

# The cost of workplace distractions to labor productivity; personal use of social media and hand-held devices during working hours

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*Abstract - Some workers may already have their own time management and self management systems that favor spending more of their paid hours working for the organization that has engaged them. However, some workers are more prone to and susceptible to social media distractions during the working hours and may not contribute as much as they could. The loss of productive hours to distractions away from the work they are being paid for, does impact on the quality of output, and the workers performance which constitutes to losses of productive work hours. This paper reviews literature on the implications of non work-related social media and personal handheld device use during paid working hours in the workplace. The focus is on economies that are benefiting from the increase in accessibility to cheaper technology without effective corresponding labor market monitoring tools.*

**Keywords —** distractions, loss of productive hours, paid working hours, performance, self management systems, time management, work quality.

## I. INTRODUCTION

A workplace has the primary purpose and function of gathering workers to engage in productive efforts that collectively achieve the mission of the organization, firm or enterprise for which they were gathered. The gathering may be done through various channels and on different platforms and sometimes online or physically yet the purpose for gathering will remain the contribution of productive work. Unless the work can be done remotely or from the homes of the workers, many workplaces tend to be at different locations as compared to the palace of residence of the workers. This is normally because most workplaces are attempting to move the workers to locations where they can concentrate on the work being done as opposed to having to provide productive work whilst being distracted with the developments in their homes. Any form of distraction and especially workplace distractions negatively impact employees. These include the use of cell phones during work time for personal reasons, workers engaging in non work-related Internet browsing during the

work hours, unproductive socializing with other work colleagues or gossip during the hours of work, the use of social media for purposes unrelated to their paid work, personal email communication, conversations with co-workers not connected to the target and work assignment for the day, non-contributory and non-constructive meetings, smoke or snack breaks outside the official breaks, noisy or distractive co-workers, and workers physically present to work without providing constructive work efforts.

All forms of distractions that impact the effective or efficient contribution to productive work either at the workplace or may impact on their work during the time of work, will in the long run have an impact on labor productivity. Labor productivity is the real economic output per labor hour provided and the potential of output that labor could produce within that hour of work. This in effect is the total productivity generated by a worker who is not distracted and has devoted all their attention and resources to the task they have been assigned to. All things being equal, labor productivity will be affected with the introduction and accessibility to social media and handheld devices that a group of workers have within the working hours. This is on the basis that a portion of the time that would have been used for work is diverted to something else. Social media distraction, when applied to the workplace, refers to the process by which social media prompts and cues draw the workers' attention away from a task that they originally pursued such as working. Such distraction may not be of interest and implication to the business they work in so long as the distraction happens outside the contracted working time. It becomes something that any cost-reducing business and department will be interested in when the distractions are occurring during the time that the workers are supposed to be engaged in productive work hours. This has become a lot more important to today's enterprises as social media distraction and distractions connected to the use of portable hand held devices has increased in recent times due especially to increased mobile access to the internet, technological advancement and cheaper technology.

A lot of research has been done on specific situations and

groups of people, but has been focused generally on highly developed economies with generally developed labor markets and regulations. Numerous studies have examined the impact of distraction in other domains such as transportation, aviation, and medicine (Rivera-Rodriguez and Karsh 2010;

Young and Salmon 2012). Some research have suggested that parallel personal and work related communication access positively influence job performance and negatively affect self-regulation and work engagement (Orhan et al 2021). A recent review found that learners regularly used social media in a lecture, reading, or studying (Chen and Yan, 2016). Further, the most studies have focused on social media as a distraction in one specific situation, or on the reasons behind the distractions, or on the effects of the distractions (Namian, Albert and Feng, 2018b), distractions while working (Brooks and Califf, 2017) or while actively participating in traffic (Gliklich et al., 2016), distraction effects in social situations, such as relationship formation (Przybylski and Weinstein, 2013) or romantic relationships (Roberts and David, 2016), and the strategies to solve or restrict the distractions. Some have been on the connection between self-control, job control and its relationship with distractions and employee well-being (Jachimowicz et al, 2015).

