

Improving Employee Performance through Empowering Leadership: Managing the Impact of Information Overload and Social Media Fatigue

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to analyse the effect of information and communication overload on social media fatigue, and its impact on employee performance, by considering the moderating role of empowering leadership.

Methodology: This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method and data collection through questionnaires distributed to permanent employees at universities in Indonesia. The data analysis technique uses linear regression and moderation test to test the relationship between variables.

Findings: The results show that information and communication overload has a significant influence on social media fatigue, which in turn negatively impacts employee performance. Moreover, empowering leadership can mitigate such negative impacts, by providing support and autonomy to employees.

Conclusion: The findings provide insights for organisations in designing more efficient communication policies and supporting empowering leadership development to improve employee well-being and performance in the digital age.

Keywords: Information Overload; Communication Overload; Social Media Fatigue; Employee Performance; Empowering Leadership

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INTRODUCTION

In this ever-evolving and increasingly borderless digital age, technology and social media have changed the way we interact, work, and communicate. (McGrath & Charan, 2023) note that social media has created a virtual space that connects individuals and organizations, allows social identities to flourish, and provides a platform for communication and information exchange without time and space constraints. In Indonesia, a report by We Are Social (2024) revealed that more than 65.5% of the Indonesian population are internet users, with almost 50% of them active on social media platforms. The average time spent by Indonesian individuals on social media is around 3 hours and 11 minutes per day, reflecting the important role social media plays in daily life, which now encompasses various aspects such as entertainment, education, business, and social interaction.

Social media has not only become an efficient communication tool but has also changed social, cultural, and organizational structures. Besides being a space for family and friends to stay connected, social media serves as an open arena for public discourse, shaping opinions on social, political, and economic issues. For example, social media influencers now play an important role in shaping people's perceptions on various topics, including health issues (Mo et al., 2024). In addition, businesses and higher education sectors increasingly rely on social media for marketing, collaboration, and communication. However, despite the immense benefits of social media, challenges related to privacy, cyberbullying, and the spread of misinformation arise, creating dilemmas for both individuals and organizations that rely on social media.

In the workplace, social media use can increase productivity, but excessive use can impact individual performance. The phenomenon of technostress, which occurs when employees feel overwhelmed by the demands of being digitally connected, is increasingly reported in academic literature (Andrade & Matias, 2022). This can lead to stress, fatigue, decreased focus, and decreased quality of work. Employees in the higher education sector, who have a huge responsibility to teach, research, and contribute to the development of society, face additional challenges. High workloads, combined with digital distractions from social media, can cause mental fatigue, reduce their effectiveness in carrying out their duties, and affect the quality of education they provide (Atmaja, 2018).

The existing literature has extensively explored the relationship between social media use and employee performance, with a primary focus on negative impacts such as decreased productivity and mental well-being due to digital fatigue (e.g., Brooks & Califf, 2017; Cao & Yu, 2019). However, there are still limitations in research highlighting the role of organizational factors that can mitigate these negative impacts. This study specifically highlights the gap in research investigating how empowering leadership can play a role in reducing technostress resulting from social media use in the workplace, particularly in the higher education sector. Previous studies have suggested the importance of leadership in supporting employee well-being (Rasool et al., 2022) and how certain leadership styles can influence stress perceptions (Ch'ng & Soo Hoo, 2022) but have not explicitly linked these to social media fatigue. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by examining the role of empowering leadership in addressing social media fatigue and optimizing employee performance in the higher education sector.

This study aims to investigate how empowering leadership can moderate the impact of burnout caused by information and communication overload from social media on employee performance in the higher education sector. Specifically, this research will explore two main issues: firstly, the negative impact of excessive social media use on employee performance and

well-being, especially in the midst of the information and communication overload that occurs in higher education work environments. Secondly, how empowering leadership can help mitigate these negative impacts by providing appropriate autonomy, support, and coordination, thereby facilitating a balance between work and social media use.

Through this research, it is hoped to gain greater insight into the importance of empowering leadership in addressing the challenges posed by social media in the workplace, especially in the higher education sector. The results of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to designing policies that can improve employee performance and reduce social media fatigue. In addition, this study can also help leaders in the higher education sector to understand their role in guiding employees, encouraging autonomy, and creating a healthy work environment in this digital era.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media

Social media is a digital platform that allows users to interact, share content, and build social relationships online. As a rapidly growing means of communication, social media now plays an important role in personal and professional life. According to Ellison et al. (2022), social media facilitates rapid and intense interaction between individuals and provides access to information and opportunities for collaboration across geographical boundaries.

