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The Use of Social Media During Working Hours and Organizational Performance. Economic and Managerial Implications in the Private Sector

Abstract

Social media has become embedded in daily work routines, shaping communication patterns and affecting attention, task execution, and exposure to digital risks. While social media can support information exchange and social capital, its uncontrolled use during working hours may reduce effective labour utilisation and generate measurable economic costs. This study examines the prevalence and patterns of social media use during working hours and explores their managerial and economic implications for organisational performance in the private sector. A structured questionnaire was administered to 50 private-sector employees. The results show that 78% of respondents use social media during working hours, and 76% report an absence of clear organisational rules regulating such use. Instagram (34%), Facebook (26%), and TikTok (20%) are the most frequently used platforms, indicating a predominance of entertainment- and feed-based applications. Beyond productivity concerns, 52% report that social media affects mood, and 32% report experiencing online blackmail, signalling non-trivial psychosocial and cybersecurity risks. Using a conservative wage-cost illustration anchored on a €350 gross monthly salary, the study estimates that 30 minutes of non-productive use per day among affected employees can imply annual wage-cost losses exceeding €10,000 for an organisation of similar size, excluding additional hidden costs such as switching times, errors, and reputational exposure. The analysis further argues that reduced effective workforce capacity may strengthen managerial incentives toward process automation and technological substitution, potentially contributing to workforce reduction or non-replacement dynamics. The paper concludes with actionable governance recommendations, emphasising outcome-based performance management, digital awareness, and proportional policies that protect productivity while avoiding counterproductive overtsurveillance.

Keywords: workplace social media; organizational performance; productivity loss; wage-cost model; effective workforce; private sector; automation; governance.

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1. Introduction

The diffusion of social media platforms has altered the social and informational environments of modern organisations. Networked platforms continuously connect employees, enabling unprecedented speed and scale in communication, content consumption, and social reinforcement. In the private sector, where performance is defined by productivity, service quality, timeliness, and cost efficiency, the integration of social media into work routines is not merely a cultural phenomenon—it is also a managerial and economic issue. Social media in the workplace is often framed as a double-edged tool. At its best, it accelerates information sharing, enhances teamwork, supports organisational learning, and facilitates professional networking. At its worst, it fragments attention, increases task switching, reduces deep work capacity, and introduces digital risks (e.g., privacy breaches, harassment, blackmail). The key question for organisations is not whether social media exists—its presence is a given—but how it should be governed to maximise benefits and minimise performance losses. From a performance measurement perspective, the consequences of uncontrolled social media use can be conceptualised as decreased effective labour utilisation**.** In many organisations, labour is the largest controllable cost, and wages are a contractual expense that is only economically justified when translated into output. When non-work social media use increases during working hours, some portion of paid time has no organisational value, generating an opportunity cost. A central managerial challenge is that this cost is often "invisible": organisations observe headcount and attendance, but the effective workforce (full-attention labour time) may be substantially lower. This aligns with accountability and responsibility perspectives in performance measurement, emphasising the need for clear responsibilities, measurable outputs, and the governance of cost drivers. The economic dimension of social media use becomes particularly salient in contexts with wage pressure and narrow margins—characteristics common in many small and medium enterprises (SMEs). A modest productivity loss per employee can aggregate into large annual costs. This study therefore introduces a conservative wage-cost illustration anchored on a widely used benchmark in the local context (gross wage €350), avoiding overstatement and preserving interpretability for decision makers. In parallel, organisations increasingly respond to productivity and cost pressures through technological development: workflow tools, digital monitoring dashboards, customer relationship management systems, automation, and—in some cases—partial substitution of human labour for standardised tasks. When human productivity becomes variable due to distraction or weak governance, the managerial case for automation strengthens. This implies that unmanaged social media use may indirectly accelerate technology-driven workforce reduction (or non-replacement of roles), raising broader labour and policy implications.

This paper contributes by providing:

1. Descriptive evidence of workplace social media use during working hours;
2. A structured view of governance gaps (absence of rules);
3. An explicit, transparent wage-cost model illustration using existing survey prevalence; and
4. A discussion of technology substitution dynamics as a managerial response to reduced effective labour utilisation.

2. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Workplace social media: productive coordination vs. non-productive distraction

Enterprise and public social media tools can facilitate knowledge sharing and coordination by lowering communication costs and supporting informal collaboration. Strategic knowledge management research highlights that social technologies may strengthen organisational learning and improve access to expertise when aligned with processes and culture (Archer-Brown & Kietzmann, 2018). However, the same connectivity can generate persistent interruptions and reduce concentration. Feed-based platforms are designed for continuous engagement, potentially intensifying attention fragmentation. The empirical literature distinguishes between **work-related** use (task communication, professional networking, learning) and **non-work-related** use (entertainment, social browsing). Work-related use may support performance depending on governance and task structure; non-work use is more often associated with time loss and reduced productivity (Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014). This distinction is critical because managerial policies should not treat all social media use uniformly: an organisation may encourage work-related networking (e.g., LinkedIn) while limiting non-work browsing during core task periods.

2.2 Productivity economics: opportunity cost and switching cost

From managerial economics, the baseline model treats non-productive time as a direct wage cost: hours not producing output still incur wage expenses. Yet the more comprehensive view includes **switching costs**, where productivity does not immediately recover after interruptions. Even brief checks can trigger cognitive "context switching" and reorientation time, leading to productivity losses larger than the time spent online. Technology overload research suggests that beyond a certain point, more connectivity reduces rather than increases productivity (Karr-Wisniewski & Lu, 2010). Additionally, technostress literature links digital pressure to reduced performance and increased error rates (Tarafdar et al., 2015). These dynamics imply that economic cost should be conceptualised as:

- Direct time loss (paid time not producing output), plus
- Indirect switching and error costs (reduced performance quality/velocity), plus
- Risk-related costs (cyber incidents, reputational harm).

The present study focuses on the first component (direct time loss) via a conservative wage-cost illustration and discusses the other components qualitatively to avoid overstating inference beyond the dataset.

2.3 Well-being and digital risk as performance inputs

Organisational performance depends not only on time allocation but also on employee well-being and psychological functioning. Mood and affect influence motivation, attention, and social interaction at work. Social media can generate emotional changes through social comparison, feedback loops, or exposure to stressful content. In addition, digital risks such as harassment and blackmail represent severe stressors. The presence of blackmail exposure is particularly important because it implies vulnerability and potential spillover into work performance, absenteeism, and organisational risk.

2.4 Governance and accountability: policy as a performance system component

Performance measurement systems emphasise accountability: organisations must define responsibilities and align resource costs with outputs. Accountability-based performance management highlights that performance is shaped by managerial design, not only employee behaviour. A governance gap—such as unclear rules on social media use—creates ambiguity, enabling non-productive behaviours to persist without corrective feedback. Rexhepi (2022) frames accountability responsibility as instrumental in performance measurement, implying that cost drivers and behavioural expectations must be clearly assigned for effective control. Human resource management (HRM) research also emphasises that training, appraisal, and development are linked to performance outcomes and financial performance, reinforcing the role of structured managerial practices (Mustafa et al., 2024).

2.5 Cost accounting logic: allocating hidden costs to managerial decisions

Activity-based costing (ABC) and other costing methods show how important it is to find cost drivers and assign costs to activities that use resources. When employees allocate paid time to non-work browsing, this constitutes an activity consuming labour cost without producing output. ABC perspectives encourage managers to trace such costs to behaviours and processes to improve efficiency (Murtezaj et al., 2024). More broadly, managerial accounting diffusion in Kosovo enterprises underlines the importance of improving decision support and performance control systems (Rexhepi, 2025).

2.6 Technology adoption and labor substitution

Technology adoption can increase productivity and reduce labour costs through automation and standardisation. When human performance is inconsistent due to distraction, the economic attractiveness of automation increases. However, automation is not purely technical; it is a managerial strategy that shifts the production function, potentially reducing labour demand. This introduces a broader implication: governance failures (e.g., unmanaged social media distraction) can indirectly contribute to workforce reduction by weakening the comparative productivity of human labour.

2.7 Conceptual framework

Based on the above, this study adopts a conceptual framework in which:

1. **Social media use during working hours** (prevalence and platform type) contributes to
2. **performance-relevant outcomes** (mood effects, distraction indicators, and digital risk exposure), which affect
3. **organisational performance and cost efficiency** via reduced effective labour utilisation and risk management burden.
4. These conditions influence **managerial responses**, including policy development, training, and technology adoption, which may alter future labour demand.

3. Research Objectives, Questions, and Hypotheses

3.1 Objectives

1. Quantify the prevalence of social media use during working hours in the private sector sample.
2. Identify platform preferences and governance conditions (presence/absence of rules).
3. Report well-being and risk indicators (mood effects; blackmail exposure).
4. Provide an illustrative wage-cost estimate anchored on a €350 gross monthly wage to translate prevalence into economic implications.
5. Discuss managerial implications and technology substitution incentives.

