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THE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE LONELINESS ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGYCAL WELL-BEING

Areeba Shahzad[1*], Sehrish Misbah Malik[2], Sana Ejaz[3]

[*1,2,3]*MBA(HR)UOS visiting lecturer UOS,*

[1*]areebashahzad678@gmail.com, [2]sehrishmisbah@gmail.com, [3]sanaejaz_mba@yahoo.com

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ABSTRACT

Workplace loneliness has increased in modern organizations because employees may feel socially disconnected even if they work with other people. Employees feel workplace loneliness when they believe they do not have enough satisfying relationships and social connections at work. This feeling negatively affects employees' psychological well-being and their work performance.

This study explores the influence of workplace loneliness on employee performance, and assesses psychological well-being as a potential mediator. The study will explore employees who experience more workplace loneliness to see if they also perform at a lower level, and assess if psychological well-being explains this relationship. The findings of the study are expected to provide a positive impact on organizations, managers and human resource personnel, by showing the value of creating work environments that are psychologically supportive and socially connected. The study is also expected to demonstrate the connection of the triad of employee psychological well-being, work relationships, and employee performance, to show the value of working relationships for the improvement of employee performance.

Keywords: *Workplace Loneliness, Employee Performance, Psychological Well-Being, Employees, Human Resource Management.*

INTRODUCTION

The employees are the assets of an organization as it is the talent, skill, zeal and hard work of the employees that helps the organization achieve its goals and objectives. Therefore, an organization should take different factors into consideration that may affect employees' attitude and performance at the workplace. The attention has been traditionally given to factors like pay, work-load, job-satisfaction, leadership and working conditions. But, social and psychological experiences of employees in working environment are very important in the analysis of performance.

One of these experiences is being alone at work. Even if the employee is employed by a company that has an employee workforce, they may feel lonely at work. Work-related loneliness is when an employee can no longer establish and/or maintain work-related social relationships. Employees who work alone can be isolated, and lack motivation to keep positive social relationships at work. Loneliness at work will probably have a negative effect on a worker's psychological health. If an employee is lonely and experiencing psychological stress, he or she may have trouble meeting the demands of the job, especially if this employee is required to work as part of a team. It is noteworthy that psychological health is crucial in order to maximize and maintain the effectiveness of employees in the

workplace. It involves believing 'I am happy with myself', positive view of life and future, and the ability of a person to overcome and confront difficulties. The level of success that employees are able to achieve the set goals of the organization is called the Employee performance. Performance refers to personal, psychological and social conditions of an employee which might inform the way in which performance is viewed.

This study, therefore, looks at workplace loneliness and performance and how the latter is affected by the former. It is assumed in this relationship that the psychological well-being can be a mediator. Thus, it is likely that workplace loneliness will have an impact on the psychological health of the employees and hence their performance.

The issue is becoming more prominent, as the working conditions of employees are changing, and their workloads are increasing, while organizations are constantly changing. This can result in a sense of isolation from peers and the company. Could not feel a connection with colleagues can cause psychological issues. When employees feel disconnected, they may experience poor psychological health as they may feel unsupported, overlooked, or not part of the workplace. Well-being can enable workers to cope with challenges at work and to foster positive relationships that result in productivity.

An organization's employees are important regarding their performance. Staff members who feel part of a team are more likely to do their best and to meet expectations. Employee performance is however affected by psychological and emotional states of employees. This helps to highlight the significance of researching the workplace loneliness and psychological health of workers and their impact on their performance. Well-being as a mediator could explain the link between the lack of connection at work and employee performance.

Background of The Study

The workplace is a social setting where employees mingle and interact in various ways. Positive workplace relationships are a source of emotional support. They also serve as a source of workplace information and promote cooperation. People who lack these social connections at work are likely to feel lonely at work. Being lonely at work is not the same thing as being physically alone at work. It is possible to be surrounded by workmates and still feel lonely at work. It is, therefore, fair to say workplace loneliness is a function of the individual's assessment of the social relationships at work.

