



# The Effects of Electronic Surveillance on Job Tension, Task Performance and Organizational Trust

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## Abstract

**Background:** In contemporary work models, employees use the Internet and electronic devices more than ever. This phenomenon has also changed the way of monitoring employees and generated a new form called 'electronic surveillance'.

**Objectives:** The central purpose of this paper is to reveal the effects of electronic surveillance on job tension, task performance, and employees' organizational trust.

**Methods/Approach:** Survey research was applied as a quantitative method to collect data. Surveys were generated as Likert-type scales, and they were distributed by hand because the use of the in-person survey technique was employed throughout the study. The research sample was created using the purposive sampling technique, and it included 228 participants from fifteen different branches of one of the biggest private banks in Turkey. **Results:** Electronic surveillance in the workplace has turned out to have positive effects on job tension and task performance, whereas it harms organizational trust. **Conclusions:** When the degree of electronic surveillance increases, the job tension level of employees tends to increase as well. Additionally, task performance increases when electronic surveillance increases. But this is not the case with organizational trust since electronic surveillance affects it negatively.

**Keywords:** electronic surveillance; electronic monitoring; job tension; task performance; organizational trust

**JEL classification:** M12; M54

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## Introduction

More and more organizations tend to invest in technology to keep up with the latest product developments and reach their goals and objectives more efficiently. Based on the technology-driven context in companies, employees are more engaged with technological devices. As a natural result of using technology in the workplace more than ever, management monitors employees through electronic devices nowadays. As strong evidence for electronic monitoring and surveillance (e-surveillance), according to American Management Association (2019), employers fired 28% of their employees due to misuse of emails and 30% due to misuse of the Internet in the USA in 2019.

Among the rationales behind using electronic surveillance, there exist (1) to assure the expected productivity (Moore et al., 2017; Urbaczewski et al., 2002), (2) to monitor employee behavior (Abraham et al., 2019), (3) to track performance (Watson et al., 2013) and (4) to sustain worker health and workplace safety (Eivazi, 2011). With the help of computers, phones, cameras, and the Internet, it is possible to track employees in the workplace today. It is clear that there is a need to control employee behavior in organizations, but is it a necessity to use the technological opportunities to keep an eye on employees' every action and behavior? There is a controversy on the positive and negative outcomes of electronic monitoring and surveillance. For example, there are studies about the positive outcomes on labor productivity (Abraham et al., 2019) and objective performance evaluations (Mishra et al., 1998). On the contrary, there is also sufficient research that employees have perceived electronic surveillance to have negative outcomes on health and performance (Abraham et al., 2019), counterproductive work behavior (Martin et al., 2016), increased tension betwixt supervisors and subordinates (Oz et al., 1999), job satisfaction (Carlson et al., 2017) based on psychological reactance theory.

This study it is aimed to search out the effects of electronic surveillance in the workplace on job tension, task performance, and organizational trust of employees. The conceptual basis for these relationships is built on the job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Bakker et al., 2007). It breaks down the job characteristics into two main groups, job demands and job resources (Bakker et al., 2010). Job demands can be taken as contextual aspects, which pressure employees while achieving a job. On the contrary job, resources are the ones that ease the way employees complete their tasks (Bakker et al., 2014).

Electronic surveillance may be taken as both a job demand or a resource based on the staff members' impressions depending on the circumstances. When electronic surveillance is perceived to disrupt personal privacy, it may be a job demand (Moussa, 2015). This is due to electronic surveillance, which causes work pressure and stress for employees (Carlson et al., 2017). But when it is perceived as a tool for increasing the wellness of the employees, by helping them save extra time or supply their performance feedback, it may be taken as a job resource. So at this point, the perceptions of employees about electronic surveillance distinguish a job resource from a job demand.

Theory and knowledge about electronic surveillance in the workplace have mostly relied on conceptual studies of scholars so far. The intended output from this paper is to put forth empirical results, which are still scarce in the literature. Various empirical research is subjected to electronic surveillance and monitoring (e.g., Holland et al., 2015; Martin et al., 2016). But still, there is a need to examine the subject extendedly. This study pays attention to the future research directions of Holland et al. (2015) to put forth empirical outputs about the link betwixt electronic surveillance and trust in the workplace.