3.2 Research questions

RQ1: What is the prevalence of social media use during working hours among private-sector employees in the sample?

RQ2: What platforms dominate use during working hours, and what does this imply about potential distraction intensity?

RQ3: What is the prevalence of mood effects and online blackmail exposure among respondents?

RQ4: What wage-cost losses are implied under conservative assumptions given the observed prevalence?

RQ5: How do governance gaps and implied costs shape managerial incentives for technological substitution?

3.3 Hypotheses (directional; consistent with descriptive design)

H1: Social media use during working hours is prevalent and is accompanied by performance-relevant indicators (mood effects and distraction-related perceptions).
H2: A governance gap exists in many private-sector contexts (absence of clear rules), which is associated with higher exposure to non-productive use.
H3: Under conservative assumptions, the prevalence of use implies non-trivial wage-cost losses that strengthen incentives for managerial intervention and technology adoption.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research design

This study uses a cross-sectional descriptive-analytical survey design, suitable for mapping prevalence and workplace perceptions. The design does not establish causality; rather, it supports evidence-informed managerial interpretation.

4.2 Sample and context

The sample comprises **N = 50** employees working in the private sector. Respondents represent both administration and fieldwork equally (25 each), enabling consideration of distinct task environments.

- Gender: Male = 42 (84%); Female = 8 (16%).
- Age: 18–30 = 14 (28%); 31–50 = 23 (46%); 51+ = 13 (26%).
- Work setting: Administration = 25 (50%); Field = 25 (50%).

4.3 Instrument

A structured questionnaire of ten self-administered questions covered:

- Demographics (gender, age),
- Work setting (administration/field),
- Social media use during working hours (yes/no),
- Platforms most used during work time,
- If respondents had experienced online blackmail,
- Perceived impact category (mood, information, new connections, distraction),
- Presence of company rules regarding social media use,
- Preferred management approach (stricter rules, education/awareness, no need).

4.4 Data analysis approach

The study uses descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages). Results are then interpreted using (a) performance measurement concepts (accountability and governance), (b) wage-cost economic logic, and (c) technology substitution reasoning. Economic calculations are presented transparently with stated assumptions to avoid over-interpretation.

5. Results

5.1 Sample profile

Table 1 summarises the sample demographics and work setting.

Table 1
Sample profile (N = 50)

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	42	84
	Female	8	16
Age	18–30	14	28
	31–50	23	46
	51+	13	26
Work setting	Administration	25	50
	Field work	25	50

5.2 Social media use during working hours

A majority of respondents indicated that they use social media during working hours.

Table 2
Social media use during working hours (N = 50)

Response	n	%
Yes	39	78
No	11	22

This prevalence suggests that workplace social media use is a normalized behavior for many employees rather than an exceptional case.

5.3 Platform preference during working hours

Respondents reported the most-used platform during work time as follows:

Table 3
Most used platforms during working hours (N = 50)

Platform	n	%
Instagram	17	34
Facebook	13	26
TikTok	10	20
WhatsApp	5	10
YouTube	5	10

The dominance of Instagram and TikTok may be performance-relevant because feed-based visual content is designed for prolonged engagement, potentially amplifying time loss.

5.4 Perceived impacts and digital risk exposure

Respondents indicated perceived impacts and risk exposure:

Table 4
Perceived impact category (N = 50)

Category	n	%
Mood impact	26	52
New connections	10	20
Information	10	20
Distraction (explicit)	4	8

While only 8% explicitly label the effect as "distraction," 52% report mood impact, which is performance-relevant: mood changes can impair focus, decision-making quality, and interpersonal dynamics.

Digital risk exposure is also noteworthy:

Table 5
Experience of online blackmail (N = 50)

Response	n	%
Yes	16	32
No	34	68

A blackmail prevalence of 32% is substantial and elevates the discussion beyond productivity into risk management, well-being, and organizational duty of care.

5.5 Governance conditions: organizational rules

Respondents reported the presence of company rules as follows:

Table 6
Company rules regulating social media use during working hours (N = 50)

Response	n	%
No	38	76
Yes	8	16
Do not know	4	8

The high "No rules" share indicates a governance gap. From an accountability perspective, unclear expectations and inconsistent enforcement can normalize non-productive behavior and increase risk exposure (Rexhepi, 2022).

5.6 Preferred management approach

Respondents indicated preferred strategies:

Table 7
Preferred management approach (N = 50)

Approach	n	%
Stricter rules	20	40
Education and awareness	20	40
No need to manage	10	20

The equal split between stricter rules and education indicates that employees perceive both governance and learning as necessary; the "no need" minority (20%) signals a potential cultural barrier to intervention.

