvement of all team members (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Both emotional and cognitive engagement are necessary to foster out-of-the-box thinking and develop innovative solutions to complex problems.

This perspective aligns with (Sawyer & Henriksen, 2023), who define creativity as a social process involving collaboration, interaction, and communication among individuals to produce something new and meaningful. According to (Zhang & Bartol, 2010), creative process engagement consists of three key indicators: (1) Problem Identification – Recognizing and defining challenges that require creative solutions. (2) Information Search – Gathering relevant knowledge and resources to inform the creative process. (3) Idea Development – Refining and expanding ideas into actionable solutions.

Job Stress

Job stress among employees arises when they experience excessive workloads, discomfort in the workplace, and low job satisfaction. It results in psychological distress caused by work demands that exceed an employee's capabilities (de Bruin & Taylor, 2005). This aligns with the definition proposed by (Lazarus & Folkman, 2013) in *Stress, Appraisal, and Coping*, which describes job stress as a condition in which work-

related demands surpass an individual's ability to cope or adapt, leading to adverse physiological, emotional, and cognitive responses.

Job stress is not solely related to workload but also to constant changes in job conditions, personal adjustments to demands, opportunities, and resources that are perceived as significant yet uncertain. According to (Robbins & Judge, 2017), job stress can be attributed to three main factors: environmental, organizational, and personal. Furthermore, (de Bruin & Taylor, 2005) identify nine key indicators for measuring job stress: (1) Role Ambiguity – Uncertainty about job responsibilities. (2) Relationships – Interpersonal dynamics in the workplace. (3) Workload – The volume and intensity of tasks. (4) Autonomy – The degree of control over one's work. (5) Bureaucracy – The complexity of administrative processes. (6) Equipment and Supplies – Availability of necessary resources. (7) Physical Environment – Workplace conditions and infrastructure. (8) Career Advancement – Opportunities for professional growth. (9) Work/Home Interface – The balance between professional and personal life.

Framework

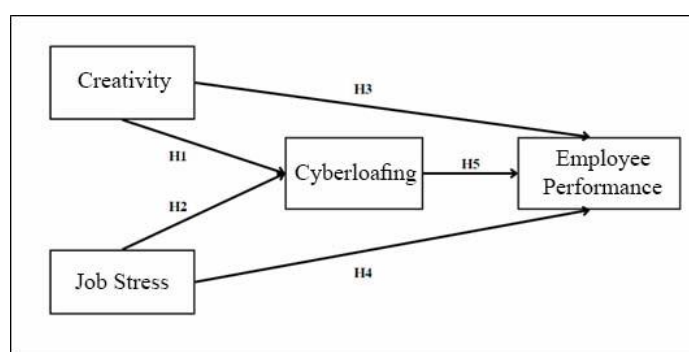


Figure 1. Framework

H1: Creativity, Work Stress, Cyberloafing and Employee Performance are good.

H2: Creativity affects cyberloafing

H3: Work stress affects cyberloafing

H4: Creativity affects employee performance

H5: Work stress affects employee performance

H6: Cyberloafing affects employee performance

H7: cyberloafing mediates Creativity affects employee performance

H8: cyberloafing mediates Work stress affects employee performance

Research Methods

This study was carried out in the Tax Office of Banda Aceh. All government officials working at the Tax Office of Banda Aceh made up the study's population. A census sampling method was employed, meaning that all members of the population were included as research participants without exception. In total, 100 employees participated in the study by completing the questionnaire.

A structured questionnaire intended for quantitative measurement of research variables was used to gather data. A Likert scale was used to rate each statement in the survey. The collected data were then analyzed using the SEM method, a statistical technique used to examine relationships between latent variables in a research model. The analysis was conducted with SmartPLS version 3.0, a software known for its effectiveness in handling small to medium-sized samples and complex research models.