After drawing the conceptual framework with a sufficient literature review throughout this paper, the research question of "what kind of effects of perceived electronic surveillance are there on job tension, task performance, and organizational trust of employees?" will be answered because there is still ambiguity about the effects of electronic surveillance on employee behavior in the literature. Therefore, it is aimed to reveal the impact of electronic surveillance on important employee behaviors such as performance and trust. This will be achieved by conducting a quantitative survey research method by collecting data from electronically monitored employees in the workplace. To achieve this, firstly, a detailed background is given. Following the conceptual framework section, the study's methodology will be explained in depth. Afterward, the results obtained from this study will be put forth and discussed before the conclusion.

## Background

### *Electronic Surveillance in the Workplace*

Thanks to the highly digitalized work environment, there is an increasing trend to monitor employees electronically. Electronic surveillance in the workplace defines the usage of cameras, computers, telephones, and smartphones to track the behaviors of employees for labor productivity, performance, and health considerations (Lee et al., 2003; Yost et al., 2019). In some studies, electronic surveillance is used together with electronic monitoring (e.g., Allen et al., 2007; Holland et al., 2015). Here, electronic surveillance is used as a form that covers the concept of electronic monitoring.

Electronic surveillance aims to gather data related to worker behaviors and actions. It can be conducted by using computer software (Spitzmuller et al., 2006), sensor technology by smartphones (Abraham et al., 2019), video cameras (O'Donnell et al., 2010), emails (Smith et al., 2009), voicemails, wiretapping, and active badge (Mishra et al., 1998). All of these tools, machines, and equipment are used by management or human resources departments to track and record, for example, performance evaluation, start and end time for work, length of shift, social media usage, internet surfing, necessary/unnecessary phone calls, planned/unplanned and necessary/unnecessary trips outside the workplace, absenteeism, health and sickness, duration of breaks and counterproductive work behaviors such as workplace theft, improper verbal and physical actions and even alcohol and drug use.

The context, which necessitates electronic surveillance on employees, is characterized by human resources managers' need for unbiased data about employees' work-related behaviors and actions, including productivity and performance feedback. Also, when the remote control is needed in such cases of being away from managers or working in virtual organizations or when employees cannot be monitored physically, electronic surveillance turns out to be a solution by management.

Electronic surveillance can affect employees in different ways, depending on how they perceive it (Martin et al., 2016). Here, perceived surveillance explains how employees think about being monitored in the workplace (D'Urso, 2006). According to the JD-R model, when employees perceive electronic surveillance as a stressor, it is taken as a job demand (Demerouti et al., 2001). Moreover, when employees think that surveillance by computer software, emails, or sensor technologies violates their privacy and personal data security, their attitudes and behaviors towards their jobs, managers, and organizations may be negatively affected.

## Job Tension

Every day, employees face some stressful situations and calmative ones in the workplace. The concept of job tension is mostly about the stressors present in employees' work. It is present when employees live some difficulties and problems or worry about work-related factors (Lyons, 1971). Additionally, job tension can be defined as "perceived negative results of role perceptions" (Lusch et al., 1990). Because job tension is originated from only work aspects, it is a different structure from the general stress of employees (Pool, 2000).

Most of this tension arises from role conflict and role ambiguity (e.g., Irving et al., 2003; Klenke-Hamel et al., 1990; Schaubroeck et al., 1989). But there are also other antecedents of job tension observed in the previous studies. Among them, there exist; organizational climate (Milner et al., 2007), supervision (Keenan et al., 1984), behavioral integrity and procedural justice of supervisors (Andrews et al., 2015), interpersonal trust (Lau et al., 2006), leader-member exchange (Lawrence et al., 2012) and unethical practices (Weeks et al., 1992).

In this study, to contribute to the management theory, a specific human resources implication, electronic surveillance, is chosen to be an antecedent of job tension of employees. Compared to the other factors, electronic surveillance is perceived more like a job demand and practiced less frequently by the researchers previously. Among the previous studies, Oz et al. (1999) pointed out that electronic surveillance in the workplace creates unwanted tension with both their supervisors and their job. Moreover, Carlson et al. (2017) underlined that technological monitoring and electronic surveillance of employees might increase job tension, boosting turnover intentions.

Based on the literature, electronic surveillance turns out to be a natural job stressor for employees. When employees are subject to electronic surveillance, they tend to have high job tension. For this reason, the first hypothesis is developed as:

*H<sub>1</sub>: Electronic surveillance in the workplace is positively related to job tension of employees.*

## Task Performance

Today, companies search for ways to improve employees' performance. Human resource managers invest in employees' training and development and use every opportunity to motivate them. This is because high employee performance seems to guarantee organizational effectiveness.