Whilst some research has been done already, there has been a recent increase in the use of social media and affordability of handheld devices in many of the emerging economies and regions. Such places are still undergoing the process of updating their rules and workplace environments with the appropriate associated developmental rules and regulations. As such, this paper contributes to the research on the aggregate impact and opportunity cost of social media use and hand held devices during their paid hours of work on labor productivity

## **II. THE AFFORDABILITY AND EASE OF ACCESS, TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT DRIVE BEHIND THEIR ON-THE-JOB USE AND DISTRACTIONS CAUSED**

As recent as the 1970's, technology was relatively expensive mainly because it was in its infant stages. However, due to technological innovation and other factors, we now have devices like portable personal computers, laptops, tablets, smartphones, smart washing machines, room sensors, internet-connected cameras, wifi-enabled cars, and many others. The good news for consumers is that many of the once expensive devices are all getting cheaper and affordable by the average worker. Some of the reasons behind the price move is the lack of innovation by the developers and manufacturers in the production of these devices. The lack of innovation means a lot more people are getting to use their devices for a longer time, new entrants into the markets are able to produce similar alternatives to the existing products which is leading the producers to reduce the prices of their produce to ensure that they are able to sell to the consumers. The advancement of technology is also contributing to the production of cheaper

hardware which is the basis of the devices and produces the core components for handheld devices. A cheaper hardware and component means a cheaper cost of production and the savings is then passed onto the consumers. Also, microchips production is getting smaller and cheaper which ends up being passed onto the consumers. Manufacturing advances and the benefits of overseas competition for sales leads to lower selling prices by the producers intending to win the market share. This also ends up getting passed onto the consumers.

Recent technological progress and interconnectivity of things and the need to stay in contact with others has led to most workers owning and using electronic devices. The ownership per worker comparatively, would have increased with time. The ease of use and affordability of these devices have contributed to their increasing presence in many workplaces too. Many of the devices are now much easier to use relative to the initial starting devices that were introduced decades ago. They are also small enough to be carried around and are now a common item in many workplaces. In some cases, some workplaces and work is conducted with the use of these handheld and portable devices which makes it difficult to measure which proportion of the working time is spent or used for the paid work and which one is used for personal matters. This is especially when there are no restrictions to access to the common social media sites and applications. It may also be difficult to estimate and calculate the amount and proportion of time and contribution made using the personal portable devices to the workplace. On one hand, many may argue for their need for the workers to stay in contact with their families and others, even at work especially in case of emergencies whilst on the other hand, some may argue that such calls could be channeled through the official office contacts. It may however be worth considering that, some workers may not be happy to have their personal matters going through the office phone lines especially when they can afford that privacy by simply using their own devices. Further, some offices may not also be happy to accommodate the use of their paid resources to be used for personal matters especially during the time that the workers are being paid to work for the organization.

The increase in the number of handheld devices at the workplace is backed by various reasons. The core motivations for social media and portable hand held device use at work has been to communicate with others (Whiting and Williams, 2013), to stay in touch with people (Papacharissi and Mendelson, 2010), to feel connected to others (Quan-Haase and Young, 2010), to escape (Papacharissi and Mendelson, 2010), or to pass time (Whiting and Williams, 2013). Some of these may have a positive contribution to the workplace and can be used for the organization such as staying in touch, connecting to customers, or prospective customers, or with suppliers, or with debtors, or with tax agents, or the government departments. However some of the reasons why some workers use handheld devices at the workplace such as escaping the workplace or passing the time may not be

accepted in most organizations. This is counterproductive to the mission and purposes of the businesses. When a worker uses any resources to escape the workplace or pass the time when they are being paid to work, this can not be a positive contribution to their employers. Most employers will therefore not be supportive of any habit or resources that can be used for these purposes. They will progressively take steps to ensure that such incidences are limited or eliminated from that workplace. When they are used during the time when the person using it is not an employed worker and not being paid for that time with the intention that they will be engaged in productive efforts towards a firm, it will be considered their leisure time and a responsible use. However, when a worker uses social media or their own hand held device for personal reasons during the work time, it will be considered an irresponsible use especially if it does not contribute positively to the organization that is paying for that time. This is because the firm that has employed them will be encountering opportunity cost and loss of paid hours of productive work and is often referred to as social media distraction.

