

The Impact of Workplace Characteristics on Healthcare Employee Performance in Pakistan: The Mediating Role of Job Stress.

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of workplace characteristics, specifically resilience, cyber loafing, and workplace ostracism on healthcare employee performance in Pakistan, with job stress serving as a mediating variable. The research was conducted in hospitals located in Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where organizational dynamics and cultural contexts present unique challenges for healthcare professionals. Drawing on theories of organizational behavior and stress management, the study employed a quantitative research design using structured questionnaires distributed among hospital employees. A sample of 176 respondents was analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with Smart PLS 3.3.3 software.

The measurement model demonstrated strong reliability and validity, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.70, composite reliability ranging from 0.904 to 0.975, and average variance extracted (AVE) values between 0.610 and 0.753. Discriminant validity was confirmed through Fornell-Larcker criteria and HTMT ratios, while variance inflation factor (VIF) scores indicated no collinearity concerns.

The structural model results revealed that resilience significantly reduced job stress, while cyber loafing and workplace ostracism increased stress levels. Job stress, in turn, had a significant negative effect on employee performance. Mediation analysis confirmed that job stress mediated the relationships between resilience, cyber loafing, ostracism, and employee performance. These findings highlight the critical role of stress management in healthcare organizations, where workplace dynamics directly influence employee well-being and productivity.

The study contributes to the literature by addressing gaps in understanding the interplay between workplace characteristics and employee performance in developing country contexts. Practical recommendations include resilience-building programs, policies to reduce cyber loafing, interventions to mitigate workplace ostracism, and proactive stress management strategies. By implementing these measures, healthcare institutions can enhance employee performance, reduce stress, and ultimately improve patient care outcomes.

Keywords: Workplace characteristics, resilience, cyber loafing, workplace ostracism, job stress, employee performance, healthcare sector, Pakistan, PLS-SEM.

Introduction

In today's competitive and dynamic work environment, employee performance is a critical determinant of organizational success. Within healthcare institutions, where efficiency and quality of service directly affect patient outcomes, understanding the factors that shape employee performance is particularly important. This study investigates how workplace characteristics specifically workplace ostracism, resilience, and cyber loafing affect healthcare employee performance in Pakistan, with job stress serving as a mediating variable.

Workplace characteristics encompass leadership styles, organizational culture, communication systems, and work design. These elements influence employee behavior, motivation, and productivity. Employee performance, in turn, reflects the ability to meet organizational goals through task efficiency, innovation, and job satisfaction. However, workplace conditions often generate stress, which can either amplify or diminish performance outcomes. By examining these relationships, this study aims to provide insights for healthcare administrators to foster supportive environments that enhance both well-being and productivity.

Job Stress as a Mediating Variable

There can be many factors that cause job stress. These include work overload, role ambiguity, role conflict and responsibility for people, lack of feedback, technological pressures, innovative roles, career growth challenges, organizational structure, and episodic events (Margolis, 1974; Sarmiento, 2007; Kazmi, 2008; Bulger, 2020). Stress is often defined as a deviation from a person's natural mental state, leading to abnormal functioning and psychological disturbance (Bashir, 2007). Mimura and Griffiths (2003) describe stress as constant workplace pressure, such as deadlines, health concerns, or family demands.

Job stress is therefore inevitable but can be managed to acceptable levels. In healthcare, where demands are high, unmanaged stress can impair both mental and physical well-being, leading to reduced performance and organizational inefficiency.

Employee Performance

Employee performance is the ability to accomplish assigned tasks successfully within resource limitations (Foster, 2002). The relationship between stress and performance can take multiple forms:

- Negative linear: performance decreases with stress.
- Positive linear: performance increases with stress.
- Curvilinear (U-shaped): moderate stress enhances performance up to a point, after which it declines (Daft & Lane, 2005; Meyer & Peng, 2005).

Empirical studies confirm that excessive job stress reduces performance, particularly in high demand sectors such as banking and healthcare (Ahmed & Ramzan, 2013; Chauhan, 2018; Suandi et al., 2014). Stress contributes to absenteeism, health problems, and counterproductive behaviors (Michie & Williams, 2003; Santos & Mikhailova, 2023). If unmanaged, stress negatively impacts both employees and organizations (Mead, 2000; Jamal, 1984).