Employee performance is mostly accepted to have a dimensional structure. These dimensions are named in-role and extra-role behavior (e.g., Demerouti et al., 2015, Srivastava et al., 2019; Van Dyne et al., 1998). In-role behaviors are the one's employees practice by their job description. On the contrary, extra-role behaviors consist of voluntary actions beyond job descriptions (Kim et al., 1996). Related to these behavior types, Borman et al. (1997) classified performance into two groups. Task performance is defined as the level of attainment in the technical duties and essential tasks predetermined in an employee's job, whereas contextual performance is about moving beyond core duties and tasks by being more cooperative and helpful, demonstrating extra efforts for the organization's sake (Conway, 1999; Motowidlo et al., 1994).

Generally, electronic surveillance practices are planned to increase the performance of employees in the workplace. To increase productivity, tracking the actions of employees should help them accomplish job-related duties. So, when employees perceive electronic surveillance as a positive input for productivity, their acceptance is more likely to increase (Abraham et al., 2019). And when employees

tend to accept electronic surveillance rather than demonstrating resistance to it, it is more likely to impact their task performance based on previous studies positively (e.g., Bhave, 2014; Goomas et al., 2009). So;

*H<sub>2</sub>: Electronic surveillance in the workplace is positively related to the employees' task performance.*

### Organizational Trust

Trust is a term related to an individual's or a group's feeling vulnerable towards the other individual's or party's attributes or behaviors (Pirson et al., 2011). Trust also consists of willingness (Mayer et al., 1995) to take some acceptable risks of the other party's situation (Johnson-George et al., 1982). According to the definition, trust has two parties. When one party trusts another, it is called 'trustor', and the other party, which has been trusted, is called 'trustee' (Jones et al., 2016). In organizations, trust can be directed to the organization itself, managers, and peer employees (Costigan et al., 1998).

Based on the meta-analysis by Dirks et al. (2002), there are separate precedents and consequences of organizational trust. Among them there exist, for example, organizational justice (Lee et al., 2018), leadership (Le et al., 2018), and organizational support (DeConinck, 2010) as precedents. Moreover, among the consequences of organizational trust, there are mainly employee performance (Verburg et al., 2018), organizational commitment (Laschinger et al., 2001), citizenship behavior (Tourigny et al., 2019), and organizational identification (Ng, 2015).

When employees' levels of organizational trust increase, they're in the role, and extra-role behaviors also tend to increase. In this context, it is understood from previous studies that trust is an antecedent of task performance (e.g., Ning et al., 2007). By the same token, when employees trust management, their job-related tension tends to decrease (Bijlsma et al., 2003; Leat et al., 2009).

Lastly, when employees perceive electronic surveillance as a tight control mechanism (Abraham et al., 2019), which damages trust relationships in the workplace, it can negatively affect organizational trust (Tabak et al., 2005). Based on this evidence,

*H<sub>3</sub>: Electronic surveillance in the workplace is negatively related to employees' organizational trust.*

After examining the direct relationships between the variables in the research model, another hypothesis is about job tension and task performance (e.g., Nisar et al., 2020).

*H<sub>4</sub>: Job tension is negatively related to the task performance of employees.*

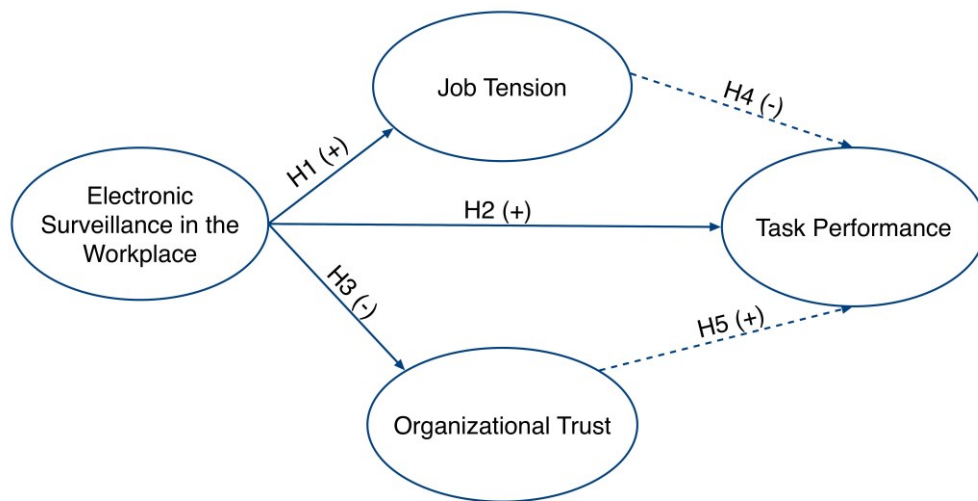
Additionally, when members trust their organizations, their performance may be the potential for an increase in their workplace. For this reason, based on the previous studies (e.g., Li et al., 2018), it can be stated as:

