



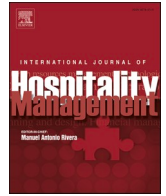
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Research Paper

Depletion of psychological, financial, and social resources in the hospitality sector during the pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This study details how psychological, financial, and social factors shape employee deviant interpersonal behaviors during a pandemic. Data were collected with a survey of 372 front-line employees of hotels and analyzed with PLS-SEM. The findings showed social disconnectedness and perceived risk of unemployment leads to perceived isolation, which further creates depression in employees. The findings also showed that depression is positively related to employee deviance. Financial strain is a major cause of perceived isolation, depression, and deviant behaviors among front-line employees. Results also proved that social support reduces fear of isolation, depression, and employee deviance. This study provides guidelines that hotels need to understand the psychological stance of employees and design policies to overcome employee perceived fears and psychological disorders.

1. Introduction

COVID-19 is a new strain of infection that emerged at the end of 2019 and has since spread to more than 200 countries with at least 8,835,000 cases globally (Worldometer, 2020a, p. 32). Since its emergence from China, it spread globally, and WHO (World Health Organization) declared a pandemic in early 2020. Globally, countries started social distancing by locking down cities and closing borders because infection is far-reaching, persistently rippling through businesses. The leisure and hospitality industry suffered the most immediate consequences of COVID-19 as a result of social distancing. Various events, conferences, and sporting events were cancelled due to the pandemic, reducing travel and tourism due to fear of community spread of the virus amid gatherings. Lockdowns keep people at home to reduce the COVID-19 spread where an unsafe working environment persists in restaurants, bars, cafes, and many other businesses within the hospitality industry (Combs, 2020).

Pakistan has seen 188,926 confirmed COVID-19 cases and more than 3750 deaths (Worldometer, 2020b). Despite the smart lockdown imposed in different cities, COVID-19 is spreading widely. WHO suggests that Pakistan should impose a complete lockdown in light of the

high positive rate (24%) of cases (Hashim, 2020). Some industries have opened for business following standard operation procedures (SOPs) provided by health officials. However, as with other global trends, the hospitality industry in Pakistan faced a serious blow, resulting in job loss for thousands of workers (Global Village Space, 2020). For instance, in Galiyat and Murree, among the main drivers of tourism in Pakistan, more than 175 hotels and restaurants have closed since 18th March, 2020, resulting in a loss of around 14 million PKR (84275 USD) (Naqvi, 2020). Thousands of hotels have been turned into quarantine centers across Pakistan (Gul, 2020) although approximately 90% rooms are empty, causing massive losses to hotels and difficulties in paying the employee salaries (The Express Tribune, 2020).

COVID-19 has resulted in hotels closing across Pakistan, and employees have been laid off or put on temporary leave. Being at home has created a sense of social disconnectedness among hospitality employees, which may result in perceptions of isolation, which often leads to depression. In such a situation, an employee must reduce participation in social activities (Cornwell and Waite, 2009). A previous study contended that when employees feel socially disconnected as they remain at home without going to work, they feel isolated, ultimately enhancing their depression (Li and Huynh, 2020). Moreover, employees also face a

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financial challenge in meeting their daily needs. In the social disconnectedness and fear of unemployment (the hospitality industry is banned from operating) create a need to study the consequences of such situations, so appropriate steps can mitigate the interpersonal deviance. Fear of unemployment/perceived risk of unemployment is characterized by the loss of financial resources, limiting social contacts outside the family, and restricting an employee from fully contributing to society (Darvishmotevali and Ali, 2020; Griep et al., 2016). Similarly, the Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989) predicts that depleting employee resources (insufficient finances, absence of social connectedness) activates a negative psychological state among employees: depression with feelings of unhappiness, lack of motivation, and feelings of restriction (Mathur and Chauhan, 2018). When employee freedom is threatened, they react by engaging in interpersonal deviance (Brehm, 1966; Miron and Brehm, 2006).

Considering the broad disturbance caused by COVID-19 in the hospitality industry, the present study attempts to investigate an integrative framework of hospitality employee involvement in interpersonal deviance. Notably, interpersonal deviance includes verbal abuse, harassment, physical assault, showing favoritism, and backstabbing (Bennett and Robinson, 2000). Previous studies of interpersonal deviance have used leadership approaches (Gill et al., 2016; Haider et al., 2018) and personality traits (Pletzer et al., 2020). More research on psychological factors could better inform interventions needed to mitigate interpersonal deviance among employees. Recently, Malik and Lenka (2019) contended that interpersonal deviance is not a result of any single predictor/variable or personality trait; instead, other variables contribute. Hence, this study has used psychological factors to study interpersonal deviance among employees to identify the key psychological factors responsible for interpersonal deviance and design appropriate interventions to reduce such deviance by ensuring a positive psychological state among hospitality employees.