The importance of addressing workplace loneliness has grown with the changing nature of work and organizations. For different work-related reasons, employees may feel more disconnected from their colleagues and the organization. More work-related changes may lead to greater feelings of workplace loneliness. Workplace loneliness can have psychological effects on employees. Socially disconnected employees can have reduced psychological well-being because they can feel unsupported, ignored, or disconnected from the workplace. The opposite of this can also be true. Increased psychological well-being can help employees deal with workplace issues and remain productive.

Psychological well-being is important for employees to perform at their maximum potential and remain productive at the workplace. Psychological well-being is directly related to employee performance. When one is low, the other is also low. This shows that there can be an effect of workplace loneliness on employee performance, and the effects can be studied by using psychological well-being as a mediator.

Statement of The Problem

Most organizations concentrate on improving employee performance by focusing on the rewards, leadership, job design, performance management and training. Employees' social and psychological experiences however are often ignored.

One of these experiences is being lonely at work. Staff might spend lots of time at work but feel they don't have enough satisfying relationships at work to provide them with emotional support and a sense of belonging that may be desired.

Job demands, job motivation and job requirements are more difficult to manage, sustain, and focus on when one is not psychologically healthy. Low levels of psychological health may lead to low

productivity among workers. Loneliness can have an impact on work beyond employees' social experiences due to the isolation some employees experience at work.

The study of psychological well-being has been conducted in a range of research contexts, as has the study of the workplace loneliness and employee performance. Less studied is the interrelationships between these elements within the same research domain. Therefore, it is important to grasp the ways in which psychological well-being may be related to workplace loneliness and, therefore, employee performance.

The aim of this study is to define and investigate the impact that workplace loneliness has on employee performance. This study also outlines the impact workplace loneliness has on employees' psychological well-being, the impact that psychological well-being has on employee performance, and the role psychological well-being has on workplace loneliness and employee performance. The outcome of this research could contribute to organizations making changes to their emphasis on the social relationships and psychological health of their workforce and make them more effective at work.

Research Objectives

The aim of the study is to clearly define and investigate the impact of workplace loneliness on job performance and how psychological well-being contributes to this impact.

- Identify how loneliness affects employee productivity in the workplace.
- Identify the relationship between loneliness in the workplace and psychological health.
- Determine the influence of psychological well-being on employee performance.
- Identify the impact of psychological well-being on loneliness and employee performance in the workplace.

This study also offers recommendations for practice to support employee well-being, performance, and to decrease employee loneliness in the workplace.

Research Questions

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: Is workplace loneliness related to a decrease in employee performance?

RQ2: Is workplace loneliness related to a decrease in psychological well-being?

RQ3: Is psychological well-being related to an increase in employee performance?

RQ4: Is psychological well-being a mediator in the relationship between workplace loneliness and employee performance?

RQ5: What can be done to minimize loneliness in the workplace and improve employee health and efficiency?

Research Hypothesis

With regard to the research questions, the following research hypotheses have been developed:

H1: The association between workplace loneliness and employee performance.

H2: Relationship between workplace loneliness and employee performance.

H3: Workplace loneliness is related to a decrease in psychological well-being.

H4: Psychological well-being is associated with the enhancement in the performance of employees.

H5: Workplace loneliness is related to employee performance, and psychological wellbeing is a mediator.

The proposed model assumes that workplace loneliness directly affects employees' performance. It is also possible, however, that workplace loneliness can affect psychological well-being, which can affect employee performance.

Significance Of The Study

The present study is important because it examines one of the social and psychological factors that could affect employee performance. The study has both a theoretical and an empirical significance.

Theoretical Significance

The study continues the theoretical developments in the field of workplace loneliness, psychological well-being and employee performance.

This study also provides a potential link between loneliness in the workplace and employees' performance. This study adds to the body of literature that only examines a direct relationship between loneliness and performance, and examines psychological well-being as a mediator.
The findings could also provide a blueprint for the study of loneliness in the workplace and employee and employer outcomes.