*H<sub>5</sub>: Organizational trust is positively related to the task performance of employees.*

Based on these relationships, the research model of this study is demonstrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1  
The Research Model



Source: Authors' work

## Methodology

### Data

In this study, screening (survey) quantitative research technique is employed to analyze data. The sampling method used in the study is the purposive sampling method. Among the types of this method, a homogeneous sampling technique (Etikan et al., 2016) was chosen. The most suitable participants exposed to electronic surveillance were intended to include as participants.

The sample was selected from the banking sector, in which there is intense electronic surveillance. By sampling technique, fifteen branches of a private deposit bank in Turkey were included. The bank branches were chosen based on the largest number of employees. All of the bank branches were located in Ankara province. Surveys were distributed by hand in selected bank branches. Afterward, they were collected in person. Data were collected between June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019, and October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019. There were 228 participants out of 341 who accepted to fill out the survey forms. So there is a response rate of 66% that falls into the category of Response Rate 1 (RR1) according to the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR).

According to AAPOR (2015), the category of response rate 1 is calculated as "the number of complete surveys divided by the number of completed surveys, plus the number of refused, non-contacts and others plus all case of unknown eligibility". All participants face electronic surveillance mostly by their tablets and partially by personal computers, cameras, emails, and smartphones. The descriptive statistics are present in Table 1.

Table 1  
Descriptive Statistics

	n	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	134	59
Male	94	41
<b>Age</b>		
21-30	61	27
31-40	82	36
41-50	58	25
>50	27	12
<b>Education</b>		
Associate	16	7
Graduate	174	76
Postgraduate	38	17
<b>Workplace Tenure</b>		
<5 years	54	24
5-10 years	96	42
>10 years	78	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Authors' work

### Research Instruments

For electronic surveillance in the workplace, the eight-item measure of Abraham et al. (2019) was employed. By the items present in the measure, the 'to what extent' statement was added to the beginning of this survey section. Moreover, the word 'tablet' was included in the questionnaire for the third and sixth items. Example items areas "I am working with a PC, a tablet or a notebook." and "I am using a smartphone, a tablet or a navigation device for orientation when on business trips." The seven-point scale from 1 (never) to 7 (all the time) was employed. To assure the reliability for all of the measures adopted, the coefficient of Cronbach's alpha was calculated, and it was obtained as .92 for electronic surveillance measures.

Moreover, to assess job tension, we chose the questionnaire generated by House et al. (1972). One of the five items is "I work under a great deal of tension." We found Cronbach's alpha value .88 in this measure.

Also, we employed a measure originated by Goodman et al. (1999) to estimate task performance. This seven-point scale is in the form of self-report, and one of the nine items was as "I am competent in all areas of the job, and I handle tasks with proficiency". Moreover, Cronbach's alpha value for this scale was .81.

Additionally, next scale is for organizational trust. It was formed by Searle et al. (2011) as a seven-point scale. Sample items were "My organization would never deliberately take advantage of employees" and "My organization is guided by sound moral principles and codes of conduct." Alpha value was calculated as .85. All of the items of the measures are present in Table 2.