Additionally, the hospitality industry is a labor-intensive industry, and front-line employees have many jobs to perform (Lin et al., 2014), so interpersonal deviance must be studied in Employee behavior is, after all, essential in this industry, and managers tend to control, coordinate, and supervise behaviors using empirical knowledge. Instead of focusing on positive behaviors, however, negative behaviors must be prevented. If an organization in the hospitality industry can reduce the employee tendency to violate organizational norms and values, then it can ensure smooth operation (Zhuang et al., 2020). On the other hand, because interpersonal deviance is widely studied in the hospitality industry (Ghosh and Shum, 2019; Haldorai et al., 2020; Jin et al., 2020), clearly, interpersonal deviance in hospitality must be researched to affirm the importance and relevance of such deviance to the hospitality industry. Hence, a study of interpersonal deviance in the hospitality industry is essential. Moreover, perceived isolation is part of such research. Policymakers and practitioners must understand perceived isolation as a construct, identify its determinants, and learn how it is linked to outcomes (Smith and Victor, 2019) like interpersonal deviance.

On the other hand, the predictors of interpersonal deviance from the psychological perspective require study to facilitate policymaking and designing of effective interventions to decrease interpersonal deviance among employees (Chiu et al., 2015), particularly in the hospitality industry. The hospitality industry confronts deviance in the form of anti-service, sabotage, and hiding customer complaints (Harris and Ogbonna, 2012); hospitality industry relies significantly on human capital for service delivery, so deviant behavior can negatively influence customers (Haldorai et al., 2020). Deviance costs the hospitality industry dearly (Harris and Ogbonna, 2012); thus, we must study its predictors to curb deviance (Haldorai et al., 2020). Therefore, this study addresses these research gaps by considering determinants of interpersonal deviance other than personality and organizational level, specifically social disconnectedness, fear of unemployment, financial strain, social support, isolation, and depression.

Additionally, interpersonal deviance is well-acknowledged and

researched in developed countries like the USA, UK, Australia, South Korea, and China (Sharma, 2019). but research on interpersonal deviance in developing countries like Pakistan is noticeably absent. Schilpzand et al. (2016) have called for more research on interpersonal deviance in different cultures to enhance understanding of its prevalence, situations favourable to its development, and the global relevance of the topic. From a contextual perspective, the study is valuable. It is the first study of the hospitality industry in Pakistan, providing empirical evidence of psychological factors and hospitality employee interpersonal deviance mainly due to COVID19. At the same time, theoretically, the study is significant for a different reason. It has combined two similar but conceptually different theories to predict workplace deviance from lost resources and threats to freedom. Few studies have used Conservation of Resources (COR) theory to predict adverse outcomes and (Schmidt, 2014) because COR has been widely used from a social exchange perspective, thus limiting explanations involving resources and the emotional perspective that significantly boost or translate these behaviors (Sheridan et al., 2019). Hence, it is a valuable addition to the literature, particularly on COR, because it explains how resource depletion in employees leads to interpersonal deviance. Previous studies have examined leadership (Gill et al., 2016; Haider et al., 2018; Markova, 2018) and personality traits (Pletzer et al., 2020; Tenzer and Yang, 2019) in elaborating interpersonal deviance. However, our study focuses on predictors of interpersonal deviance using psychological factors. The rest of the paper is arranged as follows: literature review, research methods, findings, discussion, conclusion, future directions, and limitations.

2. Literature review

2.1. Theoretical background

The study uses both the COR and Reactance theories as a base. COR (Hobfoll, 1989) holds that psychological stress is a response to an environment in which (a) resources are perceived to be lost, (b) essential resources are lost, and (c) lost resources cannot be regained despite an investment of new resources. The resources are objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valuable to an employee. COR suggests that resource depletion results in employee, and employees must invest in more resources to replace lost ones. When the employees cannot regain resources, resource depletion becomes a significant problem, resulting in adverse outcomes (Hobfoll, 1989). As a result of resource depletion, employees may not spend extra resources, which may keep them from doing good (Schönflug, 1985), and losing resources activates preventive mechanisms against further loss (Schmidt, 2014).

Bearing in mind the foundations of COR, we can argue that when employees are uncertain about their future due to COVID-19, the result may be a perceived risk of unemployment that depletes their financial resources (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Consequently, their perceived isolation and depression will increase. Moreover, when employees are asked to remain at home due to lockdowns, it may boost feelings of social disconnectedness, a valuable social resource, and depletion of this resource may lead to perceived isolation (Schmidt, 2014). Depleted resources result in adverse outcomes (Kalshoven and Boon, 2012). If employees must stay at home, limiting their social interaction and uncertainty about the job results in fear of losing financial resources, ultimately causing a negative psychological state among employees in the form of perceived isolation.