Research Results And Discussion Descriptive

Hypothesis

Descriptive hypothesis testing is conducted to assess respondents' perceptions of the research variables Creativity, Cyberloafing, Job Stress, and Employee Performance by analyzing their average values. This analysis helps determine whether respondents have a positive or negative perception of the research variables. The results of the descriptive analysis are as follows:

Table 1. Descriptive

	Test Value = 3.41					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Defferencen	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Employee_Performance	15.760	99	0.000	0.87800	0.7675	0.9885
Cyberloafing	-2.058	99	0.042	-0.24333	-0.47480	-0.0087
Creativity	8.417	99	0.000	0.57636	0.4405	0.7122
Job Stress	2.935	99	0.004	0.28778	0.0932	0.4823

Based on the table above, the test results indicate that the significance values for the research variables are as follows: Employee Performance (0.000), Cyberloafing (0.042), Creativity (0.000), and Job Stress (0.004). Since all significance values are below the 0.05 threshold, it can be concluded that the descriptive hypothesis (H1) is supported, meaning that Ha is accepted and H0 is rejected. These findings suggest that the variables Employee Performance, Cyberloafing, Creativity, and Job Stress are statistically significant and demonstrate positive results.

Verificative Hypothesis

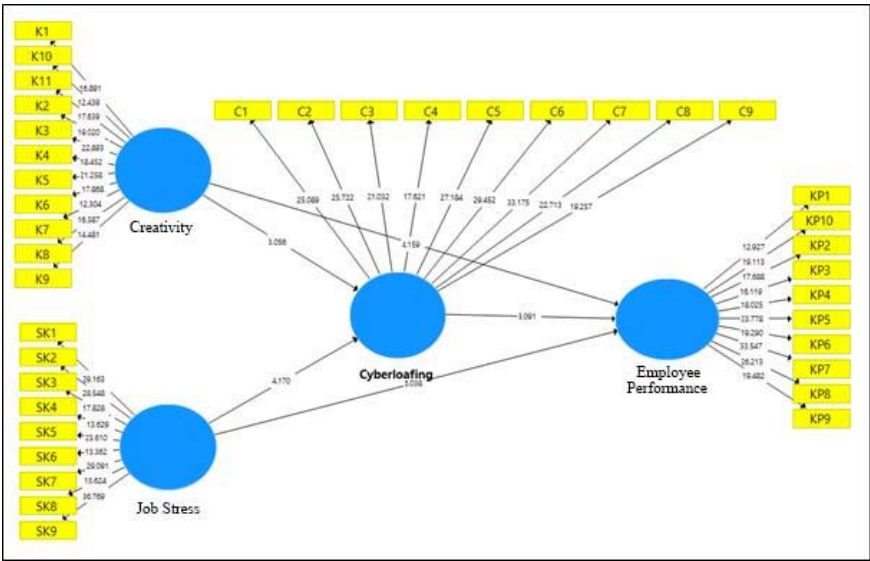


Figure 2. PLS Testing

The results of the direct hypothesis testing (direct path analysis) for the variables Creativity, Job Stress, Cyberloafing, and Employee Performance are presented and explained in the following table:

Tabel 1 Direct Hypothesis Testing (Direct Path)

	O	M	STDEV	T_Statistics	P_Values
Creativity -> Cyberloafing	0.288	0.287	0.102	2.838	0.005
Job_Stress -> Cyberloafing	0.389	0.395	0.094	4.156	0.000

	O	M	STDEV	T_Statistics	P_Values
Creativity -> Employee_Performance	0.346	0.349	0.075	4.611	0.000
Job_Stress -> Employee_Performance	0.389	0.391	0.065	5.951	0.000
Cyberloafing -> Employee_Performance	0.269	0.263	0.079	3.403	0.001

The description of the research results of the direct hypothesis (Direct Path) is as follows

H2 : The Effect of Creativity on Cyberloafing

The results of Hypothesis 2, which examines the effect of creativity on cyberloafing among employees at Tax Office of Banda Aceh, indicate a coefficient value of 0.288, a T-statistic of 2.838, and a P-value of 0.005. These results suggest that creativity has a positive and significant effect on cyberloafing, with a direct effect of 28.8%. Thus, Hypothesis 2 (Ha) is accepted, while the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected.