Workplace social media accessibility or hand-held device use and productivity is complex and difficult to analyze. A few of the reasons why it is a complex issue is that, the difficulty in calculating the productivity hour losses due to the distractions in some places, the different regulations in different regions, the absence of effective policy enforcing agents, the absence of labor hour analytical systems, the relaxed culture which allows the use of personal devices at any time in some workplaces, and the belief in some places that personal media use actually improves productivity amongst many other reasons. Some jobs are directly connected to and require the use of social media. These will include jobs where prospective customers may contact the organizations through social media, whilst some job leads are also received through referrals and personal contacts. Calculating how much of paid work hours are lost to workers using paid hours on personal communication on their portable devices is also difficult. The workplace that does not have access restrictions and limitations may receive both professional and personal emails, text messages on their smartphones, and app notifications during the working day.

Due mainly to the accessibility of the Internet, an increasing number of individuals communicate easier and faster. However, when such persons engage in such communication when they are contracted to be engaged in paid work, their distraction can become a concern for organizations. The set up and design of the social media platforms and apps are such that they engage the users for a prolonged amount of time and without them realizing how much time is being spent. Just like with many things, the increasing use of social media increases the addictive use. A proper understanding of factors that impact hazard recognition in every work environment is essential. For most workers, social media has a strong pull and appeal (Brooks, 2015, p. 26), temptation (Hofmann et al., 2017) that encourages distraction (Aagaard, 2015, p. 93).

Previous studies found that addictive social media use is associated with negative consequences such as reduced productivity, unhealthy social relationships, and reduced life-satisfaction (Sun and Zhang, 2021). The primary effect is that it leads them to override their primary goals and tasks. This strong pull of social media has a high potential for distraction away from their paid work and from participating in productive work hours. Whilst a worker is distracted, their hazard perception and recognition is influenced. One critical factor that has been hypothesized to affect hazard recognition and safety performance is distraction (Namian, Albert, and Feng, 2018). A recent research finding suggests that workplace distractions can negatively affect hazard recognition, safety risk perception, and safety performance within construction. The fact is that some workplaces and environments like construction have workers exposed to numerous emerging technologies such as drones, mobile devices, and smart robots. Any form of distraction could have material implications that can potentially multiply the amount of hazards in the workplace. When workers are able to identify, manage or eliminate hazards, most construction accidents are preventable (Albert and Hallowell, 2012). These are better done under an undistracted environment.

The reasons for hand held device and social media use have been found to relate to individual differences in general and social media-specific traits (Koessmeier and Büttner, 2021). Thus, it's generally a result of the lack of self control of the worker or the person may have a social media use problem. Subsequently, every individual worker may be prone, adverse or neutral to the presence of and availability of portable devices at the workplace. Some may already have their own time management and self management systems that keeps them on track. For such a group of people, external control and restrictions may not be as effective, efficient or necessary. However, for those who may be prone to using these devices instead of concentrating on their paid work, there may be the need to provide a structured workplace that encourages more focus and work efforts put towards the duties and responsibilities for which they are being paid for.

The presence and proximity of social media accessible or hand-held devices at the workplace does present a great deal of temptation to the worker who may be prone or averse to regularly checking their devices. This is because, throughout the paid work hours, the worker will be faced with the possibility of deciding to ignore the distraction and focus on the work, or pausing the paid work to attend to the distraction; or attempting to multitask (Koessmeier and Büttner, 2021). Previous studies on multitasking have consistently demonstrated negative effects of distraction on performance (Jeong and Hwang, 2016), on academics (Junco and Cotten, 2012; Giunchiglia et al., 2018) and on well-being (e.g., Brooks, 2015). Multitasking often occurs when the worker's attention is drawn away unto something else, and during this time the distractions take up limited cognitive resources. Multitasking will normally be the result of workers having

access to their hand held devices whilst at the work stations. This of course will impact every level of work as most paid work even within the unskilled sector will require a certain amount of attention, concentration and cognitive resources by the workers. In skilled labor work, the impact and cost of distractions could be tragic. The emergency department of medical practices has been shown to be an interrupt-driven workplace fraught with potential for distractions and interruptions that increase the potential for medical error (Eng et al 2019). Any distractions in such an environment by activities that do not contribute to the ultimate task of preserving the lives of the clients or similar cases where another person's life could have been affected by the actions and decisions of another worker, distractions could have catastrophic consequences.

### **III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PRODUCTIVE WORK HOUR LOSSES**

There may be a justifiable need for workers to have access to their handheld devices, however the impact it has on their paid work participation rate is also an area of concern. Even without distractions, workers have a limited capacity to process information, or to undertake their tasks in a safe and healthy manner and to work whilst maintaining a duty of care for themselves and others within the work environment (Koessmeier and Büttner, 2021).