Accordingly, when employees perceive themselves as socially isolated, they feel their freedom threatened, which causes depression, and they tend to engage in interpersonal deviance. Notably, the Theory of Psychological Reactance explains the consequences of threatened freedom (Brehm, 1966). When an employee is asked not to choose something, reactance depends on the degree of the significance of that lost freedom. The greater the significance, the stronger the reactance

(Brehm, 1966; Miron and Brehm, 2006). Employees who do not get the financial security to meet their needs may suffer depression, limiting their ability to think and causing reactance in the form of interpersonal deviance. Moreover, when someone perceives that free will to engage in behavior is restricted or will be restricted in the future, they will react (Miron and Brehm, 2006). Hence, when employees are depressed due to resource loss (isolation, financial and social support absence, and risk of unemployment), they may feel depressed, which limits their freedom and pushes them to engage in interpersonal deviance as a form of reactance (Bennett et al., 2018).

3. Hypothesis development

3.1. Social disconnectedness and perceived isolation

Social disconnectedness is minimal participation in social activities (Cornwell and Waite, 2009, p. 32), involving infrequent interaction with others, limited social interaction, or limited social events (Perry, 2018). Various studies have established that social disconnectedness results in perceived isolation among employees. For instance, Cornwell and Waite (2009) reported social disconnectedness affects mental health. Similarly, Ge, Yap, Ong, & Heng (2017) confirmed that social disconnectedness was positively related to isolation. Recently, Santini et al. (2020) contended that social disconnectedness significantly predicts perceived isolation among older Americans. Employees with social disconnectedness tend to feel isolated (Perry, 2018). Accordingly, Guilcher et al. (2019) conducted a study to assess the association between social disconnectedness and perceived isolation. They found that social relations are vital component in human life, and when individuals are disconnected, they tended to perceive isolation. From the perspective of COR, COVID-19 has pushed employees to stay home, barring them from going to work, attending events, and meeting friends and family, which has led to social disconnectedness and thus perceived isolation. As such, we hypothesize

H1. Social disconnectedness is positively and significantly associated with perceived isolation.

3.2. Perceived risk of unemployment and perceived isolation

Unemployment is linked to losing financial resources, thus limiting social contact outside the family, affecting status, prestige, and self-realization, as well as the ability of an employee to fully contribute to society (Griep et al., 2016, p. 149). In the presence of such perceptions, employees may start reducing social interaction, thus creating social isolation. Accordingly, perceived unemployment can limit the propensity to participate according to societal standards (Crowe and Butterworth, 2016, p. 149), thus causing perceived isolation (Rözer et al., 2020). Another study found that when the future of their jobs was uncertain (High perceived risk of unemployment), employees tend to have high perceived isolation (Hiswåls et al., 2017). Thus, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the risk of unemployment has increased, and employees without financial resources may not be able uphold generally accepted societal standards, leading to isolation. Perceived unemployment is a threat of lost resources, a loss that is relatively difficult to regain. According to COR theory, employees are stressed and indulge in harmful behaviors if they lose or are about to lose resources. Therefore, perceived fear of unemployment may be perceived as loss of financial and social resources, fostering feelings of perceived isolation. We hypothesized that

H2. Perceived risk of unemployment is positively and significantly associated with perceived isolation.

3.3. Perceived isolation and depression

Isolation is linked to poor mental health (Taylor, Taylor et al., 2018).

Moreover, subjective isolation from friends and family is significantly associated with mental disorders and depression (Santini et al., 2020). Isolation and depression are, moreover, closely associated in non-rural areas due to a lack of close relationships (Rely et al., 2019). Ge et al. (2017) investigated the determinants of depression and revealed that isolation is significantly associated with depression among adults in Singapore. Thus, employees who perceive themselves as isolated tend to be depressed. In line with COR theory, perceived isolation is a stressor that creates a feeling of resource depletion among employees and activating negative outcomes. In the current COVID-19 pandemic, employees cannot go to their jobs, meet friends and colleagues, or attend events and gatherings. Consequently, they may feel isolated and tend to be depressed. Therefore, we formulated the following hypothesis:

H3. Perceived isolation is positively and significantly associated with depression.

3.4. Depression and interpersonal deviance

According to Mathur and Chauhan (2018), depression is feeling of unhappiness, drained or hindered, and unmotivated. They found depression among employees could lead to deviant behavior. Moreover, Musheer and Sharma (2018) noted that depression tends to interfere with the thinking process, resulting in interpersonal deviance (Bennett et al., 2018). Markova (2018) investigated predictors of interpersonal deviance and found that depressed employees feel less control over a situation, reducing their ability to interpret the situation adequately. Hence, depression among employees leads them to interpersonal deviance. The Theory of Reactance (Brehm, 1966) suggests that when employees perceive that their freedom is restricted, they may engage in reactance like interpersonal deviance. Thus, we hypothesize that

H4. Depression is positively and significantly associated with interpersonal deviance.