Workplace Ostracism

Workplace ostracism (WO), often referred to as "the silent treatment," reflects experiences of alienation and exclusion from colleagues (Ferris et al., 2008; Reilly et al., 2015). Manifestations include being ignored, excluded from social gatherings, or denied eye contact (Wu et al., 2015; Lyu et al., 2017). Ostracism undermines positive employee behaviors, reduces organizational commitment, and increases turnover intentions (Li & Zhang, 2019; Scott & Duffy, 2015). Research consistently shows that ostracism elevates stress levels, thereby impairing performance.

Psychological Resilience

Resilience is broadly defined as the ability to endure setbacks and adapt positively to adversity (Luthar et al., 2000; Rutter, 2012). It is both a personality trait and a dynamic process shaped by coping strategies, social support, and organizational environments (Herrman et al., 2011; Hunter & Warren, 2013; Southwick & Yehuda, 2014). In healthcare, resilience is critical for managing stress and preventing burnout (Karakose, 2021).

Cyber Loafing

Cyber loafing refers to employees' voluntary use of organizational internet resources for personal purposes during work hours (Lim et al., 2020; Koay & Soh, 2019). Activities include browsing entertainment websites, sending personal emails, streaming videos, or engaging in social media unrelated to work (Askew et al., 2014; Erdem, 2020). While employees may appear busy, these activities reduce productivity, increase stress, and diminish job satisfaction (Vitak et al., 2011).

Cyber loafing behaviors range from minor (checking personal emails) to severe (accessing insecure websites that compromise organizational data) (Saleh & Sakallah, 2018). Studies consistently show that cyber loafing negatively affects employee performance (Sheikh et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2020; Shuaibi & Ibrahim, 2014).

Cyber Loafing and Employee Performance

Cyber loafing is considered counterproductive work behavior, leading to time theft, reduced productivity, and organizational inefficiency (Polat & Ozler, 2012; Atashgah et al., 2015). Employees engaging in personal internet activities during work hours divert attention from tasks, resulting in poorer performance (Bock & Ho, 2009; Corgnet et al., 2015).

Evidence shows that social media use at work reduces productivity by up to 1.5% (Shepherd, 2011). Moreover, cyber loafing blurs personal and professional boundaries, creating conflicts that undermine organizational effectiveness (Kossek & Allen, 2000; Moody & Siponen, 2013).

Research Objectives

- To examine the effect of workplace characteristics (resilience, cyber loafing, and workplace ostracism) on job stress.
- To investigate the effect of job stress on employee performance.
- To analyze the mediating role of job stress between workplace characteristics and employee performance.

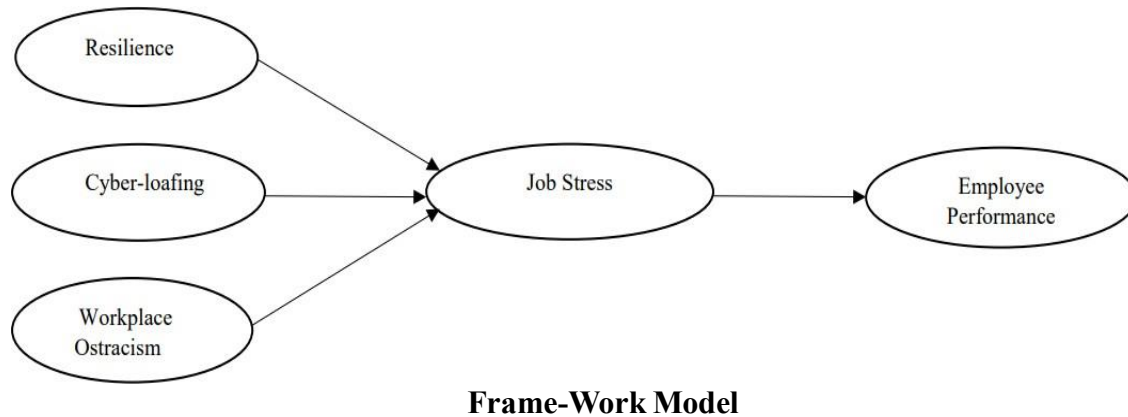
Research Questions

1. What is the effect of workplace characteristics (resilience, cyber loafing, and workplace ostracism) on job stress?
2. How does job stress affect employee performance?
3. Does job stress mediate the relationship between workplace characteristics and employee performance?