In the workplace, including the higher education sector, social media is increasingly being adopted to support internal and external communication and the efficient exchange of ideas. However, Liu et al. (2023) note that excessive use can lead to concentration problems and decreased productivity. Among academics and administrative staff, access to social media during working hours can hurt research and teaching performance (Raza et al., 2023).

Social Media Fatigue

Social media fatigue refers to emotional and mental exhaustion caused by intensive and continuous use of social media. This condition is closely related to technostress, stress arising from excessive interaction with technology (Ayyagari et al., 2021). In the global technostress model developed by Tarafdar et al. (2007), digital fatigue can stem from various sources of pressure, such as information overload, time pressure, and the need for constant connectivity. Pindek et al. (2023) identified that this fatigue can reduce work motivation and disrupt the balance between personal and professional life. For university lecturers and staff facing high work pressure, digital interruptions through social media can exacerbate work stress and reduce the quality of academic engagement (Gupta & Kumar, 2023).

Employee Performance

Employee performance reflects an individual's effectiveness in completing tasks and meeting organizational targets. In the higher education sector, this includes teaching activities, research, scientific collaboration, and community service (Tufail et al., 2022). In this context, Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model provides a global framework for understanding how job demands and organizational resources influence performance.

Fatigue due to social media can be a job demand that drains employees' energy, reduces motivation, and worsens productivity (Smith et al., 2023). Conversely, supportive and empowering leadership acts as a job resource that can neutralize these pressures and improve work performance.

Empowering Leadership

Empowering leadership gives employees autonomy in decision-making and encourages active organizational participation (Seibert et al., 2021). This style aligns with the theory of empowering leadership and the principles of transformational leadership, which have been proven effective in increasing employee engagement and reducing work stress in various global contexts (Simmons et al., 2022; Bass & Riggio, 2006).

According to Lee and Joo (2023), empowering leaders can help employees cope with the pressures of intensive digital communication by creating a flexible and supportive work environment. This approach is critical in the higher education sector to help academic staff manage the complexity of their workload and digital pressures. Raza et al. (2023) show that leaders who support collaboration and provide positive feedback can improve academic performance and strengthen employee well-being.

HYPOTHESIS AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The Relationship Between Social Media Fatigue and Employee Performance

Social media fatigue caused by excessive use can reduce the quality of employee performance, both physically and mentally. Stress caused by the overload of information coming through social media can disrupt concentration, reduce motivation, and cause a decrease in the energy needed to perform job duties properly. According to research conducted by (Pindek et al., 2023) and (Raza et al., 2023), the phenomenon of social media fatigue often has a negative impact on productivity and work quality, especially among individuals dealing with high work demands and constant digital distractions.

Based on this, it can be assumed that burnout caused by social media has a negative influence on employee performance in the higher education sector. Therefore, the first hypothesis in this study is as follows:

H1: Social media fatigue negatively affects employee performance in the higher education sector.

The Relationship Between Social Media Fatigue and Employee Performance Moderated by Empowering Leadership

Empowering leadership plays an important role in creating a supportive work environment and providing autonomy to employees to complete tasks effectively (Ratnawati & Atmaja, 2020). Empowering leadership not only reduces stress associated with workload, but also helps employees cope with burnout caused by digital distractions, such as social media. Empowering leaders can provide emotional support, encourage collaboration, and enable employees to better organise their priorities, thereby reducing the negative impact of excessive social media use.

Based on this, the second hypothesis was developed to examine the moderating role of empowering leadership in reducing the negative impact of social media fatigue on employee performance. Previous research (Seibert et al., 2021; Lee & Joo, 2023) shows that empowering leadership can increase employees' confidence and reduce stress, thereby improving their performance despite the pressures resulting from excessive social media use. Therefore, the second hypothesis in this study is as follows:

H2: Empowering leadership moderates the negative influence between social media fatigue and employee performance in the higher education sector.

The Relationship Between Empowering Leadership and Employee Performance

Empowering leadership is believed to improve employee performance by providing autonomy, supporting decision-making, and encouraging employees to feel valued in the organisation (Seibert et al., 2021). Empowering leadership can create a more positive and productive work environment, where employees feel more engaged in their work. In the context of the higher education sector, lecturers who feel supported by their leaders in decision-making and gain greater trust in their academic and administrative tasks will tend to perform better, especially in the face of challenges related to technology and social media.