Table 2  
Research instrument

Construct	Code	Item
<b>Electronic Surveillance in the Workplace</b>	ESW1	"I am working in a highly automated work environment."
	ESW2	"At my workplace, rooms and entrances are video monitored."
	ESW3	"I am working with a PC, tablet, or notebook."
	ESW4	"I am using electronic ID cards to access rooms or payments in cantinas."
	ESW5	"I use social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Xing for professional purposes."
	ESW6	"I use a smartphone, a tablet, or a navigation device for orientation when on business trips."
	ESW7	"The location of the components and goods I work with is recorded throughout the work process."
	ESW8	"I am using devices or work clothes that transmit wireless information."
<b>Job Tension</b>	JT1	"My job tends to affect my health directly."
	JT2	"I work under plenty of tensions."
	JT3	"I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job."
	JT4	"If I had a different job, my health would probably improve."
	JT5	"Problems associated with my job have kept me awake at night."
	JT6	"I have felt nervous before attending meetings in my department."
	JT7	"I often take my job home with me because I think about it when doing other things."
<b>Task Performance</b>	TP1	"I achieve the objectives of the job."
	TP2	"I meet the criteria for performance."
	TP3	"I demonstrate expertise in all job-related tasks."
	TP4	"I fulfill all the requirements of the job."
	TP5	"I could manage more responsibility than typically assigned."
	TP6	"I appear suitable for a higher-level role."
	TP7	"I am competent in all job areas, and I handle tasks with proficiency."
	TP8	"I perform well in the overall job by carrying out tasks as expected."
	TP9	"I plan and organize to achieve the job's objectives and meet deadlines."
<b>Organizational Trust</b>	OT1	"My organization is capable of meeting its responsibilities."
	OT2	"My organization is known to be successful at what it tries to do."
	OT3	"My organization is doing things competently."
	OT4	"My organization is concerned about the welfare of its employees."
	OT5	"Employees' needs and desires are important to my organization."
	OT6	"My organization will go out of its way to help its employees."
	OT7	"My organization would never deliberately take advantage of its employees."
	OT8	"My organization is guided by sound moral principles and codes of conduct."
	OT9	Power is not abused in my organization.
	OT10	"My organization does not exploit external stakeholders."

Source: Abraham et al., 2019; Goodman et al., 1999; House et al., 1972; Searle et al., 2011.



## Results

Data obtained with the help of the survey method were firstly validated and then analyzed by several sequential statistical methods. Before distributing the surveys to the employees, introductory meetings were held with both the employees and the branch managers as a pilot study to validate the content.

First of all, to assure the convergent and discriminate validity; exploratory and confirmatory analyses were applied on all of the research instruments together. Using IBM SPSS 22.0 Statistical Package, a factor analysis with varimax rotation was applied. According to the results, each of the items in the research instruments was turned out to be higher than .50, which was a limit suggested by Field (2000), constituting a one-dimensional structure for all of the separate research instruments (Tabachnick et al., 2001). Moreover, the reliability analysis was achieved by employing Cronbach's alpha coefficients, and according to the results, it was understood that the items demonstrated internal consistency. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3  
Standardized Factor Loadings

Item	Standardized Factor Loadings	Cronbach's alpha
ESW1	0.853	0.92
ESW2	0.934	
ESW3	0.781	
ESW4	0.870	
ESW5	0.752	
ESW6	0.912	
ESW7	0.675	
ESW8	0.827	
JT1	0.920	0.88
JT2	0.852	
JT3	0.870	
JT4	0.760	
JT5	0.684	
JT6	0.835	
JT7	0.730	
TP1	0.628	0.81
TP2	0.739	
TP3	0.814	
TP4	0.820	
TP5	0.981	
TP6	0.870	
TP7	0.747	
TP8	0.694	
TP9	0.788	
OT1	0.730	0.85
OT2	0.851	
OT3	0.872	
OT4	0.743	
OT5	0.682	
OT6	0.710	
OT7	0.830	
OT8	0.917	
OT9	0.837	
OT10	0.763	

Source: Authors' work

After conducting validity and reliability analyses, we calculated the correlation coefficients to examine the relationships between determined variables. Since we found a linear relationship between normally distributed variables in this study, the Pearson correlation method was chosen to figure out the relationships. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4  
Correlation Coefficients between Variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
<b>Electronic Surveillance</b>	4.08	1.13	-			
<b>Job Tension</b>	3.95	1.21	0.64***	-		
<b>Task Performance</b>	4.22	0.95	0.38***	0.11***	-	
<b>Organizational Trust</b>	3.61	1.40	-0.43***	-0.27***	0.39***	-

Note: \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ ., SD: Standard deviation.