Research Hypotheses

- **H1.** Resilience has a negative effect on employee stress.
- **H2.** Cyber loafing has a positive effect on employee stress.
- **H3.** Ostracism has a positive effect on employee stress.
- **H4.** Employee stress negatively affects employee performance.
- **H5.** Employee stress mediates the relationship between resilience and employee performance.
- **H6.** Employee stress mediates the relationship between cyber loafing and employee performance.
- **H7.** Employee stress mediates the relationship between ostracism and employee performance.

Figure 1: **Research Model of the study**



The above figure 1 shows the Effect of Work Place Characteristics on Employee Performance with Meditating Role of Job Stress.

Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design, philosophy, study platform, sampling, procedures, and measurement instruments employed in this study. The methodology ensures that the findings are reliable, valid, and aligned with the study's objectives.

Research Design

A quantitative research design was adopted to examine the relationships between workplace characteristics, job stress, and employee performance in hospitals in Swat, Pakistan. This design allows for hypothesis testing and statistical analysis of variables.

Data were collected using convenience sampling, where participants voluntarily completed online surveys. This approach was chosen due to accessibility and feasibility in hospital settings. While convenience sampling offers efficiency, it is acknowledged that it may introduce bias, as respondents may not fully represent the broader population.

Research Philosophy

The study is grounded in a realist paradigm and follows a positivist approach, emphasizing objectivity and hypothesis testing. A deductive strategy was employed, where hypotheses derived from theory were tested using empirical data. Transparency and reflexivity were maintained to minimize bias. The combination of positivism and post-positivism provides a comprehensive understanding of workplace dynamics and employee behavior.

Study Platform

The study was conducted in hospitals located in Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Data were collected from departments including medical, surgical, administrative, and support services. Collaboration with local healthcare institutions ensured ethical compliance, confidentiality, and informed consent. This context-specific focus provides insights into the unique organizational and cultural dynamics of healthcare institutions in Swat.

Preliminary Study

A preliminary review of literature on workplace characteristics, job stress, and employee performance was conducted. Initial interviews and pilot surveys with hospital staff helped identify key workplace factors and stress triggers. These findings guided the refinement of research tools and hypotheses, ensuring relevance to the healthcare context in Swat.

Population and Sampling

The population comprised employees of hospitals in Swat, KPK. With approximately 100 hospital branches in the region, a multistage sampling technique was applied. Using the formula $k=n/2$ (Jamil, 2020), five hospitals were randomly selected via Excel-based randomization.

Following Rao's (2023) recommendation, a minimum sample size of 176 participants was targeted to achieve a 90% confidence level for populations exceeding 500. This ensures statistical reliability while maintaining feasibility.

Procedure

Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires distributed electronically and through face-to-face administration. The questionnaire included sections on demographics, workplace characteristics, job stress, and employee performance. Responses were measured using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Measures

- **Perceived Stress Scale (PSS):** Adapted from Cohen et al. (1983), consisting of 10 items rated on a 7-point Likert scale. Higher scores indicate greater perceived stress.
- **Cyber Loafing Scale (CLS):** Adapted from Blau et al. (2006), comprising 7 items. Higher scores reflect greater engagement in cyber loafing behaviors.
- **Resilience Scale:** Adapted from Dalen et al. (2008), consisting of 6 items. Higher scores indicate stronger resilience.
- **Employee Job Performance Scale (EJPS):** Adapted from Williams and Anderson (1991), comprising 7 items. Higher scores indicate better job performance.
- **Workplace Ostracism Scale (WOS):** Adapted from Brown et al. (2008), consisting of 13 items. Higher scores indicate greater perceived ostracism.