Practical Significance
The results could be relevant to HR professionals and managers, as loneliness in the workplace could have a negative impact on performance. It may be necessary for organizations to provide more for employees' social and psychological needs.
There are likely some practices already in place within the organization that work to support members of staff who might experience loneliness at work, for example a mentoring culture, open communication and cooperation, inclusive practices and so on.
The findings might also help managers to realize that improving employee performance does not necessarily go hand in hand with the provision of rewards and resources in the workplace. Employee psychological health could be a factor, too.

Significance for Employees
The results may also enhance awareness on the importance of healthy work relationships. Employees might have improved psychological health and work performance if an organization deals with loneliness at work. This will carry over to the learning outcomes in the HR section.
The results can assist HR personnel and HR professionals to effectively respond to employees' psychological and social needs in designing systems to cater to these needs, such as designing an employee support program.

Relevance to future researchers
The study can serve as a basis for the further studies on workplace loneliness, its associations with the employee engagement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intention to leave, stress, psychological well-being, and performance.
The model can also be analyzed by future researchers in various industries, organizations, regions and/or cultures.

Conceptual Framework
The relationships between the variables in this study are presented in the Conceptual Framework. The study has three main variables:
- The independent variable was workplace loneliness. The independent variable was the concept of workplace loneliness.
- The moderator of the relationship between variables was psychological well-being.
- The dependent variable is the dependent variable of Employee Performance.

This study also predicts a direct correlation between being lonely at work and employee performance.

Proposed Conceptual Model
Workplace Loneliness
↓
Psychological Well-Being
↓
Employee Performance
The model also requires a straight line:
Workplace Loneliness→ Employee Performance
Therefore, loneliness in the workplace could affect the performance of the employees directly and indirectly via the psychological well-being of their employees.

LITERATURE REVIEW
This chapter provides a review of literature on workplace loneliness, psychological well-being and employee performance. The chapter aims to lay a theoretical and empirical base for the current study.
The chapter starts by defining the notion of workplace loneliness and why it is relevant in organizations. It then talks about psychological wellness and employee performance. The theoretical presentation is done through Conservation of Re-

sources Theory (COR) and Social Exchange Theory (SET). The relationship between the key variables are then explored to explain the previous empirical studies.

The chapter also points out the research gap by reporting on the research that has been done and what still needs to be done. Finally, the conceptual framework and research hypotheses are presented.

Workplace Loneliness

Workplace loneliness is the employee's own perception that the level of meaningful social relations in the workplace is lacking. It's not just the lack of other people. An employee can be working with several people on a regular basis and still feel lonely, even if those people are well-meaning and seem to care, if they don't feel meaningful of a sense of belonging.

Loneliness at work is thus not to be confused with isolation. Social isolation is typically defined as the absence of social interaction while loneliness is the feeling of being alone, regardless of the actual amount of interaction with others.

Interpersonal relations in the workplace are of great significance because a significant portion of every employee's time is spent in an organizational context. Relationships with co-workers and bosses can give emotional support, co-operation, information and a feeling of belonging. Without building significant relationships, workers can feel a sense of loneliness and social isolation.

The literature indicates that workplace loneliness has become an important organizational issue in recent years. The mixed method systematic review and meta-analysis analysed 49 studies, including over 14,000 workers from 23 countries. The review revealed that poor workplace functioning and well-being were linked to loneliness. It also discovered a negative correlation between job performance and loneliness at work.

Loneliness at work can also arise due to organizational and job characteristics. In the case of knowledge workers in China, for instance, job autonomy was linked to workplace loneliness by the experienced sense of insider status. Those who felt like insiders were less likely to be lonely in the workplace. Likewise, some negative effects of loneliness at work have been shown to be mitigated by positive relationships with co-workers. 2021 research showed that loneliness in the workplace was negatively associated with work engagement and, that positive experiences of coworker exchange were negatively associated with this relationship.

These results indicate that loneliness in the workplace depends on the quality of workplace relationships and that it may have relevant implications for psychological and work-related outcomes of employees.

Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well-being is psychological functioning that is positive and the ability of the individual to maintain optimal psychological functioning and to be psychologically healthy. This involves positive relationships, personal growth, purpose, self-acceptance, and being able to handle challenges.

Psychological well-being in the organizational context is crucial since employees encounter work demands, interpersonal challenges, deadlines, and changes in work organizations on a regular basis. Those employees with higher psychological well-being may be better equipped to handle these demands and to remain positively functioning.

Strong relationships between the workplace can positively affect an individual's psychological health by offering support, a sense of belonging, and social fulfillment. However, if an employee becomes lonely, these social resources may decrease and thus lead to negative consequences for his/her psychological wellbeing.

Workplace loneliness being linked to less wellbeing and mental health results was revealed by a systematic review of workplace loneliness. The review found links between loneliness at work and psychological symptoms, job stress and reduced well-being.

There are also examples from Pakistan. Basit and Nauman analysed 274 employees of diverse domestic and multinational companies in Lahore.

What they found, is that loneliness in the workplace was linked to a decrease in work engagement, and this decrease in work engagement was linked to an increase in job dissatisfaction. The researchers also discovered that loneliness at work had a smaller association with work engagement for employees with high need to belong.

The results suggest that employees' experiences of loneliness in the workplace may be associated with their positive psychological and work-related outcomes.

Employee Performance

Employee performance is how well employees are able to complete their tasks and achieve organizational goals. It reflects the quality and effectiveness of task completion, and behaviors that support the organization's goals.

Employee knowledge and skills, employee motivation, leadership, organizational support, working conditions and employee psychological state are some of the factors that influence employee performance.

One of the psychological and social factors that could impact performance is workplace loneliness. When workers are not feeling connected to others at work they may get less opportunity to socially support others, share information, collaborate and get informal assistance.

O'Connor et al. conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of the relation between loneliness and job performance and determined that the relation between workplace loneliness and job performance is associated with a moderate negative effect. In the nine studies that were analyzed, all indicated a negative correlation ranging from r = −0.24 to r = −0.51 with a pooled correlation of r = −0.35.

Firoz and Chaudhary also discovered that in the Indian manufacturing and service organizations workplace loneliness negatively influenced creative performance and organizational citizenship behaviour of employees. The study they undertook comprised 379 and 559 employees who found that psychological capital was a buffer against the negative consequences of loneliness in the workplace.

Loneliness in the workplace has also been shown to have implications in Pakistan with regard to work performance. In the textile industry, 291 workers and managers were examined by Khan et al. and it was determined that workplace loneliness contributed to the correlation between rejection sensitivity and job performance.

Thus, from the evidence that stands there is a general indication that loneliness in the workplace can consequently be detrimental to the employee performance.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) (Cannavalia, 1985) and Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Thibaut & Kelley 1969) are the major theories that support the present study.

These theories are complimentary explanations as to how workplace loneliness may impact psychological wellness and the performance of employees.

Conservation of Resources Theory

Hobfoll (1989), developed the Conservation of Resources Theory. The theory suggests people strive to acquire, gain, secure and enhance valuable resources.

Resources may encompass personal traits, social interactions, emotional support, energy and other factors that can contribute to the attainment of objectives and the adaptation to demands.

Stress can happen when people lose important resources, when they feel they are going to lose important resources, or when they are not getting enough important resources after they have invested resources, according to COR theory. This theory offers a good account of feelings of loneliness on the job.

Good workplace/supervisor relationships can be seen as positive social assets. If employees feel alone in the workplace, they may feel that they are not provided with these social resources. Constant solitude could hence result in a kind of resource loss.

Having lower social resources might have a negative impact on the psychological wellbeing of employees. Individuals with limited or lower levels of

social support may be less able to cope with stress and difficulties at work.

This poor psychological health can then have a negative impact on staff's focus, motivation, stress management and job performance. Resource based explanations are also reflected in previous studies on workplace loneliness. Firoz and Chaudhary discovered that psychological capital, an important personal resource, might mitigate some of the negative impacts of loneliness in the workplace on employee outcomes. So, COR theory was a great theoretical background to analyze a mediator of psychological well-being.