Source: Authors' work

According to the results obtained from the correlation analysis, firstly, there exists a moderately positive and significant relation between electronic surveillance and job tension ( $r=0.64$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Following that, electronic surveillance is turned out to be positively correlated with task performance ( $r=0.38$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), whereas negatively with organizational trust ( $r=-0.43$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Additionally, job tension has a positive relationship with task performance ( $r=0.11$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and a negative relationship with organizational trust ( $r=-0.27$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Lastly, it is seen that organizational trust and task performance are positively correlated ( $r=0.39$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

And lastly, to estimate the structural model and goodness of fit indices, structural equations model fit was used and tested by using IBM SPSS AMOS 24.0 statistical package program. By the related literature (e.g., Marsh et al., 2006; Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003), the overall fit of the research model was determined, beginning with assessing the chi-square statistics. After obtaining an insignificant chi-square, a wide range of fit indices was examined to test the model's overall fit. These fit indices were indicated based on the suggestions made by Hooper et al. (2008). The results signal that the obtained values of fit indices are very good, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5  
Results of Fit Indices for the Research Model

RMSEA	CFI	NFI	NNFI	GFI	$\chi^2 / df$
0.065	0.905	0.963	0.978	0.966	1.812
<0.080*	>0.90*	>0.95*	>0.95*	>0.95*	<2.0*

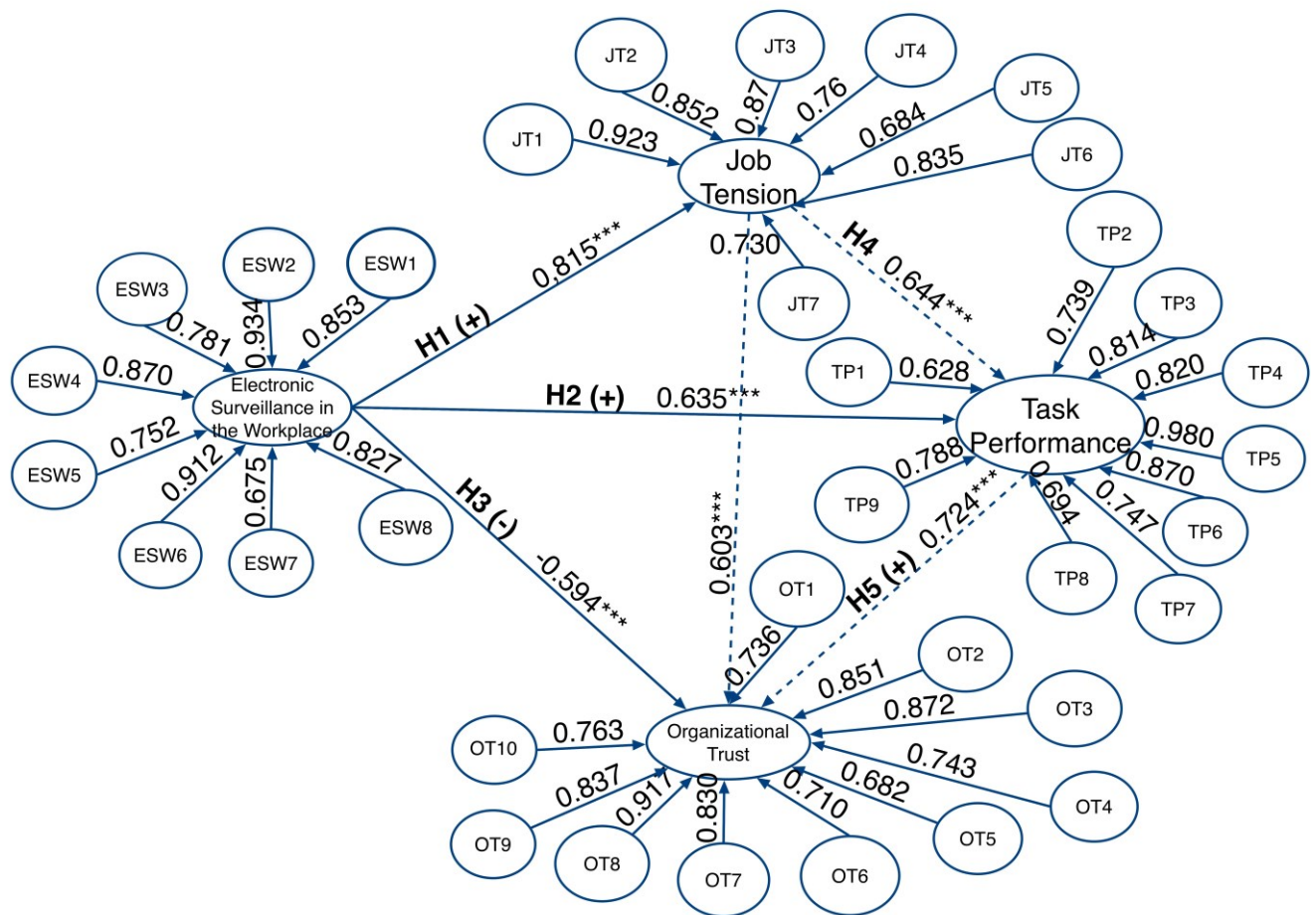
\*Reference Values are based on Hooper et al., (2008) and Hu and Bentler (1999).

