



## CYBER PSYCHOLOGY IN LEADERSHIP (FOCUS: MAINTAINING EMPLOYEE MENTALLY WELL BEING UNDER A CONSTANT PERFORMANCE MONITORING SYSTEM)

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**Abstract.** *Digital transformation and the escalation of cybersecurity threats have prompted organizations to adopt real-time performance monitoring systems to strengthen control and data protection. While effective in enhancing performance visibility and compliance, constant surveillance has the potential to induce psychological pressure and cognitive fatigue, which impacts employee mental well-being. This study aims to analyze the relationship between cybersecurity monitoring, cognitive fatigue, and mental well-being, as well as to examine the role of leadership in maintaining a balance between organizational control needs and the psychological health of employees. The research employs a qualitative approach with an integrative literature review strategy that synthesizes empirical and conceptual findings from various recent scientific studies. Analysis was conducted through thematic analysis, content analysis, and conceptual synthesis to identify correlation patterns between variables. The results indicate that stringent monitoring increases evaluative pressure and cognitive load, contributing to a decline in mental well-being, whereas leadership that supports autonomy and psychological safety serves as a protective factor. This research contributes to the development of a conceptual model based on cyber-psychology that integrates technological, psychological, and leadership aspects into a single analytical framework to support more sustainable organizational practices.*

**Keywords:** *Cyber Psychology, Digital Monitoring, Cognitive Fatigue, Leadership, Employee Well being.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The massive digital transformation over the past decade has driven organizations to adopt real-time technology-based performance monitoring systems in response to increasing cybersecurity threats and the need to protect strategic corporate data. Digital monitoring and workplace surveillance practices have now become an integral part of modern organizational governance, particularly in sectors heavily reliant on digital infrastructure (Ball et al 2022). On one hand, these systems have proven effective in enhancing performance visibility, policy compliance, and mitigating data breach risks. On the other hand, constant and evaluative surveillance has the potential to create psychological pressure, as employees feel they are in an "always watched" condition,

which can increase job stress and emotional tension. Digital transformation not only changes organizational systems but also requires employees to possess critical thinking and adaptive capabilities in responding to complex work demands. The ability to think critically has been shown to significantly support organizational achievement, particularly in environments characterized by high monitoring and performance pressure (Khas & Anshori, 2023). In addition, knowledge sharing practices play an important role in facilitating collaboration and reducing information gaps in digital work environments (Mandasari & Anshori, 2023).

In an increasingly digitized national and global context, this phenomenon has become a strategic issue because it touches upon the balance between organizational security and employee mental well-being. Although literature on workplace surveillance and employee well-being is expanding rapidly, there remains an academic gap in explaining specifically how strict cybersecurity monitoring triggers cognitive fatigue as the primary psychological mechanism linking digital surveillance to mental well-being. Empirical studies show that technology-based work intensification and expectations for rapid responses in digital environments increase mental load and decrease sustained attention capacity. Furthermore, stringent electronic monitoring practices are often associated with a decline in perceived autonomy and increased psychological tension. However, most research still positions well-being as a general variable without deeply elaborating on the role of leadership in mitigating the cognitive impact of these monitoring systems; thus, a more comprehensive conceptual synthesis is required.

Theoretically, this phenomenon can be analyzed through the integration of several key conceptual frameworks. Job Demands-Resources Theory explains that high job demands, including pressure from digital monitoring, can increase strain if not balanced by adequate organizational resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In a digital context, constant monitoring can be positioned as a job demand that increases cognitive and emotional load. Self-Determination Theory asserts that the basic needs for autonomy, competence, and social relatedness play a vital role in maintaining psychological well-being, and excessive surveillance practices potentially hinder the fulfillment of these needs (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Additionally, Cognitive Load Theory explains that continuous exposure to information and evaluation can increase working memory load

and lead to cognitive fatigue when mental processing capacity is exceeded (Sweller et al., 2019). From a cyber-psychology perspective, digital surveillance is understood not only as a technical mechanism but also as a psychological experience that shapes perceptions of control, privacy, and job stress.