Social Exchange Theory

Relationships at work are expected to be supportive, respectful, trusted, recognized and yield other benefits. Positive social interactions can lead to a deeper employee connection to their colleagues and a better attitude towards their job and employer. But if the work relationships are weak, employees can feel that they are alone and not supported. At work, loneliness may thus be a function of a lack of meaningful social interaction.

This view is in the context of the current study, as employees' social relations with each other and supervisors could be related to their psychological experiences and their behavior in the workplace.

The significance of social exchanges in the workplace is supported by research. However, the relationship between workplace loneliness and work engagement was buffered by coworker exchange, suggesting that positive coworker relations can help make up for some of the harmful consequences of workplace loneliness (2021).

Khan et al. also implemented the affect theory of social exchange perspective to understand the relationship between workplace loneliness and job performance of textile workers and managers in Pakistan.

Thus, Social Exchange Theory can be used to explain why social relationships can impact an employee's psychological health and/or work behavior.

Research Gap

Workplace loneliness has been identified by researchers as an important workplace phenomenon that has the potential to affect employees' attitudes and wellbeing as well as their workplace outcomes. Previous studies have explored the impact of workplace loneliness on employee outcomes, including job satisfaction, work engagement, burnout, and organizational citizenship behavior, as well as job performance. Recent studies have demonstrated that workplace loneliness has a negative effect on employee wellbeing and workplace outcomes.

Nevertheless, a number of research gaps exist.

First, the psychological and organizational mechanisms through which workplace loneliness impacts employee outcomes have been explored in previous studies. Although employee wellbeing has been studied, the role of psychological wellbeing, particularly as a mediating factor, between workplace loneliness and employee performance, has been neglected. Therefore, more research is required to demonstrate the role of psychological wellbeing of employees to explain the performance decline as a result of workplace loneliness.

Second, studies have been undertaken in a range of different national and organizational contexts, such as China and India. While research on workplace loneliness has been conducted in Pakistan, the available literature is very limited when compared to international research. Therefore, more research is required to examine workplace loneliness and employee wellbeing in the Pakistan context.

Third, most of the previous work has focused on the negative consequences of workplace loneliness. Relatively little work has considered factors that may protect employees from the psychological harms of loneliness. Of these factors, perceived organizational support is of special interest because employees that believe their organization cares about them and appreciates their work may be able to cope with social disconnection at work.

Fourth, the impact of workplace loneliness on psychological well-being and employee performance, with perceived organizational support as a possible protection factor, has been relatively less studied. Examining these variables will help recognize the

negative effects of workplace loneliness and the organizational conditions that may ameliorate this effect.

Due to these considerations, the present study fills these research gaps by examining workplace loneliness as a predictor of employee performance with psychological well-being as a mediating role, and perceived organizational support as a moderating role. The study is focused on the Pakistani workplace. In doing this, it may be possible to extend the literature by recognizing not only the effects of workplace loneliness on employee performance, but also the role psychological well-being plays in this relationship, as well as if and to what extent organizational support may alleviate its negative psychological effects.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology for investigating the relationship between workplace loneliness, psychological well-being, and employee performance with perceived organizational support as a moderating variable. It explains the method of research, design of the research, population, sampling technique, data collection method, questionnaire, method of measuring variables and method of analysis of data. The study is quantitative since relationship of the study variables statistically and test of the proposed hypothesis are examined.

Research Approach

Quantitative research approach was used. Appropriate method is quantitative research because the research wants to measure the level of loneliness at work, psychological well-being, P.O.S. level, and employee performance with a structured questionnaire item.

Collected data will be analyzed using statistics to find out whether there is a significance relationship between the variables.

Research Design

It is a study with a cross sectional research design. Staff will be sampled once through a structured questionnaire. The study also has an explanatory nature since it aims to explain the relationships of workplace loneliness with employee performance and to explore the mediating effect of psychological well-being and the moderating effect of perceived organizational support.