Another consideration that has to be factored in is that stresses from outside the workplace may also be brought into the workplace through the devices. The common factor is the worker, who may be having other life events and issues which could find its way into the work they do. Having a worker perform their tasks under stress will ultimately impact their performance and produce a less than ideal output.

Some of the effects that such distraction can have on the workplace have been recorded. Workplace distraction has been shown to be associated with slower reaction times, higher error rates, and lower work quality (Kim et al. 2010). Non work-related social media usage which contributes to distractions from the workplace has also been found to lead to significant decrease in workers productivity (Wushe and Shenje 2019). High social media use has been found to have as a result of social media self-control failure (Du et al., 2018, p. 68) whilst workers may engage in the use of social media following a distraction to procrastinate (Reinecke et al., 2018; Rozgonjuk et al., 2018). Workers who have to work with others in various working environments face diverse potential distractors.

A worker's reaction to distractions may be influenced by, for instance, a failure to control one's social media use or by the desire to procrastinate. Workers who are not able to control their social media use, will most likely use a lot more of their working time on social media. With the various applications and websites, these could take up a higher share

of their working day. A recent study found that 98.9% of contracted workers surveyed in Sri Lanka accessed social networks during the paid working hours at the office (Warnakula and Manickam, 2010). Such findings can reasonably be expected to be the same in most modern economies, all things being equal. Any organization that has a majority of their workers spending more time on activities that are different from their duties and responsibilities will most definitely struggle to deliver their targets. They will most likely also have staff overheads that are higher than they should thus making their operations less efficient. While workers are engaged in a task or expected to be engaged in paid work, the presence of their hand held device may also contribute to mind wandering, internal distraction and failed attentional control (McVay and Kane, 2010). This will have an associated impact on their quality of work, their health and safety or other workers.

Additionally, most modern economies and industries provide various leave of absence from work for their employees. The common reasons for workers becoming unavailable to work are broadly classified into demographic characteristics, work-related and health-related reasons (Van den Heuvel et al 2010). Poor general health, the number of longstanding health conditions, and most types of long standing health conditions were associated with productivity loss. Productivity loss is reportedly an increasing problem in an aging working population as the number of workers is decreasing in numbers. Among work-related factors, psychosocial work characteristics have been found to be the strongest relation with productivity loss, mostly with work performance (Van den Heuvel et al 2010). Most of these leave of absences are funded by the employers and or governments depending on the type of leave and in accordance with the laws prevailing in the country. In some cases when they are unpaid, the employer may not lose in monetary terms but will end up making opportunity cost losses as the work that could have potentially been done is not done. With the legal obligations on the employers to provide paid leave for their workers, there may also be a further overhead cost of providing temporary workers during the absence of permanent workers.

The products of the advancement of technology, if used responsibly may boost workers productivity. However, the unchecked and irresponsible use during work hours may be a killer to workplace productivity. Distractions are known to cause workers to take longer to complete tasks (Draheim, Hicks, and Engle, 2016). Taking longer to complete tasks will affect the ability to meet targets, and to meet customer demands, or the turn-around time to supply goods and services or replacement goods and services which will ultimately affect the operation and survival of the business. The interruptions and distractions do not just take up time (APS 2016), but also degrades the overall quality of people's work (Foroughi et al 2014). A reduction in the quality of output could have varied effects on the departments, company output and company

results. Many competitors may end up winning the market share against the company. A bad reputation may result for the organization which also has its negative influence on generating revenue. This is because, any distraction to a worker means the work loses the time that the workers attention is diverted away from the work until their returns. The possible psychological effect may be an unfulfilled feeling from reduced productivity which could lead to loss of courage. The unfinished work or slow work by a distracted worker could also encourage the other workers to also join in that habit which may have a collective negative impact on the workers and a subsequent negative impact on the enterprise and income.