Each scale was selected based on prior validation and relevance to the study's context, ensuring reliability and construct validity.

Table 1: Factor Loadings

Items	CL	EP	RES	STR	WO
CL1	0.813				
CL2	0.819				
CL3	0.855				
CL4	0.855				
CL5	0.886				
CL6	0.857				
CL7	0.866				
EP1		0.745			
EP2		0.859			
EP3		0.827			
EP4		0.831			
EP5		0.828			
EP6		0.811			
EP7		0.682			
RES1			0.674		
RES2			0.822		
RES3			0.773		
RES4			0.817		
RES5			0.802		
RES6			0.790		
STR1				0.824	
STR10				0.834	
STR2				0.816	
STR3				0.829	
STR4				0.826	
STR5				0.783	
STR6				0.832	
STR7				0.794	
STR8				0.814	
STR9				0.833	
WO1					0.866
WO10					0.882
WO11					0.664
WO12					0.885
WO13					0.822
WO2					0.905
WO3					0.899
WO4					0.867

WO5	0.892
WO6	0.859
WO7	0.919
WO8	0.895
WO9	0.894

Note. EP= employee performance; STR= stress; WO= ostracism; CL= cyber loafing; RES= resilience.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval will be obtained from relevant authorities before data collection. Informed consent will be obtained from participants, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Participants will be assured of their voluntary participation and the right to withdraw from the study at any stage.

Tools and techniques

The present study used two data analysis tools, Microsoft Excel and Smart PLS. Microsoft Excel was used. Smart PLS was used for the assessment of measurement and structural models. In specific, the PLS algorithm was used to assess the measurement model while performing the following assessments. Data collected will be analyzed using different techniques such as Descriptive statistics for population demographics, Confirmatory factor analysis CFA for data interpretation along Structural equation modeling SEM analysis to further enhance the output of the results.

- Descriptive statistics
- Measurement assessment model (CFA)
- SEM (Structural equation modeling)

Demographics

The demographic data shows a considerably higher representation of females than males, with 56% of the sample being female. The largest age group in the sample is under 30 (56%), followed by those in the range of 31 to 35 (20%), 36 to 40 (14%), and above 40 (10%). The majority of the sample's professionals are nurses (46%), followed by doctors (39%), and psychologists (15%).

Table 2: Demographics

Variable	Frequency
Gender	
Male	80
Female	101
Age	
30 or less	100
31-35	36
36-40	26
Above 40	19
Occupation	
Nurse	64
Doctor	54
Psychologist	21

Conclusion

Provides a comprehensive overview of the research methodology employed to investigate the effect of workplace characteristics on employee performance, with the mediating role of job stress, in hospitals located in Swat. The chosen research design, sampling technique, data collection methods, measurement tools, and analysis techniques are carefully selected to ensure the validity and reliability of the study findings.

Data Analysis

The researcher used the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) approach aided by the Smart-PLS 3.3.3 software to examine the hypotheses set forth. Many researchers prefer the PLS- SEM approach because it allows them to estimate complex models, have multiple constructs, indicator variables, and structural routes without making any distributional assumptions on the data. PLS-SEM is also a causal-predictive method to SEM that stresses prediction in statistical model estimation (Hair et al., 2021). We performed two-stage PLS-SEM for the present study: the measurement and structural assessment models (Hair et al., 2019).

Scheme of analysis

For the data analysis of this investigation, we used a two-stage PLS-SEM: measurement and structural assessment models (Hair et al., 2019). In Measurement assessment model (CFA), Loadings, Alpha, CR, AVE, HTMT, VIF analysis were performed for data analysis. And apart from that, SEM (Structural equation modeling) was used for hypotheses testing.

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive technique deals with summary statistics for different variables in a single table and calculates their uniform values. The basic details like sample size, minimum and maximum values, mean values and standard deviation values of the data are included in the descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics of the current data were given in Table 4.1 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables. RES has a mean value of 3.450 with a standard deviation of 0.925. The response is scattered. Most of the respondents likely to accept the items of the said variable. On the other hand, the variable CL, WO, STR, and EP has a mean value of 2.712, 2.614, 2.452, and 3.653. The variables CL, WO, and STR has a high standard deviation value, which confirmed that most of the respondents are disagree with the items as asked. However, the variable EP has a greater mean value, which confirmed that the respondents are more likely to agree with the statements that asked.