Research by (Lee & Joo, 2023) shows that empowering leadership has a significant positive relationship with improving employee performance, which is more responsive to the challenges faced in the work environment. Based on this theory, the third hypothesis in this study is as follows:

H3: Empowering leadership has a positive effect on employee performance in the higher education sector.

The Relationship Between Social Media Fatigue and Empowering Leadership in Improving Employee Performance

As an additional hypothesis that complements existing theories, it can be considered that empowering leadership not only serves as a moderator between social media fatigue and employee performance, but can also serve as a factor that strengthens employees' ability to remain productive despite digital stress. Empowering leaders can provide training, mentoring, and professional development opportunities that enable employees to better manage digital challenges, which in turn can improve the quality of their work despite external pressures such as excessive social media use.

Considering the important role of leadership in coping with stress and reducing the negative impact of social media, the fourth hypothesis that can be developed is as follows:

H4: Empowering leadership enhances employees' ability to cope with social media fatigue and improves their performance in the higher education sector.

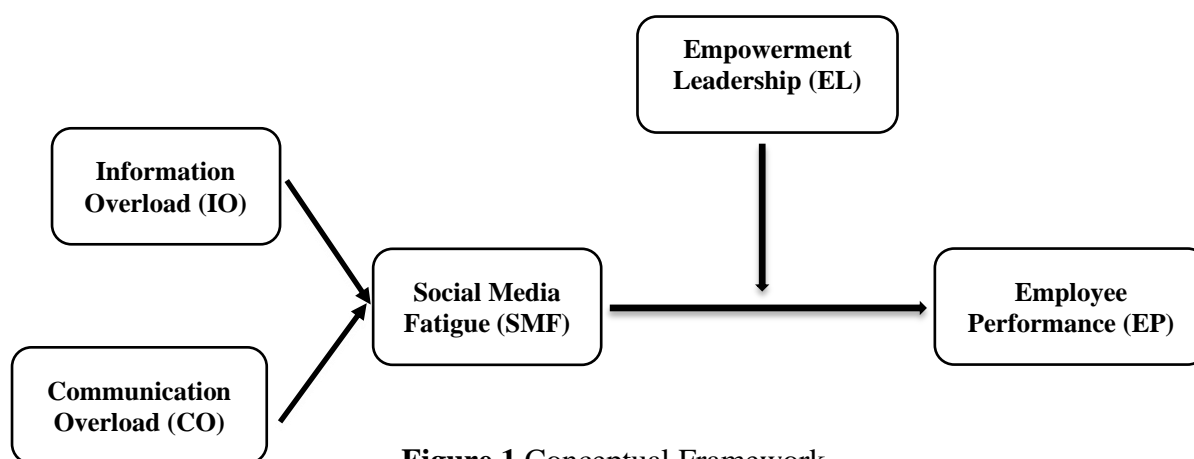


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

METHODS

This research uses a descriptive quantitative research design with a survey approach (Yakin et al., 2023). This design was chosen because this research aims to explore the influence of existing variables, namely social media fatigue, empowering leadership, and employee

performance. The data obtained will be analysed using statistical techniques to test the hypotheses that have been formulated previously. The survey approach was chosen because it allows researchers to collect large amounts of data efficiently through questionnaires that can be distributed online (Creswell, 2014).

Population and Sample

The population in this study were all permanent employees at universities in Indonesia in the central, western and eastern regions. The sample of this study consisted of 258 permanent employees selected using purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling was chosen because the researcher set certain criteria for respondents in accordance with the research objectives. The criteria for respondents were permanent lecturers who had worked for more than two years, had at least two social media accounts, and used social media for at least 3 hours a day and opened social media at least 10 times during work.

The online questionnaire was distributed to 258 respondents through a Google Form link sent through WhatsApp private messages distributed by representatives at each university. The survey resulted in 141 respondents who met the criteria (response rate 54.65%). The data collected from these respondents will be used to analyse the relationship between the variables mentioned. This purposive sampling technique allows researchers to select respondents who are most relevant to the research topic, so that the data obtained is more representative (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Data Collection Technique

Data were collected through a survey using a questionnaire distributed online. The research instrument used was a questionnaire consisting of statements related to each variable studied. This questionnaire was sent via the WhatsApp platform with a Google Form link that could be accessed by respondents.