The value of an hour of work to an employer thus, can be measured in either the output that a worker is able to produce within an hour of work or the opportunity cost of labor productive hour losses that is lost whilst the workers are engaged in other activity when they should have been working for their employer. In an employment setting where the workers are free to use their devices during the working hours without any reprimand or consequence is likely to have the environment that follows. All the social media-addicts, those without self control, and those who otherwise would not have used their devices during working hours will use some of the working time to engage in this unproductive labor activity. The amount of losses and hours of work that will be lost due to this activity will depend on the amount of communication and use of devices that the workers decide. This could be material especially where the remuneration and compensation for the workers depends on the number of hours they provide paid work instead of the quantity and quality of work provided. However, in an alternative work setting, that has an enforced company restriction on the use of such devices, the number of hours of work that is lost will be limited to the time that the workers are able to discreetly use or be limited to during their lunch time. The effect of such use will therefore not be as material as in the unchecked and unrestricted use scenario.

When the attention of workers is diverted, the effects are that it tends to increase errors, decrease productivity, and have associated human and monetary costs in the workplace (Cohen, LaRue, and Cohen, 2017). The fundamental truism underpinning all workers is that truism that human workers are prone To error, they are fallible and errors are inevitable as well as predictable. As such, as much as is humanly possible, steps need to be taken to ensure that preventable mistakes are avoided. All of these have financial cost ramifications, legal, health and safety implications, implications on the wider productivity and ability to meet deadlines. The successful completion of paid work tasks with efficiency may necessitate the limiting of social media and other hand held portable devices from the work environments. Distractions have been suggested to be driven by irrelevant work-related stimuli that interrupt goal-directed behavior (Clapp and Gazzaley, 2012). In order for workers to focus on paid work, such distractions

must be ignored through their own self regulating systems or be assisted with whatever facilities are available.

#### **IV. THE NEED FOR WORK PARTICIPATION RATE MONITORING AND WORKERS ENGAGEMENT**

With mobile internet penetration surging, the use of social media in the workplace, and neglecting work has also increased. An average of 2.35 hours is spent on social media whilst at work daily, 54 percent of workers post regular Facebook updates from the office, around 32% of the total work time is spent entirely for personal work and 13% of the total productivity is lost owing to the social media indulgence alone indicating a huge loss of official resources and productivity (Business Today 2016). UK workers spend 1.3 days on social media and just 3.7 days out of five doing office-related work. more than two hours a day procrastinating; including around three hours and five minutes of a working week on social media (Bean 2017). Facebook, Twitter and other social media Web sites are costing British businesses billions. Since one of the most advanced economies with a very developed labor market is facing a loss of a quarter of its paid hours, the implication of such data in other less advanced markets will be material.

In the review, assessment and monitoring of capital factors of production, advanced data analytics has been engaged. A recent example is the analysis done on the productive hours of the combine harvesters (Yakhin, Padalka, and Burlaka 2021). Some of the pertinent results of the survey was that, it was possible to calculate the productivity of the latest combine harvesters after taking into consideration other factors like the structural weight, the hopper fluctuation, and the additional weight. The analysis was extended to include the various output of the different brands that exist on the market. Further, the results also suggested the possibility of increasing the productivity of the combine harvesters by adjusting its size. With this in mind, the possibility of measuring the marginal revenue, marginal product and contribution of workers or labor as a factor of production may also be a very important asset to the managers, supervisors and business operators. This could assist in identifying the quality of their workforce and more specifically which of them is productive and which ones are unproductive. Subsequently, those who accept the distinction between productive and unproductive labor believe that a rising proportion of unproductive labor constitutes a burden mainly because unproductive labor is paid out of excess-value, resulting in less value available for wealth accumulation (Mohun 2013).

Entrepreneurs, business operators, supervisors and managers may be able to overcome the challenge by monitoring and controlling the distractions from social media at work. The application of this targeted solution starts during

the hiring process, at new employee orientations, through employee recognition programs, through the use of visual aids in the work environment, and through ongoing training and awareness programs (Herlle and Astray-Caneda, 2013). Some businesses use policies such as: restricting the use of certain websites and applications, retraining their workers on the importance of providing the quality and quantity of hours work they are being engaged for, stopping personal calls or handheld device use during the working office and at the designated places of work, enforcing the set lunch and break times, screening all the company's communications and internet use, encouraging the use of a do-not-disturb resources, limiting the number of meetings to only constructive and contributory ones, the adoption of open-space layout instead of cubicles which allows the supervisors to easily notice and monitor the workers during the working hours, and allowing employees to telecommute on certain days of the workweek.