3.5. Social support influence on perceived isolation and depression

Social support is a necessary part of human life (Matthews et al., 2016), defined as the availability and adequacy of social connections (Eagle et al., 2019). These relationships provide support to employees and have positive outcomes (Umberson and Karas Montez, 2010). At the same time, the absence of social connections can lead to depression. Recently, Eagle et al. (2019) assessed the influence of perceived support on depression and reported that increasing perceived support is negatively associated with depression. Chang et al. (2018) assessed the relationship between social support and perceived isolation. They concluded that social support directly influences the level of depression. Support from peers was associated with reducing depression. Perceived social support, in other words, is a remedy for depressed employees.

Social support reduces isolation. The presence of social support from friends, family, and other sources triggers a range of positive cognitive, behavioral, and psychological responses (Cacioppo and Hawkley, 2009). Moreover, social support means employees do not feel lonely and tend to be happy, optimistic, and friendly (Cacioppo and Hawkley, 2005, 2009). Thus, employees with social support tend to be less isolated than employees without. Additionally, within organizations, perceived social support can reduce isolation among employees by providing social connections (Rubenesvaran Rau et al., 2019). Social support thus reduces perceived isolation. Notably, the COR theory predicts that employees not suffering resource depletion or those who can regain resources tend to be positive. When employees are provided with social support, there is no resource depletion that subsequently leads to reduced depression and isolation. Thus, we hypothesized

H5. Social support is negatively and significantly associated with perceived isolation.

H6. Social support is negatively and significantly associated with

depression.

3.6. Influence of financial strain on perceived isolation and depression

Lack of financial and/or non-financial resources influence employee behaviors (Hobfoll, 1989). Employees with no financial resources find it difficult to meet daily needs and tend to be depressed (Crowe and Butterworth, 2016). When people feel they do not have sufficient financial resources to meet daily needs, then perceived isolation tends to increase; financial strain does not allow them to reciprocate. Accordingly, expected, or actual financial strain causes perceived isolation. Financial strain is also associated with depression among employees. Kim et al. (2020) assessed the predictors of depression among refugees. They found that when individuals do not have the financial means to meet their needs, they tend to be depressed. Generally, people suffer from depression when they confront financial strain. Depression tends to increase if financial strain continues over time. Mamun et al. (2020) found that both unemployed men and women reported being depressed because of ongoing financial strain. Moreover, a previous study (Viseu et al., 2018) highlights the positive relationship between financial strain and depression. Thus, COVID-19 may create financial strain among employees, leading to depression. According to the COR theory, therefore, when employees feel unable to meet their financial needs, then they will become depressed. We thus hypothesized that

H7. Financial strain is positively and significantly associated with perceived isolation.

H8. Financial strain is positively and significantly associated with depression.

3.7. Social support and financial strain influence interpersonal deviance

Recently, Peck et al. (2018) assessed the relationship between financial strain and substance abuse. The General Strain Theory (which includes financial strain) predicted that financial strain would cause substance abuse, a form of social deviance. Similarly, COR theory predicts that lack of resources leads to negative behaviors like interpersonal deviance. Moreover, the reactance theory (Brehm, 1966) also predicts that individuals whose freedom is threatened will respond by engaging in negative behaviors. Financial strain keeps employees from buying what they need or want. Consequently, they will engage in interpersonal deviance. Employees who are exposed to strain will engage in deviant behavior to reduce the effect of stressful events (Agnew, 2015). Thus, employees going through financial strain because hotels close during the COVID-19 pandemic will use interpersonal deviance as a mechanism to reduce their stress. Social support increases personal resources, resulting in positive outcomes (Hobfoll, 1989). Hence, in line with the COR theory, employees with social support will retain and gain new resources and engage in less deviant behavior. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H9. Social support is negatively and significantly associated with

interpersonal deviance.

H10. Financial strain is positively and significantly associated with interpersonal deviance.

Fig. 1 presents the theoretical framework for this study.

4. Methods

4.1. Sample design and data collection

The target population for this study is front-line employees of hotels in Pakistan. Employees in the hotel industry fear losing their jobs in these hotels because of COVID-19. Data were collected from the front-line employees of selected hotels from multiple significant cities of Pakistan using a survey questionnaire. Surveys were administered by 5 research assistants after training and guidance, and by adopting the safety measures and SOPs provided by the hotel management as well as health authorities. A total of 850 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 410 questionnaires were returned. Upon careful screening, 372 questionnaires were deemed useable for data analysis, which is in line with average response rates in hospitality research involving employees (Ali et al., 2020).