The questionnaire instruments used to measure the variables in this study are as follows:

- 1) Information Overload and Communication Overload: These dimensions are measured using statements developed by (Rasool et al., 2022) in (Yu et al., 2018).
- 2) Social Media Fatigue: This variable was measured using three statements developed by (Ayyagari et al., 2011) and (Moore, 2000) in (Yu et al., 2018).
- 3) Empowering Leadership: This variable is measured using ten statements developed by (Ahmed et al., 2022).
- 4) Employee Performance: This variable is measured by four statement items developed by (Yu et al., 2018).

Each statement on the questionnaire was measured using a 5-point Likert scale, consisting of:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly Agree

Respondents were asked to rate the statements based on their experiences and views on social media use and workplace performance.

Research Instruments

This research instrument is a questionnaire containing statements to measure the variables under study. Each item in the questionnaire relates to a specific dimension of the variable being

measured, namely social media fatigue, information and communication overload, empowering leadership, and employee performance. The Likert scale is used to measure the respondent's level of agreement or disagreement with each statement in the questionnaire. This instrument has been tested for validity and reliability to ensure that the data collected can be trusted and provide valid results. Instrument validity was tested using factor analysis, while reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Data Analysis Technique

The collected data will be analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis techniques. For descriptive analysis, data will be presented in the form of frequencies and percentages to describe the characteristics of respondents and the distribution of answers to each statement item.

Furthermore, inferential analysis will be used to test the hypotheses that have been formulated. Linear regression test and moderation analysis will be used to examine the effect of social media fatigue on employee performance and the role of empowering leadership in moderating the relationship. Moderation regression test will be used to identify whether empowering leadership affects the strength or direction of the relationship between social media fatigue and employee performance (Tojiri et al., 2023). In addition, reliability and validity tests will be conducted to ensure the consistency and accuracy of the measurement tools used in this study. Data analysis is conducted using statistical software such as SPSS or AMOS to ensure the accuracy of the analysis results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The following table shows the distribution of respondents based on the demographic characteristics relevant in this study, including gender, age, length of employment, and type of social media used.

Table 1 Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency (n = 141)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	67	47.5
Women	74	52.5
Age		
25-35 years old	51	36.2
36-45 years old	55	39.0
46 years and above	35	24.8
Length of Service		
2-5 years	58	41.1
6-10 years	48	34.0
10 years or more	35	24.8
Social Media Used		
WhatsApp, Instagram	96	68.1
Facebook, Twitter	63	44.7
YouTube, TikTok	45	31.9

This table illustrates the distribution of respondents' characteristics, which mostly consisted of female lecturers (52.5%) and the age group of 36-45 years (39%). The most common uses of social media are WhatsApp and Instagram, followed by Facebook and Twitter.

Validity and Reliability

Table 2 Validity and Reliability Results

First-Order Construct	Second-Order Construct	Items	Loadings	α	CR	AVE
Information Overload (IO)		IO.1	0.744	0.725	0.842	0.641
		IO.2	0.823			
		IO.3	0.832			
Communication Overload (CO)		CO.1	0.770	0.740	0.852	0.658
		CO.2	0.816			
		CO.3	0.836			
		CO.4	0.781			
Social Media Fatigue (SMF)		SMF.1	0.791	0.875	0.914	0.728
		SMF.2	0.874			
		SMF.3	0.875			
		SMF.4	0.869			
Empowerment Leadership (EL)	Encouraging employee independent behaviour	EL.1	0.759	0.908	0.913	0.639
		EL.2	0.793			
		EL.3	0.799			
		EL.4	0.759			
	Encouraging employee opportunism thinking	EL.5	0.724	0.839	0.903	0.756
		EL.6	0.766			
		EL.7	0.779			
	Encouraging employee cooperative action	EL.8	0.857			
		EL.9	0.860			
		EL.10	0.863			
Employee Performance (EP)		EP.1	0.876			
		EP.2	0.825			
		EP.3	0.865			

This table presents the measurement results of the variables used in this study, which include five main constructs: Information Overload, Communication Overload, Social Media Fatigue, Empowerment Leadership, and Employee Performance. Measurement of each variable is done through several indicators or items that have been tested for validity and reliability. The validity test was conducted using factor analysis, while reliability was tested with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (α), Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). These values provide an overview of how consistent and valid the measurement instruments used in this study are.