6. Economic Analysis: Effective Workforce Reduction, Wage-Cost Loss, and Workforce Implications

6.1 Conceptualizing "effective workforce" versus headcount

Headcount is a static measure. Effective workforce capacity is dynamic and depends on attention, effort allocation, and task focus. If a majority of employees engage in non-work social media use during paid hours, then some portion of labour cost does not translate into output. Such behaviour is not merely a moral issue; it is a performance accounting issue. Performance measurement systems require that managers control and explain cost drivers (Rexhepi, 2022).

Using the sample prevalence, a simple "effective workforce risk" illustration is:

Table 8
Effective workforce illustration (N = 50)

Parameter	Value
Total employees	50
Employees reporting social media use during working hours	39
Employees reporting no social media use during working hours	11

This does not claim that the 39 are unproductive; rather, it identifies a large segment at risk of attention fragmentation, which can materially reduce effective output capacity.

6.2 Wage-cost loss illustration using €350 gross monthly salary

To translate prevalence into economic meaning, a conservative wage-cost model is used. Assumptions (transparent and intentionally conservative):

- Average gross monthly salary per worker: **€350**
- Working days per month: **22**
- Working hours per month: **176 (22 × 8)**
- Implied hourly wage: **€350 / 176 ≈ €1.99**
- Conservative non-productive time due to social media: **30 minutes per day (0.5 hours)**
- Employees affected: **39** (those reporting social media use during working hours)

Stepwise calculation:

1. Hourly wage ≈ €1.99
2. Daily cost of 0.5 hours non-productive time ≈ €0.995 ≈ **€1.00 per worker/day**
3. Monthly loss per worker: €1.00 × 22 ≈ **€22**
4. Monthly loss total: €22 × 39 = **€858**
5. Annual loss total: €858 × 12 = **€10,296**

Table 9
Wage-cost loss under conservative assumptions (€350 gross wage; 30 minutes/day)

Metric	Value
Hourly wage (approx.)	€1.99
Non-productive time/day	0.5 hours
Cost/day per affected worker	€1.00
Cost/month per affected worker	€22
Affected workers	39
Total monthly loss	€858
Total annual loss	€10,296

Interpretation: Even under conservative assumptions, the implied annual wage-cost loss exceeds €10,000 for an organization of similar size. This excludes hidden costs (switching, quality defects, delays, customer dissatisfaction), which means real economic impact may be higher.

6.3 Linking cost losses to managerial accounting and cost control

Cost control frameworks emphasise that managers must identify where costs originate and how behaviours shape cost consumption. ABC logic argues that costs follow activities and activity drivers (Murtezaj et al., 2024).Non-work social media browsing during paid hours is a cost-consuming activity that does not generate output; it is therefore a cost driver that management can address via governance, training, and process design.In Kosovo enterprises, discussions around managerial accounting diffusion highlight persistent opportunities to strengthen decision-relevant cost information and operational control (Rexhepi, 2025). Social media governance can be positioned as a practical operational control intervention aligned with performance management.

6.4 Technology development, partial substitution, and workforce reduction incentives

When organisations face productivity instability or measurable wage-cost leakage, they often seek structural solutions that reduce dependence on human attention. Technological tools can provide:

- Standardized workflows,
- Automated reporting,
- Consistent service routines,
- Reduced susceptibility to distraction,
- And availability beyond fixed shift hours.

This strengthens the managerial case for technological substitution when the cost differential is significant. An illustrative comparison is:

Table 10
Cost and operational comparison: human labor vs technology (illustrative)

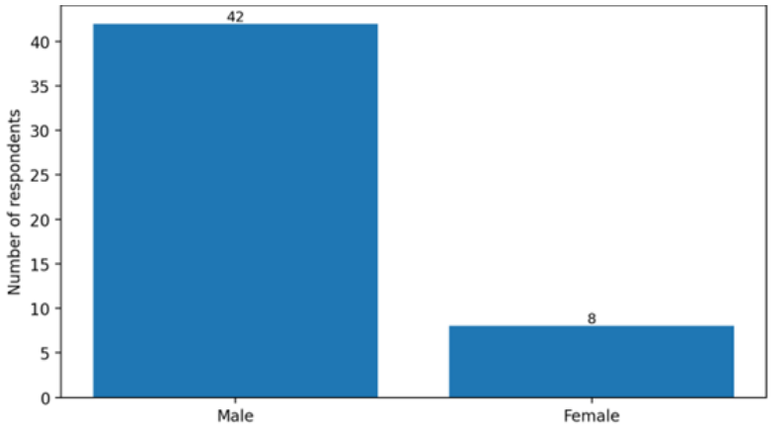
Dimension	Human worker	Technology tool
Monthly cost	€350	€50–150
Availability	8 hours/day	24/7
Output consistency	Variable	High
Distraction risk	Higher	Minimal
Scalability	Limited	High