4.2. Questionnaire and pre-test

All scales used in this study were adapted from pertinent prior literature. The questionnaire comprised closed-ended questions measured against a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5). To measure the perceived risk of unemployment, a scale with a 3-item was adopted from (Kinnunen and Nätti, 1994). The study used Santini et al.'s (2020) scale on depression, which is a 10-item self-reported assessment instrument intended to measure levels of depression. The latent variable of financial strain was measured using four items adapted from Chou, Chi and Chow (2004). Perceived isolation was investigated using 3 items adopted from Hughes et al. (2004). This scale was used because it measures the phenomenon in a simple, short, and concrete way. Social connectedness was measured with a 10-item scale from Lee et al. (2001). Social support was measured with a 12-item scale from Zimet et al. (1988). Interpersonal deviance was measured with a 7-item scale from Bennett and Robinson (2000). This interpersonal deviance scale (Bennett and Robinson, 2000) was used in previous studies (Erkutlu and Chafra, 2019; Haider et al., 2018; Li and Zeng, 2019) without specifying a time for any interpersonal deviance incidents. The content validity of the scales was established by expert academics as well as experienced employees. Before starting data collection, a pre-test was conducted with three academicians and two employees of selected hotels. Based on their responses, few minor modifications were made to improve the readability of the questionnaire.

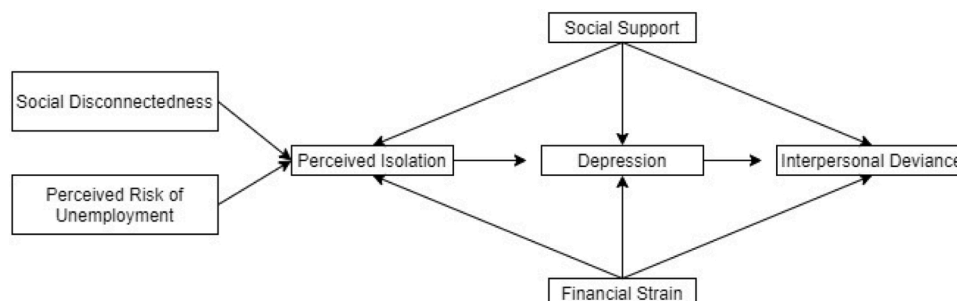


Fig. 1. Theoretical Framework.

5. Findings

PLS-SEM was used to analyze data with Smart PLS 3; it is a popular and advanced estimation technique in the hospitality and tourism domain (Ali et al., 2018). This study attempted to predict and explain the study constructs with the help of the underpinning theory. PLS-SEM is a useful tool when the primary objective of applying the structural modelling is to explain and predict constructs (Hair et al., 2016). Moreover, it is a flexible approach for model building (Ringle et al., 2005). Another reason for choosing PLS-SEM is that it also makes fewer demands of the sample size than other techniques and does not require normally distributed data (Hair et al., 2016). Thus, this technique allowed us to avoid data normality issues. The PLS algorithm, followed by bootstrapping, was used to determine loadings, path coefficients, and significant levels. The measurement model was assessed, followed by the examination of structural model assessment.

5.1. Data normality

Even though PLS-SEM does not require normal distribution of data, it is crucial to assess the data normality distribution before applying inferential statistics (Hair et al., 2007). Therefore, as recommended by Munro (2005), this study checked the data normality with skewness, kurtosis, and histogram plots. Scores of all constructs were normally distributed because skewness and kurtosis values between -2 and +2 are acceptable to show normal distribution. Fortunately, there was no indication of highly non-normal data. This study then proceeded with subsequent analysis using PLS-SEM.

5.2. Common method bias

It is quite possible that common method bias may occur because data are collected from a single respondent. A study by Kock (2015) discussed the common method bias in the domain of structural equation modelling (SEM) by using the partial least squares (PLS) approach. The author said that full collinearity could be used to assess common method bias in SEM. Based on Kock (2015), the present study used this practical approach to identify common method bias with the help of variance inflation factors (VIF) engendered by a full collinearity test. Variance inflation values higher than 3.3 indicate that the model may be inaccurate by common method bias, but values lower than 3.3 indicate the model is free of common method bias. In this study, all VIF values for all constructs are lower than 3.3, indicating that no common method bias in this study. Therefore, common method bias was not a problem.

Table 1 Demographics.