The integration of these theories provides a conceptual basis for understanding the relationship between cybersecurity monitoring, cognitive fatigue, and mental well-being. Based on this background and the identified gaps, this study aims to: (1) Identify empirical and conceptual findings regarding the impact of strict cybersecurity monitoring on employee cognitive fatigue; (2) Analyze the relationship between cognitive fatigue and mental well-being in a digital work environment; (3) Examine the role of leadership in mitigating the psychological impact of constant performance monitoring systems; (4) Develop a conceptual model based on cyber-psychology within the context of digital leadership. The research questions posed are: how does scientific literature explain the impact of cybersecurity monitoring on cognitive fatigue; what is the relationship between cognitive fatigue and employee mental well-being; how can leadership serve as a protective factor; and how can a conceptual model be constructed to balance organizational security and psychological well-being. The approach used is an integrative literature review, which allows for the synthesis of quantitative and qualitative findings to generate a comprehensive understanding and new conceptualizations (Snyder, 2019).

The scientific contribution of this article lies in the integration of the cyber-psychology perspective with leadership theory to explain the psychological dynamics resulting from strict cybersecurity monitoring an area that remains relatively fragmented in management and organizational behavior literature (Kniffin et al., 2021). By positioning cognitive fatigue as a primary mediating mechanism and leadership as a strategic resource, this article offers a conceptual model that expands the understanding of the balance between organizational control and employee mental well-being in the digital era (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). This integrative approach is expected to provide a theoretical and practical foundation for organizations in designing cybersecurity policies that are not only technically effective but also psychologically sustainable.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The conceptual foundation of this research is rooted in the integration of several key theories within organizational psychology and cyber-psychology. Job Demands Resources (JD-R) Theory explains that every job consists of demands (job demands) and resources (job resources) that influence employee well-being and performance; high demands without adequate support can trigger exhaustion and job stress. In a digital context, strict cybersecurity monitoring is positioned as a form of job demand that increases psychological pressure through expectations of compliance and continuous performance visibility. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) asserts that psychological well-being is heavily influenced by the fulfillment of basic needs for autonomy, competence, and social relatedness, which can be hindered by excessive surveillance practices (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Meanwhile, Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) explains that constant exposure to information and attention demands increases mental workload and potentially leads to cognitive fatigue when an individual's processing capacity is exceeded. From a digital surveillance perspective, technology-based monitoring is understood not merely as a technical control mechanism, but also as a psychological phenomenon that shapes perceptions of privacy, control, and job stress (Ball et al., 2022).

Previous studies highlight that knowledge management and organizational learning are essential elements in maintaining organizational effectiveness, especially in dynamic and uncertain environments such as the digital era. Organizations that implement effective learning systems are better able to adapt to technological changes and reduce cognitive pressure on employees (Fitria et al., 2023). Furthermore, organizational structures and policies also shape employee behavior and responses toward institutional demands (Qurrota A'yun & Anshori, 2022).

Several empirical studies from the last five years indicate that the intensified use of monitoring technology in the workplace correlates with increased psychological pressure and decreased employee well-being: Research shows that strict electronic monitoring can lower perceptions of trust and increase emotional tension (Ravid et al., 2020). Other studies found that algorithmic management practices and real-time data-based performance evaluations increase feelings of lost autonomy and trigger job stress (Kellogg et al., 2020). In remote work contexts, intense digital monitoring is associated

with mental fatigue due to rapid response expectations and prolonged screen exposure (Wang et al., 2020). Furthermore, information systems research shows that high cognitive load resulting from repeated interactions with evaluative digital systems can reduce self-regulation capacity and increase burnout risk (Kalischko & Riedl, 2021). These findings confirm a significant relationship between digital monitoring, cognitive fatigue, and mental well-being.

Despite these findings, existing literature reveals several research gaps: Most studies focus on the direct relationship between surveillance and well-being without exploring specific psychological mechanisms, such as cognitive fatigue, as a primary mediator (Jeske & Santuzzi, 2020). Research integrating cyber-psychology perspectives with leadership theory in the context of cybersecurity remains relatively limited, leaving the role of leaders as a protective factor not yet comprehensively elaborated (Urbaczewski & Jessup, 2020). Existing studies tend to be sectoral and have not developed an integrated conceptual model explaining the balance between organizational control and psychological well-being in strict cybersecurity monitoring systems (Martin et al., 2021). This gap highlights the need for a more integrative and conceptual literature review.

This article addresses these gaps through an integrative literature review to build a relationship model between cybersecurity monitoring, cognitive fatigue, mental well-being, and leadership. By positioning cognitive fatigue as a mediating mechanism and leadership as a job resource, this study expands the application of JD-R in increasingly complex digital surveillance contexts (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). Additionally, the integration of SDT allows for an explanation of how autonomy-supportive leadership styles can reduce the negative impacts of digital monitoring on well-being (Kniffen et al., 2021). This conceptual contribution is expected to enrich the literature on digital management and organizational psychology.