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
RES	181	1.00	5.00	3.4509	.92582
CL	181	1.00	5.00	2.7127	1.11055
WO	181	1.00	5.00	2.6141	1.08177
J-STR	181	1.00	5.00	2.4525	.97289
EP	181	1.00	5.00	3.6532	.97185

Measurement model assessment

The study employed multiple parameters to assess the measurement model. Hair et al. (2019) suggested testing internal consistency through Cronbach alpha, convergent validity (composite reliability, average variance extracted), and discriminant validity.

Cronbach alpha tested internal consistency reliabilities of the measuring items, and all variables were higher than 0.70. Convergent validity is assessed through two measures; composite reliability and average variance extracted. The composite reliability (CR) ranges from 0 to 1, with acceptable values over 0.70 (Graciola et al., 2020). Since CR values for all the constructs range from 0.904 to 0.975, therefore, considered satisfactory. The average variance extracted should be higher than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2021). The observed AVE values ranged from 0.610 to 0.753, hence acceptable. Collectively, CR and AVE verified the convergent validity of measures. Table 4.1 summarizes the measurement model assessment based on Cronbach alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE).

Table 4: Reliability and Convergent Validity

	Cronbach' s alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Cyber loafing	0.936	0.937	0.948	0.723
Employee Performance	0.905	0.907	0.925	0.639
Resilience	0.871	0.875	0.904	0.610
Job Stress	0.945	0.946	0.953	0.670
Ostracism	0.972	0.972	0.975	0.753

The discriminant validity refers to the extent to which a construct is empirically distinct from other constructs in the structural model (Hair et al., 2019). The AVE of each construct should be compared to the squared inter-construct correlation of that construct and all other reflectively assessed constructs in the structural model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 4.2 shows the correlations and square-rooted AVEs of all constructs. It can be observed that all of the square-rooted AVEs were distant from the diagonal correlation values, indicating satisfactory discriminant validity.

Table 5: Discriminant validity

	CL	EP	RES	STR	WO
Cyber loafing	0.850				
Employee Performance	0.741	0.800			
Resilience	0.813	0.813	0.781		
Job Stress	0.826	0.821	0.830	0.819	
Ostracism	0.867	0.746	0.761	0.834	0.868

Note. EP= employee performance; JSTR= job stress; WO= ostracism; CL= cyber loafing; RES= resilience.

In addition to the AVE-based approach, Hair et al. (2019) suggested using the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations to assess discriminant validity. It requires computing bootstrapping confidence intervals with 5000 resamples. The HTMT is a more trustworthy approach for assessing discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2021). For the conceptually similar constructs, the

threshold value is 0.90, while for conceptually distant constructs, a slightly lower threshold value of 0.85 is considered acceptable (Henseler et al., 2016). While (Henseler et al., 2015) believed that any value less than 1.00 is acceptable. In either case, all the observed HTMT values are below the given limits, indicating adequate discriminant validity. The values in table 4.3 show the test for discriminant validity based on HTMT ratios.

Table 6: HTMT

	CL	EP	RES	STR	WO
Cyber loafing					
Employee Performance	0.788				
Resilience	0.898	0.909			
Job Stress	0.877	0.877	0.911		
Ostracism	0.909	0.774	0.822	0.867	

Note. EP= employee performance; JSTR= job stress; WO= ostracism; CL= cyber loafing; RES= resilience.

One of the frequently used indicators to assess the collinearity of the formative indicators is the variance inflation factor (VIF). VIF scores of 5 or higher suggest serious concerns with collinearity between indicators of formatively measured constructs. (Becker et al., 2015) argue that collinearity concerns can emerge at lower VIF values of 10 as well. Therefore, the VIF scores should ideally be around three and below. All the observed VIF were below 10, indicating no collinearity concerns. See table 4.4 for details.

Therefore, the variance inflation factor (VIF) was calculated as presented in table 4.4.