Workforce implication (analytical argument): If unmanaged distraction reduces effective human productivity, managers may rationally increase automation, reduce headcount, or avoid replacing employees who leave. This does not imply immediate layoffs; rather, it indicates that weak governance and performance leakage can accelerate substitution pressures over time. These dynamics align with firm performance logic that links HR practices to financial outcomes: systematic management and training improve performance, while unmanaged practices contribute to cost inefficiency (Mustafa et al., 2024).

7. Figures and GraphPad Prism Specifications (Ready for Attachment)

All figures below are designed to comply with standard GraphPad Prism conventions: 2D charts, clear axis labels, N and % annotation, no 3D effects, and consistent category ordering. Where a "calculation" is used, the figure explicitly states it is author-calculated.

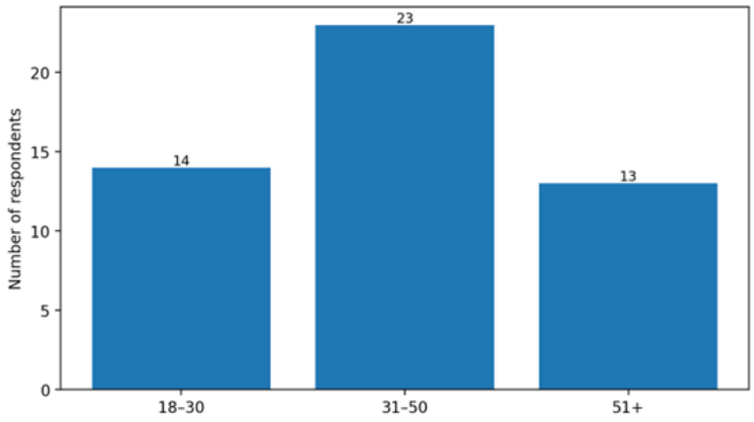
Figure 1. Gender distribution of respondents (N = 50).



Bar chart: Male (n = 42; 84%), Female (n = 8; 16%).

Data source: Survey results.

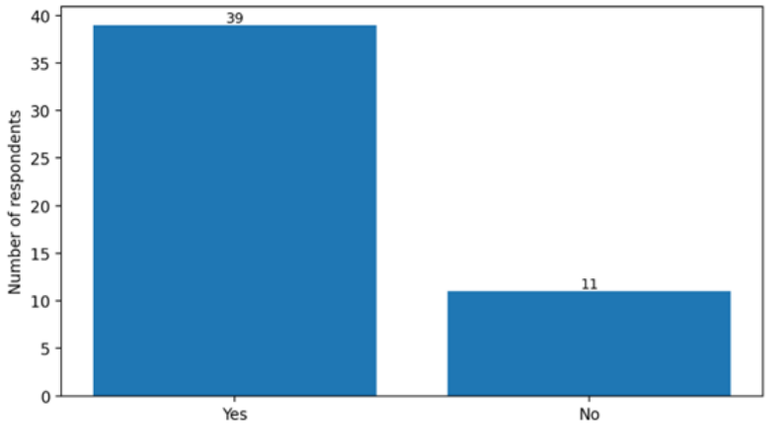
Figure 2. Age distribution of respondents (N = 50).



Bar chart: 18–30 (n = 14; 28%), 31–50 (n = 23; 46%), 51+ (n = 13; 26%).

Data source: Survey results.

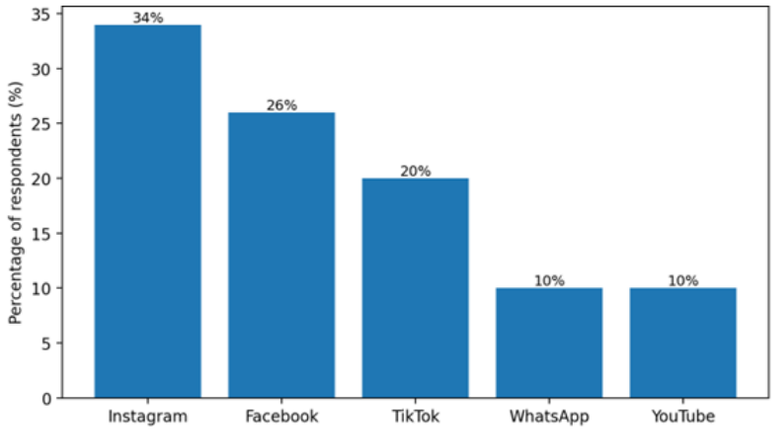
Figure 3. Social media use during working hours (N = 50).