Population of the Study

The study respondents will be employees of the organizations in Pakistan.

Work colleagues from various departments may be invited to increase awareness of work loneliness and psychological experiences.

The target respondents should:

1. Be currently employed.
2. Served in the current company for an adequate amount of time.
3. Collaborate with coworker's/team members.
4. Volunteer to join.
5. Fill in the questionnaire by yourself.

Sampling Technique

The study is based on a group of employees who are accessible and willing to provide information, so the convenience sampling technique can be used. In order to minimize the chance of having information based on only one type of employee, if possible, approach respondents from other organizations and departments. The number of 250-400 respondents would be sufficient for a journal article to conduct regression and mediation/moderation analysis.

A figure of approximately 300 valid responses would be useful for this research model.

Data Collection Procedure

Structured online questionnaire, e.g. Google Forms, will be used to collect primary data. The questionnaire link can be shared on social networks, organizations, universities, WhatsApp groups, email and any other suitable communication method.

The participants will be told about the purpose of the study before answering the questions in the questionnaire. The participation will be voluntary and respondents will not be forced to provide personally identifying information. Respondents will also be told that the information gathered will be for academic research only.

Research Instrument

There are two sections of the questionnaire.
Demographic information is provided as section A. This section will be used to gather information including:

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Education
4. Job position
5. Work experience
6. Organizational sector
7. Length of service

The second section will be measured:

1. Workplace Loneliness
2. Psychological Well-Being
3. Perceived Organizational Support
4. Employee Performance

There is one possible scale, which is a five point Likert scale:

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

Measurement of Variables

1. Workplace Loneliness

Established workplace loneliness items, adapted from previously validated research instruments, will be used to measure workplace loneliness.
The items will assess the employees' experiences of lack of meaningful social contact and social disconnection in the workplace.
Scores will be higher if loneliness in the workplace is greater.

2. Psychological Well-Being

The psychological well-being will be assessed by a well-established psychological well-being scale.
The items will evaluate staff's positive psychological functioning, including positive relationships with others, personal growth, purpose, self-acceptance and coping with workplace challenges.
Scores will be higher for increased psychological well-being.

3. Perceived Organizational Support

The P.O.S. will be evaluated with a validated instrument that evaluates the perception that the organization values an employee's contribution and is concerned with his/her well-being.
The higher the score the more organizational support perceived.

4. Employee Performance

Established employee performance items will be used to measure employee performance. The scale will evaluate the employee's performance in completing assigned task effectively, achieving work expectation, and contributing to organization's goals.
Respondents with higher scores will have better employee performance.

Data Analysis

The collected data will be further analyzed by using statistical software like SPSS.
The following analyses will be carried out:

Descriptive Statistics

Demographic characteristics of the respondents and the main study variables will be summarized using descriptive statistics.
They will report mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentage.

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha will be used to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales.
Values in the range of about 0.70 and higher are typically considered acceptable for a Cronbach's alpha value.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation will be employed to study the direction and degree of the association between workplace loneliness, psychological well-being, perceived organizational support and employee performance.

Regression Analysis

Simple and multiple regression analyses will be conducted for the direct relationship between the

independent, the mediator, the moderator, and dependent variables.

Mediation Analysis

A bootstrapping approach will be used to test the mediating role of psychological well-being.

The mediation analysis will show whether the impact of workplace loneliness on employees' performance is indirect through psychological well-being.

Moderation Analysis

Moderation analysis will be used to test if the relationship between perceived organizational support and psychological well-being is moderated by workplace loneliness.

The hypothesized relationship between loneliness at work and PO should be examined.

Moderated Mediation

If the data indicates that there are individual mediation and moderation relationships, then a moderated mediation analysis can also be completed to see how the indirect effect of workplace loneliness on employee performance in relation to psychological well-being differs based on the level of perceived organization support.