Firstly, Information Overload (IO) is measured by three items that indicate that the excess information received by employees can affect their performance. The results show that all items have high loadings, with a Cronbach's Alpha (α) value of 0.725, Composite Reliability (CR) of 0.842, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of 0.641. These values indicate that the information overload variable has good reliability and validity, and plays a significant role in influencing employee performance.

Second, Communication Overload (CO) was measured by four items, and the results showed that excessive communication in the workplace has an effect on employee performance. The reliability test results show a CR value of 0.852 and an AVE of 0.658, which indicates that this construct also has good reliability and validity. In other words, communication overload can contribute to a decrease in performance due to the distraction it causes.

Furthermore, Social Media Fatigue (SMF) is measured by four items that indicate how excessive use of social media can cause fatigue that impacts employee productivity. All items on this construct have loadings above 0.7, with a CR value of 0.914 and an AVE of 0.728. These values indicate that social media fatigue is a highly reliable and valid construct, and an important factor affecting employee well-being and performance in this digital age.

The Empowerment Leadership (EL) variable measures the influence of empowering leadership on employee performance, with three main sub-dimensions: granting autonomy in independent behaviour, opportunistic thinking, and cooperative action. The analysis results show a CR value of 0.913 and an AVE of 0.639, which indicates that empowerment leadership has excellent reliability and validity. This empowering leadership has a significant impact on employee performance, by giving them room to grow and manage their work more independently.

Finally, Employee Performance (EP) is measured by three items that indicate employee performance related to work quality and productivity. The measurement results show a CR value of 0.903 and an AVE of 0.756, indicating that the employee performance construct has excellent reliability and validity. With high CR and AVE values, this variable can well predict employee performance in the higher education sector.

Overall, the measurement results show that all variables tested in this study have excellent reliability and validity, with high CR and AVE values on each construct. This indicates that the measurement model used in this study is reliable for further analysis, and provides a strong understanding of the influence of factors such as information overload, communication overload, social media fatigue, and empowering leadership on employee performance.

Correlation Test

Table 3 Correlation

Constructs	CO	EP	EL	IO	SMF
Communication Overload (CO)	0.811	-0.328	-0.072	0.629	0.728
Employee Performance (EP)	-0.328	0.870	0.371	-0.251	-0.368
Empowerment Leadership (EL)	-0.072	0.371	0.799	-0.041	-0.151
Information Overload (IO)	0.629	-0.251	-0.041	0.801	0.497
Social Media Fatigue (SMF)	0.728	-0.368	-0.151	0.497	0.853

This table presents the results of the correlation analysis between the variables used in this study, which include Communication Overload (CO), Employee Performance (EP), Empowerment Leadership (EL), Information Overload (IO), and Social Media Fatigue (SMF). This correlation analysis aims to understand the relationship between the variables tested, and provide insight into how these factors influence each other in the context of work and social media use.

The correlation results show that Communication Overload (CO) has a significant positive correlation with Information Overload (IO) ($r = 0.629$) and Social Media Fatigue (SMF) ($r = 0.728$). This indicates that the higher the communication burden felt by employees, the greater the information overload received and the level of fatigue caused by the use of social media. In this context, the communication overload that occurs in the workplace can affect the mental

stress of employees, who have to manage an abundance of information as well as maintain communication effectiveness, which in turn can increase fatigue.

Employee Performance (EP) shows a moderate positive correlation with Leadership Empowerment (EL) ($r = 0.371$), which suggests that employees who feel more empowered by their leaders tend to show better performance. On the other hand, the weak negative correlation between Communication Overload (CO) ($r = -0.328$) and Social Media Fatigue (SMF) ($r = -0.368$) with Employee Performance signifies that communication overload and social media fatigue to some extent reduce employees' work effectiveness. This indicates that although employees feel empowered, external factors such as information overload and fatigue from social media can reduce their performance.

The correlation between Empowerment Leadership (EL) and Employee Performance (EP) shows a very strong relationship ($r = 0.799$). This finding confirms that empowering leadership has a significant influence in improving employee performance. By giving greater autonomy, as well as supporting employees to make decisions, empowering leaders can improve work quality and productivity. Conversely, the weak negative correlation between Empowerment Leadership and Communication Overload (-0.072) and Social Media Fatigue (-0.151) suggests that providing greater support from leaders can help reduce the negative impact of communication overload and social media fatigue faced by employees.