Bar chart: Yes (n = 39; 78%) vs No (n = 11; 22%).

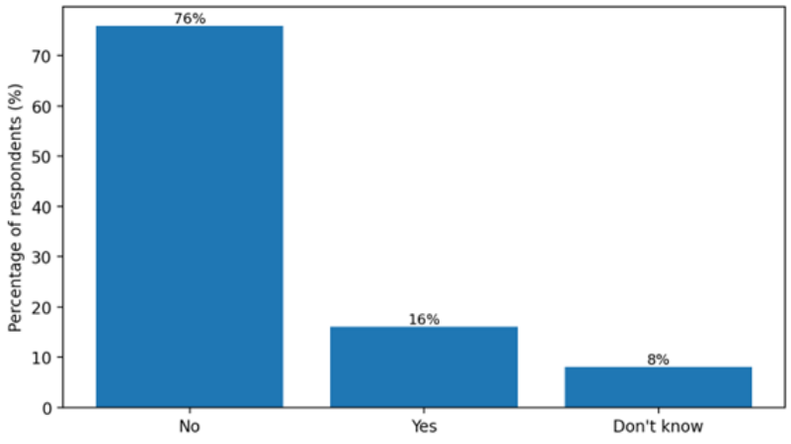
Data source: Survey results.

Figure 4. Most used platforms during working hours (N = 50).



Bar chart: Instagram (34%), Facebook (26%), TikTok (20%), WhatsApp (10%), YouTube (10%).
Data source: Survey results.

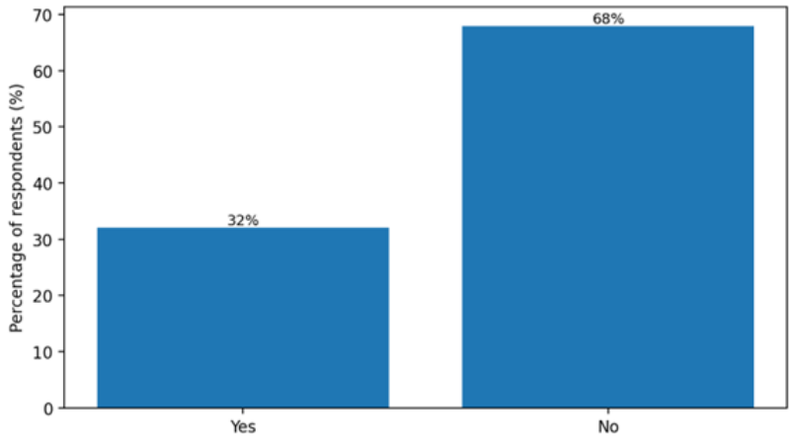
Figure 5. Organizational rules for social media use (N = 50).



Bar chart: No (76%), Yes (16%), Don’t know (8%).

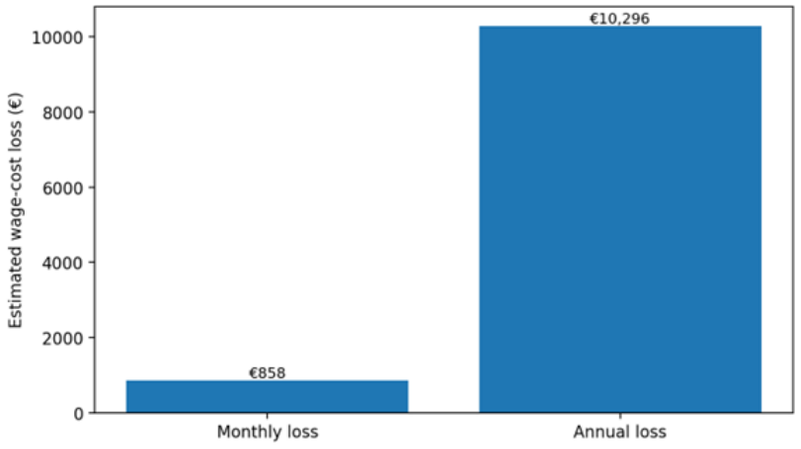
Data source: Survey results.