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	207	55.3
	Female	167	44.7
Age	Up to 25	93	24.9
	26–45	251	67.1
	46–55	30	8.0
	56+	0	0
Qualification	Bachelor's	279	74.6
	Master's	80	21.4
	PhD	6	1.6
	Others	9	2.4
Nature of Employment	Contractual	150	40.1
	Permanent	212	56.7
	Internee	12	3.2
Length of Service	Up to 1 Year	79	21.1
	2–5 Years	179	47.9
	5–10 Years	72	19.3
	10+ Years	44	11.8

5.3. Demographics

Table 1 provides respondent demographic profiles. A total of 374 respondents participated. Table 1 shows that out of 374 participants, 55.3% (207) were male, and 44.7% (167) were female. The findings show that most respondents were 26–45 years old with 67.1% (251) of respondents in that age group. While 24.9% (93) were younger than 25 years old, the remaining 8% (30) belonged were 46–55 years old. In terms of education, 74.6% (279) of participants had bachelor's degrees, 21.4% (80) with Master's degrees, and 2.4% (9) fell in other categories (Diploma or Professional Qualification), and the remaining 1.6% (6) had obtained their Ph.D. In addition, 56.7% (212) of respondents had permanent jobs, while 40.1% (150) were contractual employees, and the remaining 3.2% (12) were interns. Length of service showed that 21.1% (79) of employees had up to one year of job experience, 47.9% (179) of respondents had 2–5 years of experience. In addition, 19.3% (72) had 5–10 years of experience, and the remaining 11.8% (44) had 10+ years of job experience.

5.4. Measurement model assessment

The measurement model was evaluated, and convergent validity was assessed using loadings, average variance extract (AVE), and competitive reliability. See Table 2; factor loadings exceeded the recommended value of 0.60. Similarly, all values of composite reliability (CR) exceeded the recommended value of 0.70. All values of AVE for all constructs in

Table 2 Convergent Validity.

Constructs	Items	Loadings	Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
Social Disconnectedness	SD1	0.731	0.910	0.915	0.925	0.555
	SD2	0.761				
	SD3	0.722				
	SD4	0.735				
	SD5	0.701				
	SD6	0.804				
	SD7	0.821				
	SD8	0.784				
	SD9	0.672				
	SD10	0.701				
Perceived Risk of Unemployment	PRE1	0.933	0.829	0.897	0.897	0.747
	PRE2	0.933				
	PRE3	0.707				
Perceived Isolation	PI1	0.869	0.877	0.881	0.924	0.803
	PI2	0.931				
	PI3	0.888				
	PI4	0.888				
Depression	D1	0.76	0.891	0.89	0.913	0.569
	D2	0.706				
	D3	0.744				
	D4	0.789				
	D5	0.594				
	D6	0.802				
	D7	0.797				
	D8	0.82				
	D9	0.82				
Financial Strain	FS2	0.92	0.701	0.706	0.817	0.603
	FS3	0.66				
	FS4	0.726				
	FS5	0.726				
Social Support	SS1	0.885	0.885	0.918	0.918	0.634
	SS2	0.887				
	SS4	0.821				
	SS5	0.784				
	SS7	0.864				
	SS10	0.881				
Interpersonal deviance	SS11	0.239	0.711	0.724	0.791	0.536
	ID1	0.783				
	ID2	0.716				
	ID3	0.679				
	ID4	0.529				
	ID5	0.559				

Note: AVE- Average Variance Extracted; CR- Composite Reliability.

the study exceeded the recommended value of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2016). Items with the lowest factor loadings (<0.50) were deleted.

5.5. Discriminant validity

Henseler et al. (2015) proposed a new and advanced criterion (HTMT ratio) to assess discriminant validity and agreed that the Fornell-Larcker criterion an effective method to evaluate discriminant validity. However, this approach did not detect a lack of discriminant validity in various research situations. Therefore, both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT ratio were used to assess the discriminant validity of constructs. As Table 3 shows, discriminant validity was established for all constructs for both datasets.

5.6. Structural model assessment

The structural model was also assessed after the measurement model was evaluated. For this, the significance of the model was assessed based on path coefficients, t-values, and standard errors. The hypotheses were tested for main effects using the bootstrapping procedure in Smart PLS 3 (Ringle et al., 2005). Direct hypotheses were empirically tested (see Table 4). Hypotheses were evaluated using critical ratio ($t > 1.645$; $P < 0.05$). All but one hypothesis were supported.

6. Discussion

This study investigated the mitigating and modeling effects of social support and financial strain on interpersonal deviance triggered by social disconnectedness and perceived risk of unemployment in the hotel industry of Pakistan during the outbreak of the COVID-19. Consistent with the extant literature, social disconnectedness affects perceived isolation positively (Ge et al., 2017; Perry, 2018), and perceived risk of unemployment strongly influences perceived isolation (Lee et al., 2001; Reininghaus et al., 2008). When employees fear losing their jobs, they are likely to feel isolated from their colleagues and social circle. The classical study of Jahoda et al. (1933) showed that prolonged unemployment affects the social aspects of an employee's whole life unfavorably. Topical research has predicted many of the adverse outcomes of unemployment on young people, among them, financial distress, depression, decreased life satisfaction (Lorenzini and Giugni, 2010; Navarro-Abal et al., 2018), and poor psychological outlook (Amissah and Nyarko, 2017; Åslund et al., 2014; Crowe and Butterworth, 2016;

Paul and Moser, 2009). Detailed review has revealed conclusive evidence of this from different fields: medicine and psychology, for instance. Unemployment creates antagonistic behavior that may go beyond the effects of financial loss (for a review, see McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). The present study agrees with these studies.