Table 7: Variance inflation factor (VIF)

Item	VIF
CL1	2.233
CL2	3.010
CL3	3.566
CL4	2.844
CL5	3.819
CL6	3.606
CL7	3.325
EP1	2.365
EP2	4.408
EP3	3.661
EP4	3.058
EP5	2.491
EP6	2.942
EP7	2.401
RES1	1.627
RES2	2.095
RES3	1.866

RES4	2.323
RES5	2.030
RES6	2.186
STR1	2.853
STR10	2.925
STR2	2.971
STR3	3.029
STR4	2.948
STR5	2.820
STR6	2.972
STR7	2.293
STR8	2.639
STR9	3.369
WO1	3.874
WO10	4.275
WO11	1.968
WO12	5.089
WO13	3.448
WO2	6.008
WO3	5.970
WO4	3.951
WO5	5.284
WO6	3.902
WO7	6.410
WO8	6.137
WO9	6.184

Note. EP= employee performance; JSTR= job stress; WO= ostracism; CL= cyber loafing; RES= resilience.

Figure 2 is a graphical depiction of the measurement model assessed in the present study.

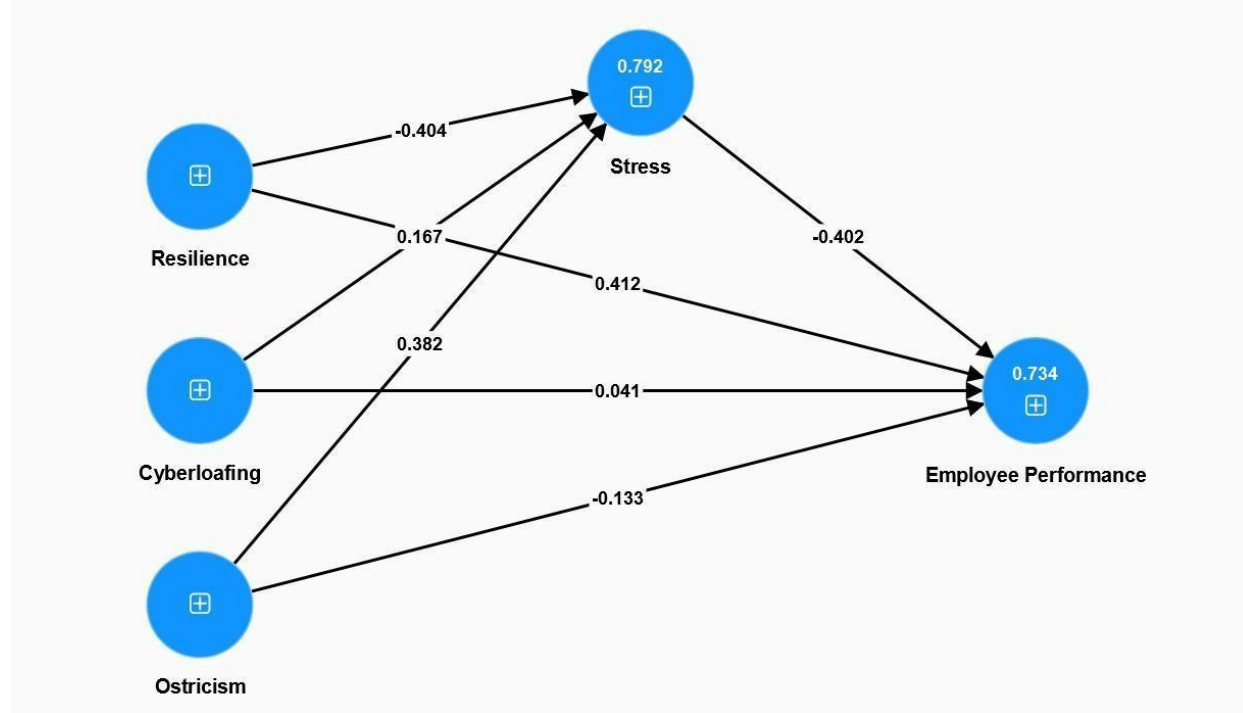


Figure 2: Measurement Model
Structural Model Assessment

When formative constructs are incorporated in the structural model, PLS-SEM is the preferable method. (Hair et al., 2019) suggested that the relevance of the indicator weights, indicator collinearity, and statistical significance are used to evaluate formative measurement models Table 4.5 shows scores.