Information Overload (IO) also showed a significant positive correlation with Communication Overload (CO) ($r = 0.629$) and Social Media Fatigue (SMF) ($r = 0.497$). This means that the more information employees receive, the higher the likelihood of them feeling information overload and social media fatigue. Employees who experience information overload tend to feel more burden in managing their work, which exacerbates the mental and physical stress they feel, especially with the constant use of social media.

Social Media Fatigue (SMF), which reflects fatigue due to excessive social media use, showed a positive correlation with Communication Overload (CO) ($r = 0.728$) and Information Overload (IO) ($r = 0.497$). High social media fatigue may be exacerbated by communication and information overload received by employees. On the other hand, the negative correlation with Employee Performance (EP) ($r = -0.368$) indicates that social media fatigue has a negative impact on employee performance. When employees feel exhausted and overwhelmed by social media, their performance will suffer, affecting their productivity and the quality of their work. Overall, the findings from this correlation analysis provide a clear picture that Communication Overload, Information Overload, and Social Media Fatigue are closely interconnected and have a significant impact on Employee Performance. In addition, Empowerment Leadership plays an important moderating role by helping to reduce the negative impact of communication overload and social media fatigue on employee performance. These results emphasise the important role of empowering leadership in mitigating digital stress factors in the workplace and improving employee performance.

Hypothesis Test

Table 4 R-Square Value	
Hypotheses	R-Square
Employee Performance	0.237
Social Media Fatigue	0.533

This table presents the R-square values for the two main hypotheses in this study, namely Employee Performance (EP) and Social Media Fatigue (SMF). The R-square value is used to

measure how much variability in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables in the model. In this study, R-square provides important information about the extent to which the proposed model is able to explain the variations that occur in the two dependent variables.

For Employee Performance (EP), the R-square value obtained is 0.237, which indicates that this research model can only explain about 23.7% of the variability in employee performance. This suggests that although some of the variables in this model have an effect on employee performance, there are still other factors not detected in this study that also affect performance. These may include external factors that are not measured in the model, such as personal motivation, working conditions, or other social factors that may affect productivity and performance quality.

In contrast, Social Media Fatigue (SMF) has a higher R-square value of 0.533. This indicates that the model can explain about 53.3% of the variability in social media fatigue experienced by employees. This higher R-square value indicates that the factors tested in this study have a greater influence on social media fatigue compared to employee performance. This indicates that the model is more effective in explaining what influences the level of burnout caused by social media use, such as information or communication overload, which is increasingly common in the digital age.

Overall, these findings provide useful insights into how Social Media Fatigue is more influenced by the variables tested in this study than Employee Performance. The greater influence of social media fatigue suggests that digital fatigue may be a major challenge for employees, while other factors outside of this model may contribute more to variations in their performance. This highlights the importance of paying more attention to external factors that may affect performance, as well as the need for managerial policies and strategies to address the negative impact of social media in the work environment.

Path Analysis

Table 5 Path Analysis Results

Hypotheses	Path Coefficient	t-statistics (t)	P value	Decision
H1: Information overload positively affects social media fatigue	0.663	6.635	0.000	Supported
H2: Communication overload positively affects social media fatigue	0.689	7.725	0.000	Supported
H3: Social media fatigue negatively affects employee performance	-0.317	4.528	0.000	Supported
H4: Leadership empowerment moderates the negative effect of social media fatigue on employee performance	0.328	3.360	0.001	Supported