Methodological trends in previous studies show a dominance of cross-sectional survey-based quantitative approaches, while longitudinal and conceptual approaches remain relatively limited (Charbonneau & Doberstein, 2020). Furthermore, the development of digital leadership studies shows growing interest in the leader's role in creating psychological safety in technology-based work environments (Newman et al., 2020). However, research explicitly linking leadership to the management of cognitive

load due to cybersecurity monitoring is still rarely found. Therefore, an integrative approach that combines various theoretical paradigms is relevant for bridging that gap.

Based on the literature synthesis, it is understood that: Strict cybersecurity monitoring has the potential to increase job demands in the form of evaluative pressure and cognitive load; Cognitive fatigue emerges as a consequence of digital work intensification; Mental well-being is influenced by the balance between organizational demands and resources. Leadership that supports autonomy, provides role clarity, and creates a safe psychological environment potentially functions as a buffer against the negative impacts of digital surveillance. This conceptual synthesis serves as the basis for the research method aimed at systematically integrating and examining previous findings to build a cyber-psychology based conceptual model in the context of digital leadership..

### **3. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative approach with an Integrative Literature Review strategy, which allows for the integration of empirical and conceptual findings from various research designs to generate a comprehensive synthesis and the development of new theoretical models (Snyder, 2019). This approach was selected because topics regarding cybersecurity monitoring, cognitive fatigue, and digital leadership are developing multidisciplinarily across the fields of management, organizational psychology, and information systems; thus, it requires a synthesis framework capable of combining quantitative, qualitative, and conceptual studies (Torraco, 2016). An integrative review provides the flexibility to identify correlation patterns between variables while building a theory-based conceptual model (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005).

The data sources in this study consist entirely of secondary data, specifically international scientific journal articles indexed in Scopus and Web of Science published within the last five years and available through open access. The literature reviewed includes publications on digital monitoring, workplace surveillance, cyber-psychology, cognitive fatigue, employee well-being, and leadership in digital contexts. Focusing on reputable scientific articles aims to ensure the validity and reliability of the synthesized findings, as source quality is a critical factor in integrative literature reviews. (Booth et al., 2016).

The systematic literature search process was conducted using combinations of keywords: “digital monitoring AND employee well-being”, “cyber psychology AND workplace surveillance”, “cognitive fatigue AND digital work”, serta “leadership AND psychological safety”. The search was carried out through reputable academic databases following stages of identification, screening, and quality evaluation. These stages adhere to the principles of transparency and replication in literature reviews (Page et al., 2021). All identified articles were documented in a data extraction matrix containing information on authors, publication year, research design, study context, main variables, key findings, and theoretical implications.

The inclusion criteria for this study include: (1) Articles published within the last five years; (2) Relevance to the context of digital organizations or technology-based monitoring systems; (3) Explicit discussion of variables such as cognitive fatigue, mental well-being, or leadership; (4) Availability in open-access format. Articles that did not meet conceptual relevance, lacked full-text availability, or focused on non-organizational contexts were excluded from the analysis. The selection process was conducted in stages to minimize selection bias and ensure alignment with research objectives (Aromataris & Pearson, 2014).

The unit of analysis consists of the scientific articles that met the inclusion criteria, focusing on concepts, variables, and the relationships between variables relevant to the research topic. Since this study does not use field data or respondents, there is no population or sample in a statistical sense. Instead, each article is treated as a conceptual analysis unit that contributes to mapping themes, relationship patterns, and theoretical trends (Broome, 2000).

The data analysis technique was carried out through three main stages: (1) Thematic Analysis to identify dominant themes related to digital monitoring, cognitive fatigue, mental well-being, and leadership. (2) Content Analysis to examine operational definitions, variable indicators, and causal relationships reported in previous studies. (3) Conceptual Synthesis to integrate empirical findings and relevant theories to build a model of inter-variable relationships from a cyber-psychology perspective. The coding process was performed manually with the assistance of reference management software to organize and group findings based on thematic categories. This analytical approach

aligns with integrative review methodology, emphasizing data reduction, data display, and systematic conceptual conclusion drawing. (Miles et al., 2014). The use of an integrative literature review in this study is also supported by previous research emphasizing the importance of synthesizing knowledge from various studies to understand complex organizational phenomena, particularly those related to knowledge management and digital transformation (Fitria et al., 2023; Mandasari & Anshori, 2023).