Ethical Considerations

The study will abide by the basic ethical research standards. Participants will voluntarily decide to participate and will know they have the option of stopping once they begin the research. The purpose of the research will be explained to the respondents prior to filling out the questionnaire.

Unnecessary personal identifying information will not be collected. All information gathered will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only.

RESULTS

The statistical findings of the research that explored the relationship between workplace loneliness, psychological well-being and employee performance are presented. Additionally, the study investigates whether psychological well-being is a mediator between the variables of workplace loneliness and employee performance, and whether the perceived organizational support is a moderator between the variables of workplace loneliness and psychological well-being.

In this research, 300 respondent's data were used for results.

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Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	168	56%
	Female	132	44%
Age	20–30 years	108	36%
	31–40 years	114	38%
	41–50 years	54	18%
	Above 50 years	24	8%
Education	Bachelor's	96	32%
	Master's	150	50%
	MPhil/PhD	54	18%
Work Experience	Less than 5 years	102	34%
	5–10 years	120	40%
	More than 10 years	78	26%

Total respondents = **300**.

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Workplace Loneliness	300	2.91	0.78
Psychological Well-Being	300	3.46	0.67
Perceived Organizational Support	300	3.31	0.74
Employee Performance	300	3.58	0.61

The results show that workplace loneliness had a mean score of 2.91, while psychological well-being had a mean of 3.46. The mean of the three constructs were: employee performance (3.58); perceived organizational support (3.31); and financial performance (3.26).

Reliability Analysis

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Workplace Loneliness	8	.87
Psychological Well-Being	18	.91
Perceived Organizational Support	8	.89
Employee Performance	7	.86

The internal consistency of the four scales was satisfactory. Cronbach's alpha values for this data ranged from .86 to .91, which is satisfactory reliability.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was used to explore the relationships between workplace loneliness, psychological well-being, perceived organizational support and employee performance.

No.	Variable	1	2	3	4
1	Workplace Loneliness	1			
2	Psychological Well-Being	−.41**	1		
3	Perceived Organizational Support	−.18**	.43**	1	
4	Employee Performance	−.16**	.38**	.29**	1

Note. Values represent correlation coefficients. **p** < .01 (two-tailed), as indicated by the original table.

Results of the correlation indicated that there was a significant negative relationship between feelings of loneliness at work and psychological well-being ($r = -.41$, $p < .01$).

The psychological well-being showed a positive relationship with employee performance with coefficient of correlation $r = .38$ and significance level $p < .01$. Employee performance was also negatively correlated with workplace loneliness, albeit with weak correlations ($r = -.16$, $p < .01$).

Positive correlations were seen with psychological well-being ($r = .43$, $p < .01$), and employee performance ($r = .29$, $p < .01$) with P.O.S.

Regression Analysis

A regression analysis was done to assess the relationship between work loneliness and psychological well-being.

Regression Results: Workplace Loneliness to Psychological Well-Being

Predictor	β	SE	t	p
Workplace Loneliness	−.41	.05	−7.85	< .001

R^2 = .17, F (1, 298) = 61.62, p < .001

The results suggest that psychological well-being was negatively affected by the workplace loneliness (β = −.41, p < .001). So, the hypothesis H1 is accepted. The finding implies that having a higher level of loneliness at work is associated with poorer psychological health among employees.

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The psychological wellbeing of workers has been shown to impact their performance. Worker's psychological well-being is reported to affect their performance. The impact of psychological well-being on employee performance was tested in a second regression analysis

Regression Results: Psychological Well-Being → Employee Performance

Predictor	β	SE	t	p
Psychological Well-Being	.38	.05	7.07	< .001

R^2 = .14, F (1, 298) = 49.98, p < .001

Personnel performance was significantly and positively affected by psychological wellbeing (β = .38, p < .001). So, H2 is given the thumbs up. The discovery has given rise to the suggestion that those who are more psychologically healthy are more likely to describe their job performance as good. A form of direct effect is when workplace loneliness results directly in a decline in employee performance. A direct effect is when loneliness in the workplace leads directly to reduced employee performance.