Our study shows the social disconnectedness increased the extent of perceived isolation, which in turn increased depression and interpersonal deviance. This study provides empirical evidence that social support decreases perceived isolation, depression, and interpersonal deviance in front-line employees at one- and two-star hotels of Pakistan. The more employees are surrounded by an extended social circle, the less likely they are to suffer from psychological ill effects like perceived isolation, depression, and interpersonal deviance. The research provides deep insight into how family, friends, and peers can pragmatically reduce adverse effects of depression and consequent deviant behavior (non-conformity to norms). The study highlights the importance of social circles in providing emotional support, solutions to problems, feelings of intimacy, and so on.

Acknowledging the unfavorable outcomes of interpersonal deviance for the hotel industry, passive individual service quality, organization performance, financial loss, and effectiveness allows the next step: identifying its potential causes (Gatling et al., 2017). Currently, employees in hotels are financially strapped and socially constrained because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, this study considered financial strain as a possible trigger to perceived isolation, depression, and interpersonal deviance. The findings supported financial strain as positively associated with depression, in which agrees with previous, similar studies (Chou et al., 2004; Okechukwu et al., 2012) as well as positively associated with interpersonal deviance (Agnew, 2015). Perceived isolation was not associated in the same way. This implies that the inability to meet daily or unexpected expenses may cause unhappiness, eating disorders, sleep disorders, and a sarcastic and cynical attitude but may not make an employee feel isolated. It is more likely that in the financial crunch caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, front line employees working in hotels may manifest attitudinal problems (depression) and behavioral disorders (interpersonal deviance). Such employees can be gloomy and contemptuous but will not feel socially disconnected. Instead, they may try to connect with others to reduce their anxiety and share their problems as they seek solutions. To conclude, all the constructs in the proposed model in this study mutually reinforce one another horizontally but are inversely buffered by social support and directly by financial strain.

Table 3
Discriminant Validity.

HTMT Criteria								
	D	FS	ID	PI	PRU	SS	SD	
D	0.379							
FS	0.303	0.17						
ID	0.709	0.216	0.262					
PI	0.74	0.374	0.148	0.623				
PRU	0.581	0.213	0.297	0.592	0.349			
SS	0.502	0.278	0.243	0.581	0.514	0.391		
SD								
Fornell and Larcker Criteria								
	D	FS	ID	PI	PRU	SS	SD	
D	0.754							
FS	0.298	0.776						
ID	0.247	-0.065	0.732					
PI	0.643	0.159	0.213	0.896				
PRU	0.639	0.265	0.112	0.547	0.864			
SS	-0.543	-0.127	-0.244	-0.522	-0.296	0.796		
SD	0.457	-0.016	0.19	0.524	0.443	-0.355	0.744	

Note: Diagonal bold values show square root of AVE.

Note: D-Depression; FS-Financial Strain; ID- Interpersonal Deviance; PI- Perceived Isolation; PRU-Perceived Risk of Unemployment; SS-Social Support; SD- Social Disconnectedness.

Table 4
Path Analysis.

	Relationships	Beta	t-value	L.L	U.L	Decision
H1	Social Disconnectedness → Perceived Isolation	0.265	4.868	0.173	0.35	Supported
H2	Perceived Risk of Unemployment → Perceived Isolation	0.323	4.862	0.222	0.439	Supported
H3	Perceived Isolation → Depression	0.471	10.007	0.394	0.549	Supported
H4	Social Support → Depression	-0.273	6.474	-0.346	-0.209	Supported
H5	Social Support → Interpersonal deviance	-0.148	2.337	-0.26	-0.054	Supported
H6	Social Support → Perceived Isolation	-0.328	5.447	-0.425	-0.226	Supported
H7	Financial Strain → Depression	0.188	4.584	0.113	0.251	Supported
H8	Financial Strain → Interpersonal deviance	-0.146	2.32	-0.226	-0.017	Not Supported
H9	Financial Strain → Perceived Isolation	0.036	0.862	-0.03	0.106	Not Supported
H10	Depression → Interpersonal deviance	0.21	3.265	0.085	0.3	Supported