Figure 6. Online blackmail exposure (N = 50).



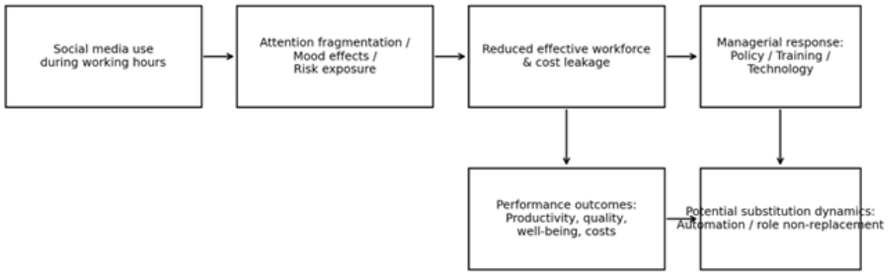
Bar chart: Yes (32%) vs No (68%).
Data source: Survey results.

Figure 7. Wage-cost loss illustration under conservative assumptions.



Two-bar chart: Monthly loss (€858) and Annual loss (€10,296).
Data source: Author calculations based on survey prevalence and €350 gross salary assumption (see Table 9).

Figure 8. Conceptual pathway model (diagram).



Flow diagram: Social media use → attention fragmentation/mood effects/risk exposure → reduced effective workforce & cost leakage → managerial response (policy/training/technology) → performance outcomes and potential substitution dynamics.
Data source: Author conceptual model grounded in cited literature.

8. Discussion

8.1 Prevalence and platform profile: why "type of platform" matters

The prevalence of social media use during working hours (78%) indicates that workplace social media engagement is not marginal but structurally embedded. The platform profile—dominated by Instagram and TikTok—matters because feed-based visual platforms are engineered for continuous consumption, which can amplify time loss and attention fragmentation. This supports the argument that not all social media use is equal: policies should differentiate between platforms and purposes (e.g., messaging for coordination vs endless-feed browsing). The finding that only 8% explicitly label the effect as "distraction" while 52% report mood impact suggests that employees may not interpret their behaviour in productivity terms. Mood impact can still be performance-relevant: affective state influences motivation, persistence, and interpersonal conduct. In practical managerial terms, productivity leakage can occur even when employees do not self-identify as "distracted".

8.2 Governance gaps as a performance measurement issue

The reported absence of rules (76%) is an institutional governance gap. From a performance measurement perspective, this gap implies unclear standards of expected behaviour and limited accountability mechanisms. Accountability frameworks argue that performance management requires clearly assigned responsibility and measurable expectations (Rexhepi, 2022). If employees operate without clear guidance, social norms rather than performance standards may govern behaviour. Over time, "normalisation" of social media browsing can become embedded in culture, making later corrections more difficult. This finding also offers a managerial insight: many organisations may be implicitly tolerating productivity leakage because it is not measured. The absence of measurement often produces the illusion that no problem exists. A key contribution of this study is translating prevalence into an economic narrative through a wage-cost illustration, which makes the cost visible to decision makers.

8.3 Digital risk and duty of care: blackmail as a high-severity signal

The 32% blackmail exposure rate is a high-severity signal. Even if some incidents occur outside the workplace, they can spill over into work performance through stress and reputational risk. For management, this finding justifies digital safety training and support mechanisms, not only as a humanitarian duty but also as a performance protection measure. It also implies the need for clear reporting pathways and confidentiality protocols.

8.4 Economic implications: why a conservative model still matters

The wage-cost illustration demonstrates that even conservative assumptions can yield economically meaningful losses. The point is not to claim exact losses for all organisations but to provide a transparent baseline estimate that can be adapted with local wage and time-loss assumptions. Under standard cost-control logic, a recurring annual loss above €10,000 is material for many SMEs, particularly when combined with other non-wage costs (errors, rework, delays, customer churn). Cost accounting reasoning (e.g., ABC) would treat non-productive browsing as an activity consuming labour cost without output, identifying it as a controllable cost driver (Murtezaj et al., 2024). This reinforces the argument that social media governance is not a "soft" HR concern but part of operational cost management.

8.5 Technology substitution and workforce reduction: a plausible structural consequence

A major implication of this paper is the connection between productivity leakage and managerial incentives for technology substitution. When labour productivity appears unstable, managers may adopt technology to stabilise output at a lower cost. Over time, technology can reduce staffing needs through:

- Automation of routine tasks,
- Digital self-service,
- Standardized workflows requiring fewer employees,
- And elimination of redundancy.