Table 8: F statistics

Paths	Beta	T statistics	P values
H1: RES → J-STR	-0.404	5.437	***
H2: CL→ J-STR	0.167	1.812	*
H3: WO → J-STR	0.382	4.809	***
H4: J-STR → EP	-0.402	3.867	***

H5: RES → J-STR → EP	0.162	3.174	**
H6: CL → J-STR → EP	-0.067	1.674	*
H7: WO → J-STR → EP	-0.153	2.752	**

Note. EP= employee performance; JSTR= Job stress; WO= ostracism; CL= cyber loafing; RES= resilience. ***= $p < .001$; **= $p < .05$; *= $p < .10$.

Regarding the hypothesis testing, H1 proposed that Resilience has a negative effect on job stress. The results show that the impact of Resilience on job stress was significant ($t = 5.437$, $p < .001$), supporting H1. Similarly, H2 that proposed the effect of Cyber Loafing will be significantly positive on Job Stress was also supported ($t = 1.812$, $p = .10$). H3 proposed that Workplace Ostracism has a significant positive effect on Job Stress. This hypothesis was also supported ($t = 4.809$, $p < .001$).

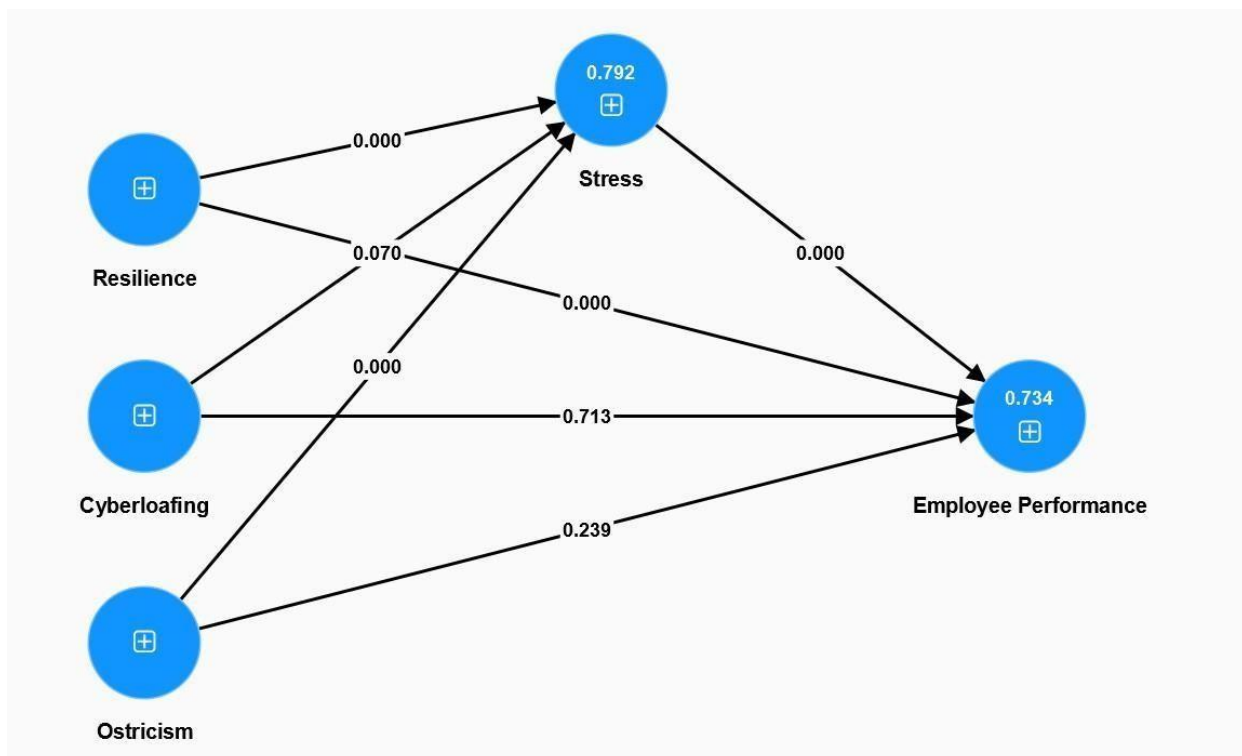


Figure 3: Structural model

Hence H4 proposed that Job Stress has a significant negative effect on Employee Performance. These hypothesis was also supported ($t = 3.867$, $p < .001$). Similarly, H5 that proposed the effect Job Stress mediates the relationship between resilience and employee performance was also supported ($t = 3.174$, $p < .05$). H6 proposed that Job stress mediates the relationship between cyber loafing and employee performance. This hypothesis was also supported ($t = 1.674$, $p < .10$). H7 proposed that job stress mediates the relationship between ostracism and employee performance. This hypothesis was also supported ($t = 2.752$, $p < .05$).

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of workplace characteristics i.e., resilience, cyber loafing, and workplace ostracism on healthcare employee performance in hospitals in Swat, Pakistan, with job stress serving as a mediating variable. Using PLS-SEM analysis, the findings provide several important insights:

1. **Resilience and Job Stress:** Resilience was found to have a significant negative effect on job stress (H1 supported). Employees with higher resilience reported lower stress levels, confirming that resilience acts as a protective factor in demanding healthcare environments.
2. **Cyber Loafing and Job Stress:** Cyber loafing demonstrated a positive relationship with job stress (H2 supported). Employees engaging in non-work-related internet activities experienced higher stress, likely due to time theft, reduced focus, and organizational pressures.
3. **Workplace Ostracism and Job Stress:** Ostracism had a strong positive effect on job stress (H3 supported). Social exclusion and neglect in the workplace significantly increased stress levels, undermining employee well-being and performance.