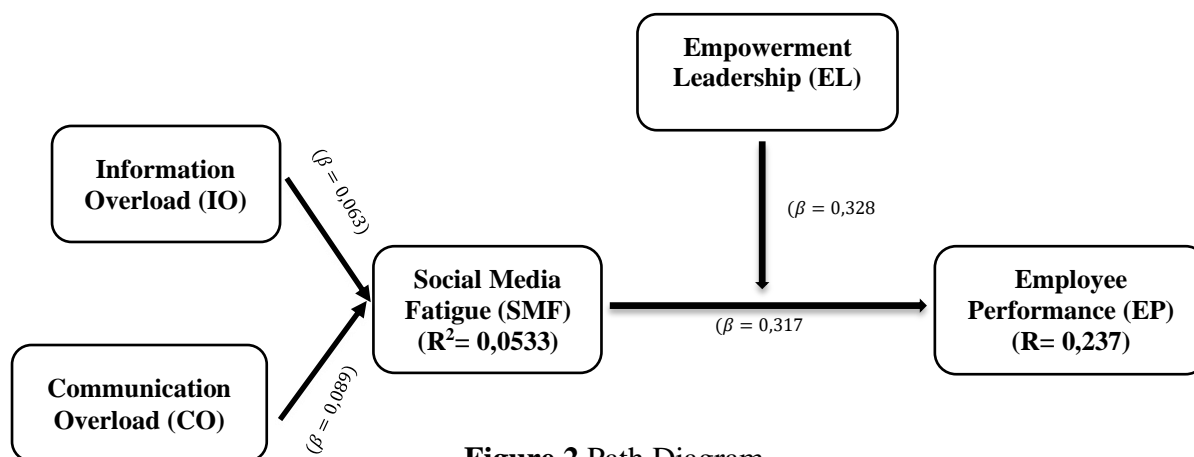


Figure 2 Path Diagram

This table and figure present the results of the hypothesis tests used to examine the relationship between the variables in this study. Each hypothesis was tested using the path coefficient, t-statistics, and p-value to determine whether the proposed relationship between the variables is significant or not. The decision to accept or reject a hypothesis is determined based on a p-value smaller than 0.05, which indicates that the relationship is significant at the 95% confidence level.

Description of Findings:

- 1) H1: Information overload positively affects social media fatigue The first hypothesis tested whether information overload positively affects social media fatigue. Based on the test results, the path coefficient obtained is 0.663, t-statistics 6.635, and p-value 0.000. These results indicate a highly significant positive relationship between information overload and social media fatigue. Thus, the first hypothesis is accepted, indicating that the higher the information overload received, the higher the level of fatigue felt due to social media.
- 2) H2: Communication overload positively affects social media fatigue The second hypothesis tested the effect of communication overload on social media fatigue. The test results show a path coefficient of 0.689, t-statistics of 7.725, and p-value of 0.000. This indicates that communication overload has a highly significant influence on social media fatigue. This hypothesis is accepted, which indicates that communication overload can increase the fatigue felt by employees due to social media use.
- 3) H3: Social media fatigue negatively affects employee performance The third hypothesis tested whether social media fatigue has a negative impact on employee performance. The analysis results show a path coefficient of -0.317, t-statistics of 4.528, and p-value of 0.000, confirming a significant negative relationship between social media fatigue and employee performance. The higher the level of social media fatigue experienced by employees, the lower the performance shown. Therefore, this hypothesis is accepted.
- 4) H4: Empowerment leadership moderates the negative effect of social media fatigue on employee performance The fourth hypothesis tested the moderating role of empowerment leadership in reducing the negative impact of social media fatigue on employee performance. The test results show a path coefficient of 0.328, t-statistics of 3.360, and p-value of 0.001. This indicates that empowering leadership has a significant moderating role in reducing the negative impact of social media fatigue on employee performance. In other

words, empowering leaders can help employees manage social media fatigue and improve their performance.

Overall, all hypotheses in this study proved to be significant and accepted, providing strong evidence that information and communication overload has a significant effect on social media fatigue, which in turn affects employee performance. In addition, empowering leadership plays an important role in mitigating the negative impact of social media fatigue on performance. These findings provide important insights for organisational managers and leaders to pay attention to these factors in improving employee productivity and well-being in the ever-evolving digital age. With the right leadership strategies, organisations can help employees manage digital stress and achieve optimal performance.

Discussion

The Effect of Information and Communication Overload on Social Media Fatigue

The results of this study show that information and communication overload has a significant positive influence on social media fatigue, which is in line with the findings from previous studies. For example, research by (Liu et al., 2023) also showed that information overload, whether coming from social media or other communications at work, can cause mental stress that impacts individuals' well-being. In this context, communication and information overload not only worsens employees' focus, but also worsens the quality of their social interactions, distracting them from their main task. The results of this study reinforce the assertion that communication overload in the workplace, if not properly managed, can lead to detrimental distractions both personally and professionally (Rasool et al., 2022).

Previous research has also emphasised the importance of information management in the workplace, and how unmanageable communication burden can reduce productivity (Raza et al., 2023). The findings in this study are in line with these studies, suggesting that communication and information overload should be monitored more carefully, especially in environments that rely heavily on digital technology. Organisations need to have effective policies in place to manage the information delivered to employees to avoid overload that can disrupt their concentration and motivation.