These findings are in line with the research conducted by (Akar & Karabulut Coskun, 2020), which demonstrated a statistically significant yet weak positive correlation between creativity and cyberloafing. Similarly, the study by (Derin & Gökçe, 2016) indicated that cyberloafing exerts a slight positive influence on innovative work behavior. Furthermore, research by (Lim et al., 2002) supports this conclusion, suggesting that employees with high creativity levels are more likely to engage in cyberloafing as a means of seeking inspiration or generating new ideas. In this context, cyberloafing can serve as a mechanism that fosters creative thinking and problem-solving abilities in the business environment (Akar & Karabulut Coskun, 2020).

H3 : The Effect of Job Stress on Cyberloafing

Job stress has impact to cyberloafing. This is evidenced by a coefficient value of 0.389, a T-statistic of 4.156, and a P-value of 0.000. These results indicate that job stress accounts for 38.9% of the variance in cyberloafing behavior. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 (Ha) is accepted, while the H0 is rejected.

The findings of this study are consistent with (Zhu et al., 2021), Several studies have concluded that employees tend to engage in cyberloafing as a coping mechanism in response to increasing job stress. This behavior serves as a means for employees to temporarily relieve stress and regain focus before returning to their primary tasks. Similarly, research by (Koay et al., 2017) found that high levels of workplace stress contribute to increased cyberloafing behavior. Additionally, the study by (Nur Kamila & Muafi, 2023) further supports this relationship, demonstrating that job stress has a positive and significant impact on cyberloafing behavior.

H4 : The Effect of Creativity on Employee Performance

Employee performance at Tax Office of Banda Aceh shows a good and noteworthy influence when creativity is applied. The coefficient value is 0.346, with a T_statistic of 4.611 and a P_value of 0.000. These results indicate that creativity contributes 34.6% to employee performance. This proves that testing hypothesis 4 is accepted. These results suggest that all employees of Tax Office of Banda Aceh should continue to strive to improve their work creativity so that the work targets set can be achieved.

Research by (Du et al., 2016) discovered that participating in the creative process can improve worker performance, demonstrating a strong and favorable correlation between creativity and productivity. This finding suggests that creativity not only fosters innovation but also directly improves work productivity and efficiency. Similarly, previous studies have identified a significant positive correlation between creativity and job performance (Ismail et al., 2019). Additionally, it has been demonstrated that creativity positively correlates with task and contextual performance (Ongel, 2014), whereas improved employee performance is

significantly impacted by greater inventiveness (Syukran et al., 2023).

H5: The Effect of Job Stress on Employee Performance

Job stress is proven on employee performance. The coefficient value is 0.389, with a T_Statistic of 5.951 and a P_Value of 0.000. Based on the coefficient value, it is proven that job stress can influence the performance of Tax Office of Banda Aceh employees by 38.9%. Leading to the acceptance of H_{a5} and the rejection H_{05} . The results show that work stress prevention has a very crucial role because it has a direct and significant impact on employee performance. Therefore, the leadership of Tax Office of Banda Aceh needs to continue to strive to maintain a balance in the workload so as not to burden employees excessively. In addition, a strategic step that can be taken is to create a conducive work environment, namely an environment that supports productivity, psychological well-being, and increases employee work motivation. This can be realized through effective communication, giving appreciation for employee performance, and implementing flexible and adaptive work policies.

Research by (LePine et al., 2005) supports this notion, stating that job stress can yield positive effects (known as eustress) when it is perceived as a manageable challenge rather than an impediment. Eustress occurs when individuals view a stressful situation as a challenge that can be overcome, rather than a threat. This positive perception fosters constructive emotions and enhances motivation to perform (Lazarus & Folkman, 2013). Furthermore, challenge appraisal has been shown to improve performance by stimulating motivation and increasing work engagement (Searle & Auton, 2015).

H6 : The Effect of Cyberloafing Employee Performance

Cyberloafing is proven and significant affects on the performance of employees at Tax Office of Banda Aceh. The analysis results indicate a O_value of 0.269, with a T_statistic of 3.403 and a P_value of 0.000. These findings suggest that cyberloafing contributes to 26.9% of the variation in employee performance. Accordingly, hypothesis 6 is supported, with H_a accepted and H_0 rejected.