4. **Job Stress and Employee Performance:** Job stress negatively impacted employee performance (H4 supported). High stress levels reduced productivity, job satisfaction, and overall effectiveness, consistent with prior literature.
5. **Mediating Role of Job Stress:** Job stress mediated the relationships between resilience, cyber loafing, ostracism, and employee performance (H5–H7 supported). Specifically:
 - Resilience reduced stress, which in turn improved performance.
 - Cyber loafing increased stress, which lowered performance.
 - Ostracism elevated stress, which diminished performance.

Overall, the findings highlight that workplace characteristics significantly influence employee performance, and job stress plays a critical mediating role in shaping these outcomes. In healthcare settings, where teamwork and efficiency are vital, managing stressors is essential for sustaining productivity and patient care quality

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several practical recommendations are proposed for healthcare administrators, policymakers, and organizational leaders:

1. Enhance Psychological Resilience

- Implement resilience-building programs such as stress management workshops, mindfulness training, and peer-support groups.
- Encourage professional development and mentoring to strengthen employees' coping strategies.
- Promote a culture of recognition and appreciation to boost morale and resilience.

2. Reduce Cyber Loafing

- Establish clear policies on internet usage during work hours.
- Provide structured breaks and recreational outlets to reduce the temptation of cyber loafing.
- Use monitoring tools judiciously, balancing accountability with trust to avoid excessive surveillance stress.

3. Address Workplace Ostracism

- Foster inclusive organizational cultures by promoting teamwork, collaboration, and open communication.
- Train managers and supervisors to identify and mitigate ostracism behaviors.
- Introduce grievance mechanisms and anonymous reporting channels to address social exclusion.

4. Manage Job Stress Proactively

- Regularly assess employee stress levels using validated tools such as the Perceived Stress Scale.
- Provide counseling services and employee assistance programs (EAPs).
- Ensure reasonable workloads, role clarity, and supportive leadership to minimize stressors.

5. Policy and Organizational Interventions

- Develop HR policies that integrate stress management into performance evaluation frameworks.
- Encourage flexible work arrangements where possible to balance personal and professional demands.
- Invest in organizational culture reforms that prioritize employee well-being alongside productivity.

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