The Impact of Social Media Fatigue on Employee Performance

Social media fatigue found in this study has a significant negative impact on employee performance. This result is consistent with previous research by (Pindek et al., 2023), which revealed that stress due to excessive use of social media disrupts concentration, decreases motivation, and ultimately reduces work quality. In the context of higher education, where lecturers are often faced with high demands in both teaching and research, excessive social media use can exacerbate existing burnout (Gupta & Kumar, 2023). This social media fatigue, exacerbated by the need to be constantly responsive to digital notifications, reduces the mental capacity to effectively perform work tasks.

The research also shows that employees who experience social media fatigue tend to feel torn between their work and digital lives. This results in decreased productivity, as employees' attention is easily distracted by irrelevant information on social media. These findings underscore the importance for organisations to provide support to employees in managing social media use, through better time management and prioritisation training, as well as more flexible policies regarding social media use during working hours (Liu & Wang, 2021).

The Role of Empowering Leadership in Mitigating the Negative Impact of Social Media Fatigue on Employee Performance

Empowering leadership plays an important role in reducing the negative impact of social media fatigue on employee performance. This finding corroborates the results of a previous study by Lee & Joo, (2023) which showed that empowering leaders can help employees cope with stress and improve their productivity despite being exposed to high digital pressures. In this study, it was found that leaders who provide autonomy, emotional support, and priority setting can effectively improve employee well-being and reduce fatigue caused by communication and information overload. These results are consistent with empowerment theory which emphasises the importance of the leader's role in providing a sense of control and support to increase employee engagement (Simmons et al., 2022).

Empowering leadership not only helps employees in making better decisions but also improves their ability to manage the stress brought about by social media and communication overload. This is in accordance with the research results by (Seibert et al., 2021), which highlighted the positive relationship between employee empowerment and improved performance in a digitally stressful environment. Therefore, leaders who are open, accessible, and provide appropriate support play a very important role in maintaining employee well-being in this digital age.

Based on these findings, organisations, especially in the higher education sector, should consider the importance of an empowering leadership role to mitigate the negative impact of social media fatigue. As noted by (Liu & Wang, 2021), creating a more efficient communication system in the workplace can help minimise information overload and unnecessary communication, allowing employees to focus more on their primary tasks. Therefore, it is important for organisations to introduce clear policies regarding the use of social media and how to manage information effectively.

Training focused on time management, work prioritisation, and healthy social media use needs to be provided to employees to maintain work-life balance (Rusdian & Rismayani, 2020). Empowering leadership development should be a top priority, providing leaders with the tools and skills to effectively support their employees, increase their engagement and mitigate the negative impacts of widespread digital fatigue.

Thus, this study suggests that organisations should not only focus on improving employee performance, but also on creating a healthy environment that enables employees to manage the challenges that come with rapid digitalisation. A thoughtful approach to communication policies and the use of social media will help create organisations that are healthier, more productive, and better equipped to face the challenges of the ever-evolving digital age.

CONCLUSIONS

This study aims to investigate the influence of information and communication overload on social media fatigue and its impact on employee performance, considering the moderating role of empowering leadership. Based on the findings, this study successfully confirmed that information and communication overload significantly contributes to social media fatigue, which in turn negatively impacts employee performance. The results also indicate that empowering leadership plays an important role in reducing the negative impact of social media fatigue on performance by providing support and autonomy to employees.

Organizations can apply several practical recommendations based on the results of this study to address the challenges of an increasingly digitalized work environment. First, organizations must conduct an internal digital communication audit to identify repetitive or inefficient

communication channels and utilize information management systems such as email prioritization rules, intranet updates, or centralized notification dashboards to reduce information overload. Second, implementing healthy social media usage policies is essential, including restricting access during working hours and educating employees on productive social media usage. Third, organizations are advised to conduct digital stress management and time management training so that employees can manage their exposure to social media and communication pressures more wisely. Fourth, empowering leadership is also crucial through training that teaches leaders to delegate tasks effectively, provide constructive feedback, and support work-life balance; even leadership performance assessments can include aspects of support for employee digital well-being. Finally, the integration of supporting technologies such as AI-based email filters, internal chatbots, and task management applications should be considered to help filter out irrelevant information and facilitate more efficient and focused work prioritization.

This study paves the way for further research on the influence of other digital factors on employee well-being and performance. Future research could expand the scope by examining specific interventions that organisations can implement to reduce digital stress and improve performance, including the use of smart technology to manage information overload and improve workplace communication systems. Thus, this study provides a strong foundation for the development of better policies to address the challenges of an increasingly digitalised workplace.

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