Empirical studies support this conclusion. Research by (Sao et al., 2020) found that cyberloafing positively influences employee behavior, particularly in facilitating work recovery and the acquisition of new skills. Similarly, (Lim, 2002) identified cyberloafing as a mental break mechanism that enhances employee focus and productivity. These findings align with those of (Coker, 2011), who demonstrated that workplace internet browsing, or cyberloafing, has a beneficial affects on employee productivity.

Indirect Path

The results of indirect path hypothesis testing between variables of Employee Performance, Cyberloafing, Creativity and Job Stress are seen and explained in the following table:

Tabel 2 Indirect Path Hypothesis Testing Results

	(O)	(M)	(STDEV)	T_Statistics	P_Values
Creativity -> Cyberloafing -> Employee_Performance	0.078	0.076	0.036	2.128	0.034
Job_Stress -> Cyberloafing -> Employee_Performance	0.105	0.104	0.04	2.626	0.009

H7 : The Mediating Role of Cyberloafing in the Relationship Between Creativity and Employee Performance

The test results are as indicated in the image below:

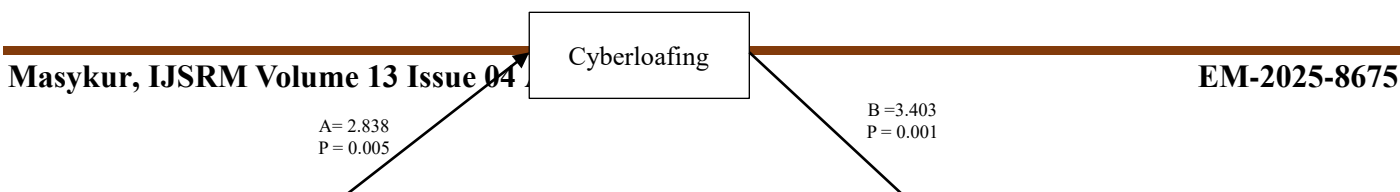


Figure 3 Results of Hypothesis Testing 7

A coefficient value of 0.078, a T-statistic of 2.178 (>1.96), and a P-value of 0.034 (<0.05) show that creativity has a positive and substantial impact on employee performance at the Tax Office of Banda Aceh through cyberloafing. The indirect path's relevance is validated, showing that, with a mediating effect of 7.8%, cyberloafing partially mediates the association between employee performance and creativity. Thus, the outcomes of the testing of Hypothesis 7 verify that H_a is approved and H_0 is denied.

These results imply that the relationship between employee performance and creativity may be mediated by cyberloafing. Although cyberloafing is frequently seen as a bad workplace practice, there are some situations in which it might be advantageous. In particular, it can provide workers with a quick mental respite, allowing them to unwind and come up with fresh, original ideas that eventually improve performance. Furthermore, moderate cyberloafing when used strategically for inspiration or stress relief can contribute to improved employee performance. However, excessive cyberloafing may have adverse effects, potentially reducing productivity and work efficiency (Blanchard & Henle, 2008).

These results highlight the nuanced role of cyberloafing in the workplace, emphasizing the need for balanced management approaches that allow employees to engage in brief, purposeful breaks without compromising overall productivity.

H8 : The Mediating Role of Cyberloafing in the relationship between Job Stress and Employee Performance

The test results are as indicated in the image below:

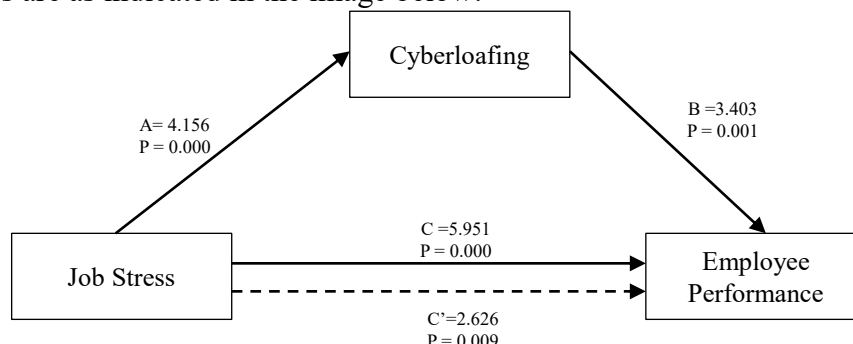


Figure 3 Results of Hypothesis Testing 8

The Tax Office of Banda Aceh's path coefficient value of 0.105, T-statistic value of 2.626 (>1.96), and P-value of 0.009 (<0.05) all show how job stress affects employee performance through cyberloafing. These findings show a significant indirect effect, indicating that the association between job stress and employee performance is partially mediated by cyberloafing. According to the test results, cyberloafing has a 10.5% mediation influence in the relationship between job stress and employee performance at the Tax Office of

Banda Aceh. Consequently, the outcomes of the testing of Hypothesis 8 verify that H_a is approved and H_0 is denied.

These findings align with the research of (Blanchard & Henle, 2008), which suggests that when conducted in moderation and with the purpose of seeking inspiration or alleviating stress, cyberloafing can enhance employee performance. Additionally, cyberloafing can function as a temporary escape from the demanding nature of work, providing employees with the necessary mental respite to restore focus and energy (Pee et al., 2008). In this context, cyberloafing serves as a mechanism for managing stress, ultimately contributing to improved performance when employees return to their primary tasks.

Conclusion

The results of the research at Tax Office of Banda Aceh resulted in the following conclusions:

1. The results of descriptive hypothesis testing, namely the variables of Creativity, Cyberloafing Job stress and Employee Performance of Tax Office of Banda Aceh, have good results. One Sample test with a test value of 3.41 shows the significance value for the employee performance variable is 0.000, the cyberloafing variable is 0.042, the Creativity variable is 0.000 and the job stress variable is 0.004. All significance values are below 0.05.
2. Direct affects results indicate that cyberloafing is significantly impacted by creativity, cyberloafing is significantly impacted by job stress, cyberloafing is significantly impacted by employee performance, and cyberloafing is significantly impacted by employee performance.
3. The findings of the indirect path hypothesis test indicate that cyberloafing partially mediates the relationship between job stress and employee performance at the Tax Office of Banda Aceh, as well as the relationship between creativity and employee performance.

Employee creativity plays a crucial role in improving the performance of Tax Office of Banda Aceh employees. Creativity facilitates the generation of new ideas, innovative solutions, and alternative approaches to problem-solving. In the process of developing creative ideas, employees often seek inspiration from various sources, including the internet. Notably, creative employees may engage in cyberloafing as a means of exploring new ideas and gaining insights.

Cyberloafing does not necessarily have a negative impact on employee performance. Instead, it can serve as a positive mediator between job stress, creativity, and employee performance. Specifically, cyberloafing can foster creativity by providing employees with opportunities to explore new ideas. Additionally, it functions as a coping mechanism to alleviate job stress, offering employees a mental break that helps restore focus and energy, ultimately enhancing performance. However, it is imperative for organizations, including Tax Office of Banda Aceh, to implement flexible policies that allow controlled cyberloafing while ensuring that it does not hinder employee productivity.

Similarly, job stress does not always directly result in negative performance outcomes. When perceived as a challenge, job stress can have a positive impact on performance. High workloads and significant responsibilities may serve as motivating factors, encouraging employees to work harder and achieve better results. The findings of this study suggest that job stress at Tax Office of Banda Aceh is categorized as challenge stress, as employees are driven by their demanding tasks and responsibilities, which, in turn, motivate them to enhance their performance.

Creativity, job stress, and cyberloafing are interconnected factors that influence employee performance within an organization. To foster creativity, Tax Office of Banda Aceh can implement policies that encourage innovation through training programs, in-house training, and knowledge transfer initiatives, ensuring that employee performance remains high. Additionally, the organization can mitigate the adverse effects of job stress by actively monitoring employees' physical and mental well-being to prevent negative consequences and sustain optimal performance. Moreover, adopting flexible cyberloafing policies is

essential, as moderate engagement in cyberloafing can contribute positively to employee performance. However, organizations must ensure that such behavior remains within acceptable limits to prevent potential declines in productivity.

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