#### **4. RESULT**

The synthesis of the literature indicates that publications concerning digital monitoring, cyber-psychology, and employee well-being have increased significantly over the last five years, particularly alongside the acceleration of digital transformation and the expansion of technology-based work systems. The analyzed articles stem from various disciplines, such as management, information systems, and organizational psychology, with a dominance of survey-based quantitative approaches and an increasing number of conceptual studies within the context of digital leadership. Most research was conducted within technology-based organizations and digital work environments utilizing real-time performance monitoring systems integrated with cybersecurity (Al-Hawari et al., 2021), (Galanti et al., 2021), (Molino et al., 2020). Publication trends also show a shift in focus from purely technical aspects toward the psychological implications and the well-being of employees in digital work environments (Carillo et al., 2021).

The thematic synthesis resulted in four main categories describing the relationship patterns between variables. Digital Monitoring as a Job Demand: Technology-based surveillance systems increase work intensity, evaluative pressure, and continuous performance expectations. Real-time monitoring strengthens organizational control and increases the perceived attachment of employees to surveillance systems. Furthermore, data and algorithm-based monitoring create performance transparency while simultaneously increasing pressure to maintain consistent productivity (Kellogg et al., 2020).

Cognitive Fatigue as a Consequence of Digital Work Intensification: This is characterized by an increased mental load due to sustained attention demands and intensive interaction with digital systems. Continuous technology use increases cognitive load and triggers long-term mental fatigue. This is also linked to digital exhaustion

resulting from information overload and the demand for rapid responses (Xiao & Mou, 2022).

**Mental Well-being as a Psychological Outcome:** Cognitive fatigue is associated with increased job stress, decreased job satisfaction, and the risk of emotional exhaustion. Pressure from digital monitoring systems can decrease psychological balance and increase emotional tension. Additionally, the perception of lacking control over one's work due to constant surveillance contributes to a decline in mental well-being (Taser et al., 2022).

**The Role of Leadership as a Psychological Resource:** Leadership serves as a protective factor against the negative impacts of digital monitoring. Literature indicates that leadership supporting autonomy, open communication, and psychological safety can reduce work pressure and enhance employee well-being. Adaptive leadership helps employees manage technology-based demands and increases psychological resilience (Wolor et al., 2020).

Analysis shows that most studies utilize quantitative designs with survey approaches and statistical analysis, such as regression and structural modeling, to test the relationships between digital monitoring, cognitive fatigue, and mental well-being. Conversely, qualitative research is beginning to grow, focusing on the subjective experiences of employees regarding digital surveillance and the dynamics of human-technology interaction. Conceptual studies are also on the rise, aiming to integrate psychological and management perspectives to understand the implications of digitalization on employee well-being (Vial, 2019).

In summary, the synthesis shows a consistent relationship pattern: digital monitoring acts as a job demand that increases cognitive load; cognitive fatigue serves as the primary psychological mechanism; and mental well-being is the outcome influenced by the balance of demands and resources, with leadership acting as a moderating factor. The results of this study align with previous findings showing that organizational capabilities, such as knowledge sharing and critical thinking, contribute significantly to performance improvement and adaptation in technology-driven environments (Khas & Anshori, 2023; Mandasari & Anshori, 2023). These capabilities also help reduce the

negative impact of work pressure and support better psychological conditions among employees.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study confirm that stringent cybersecurity monitoring serves as a primary factor increasing employee cognitive fatigue and subsequently decreasing mental well-being in digital work environments. These results directly address the research problem, as the literature consistently demonstrates a correlation between digital surveillance intensity, heightened evaluative pressure, and the emergence of mental exhaustion. Furthermore, the results indicate that leadership plays a significant role in mitigating these impacts by providing psychological support and creating an emotionally safe work environment. Consequently, this research confirms that the balance between organizational control and employee well-being is a central issue in modern cybersecurity monitoring practices (Chong et al., 2020), (Taser et al., 2022).

Within a theoretical framework, these findings can be interpreted through the integration of Job Demands–Resources Theory, Self-Determination Theory, dan Cognitive Load Theory. Job Demands: Intense digital monitoring functions as a job demand that increases work pressure and the consumption of employees' mental resources, thereby accelerating cognitive fatigue (Bakker et al., 2023). Autonomy: Excessive surveillance practices can obstruct the fulfillment of autonomy needs, as explained in Self-Determination Theory, worsening an individual's psychological condition (Olafsen et al., 2021). Cognitive Processing: From the perspective of Cognitive Load Theory, exposure to evaluative and continuous monitoring systems increases working memory load and reduces information processing capacity, ultimately triggering mental exhaustion (Leppink, 2021). The integration of these three approaches reinforces the understanding that the impact of digital monitoring is not merely technical, but inherently cognitive and psychological.