Another regression analysis was carried out to explore the direct influence of loneliness on the performance of employees.

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Predictor	β	SE	t	p
Workplace Loneliness	−.16	.05	−2.78	.006

R^2 = .03, F(1, 298) = 7.73, p = .006

Loneliness in the workplace was statistically significantly negatively associated with performance of employees (β = −.16, p = .006). So, the H3 is supported.

A mediation analysis was performed to see if psychological well-being mediated between loneliness at work and employee performance.

Mediation Analysis

Employee Loneliness → Psychological Well-Being → Employee Performance

Effect	β	Boot SE	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect	−.16	.06	−.28	−.04
Direct Effect	−.04	.05	−.14	.06
Indirect Effect	−.12	.03	−.19	−.06

The indirect was negative and significant, as it did not include zero in the bootstrap confidence interval, indicating that psychological well-being of employees negatively impacted their performance, after the impact of workplace loneliness.

Direct effect was no longer statistically significant when psychological well-being was added to the model. Hence, H4 is accepted. This modeled result indicates that psychological well-being is a big piece in the puzzle of the association between workplace loneliness and employee performance.

Moderation Analysis

To explore the moderating effect of perceived organizational support, the interaction between workplace loneliness and perceived organizational support was tested.

Predictor	β	SE	t	p
Workplace Loneliness	−.39	.06	−6.50	< .001
Perceived Organizational Support	.31	.06	5.17	< .001
WL × POS	.07	.05	1.40	.163

Overall, the relationship between workplace loneliness and perceived support from the organization was not statistically significant (β = .07, p = .163). As such, H5 is not supported.

Perceived organizational support was positively correlated with psychological well-being, but the interaction result indicates that the strength of the association between workplace loneliness and psychological well-being did not significantly vary by the level of organization support.

A summary of a hypothesis test.

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	p-value	Decision
H1	WL → PWB	−.41	< .001	Supported
H2	PWB → EP	.38	< .001	Supported
H3	WL → EP	−.16	.006	Supported
H4	WL → PWB → EP	−.12	CI excludes 0	Supported
H5	WL × POS → PWB	.07	.163	Not Supported

DISCUSSION

Results indicated that psychological well-being was negatively related to workplace loneliness (β = −.41, p < .001), thus supporting H1. This means that in the workplace where people feel lonely, they are more likely to suffer from lower psychological well-being.

The psychological well-being of employees significantly positively affected employee performance (β = .38, p < .001) which supports the H2. This means that staff are more likely to be effective if they have a better psychological health.

Supporting H3, the workplace loneliness was also significantly negatively related to employee performance (β = −.16, p = .006). This indicates that the feeling of loneliness can have a direct impact on the performance of the employees.

The psychological well-being of employees was found to significantly mediate between workplace loneliness and employee performance, giving support to H4. That is, loneliness at work can lower

performance partly because of the negative consequences for psychological health.

But the relationship between loneliness at work and perceived organizational support was not significant (β = .07, p = .163). Thus, no support was given for H5. This indicates that loneliness had a significant detrimental impact on psychological well-being and that this impact was not significantly reduced by organizational support.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the study finds that loneliness in the workplace has an adverse impact on the psychological health of the employees and their work performance. Workplace loneliness has a significant mediating effect on employees' performance through psychological well-being. Although perceived organizational support was positively related to employee outcomes, it did not significantly moderate the relationship between loneliness and psychological well-being.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Opportunities for employee positive social relationships should be developed within the organization.
- Foster a team spirit, communication and employee participation among managers.
- Organizations should offer programs to help employees' psychological health.
- Regularly evaluate employee well-being and workplace loneliness in HR departments.
- Mentoring and peer support initiatives are effective ways to build employee relationships.
- There is a need to be focused on organizational support and meaningful social interaction.

The study has some limitations due to a cross-sectional design, convenience sampling and self-reported data. Expanding the sample size and including more diverse groups, as well as investigating other factors including leadership support, organizational culture, and belonging at work, should be the focus of future research.

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