This does not imply that social media use "causes" layoffs; rather, it suggests a plausible structural pathway where unmanaged distraction strengthens the business case for automation. This perspective is consistent with financial performance logic in HRM research: systematic training and appraisal improve performance, while weak governance can contribute to inefficiency (Mustafa et al., 2024). It also aligns with managerial accounting discussions that emphasise improving decision support and control systems in Kosovo enterprises (Rexhepi, 2025).

9. Managerial Implications and Recommendations (Policy-Ready)

9.1 Adopt proportional, role-sensitive social media policies

Policies should define:

- acceptable use (e.g., limited personal use during breaks),
- unacceptable use (e.g., continuous browsing during core task time),
- exceptions for work-related tasks (e.g., marketing roles, customer communication),
- and confidentiality/data protection rules.

Role sensitivity matters: administration roles may require sustained attention, while fieldwork may involve intermittent downtime and coordination needs.

9.2 Implement education and digital awareness training

Given the equal support for stricter rules and education (40% each), a combined approach is recommended:

- Awareness of productivity costs, such as time loss and switching costs, is important.
- Digital safety training should include topics such as privacy, harassment, and blackmail prevention.
- The training also provides guidance on healthy digital habits.

Training aligns with evidence that HR development practices support performance outcomes (Mustafa et al., 2024).

9.3 Use outcome-based performance management rather than intrusive surveillance

Outcome-based management focuses on:

- Output quality,
- Task completion time,
- Error rates and rework,
- Customer satisfaction indicators.

Over-surveillance may reduce trust and increase covert behaviour. A better approach is to define measurable outputs and align incentives to performance.

9.4 Strengthen accountability and responsibility structures

Accountability frameworks emphasise that performance requires clear responsibility for results and for controlling cost drivers. Management should assign responsibility for policy enforcement, training delivery, and performance monitoring (Rexhepi, 2022).

9.5 Use technology strategically to complement—not automatically replace—labour.

Technology should be used to:

- Reduce routine workload,
- Standardize processes,
- And improve reporting and decision support.

However, premature substitution may harm service quality where human judgement is critical. Strategic deployment should prioritise complementarities (technology improves human productivity) rather than immediate replacement.

9.6 Establish support mechanisms for digital risk incidents

Given the blackmail prevalence, organisations should:

- Provide confidential reporting channels,
- Offer guidance and psychological support.
- Coordinate with legal counsel when necessary.
- And implement cybersecurity best practices.

10. Limitations and Future Research (without adding variables)

This study is based on a small sample (N=50) and self-reported data; thus, it cannot establish causality. The economic loss model is illustrative and conservative, not a precise firm-level estimate. Future research should replicate the study with larger samples and incorporate objective performance metrics (e.g., KPIs, error rates) and time-use tracking; however, this paper intentionally refrains from adding variables to remain strictly aligned with the existing dataset.

11. Conclusion

This study provides evidence that social media use during working hours is highly prevalent in the private sector sample and is accompanied by meaningful governance gaps and risk indicators. The dominance of entertainment-orientated platforms suggests that non-work use may be substantial. The absence of clear organisational rules indicates a managerial control weakness that can enable productivity leakage. In addition, reported mood effects and blackmail exposure highlight that the issue extends beyond time loss to include well-being and cybersecurity risks. Using a transparent wage-cost illustration anchored on a €350 gross monthly salary, the study shows that even conservative time-loss assumptions can imply annual wage-cost losses exceeding €10,000 for a similarly sized workforce, excluding indirect costs. Importantly, the paper argues that unmanaged productivity leakage may strengthen managerial incentives toward automation and technological substitution, potentially contributing to workforce reduction or non-replacement dynamics over time. The findings support a balanced managerial approach that integrates clear, role-sensitive policies; employee education and digital awareness; accountability structures; and strategic technology deployment aimed at complementing human labour while protecting productivity and organisational performance.

Tables:

Table 1. Sample profile (N = 50) — see above
Table 2. Social media use during working hours (N = 50) — see above
Table 3. Most used platforms during working hours (N = 50) — see above
Table 4. Perceived impact category (N = 50) — see above
Table 5. Experience of online blackmail (N = 50) — see above
Table 6. Company rules regulating social media use (N = 50) — see above
Table 7. Preferred management approach (N = 50) — see above
Table 8. Effective workforce illustration (N = 50) — see above
Table 9. Wage-cost loss under conservative assumptions — see above
Table 10. Cost comparison: human labor vs technology (illustrative) — see above

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