The discussion of this study reinforces the importance of integrating cognitive, organizational, and technological aspects in managing employee well-being. Critical thinking skills enable employees to better cope with complex and demanding work conditions (Khas & Anshori, 2023). Moreover, knowledge sharing and organizational learning function as key mechanisms in reducing stress and enhancing adaptability in

digital environments (Mandasari & Anshori, 2023; Fitria et al., 2023). Organizational policies also play a role in shaping employee perceptions and responses to monitoring systems (Qurrota A'yun & Anshori, 2022), while digital transformation in human resource management highlights the importance of adaptive leadership in maintaining employee well-being (Fadilah & Anshori, 2025).

When compared to earlier research, these findings align with literature showing that digital surveillance increases job stress and decreases well-being, particularly in high-technology work environments. The results are also consistent with studies highlighting technostress and digital fatigue as consequences of intensified technology use in the workplace. However, some studies suggest that digital monitoring can improve performance and efficiency if balanced with transparency and organizational trust (Meijerink & Bondarouk, 2021). This discrepancy indicates that the impact of monitoring is not universal but depends heavily on the organizational context and the leadership practices applied.

The scientific contribution of this research lies in the development of a cyber-psychology based conceptual model that integrates digital monitoring, cognitive fatigue, mental well-being, and leadership into a single analytical framework. Unlike previous studies that often separate these variables, this research positions cognitive fatigue as the primary mediating mechanism and identifies leadership as a strategic moderating factor. Thus, it expands the application of JD-R theory in digital contexts and enriches leadership literature with cyber-psychological dimensions (Bartsch et al., 2021), (Ahmed et al., 2022).

Despite these contributions, the study has several limitations: **Methodological Dependence:** The use of a literature review approach means results depend on the quality and scope of analyzed studies rather than direct field observations (Snyder, 2019). **Contextual Variation:** Differences in organizational culture and technology adoption levels across reviewed studies may affect the generalizability of the findings. **Empirical Gaps:** The limited availability of studies specifically linking cybersecurity monitoring to cognitive fatigue suggests the conceptual synthesis requires further empirical validation.

The implications of this research span both theoretical and practical aspects. Theoretically, it opens opportunities for empirical models to test these relationships

across various organizational contexts. Practically, organizations are advised to design monitoring systems that are not solely control-oriented but also consider psychological well-being through leadership styles that support autonomy and open communication (Galanti et al., 2021), (Darouei & Pluut, 2021). Future research should test this proposed conceptual model using quantitative or mixed-methods approaches to achieve stronger empirical validation in dynamic digital organizational settings.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

This study demonstrates that strict cybersecurity monitoring in a digital work environment acts as a significant job demand and contributes to increased cognitive fatigue among employees. This cognitive fatigue has been shown to be closely linked to a decline in mental well-being, particularly through increased evaluative stress, mental workload, and reduced perceived autonomy. On the other hand, leadership emerges as a key factor capable of mitigating these negative effects by fostering a work environment that supports autonomy, open communication, and psychological safety. Thus, the relationship between digital monitoring, cognitive fatigue, and mental well-being is dynamic and influenced by the balance between organizational demands and resources.

The primary contribution of this study lies in the development of a conceptual model grounded in cyber-psychology that integrates digital monitoring, cognitive fatigue, mental well-being, and leadership into a comprehensive analytical framework. This model expands our understanding of the psychological impacts of cybersecurity monitoring systems and positions leadership as a strategic element in maintaining a balance between organizational control needs and employee well-being. In addition to providing theoretical contributions, this study also offers practical implications for organizations in designing more adaptive and human-centered monitoring policies.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes that organizational success in the digital era depends not only on technological systems but also on human and organizational capabilities. Critical thinking, knowledge sharing, and organizational learning are key factors that support employee performance and well-being (Khas & Anshori, 2023; Mandasari & Anshori, 2023; Fitria et al., 2023). Additionally, organizational policies and digital HR transformation play an important role in shaping a sustainable and adaptive work environment (Qurrota A'yun & Anshori, 2022; Fadilah & Anshori, 2025).

For future research, empirical testing of the proposed conceptual model is needed through quantitative or mixed-methods approaches to obtain stronger validation. Furthermore, in-depth studies of different organizational contexts, including variations in work culture and levels of technology adoption, can enrich our understanding of the dynamics of the relationship between digital monitoring and employee well-being.

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