Distractions from work have not all been known to be negative on productivity if used responsibly as it does have some mental health benefits to the workers which in turn impacts their work. Some have been considered to have a positive impact on work in appropriate situations: such as socialization, water, breaks, Internet surfing, listening to music, reading, short sleep (power naps), social Media, quick phone calls, potluck, lunch, snack, meditation, exercises including stretching and breathing, games, vision Board, fun activities, having a clean work area, creating a to-do list. In some workplaces, these may be done for the workers. Behind these apparent distractions are team building distractions, distractions that ensure the workers have a healthy and positive body and mind, or distractions that ensure that workers are getting enough exercise.

Effective solutions to prevent cognitive distraction must follow a task-oriented approach whereby interruptions in the environment are systematically evaluated and mitigated through various means, including education, policies and technology, rather than trying to prevent a cognitive process that occurs in the mind of an individual worker. Effective workplace participation rate measurements can be employed such as supervisors monitoring the workers input, and engagement, monitoring the quality and quantity of output, the use of CCTV, the use of clock in and clock out, the use of restricted work devices that limits access to certain apps and websites, enforcing strict no social media use on the job policies. The use of software in some work environments to limit the use and access to personal social media use is becoming popular. Exploratory studies conducted with information workers found that with the use of software to block distractions, focus and productivity increased in the workers (Mark, Czerwinski, and Iqbal, 2018).

## **V. WORKPLACE SURVEILLANCE AND PRODUCTIVITY**

The internet is perhaps the most creative innovation ever made in the history of technology. Internet platforms inclusive of the various social media outlets have numerous advantages for employers and employees. Much of the work in workplaces is internet-dependent and the applications and processes available simply enhance the aspects of work. However, its drawbacks in certain areas, particularly employee productivity, surface areas of concern as to whether the internet through surveillance processes impacts worker's productivity or not. Many organizations turn to surveillance in the workplace in pursuit of improved workplace productivity through monitoring the activities of their employees. Monitoring employees is one strategy to keep track of their productivity during work hours and the utilization of their time in doing what they were paid to do. Employers would often want to know what their employees are doing during working hours to make sure their time is not taken up by distractions.

The implication of workplace surveillance is initially advantageous to tracking productivity. Employees are less likely to be unproductive when they know they are being monitored as they will be inclined to emphasize making an impression to their employer that they in fact are being a productive employee upon observance. Controversies with workplace surveillance generally arise when observation goes beyond what is reasonable and necessary (Ball, 2010). Consequently, surveillance at the workplace impacts employee productivity in a positive way as it cultivates a productive work culture. Productivity can drastically increase when employees are aware of their work being monitored through surveillance systems. Employees are more inclined to impress their employer when they know their work is being observed. Employees are more likely to work towards providing a productive day at work when there is an incentive in place for productivity.

Some studies have proven that humans possess the natural instinct to stay focused and portray better work ethics when they have people viewing them. In addition, keeping track of employee work assists in their motivation to work harder and waste less time (Trivedi and Patel, 2021). While surveillance at the workplace aids employers in finding out their sedulous employees, it also helps them identify and address their unproductive employees and assist in getting them to work more efficiently. However, while some studies addressed the positive impact of surveillance at workplace on employee productivity, most published work tend to place emphasis on its drawbacks and view workplace surveillance as a violation of the basic privacy rights of an employee. Privacy is a guaranteed basic right of every human being afforded by the constitution. Violating this right may lead to employer liability and employers are expected to acknowledge liability in the event that such right is being breached.

Infringing employee privacy stems from excessive and

intrusive monitoring that ultimately compromises the right to privacy. While the intention is affirmative, surveillance in the workplace not only has its protective aspects, but also its intrusive aspects that suppress the positive aim behind adopting such systems. Excessive monitoring can be harmful to the productivity of an employee in a way that personal information of employees can be disclosed to third parties without their knowledge. Modern technology can sometimes yield more information than required without the knowledge of employees, and such is detrimental in a way that personal and private information that should be off limits as opposed to public information are now being bargained (IvyPanda, 2019). With the rise of monitoring apps, it can be viewed that surveillance is not going away anytime soon. Monitoring tools are widely used by employers to track the productivity of their workers. With such, some employees feel uncomfortable that their personal actions and communications are getting accessed by their employers at any time. This could result in decreasing creative behavior if employees are concerned with any judgment made based on their work (Ball, 2010). Besides, infringement of privacy right through surveillance systems is harmful to the motivation of employees at work and lowers their spirit of efficiency (Meyers, 2003).