Note: RMSEA: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; CFI: Comparative Fit Index; NFI: Normed Fit Index; NNFI: Non-Normed Fit Index; GFI: Goodness of Fit;  $\chi^2$ : Chi-Square; df: Degree of Freedom.

Source: Authors' work

After obtaining satisfactory results of fit indices values for the research model, as the next step, the structural equation model was set, and hypotheses were tested by examining the signs, statistical significance, and amount of variance explained for the parameters. The results of the structural equation model are present in Figure 2.

Figure 2  
Test Results of the Structural Equation Model



Note: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Source: Authors' work

As seen in Figure 2, H<sub>1</sub> that proposes the positive link between electronic surveillance in the workplace and job tension is supported since the coefficient is 0.815 at a 1% significance level. Additionally, the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value was 0.524, which explained the 52.4% variations in this relationship. Also, the following hypothesis H<sub>2</sub> suggests the positive relationship between electronic surveillance in the workplace and task performance is supported since the coefficient is 0.635 at a 1% significance level. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value was 0.448, which explained the 44.8% variations in this relationship. H<sub>3</sub>, which offers the negative relationship between e-surveillance and organizational trust, is supported because the coefficient is -0.594 at a 1% significance level. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value was found .394, which explained the 39.4% variations in this relationship. Following them, H<sub>4</sub> is not supported since the coefficient is 0.644 at a 1% significance level. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value was found 0.322, which explained the 32.2% variations.

On the contrary to the results obtained from previous studies, job tension caused a positive impact on task performance due to the source of tension in the workplace. The tension is based on the electronic controlling tools, and it is understood that, in the name of performance, it was perceived as a job resource rather than a job demand by the employees. But it should be kept in mind that this may be a specific

situation for the banking employees under electronic surveillance. Lastly, H<sub>5</sub>, which represents the positive link between organizational trust and task performance, is supported because the coefficient is .724 at a .01 significance level. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value explained the 41.9% variations in this relationship.

## Discussion and Conclusion

### *Summary*

In this paper, it was intended to put forth the effects of electronic surveillance in the workplace on selected employee outcomes. As previously stated in this study, it is understood that electronic surveillance positively impacts both job tension and task performance, and in contrast, it hurts the organizational trust of employees.

The effects of electronic surveillance are revealed by conducting a quantitative survey research technique in this study. According to the results obtained from data analysis, it is figured out that when the degree of electronic surveillance in the workplace by using computers, tablets, cameras, emails, and smartphones increases, employees' job tension also increases. When they feel close tracking by electronic devices, they are more likely to feel job tension. This positive relationship was also observed by Aiello et al. (1993). They have noted that employees with an external locus of control have higher stress levels than those with an internal locus of control. Normally, when job tension increases, job performance is expected to decrease. According to the results, it is obvious that when the degree of electronic surveillance increases, employees' task performances also increase. This may be due to the employees' worries about being monitored and their performance evaluations. Previous studies revealed that task performance of employees completing routine tasks increased, whereas task performance of employees completing complex tasks decreased (e.g., Aiello et al., 1995; Griffith, 1993). Since the employees who participated in this research were doing complex jobs in the banking sector, their increased level of performance is notable.

The last result shows the relationship between electronic surveillance and employees' organizational trust. It is turned out to be a negative relationship between these two variables. This result is consistent with the one obtained by Snyder (2010), who indicated a similar decrease in trust in organizations when their emails are monitored by management. It is due to a decrease in employees' trust in their organization stemming from the negative perception of electronic monitoring. Employees' level of organizational trust may have deteriorated because they may have perceived electronic monitoring techniques as a means of violating privacy.