6.1. Theoretical contributions

This study shed some light on the pathways through which social disconnectedness and perceived risk of unemployment and depression could influence interpersonal deviance. This study contributes to the literature by showing how social support and financial strain significantly affect perceived isolation, depression, and interpersonal deviance in front-line hotel employees. Second, from a theoretical perspective, resource confirmation results in positive outcomes, whereas resource depletion results in adverse outcomes. This paper measured the dysfunctional effects of the COVID-19 on employee depression, social disconnectedness, and interpersonal deviance. Few studies have used the COR theory to elaborate on adverse outcomes and predictors (Schmidt, 2014). More importantly, although employee misbehavior is widely studied from a social exchange perspective, any explanation from the resources and emotional perspective is limited (Sheridan et al., 2019). This provides empirical evidence of both the COR theory and Reactance theory from front-line employees in the hotel industry. Third, this paper measures psychological problems in the business domain and goes beyond the routine inquiry on those phenomena in the life sciences and psychology domain. Though earlier studies have explicated the construct of unemployment and aspects of social disconnectedness separately from a leadership perspective (Gill et al., 2016; Haider et al., 2018) and personality traits (Pletzer et al., 2020), none has broadly captured both complex constructs from the psychological, attitudinal, and behavioral standpoint. Fourth, the authors explored individual responses to social disconnectedness and perceived risk of unemployment during the Covid-19 pandemic in an integrative way and developed an integrative and holistic mechanism for interpersonal deviance; such studies are still in their infancy.

6.2. Practical implications

Our findings indicated a strong association between social disconnectedness and perceived isolation, between perceived risk of unemployment and perceived isolation, and between perceived isolation and lack of psychological well-being. The patterns show how critical social support is to perceived isolation of front-line employees. They perceive the risk of unemployment and financial strain and are at a greater risk of depression and interpersonal deviance, indicating that enhanced social connectedness among such employees could prevent perceptions of isolation and related negative consequences. This scholarly work presented interesting implications for preventing emotional and behavioral disorders in the hotel industry. From a practical viewpoint, social networks may ease depression significantly through companionship and virtual social relationships.

Given that our findings indicate perceived isolation among employees can lead to depression and workplace deviance, it is imperative to identify at-risk individuals and subsequently identify indicators for developing a strategy to assist employees and executing that strategy. For some younger staff members, fewer acquaintances would help, but others might need a broader social network or more comprehensive peer

interaction. Hotels could help employees by putting into place a 'No-termination policy during Covid-19' and raising morale by focusing on employee well-being. This can be done by taking advantage of government aid packages. Government should support the hotel industry either by providing tax relief, instituting electricity laws that provide relief packages on bills with no disconnection of meters for 6 months, and offering loans with low interest rates, as well as other financial help.

The hotel industry can also collaborate with non-profits and other support agencies to help employees facing financial crises. Practitioners could initiate online social connections, social engagement, and cohesion initiatives, especially with platforms like Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom. Another innovative solution might lie in launching a health campaign to encourage staff to participate in creative activities and productive behaviors, such as expressive challenges or social causes, keeping active through exercise, preserving interaction with social networks, recording or capturing photographs of the best moment of the day/week, and getting involved within the household. Governments can chip in and provide financial/medical support and generous rebates to those hotels that develop quarantine facilities inside hotels; hotels should train their employees to follow SOPs, facilitating and taking care of COVID-19 patients. Staff can register for free online training on related job activities to enhance their skills.

6.3. Limitations and future directions

This study is constrained by a few limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. Indeed, these limitations set future directions for other researchers. First, the scales for isolation and depression symptoms were based on self-reported measures. The results might have differed if anxiety or depression symptoms were assessed by medical personnel instead a questionnaire. Interpersonal deviance is also self-reported and might be inaccurate. Such behaviors may best be reported by peers or supervisor. Future studies may use multiple sources of information for data collection and medical assessments. Second, only front-line employees participated as respondents because they were assumed more susceptible to unemployment during the pandemic. However, this may provide only a limited view of a specific level of management, so further studies may take a holistic approach by assessing middle or higher levels of management. In future research, responses can also be gathered from older, unemployed, and less qualified staff.

Further research can also incorporate the differences in responses from women and men in the same situation. Third, the study deployed a cross-sectional design; thus, it is likely to incorporate common method bias. Future scholars may want to use longitudinal research design. Fourth, this research was conducted in Pakistan, where the culture varies considerably from Western cultures; the findings cannot be generalized. Pakistan adheres to a collectivistic culture, so Pakistani employees value connectedness to lessen depression through social support. This is likely to reduce interpersonal deviance, which may not be the case in other cultural settings. Therefore, future research is much needed in other cultural milieus to improve predictions of the

theoretical model. Next, the current study only investigated the precursors of interpersonal deviance, so outcomes of interpersonal deviance such as passive individual service quality, ostracism, psychological well-being/mental ill-being, organization performance, and financial loss remain to be explored. Future researchers should find moderators (religiosity) to mitigate the effects of social disconnectedness and perceived risk of unemployment on interpersonal deviance. Furthermore, mental health outcomes (cognitive distortions, suicidal tendencies) of these variables can be studied.

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