On the other hand, some studies have proven that workplace surveillance causes high levels of stress to employees as a result of the pressure associated with it. Such stress poses negative impacts on employee productivity as working under tension to meet unrealistic goals is now a common practice (Bryart, 2006). This negative mindset can elicit mistrust between the employer and the employee and negatively impacts the comfort of the employee at work (Trivedi and Patel, 2021). With that being said, surveillance comes with its fair share of distractions upon the work of employees, which ultimately hinder their productivity. Employers are tasked with the responsibility of protecting the privacy of employees. In other words, employers owe employees a duty of care when it comes to protecting employee privacy, thus should take into account the proper utilization of such systems to yield positive results to aid in boosting productivity. This means that through certain policies and guidelines, workplace surveillance should be regulated to yield benefits for both employers and employees. To aid in boosting productivity, policies and guidelines should be in place to ensure workplace surveillance is conducted in a manner that conforms to human rights and should not supersede the guaranteed basic right of every human being to privacy. Also, these policies should take into account the interest of all parties involved to ensure everyone acquires the benefits of such systems.

One should also consider the fact that every nation has its own set of rules that guide the utilization of surveillance systems in particular circumstances. In other words, surveillance is limited to a particular country's regulations. These rules may apply differently in various government sectors depending on its application. For effective employment of surveillance

systems to boost productivity, interested parties should be aware of and familiar with the local legal environment to ensure that all policies and guidelines, be it local or regional, are complied with. Compliance with local security and labor laws not only generates long term success, but also establishes confidence in employees that will foster productivity (Hugl, 2013). Employers should set clear written policies to ensure efficient workflow and get their employees to familiarize with these policies to avoid non-compliance. Employers should also know what exactly to monitor so to draw the line between work information and personal information. All these are necessary to manifest an ideal productive workplace where there is spotlight on productivity and recognition of employees as crucial assets to the workplace is prioritized.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

Workplace distractions in the wake of technological advancements, takes various forms. Measuring it and implementing effective solutions are also quite difficult due to the legal environment and the dynamic technological climate in the economy. A few of the things that are challenging to employers, regarding the distractions of paid workers is the difficult for many businesses to calculate the value of an hour of productive hour that's lost to distractions, the actual loss of concentration to productivity, the right structures to put in place to reduce to loss of concentration, and the loss of productive hours due to unchecked social media use. Other pertinent issues include, effect that a relaxed environment with regards to social media use has on workers, and the impact that restrictive policies also has on workers, and the team.

Research into the use of social media and other portable devices is still in its infant stages. This is partly due to the fact that the devices that are now being used are recent technological developments, are still undergoing upgrades and therefore constantly a step ahead of the limitations that some employers put in place in addition to the unpleasant advancements in technology breaches and hacking. In some work settings, the same devices that are officially provided by the employer besides being used to carry out paid work can also be used to access and use personal communication platforms and applications. In other settings where the employer does not provide the appropriate devices, the employee may have their own portable accessible device. The only limitation that may exist may be their own self management systems or the rules and regulations of their place of work. Some workplaces forbid the use of social media during work hours and or ensure that no personal devices are allowed into the workplace.

The consequence of not having any restriction on the hours of work that labor is engaged in on the work that they are being paid for is similar to having mechanical resources that are not

engaged in the hours of work that they can be put to. In such an environment, the machines may be used for alternative purposes that do not contribute to the purposes for which the business bought the machines for. Whilst the machines are being exhausted, or additions are being made to its wear and tear and maintenance and repair costs, it is not contributing to the ultimate mission of the business. Similarly, the use of social media and other handheld devices during the time of work by the workers for their personal interests, does not only lead to a loss of productive time but also has an impact on their attention, work effort, productivity, attention, level and quality of work, potential health and safety consequences on themselves and other works, and other reasons.

Some organizations have instituted policies and systems to assist their workforce to encourage productivity at work, including taking timed breaks, working close to productive co-workers and being publicly accountable. However, having a monitoring, restricting and review of the use of social media and personal hand held devices has to be done alongside the employer's duty of care, the overarching duty on employers to ensure the well being of employees, the employee's duty of good faith in their workers, and appropriate employment contracts.

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