### *Contributions to the literature*

So far, scholars have made contributions to the theory by mostly concentrating on the effects of electronic surveillance on counterproductive work behaviors (e.g., Jensen et al., 2012; Martin et al., 2016). These studies highlighted the negative effects of electronic surveillance. But with this study, it has been understood that there are also positive effects of electronic surveillance on employees, such as improving their task performances in the workplace.

The positive effect of electronic surveillance on job tension was previously proposed by Carlson et al. (2017). This study also aimed to test that relationship practically. And according to the results, a positive effect has been proven between electronic surveillance and job tension. In this manner, electronic surveillance may be added to the literature of the JD-R Model as another new aspect of job demand.

Moreover, this research attempts to reveal the relation between electronic surveillance and task performance, which is another scarcity in the literature. Lately, there has been only the research of Yost et al. (2019) on the effect of contextual performance rather than task performance, and they have found a negative relationship between these variables. On the contrary, performance has turned out to be positively related to electronic surveillance in this study.

Lastly, it is understood from the results that contrary to the findings in the literature (Pool, 2000), job tension has a positive relationship with task performance. This may have occurred because of the characteristics of the participants. Since most of them are young and adaptive to use technology, they might have felt job tension stemming from electronic surveillance up to a constructive limit to do their best in their tasks. This type of job tension positively affects task performance rather than a negative one.

### *Practical implications*

Especially under the Covid-19 circumstances, new forms of work, mostly based on remote work, have become a key factor for organizations to survive. Having roots in times before the Covid-19 pandemic, electronic surveillance has also become a necessity in today's organizations. But how can employers help employees adapt to this type of monitoring without negative perceptions? This study gives important clues for this situation.

Since electronic surveillance creates some stress on employees, it is expected to impact employees' job tension positively. Employees feel uncomfortable about being tracked while working, which causes job tension in the workplace. Managers can overcome this problem by only using electronic surveillance for constructive feedback without violating personal privacy. Managers should be clear to employees about electronic surveillance standards, rules, and procedures.

Moreover, a remarkable point from this study is that electronic surveillance hurts organizational trust levels of employees. This may be due to a debate between control and trust. When employees feel that e-surveillance is a tool used to track and control employees more closely, they may assume the organization does not trust in them. As a result, they also tend to trust less in their organization. According to Abraham et al. (2019), when organizational members constructively comprehend electronic surveillance, they may develop positive attitudes towards it, which causes more beneficial employee behaviors in the workplace. To solve this problem, managers should communicate with employees about e-surveillance transparently. They should tell employees why it is necessary and where it is used to resolve trust issues.

Consequently, this study has understood that employees tend to obey norms and procedures more under electronic surveillance. Although this situation creates job tension among employees, it has a constructive effect like improving their task performance. As stated before, electronic surveillance is formed and used in such a way that helps employees do their job more effectively. It is a very useful tool for increasing job performance.

### *Limitations of the study*

Firstly, the sample included in this study was chosen purposively to include the most relevant participants to electronic surveillance. Participants should have been faced with these types of implementations; otherwise, the results would be meaningless. Also, the sample is chosen from one company, which is an extra limitation.



Additionally, employee number in the sample makes the results unable to be generalized.

Furthermore, although the questionnaires used in the study are valid and reliable, there is an important weakness about them, and it stems from their being self-evaluated. Especially, another limitation emerges since the measure used for task performance is self-evaluated. The general rules and conditions of the bank selected for this study made it unable for managers to evaluate their subordinates' task performance for scientific research.

### *Future research directions*

Although numerous studies on electronic surveillance and its effects on employee-related outcomes, there is still a substantive need for new research. First of all, to overcome the limitations of this study, in the future, researchers should reach a more diversified research sample and electronic test surveillance in the workplace in more than one sector to generate a comparison between them.

Secondly, since today's definition of the workplace is changing, future studies may concentrate on virtual workplace electronic surveillance. The importance of this type of surveillance has increased due to the work conditions under the Covid-19 pandemic.

Lastly, there should be studies revealing the link between electronic surveillance and behavioral outcomes like; organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job motivation, job performance, and organizational antecedents and consequences like; organizational justice, organizational support, etc. Researchers may build their theoretical framework using psychological reactance theory and privacy protection motivation theory. After conducting empirical studies, they may contribute to the existing knowledge and theory about electronic surveillance.

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