

The Catalytic Role of Perceived Psychological Safety on the Relationship Between ‘Support from Supervisor’ and ‘Workplace Loneliness’

¹Dr. Shabnam Siddiqui, ^{*2}Ankur Sangwan

¹Associate Professor, FMS – WISDOM, Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan, INDIA, shabnammba@rediffmail.com

²Research Scholar, FMS – WISDOM, Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan, INDIA, sangwankur@gmail.com

Abstract

The perception of psychological safety is shaped by the reactions of other employees in the positive proactive behaviors of the employees at the workplace. It can be said that the level of psychological safety perception is low when other employees react negatively to the constructive suggestions and feedbacks of the employees. Research has also shown that the perception of psychological safety is based on interpersonal trust. In this study, the mediating role of the perception of psychological safety on the relationship between the support from supervisor and workplace loneliness was examined. The support from supervisor is the belief of the employees in the workplace that their expectations from the supervisors can be realized. Workplace loneliness is defined as the inability of employees to have a relationship in the quality and quantity they desire. 170 nurses working in the National Capital Region of India constitute the sample of the study. The data collected by the face-to-face survey method were analyzed with the SPSS 21 application. When the results are examined, it has been observed that the perception of psychological safety has a full mediator effect on the relationship between support from the supervisors and workplace loneliness.

Keywords: Perception, Support from Supervisor, Workplace Loneliness, Psychological Safety.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the effect of interpersonal relations on the outputs of the organization is felt more to be studied. Modern approaches such as the configuration approach suggest that interpersonal relationships can add value in organizations (Yeloğlu, 2008). The stressful work environments with high variability can affect the psychological state of the employees as well as the organizational outputs. Meeting the changing needs of the customers base (especially in the service sector) requires too much psychological engagement of employees, therefore, turning the employees into scapegoats in the event of negativity can psychologically isolate the employees. It can be thought that an employee who does not trust

the organizational process may become alienated and even objectify his organization.

Although the loneliness of healthcare professionals, especially nurses, has been examined in the literature in the context of nurses working in elderly care services, there are almost no publications on nurses' personal loneliness in India. It is thought that nurses can also experience the feeling of loneliness, which is defined as the state of being deprived of the quantitative and qualitative relationship that individuals need. The fact that nurses take the care of health and other personal problems of patients and respond to their differing expectations, especially in busy and tiring work environments, requires their time, physical energy, psychological engagement etc. In addition, the fact that nurses have to solve

many problems they encounter every day in busy and tiring work environments, and that they often have to struggle with the situations they encounter can be counted as factors that complicate the work of nurses (Melamed et al., 2001). Another factor that causes stress for nurses is that they often have to take initiative and intervene on their own in situations they encounter. The fact that nurses can be held responsible when negative results are experienced in some cases where they take the initiative can be shown as a reason that makes the process negative. The fact that the basic interventions they do in the shifts where they have to work independently or in the emergency services are of vital importance in the treatment of the patient which require the nurses to be very careful and sensitive, these processes increase the stress of the nurses. In addition, intense and tiring working conditions limit the quality of time they can devote to themselves outside of work. Apart from these physical determinants, deprivation of emotional resources, inability to have interactions or relationships to express themselves, negative reactions of patients, complaints, ethical or legal investigations are reported as factors that increase nurses' stress and other negative emotions (Rokach, 2018). One of the main determinants of the emotional factors that determine the loneliness of nurses is shown as quality workplace relations (Dutton and Ragins, 2017). It is thought that nurses can enrich their lives emotionally and add vitality to their lives by adding meaning to their work and quality to their workplace relations. It is thought that the emotional resources that nurses will need in these stressful working environments can be overcome with the support of managers. Leaders who show that they stand by their employees in such work environments and try to provide them with the resources and support they need can give nurses confidence. It is thought that nurses can be satisfied with their work and add meaning to their work by increasing their interactions and relationships with their managers whom they trust.

The perception of psychological safety has been the subject of widespread studies in the literature for the last 20 years. Edmondson (1999), brought the perception of psychological safety to the literature and claimed that interpersonal trust can shape the behavior of

individuals in the organization. It is thought that employees can act safely and exhibit positive proactive behaviors with confidence in an environment where they will not be harmed by other employees (Yener, 2015). For healthcare professionals who often have to make decisions on their own, clear and fair procedures on the job can assure their mental stability. Providing the resources (physical, emotional, etc.) that healthcare professionals will need during job by the supervisor can make the employees trust their supervisors. Conversely, failure to provide the necessary resources (time, tools, equipment, human resources, emotional support etc.) to healthcare professionals may cause employees to experience stress. Failure to disclose work-related problems for various reasons may cause nurses to face these problems. The employee may not be able to establish the relationships he needs in an environment where he does not trust anyone and hence may experience workplace loneliness.

The two dimensions of Herzberg's two-factor theory are hygiene and motivating factors. The behaviors, relations and practices of managers and leaders towards employees are seen as hygiene factors. Within the framework of Herzberg's two-factor theory, it is thought that as long as supervisors cannot create behaviors, practices and interactions that will create trust, nurses will not be able to have quality relationships in the workplace, and this may push nurses into loneliness. It is thought that the perception of loneliness will decrease the work motivation, organizational commitment and belonging, job satisfaction, employee happiness and increase the intention to leave the job.

Another theory that can be used in the research is Alienation Theory. Although the theory of alienation was used in Marx's discourses to describe the feeling of alienation from the workers in the capitalist economic system, it is thought that there are also dimensions that can be used in this study. According to the alienation theory, it is claimed that employees can become alienated from their work in a process where there is no participation of employees and only the output of their labor is questioned (Mandel and Novack, 1975). Within the framework of the study, the participation of the employees in the process is described with

the perception of psychological safety and it is thought that the employees in the organizations where the perception of psychological safety is low may avoid making a positive contribution to the organizational process. In this case, it is thought that employees can become lonely by avoiding making a positive contribution to the process, and isolate themselves from their work by objectifying their work. It is thought that when employees have the opportunity to contribute to the process in an environment where they have support from their supervisor, they can identify themselves with their work and not experience loneliness.

Within the framework of Marx's alienation theory and Herzberg et al.'s two-factor theory, it is thought that the perception of psychological safety may play a mediating role between support from supervisor and workplace loneliness.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Support from Supervisor

The workplaces model emphasizes the importance of trust and support in the organization, it is claimed that the dimensions of the organizational climate based on trust and support are credibility and respect (Mineo, 2014). This model has been shaped by the results of studies that have focused on many prominent organizations in the world and emphasized the characteristics of these organizations (Burchell and Robin, 2011). Credibility in the organization is formed by clear and accessible communication, organizational competence, physical resources and a coherent vision. Respect is shaped by supporting professional development, valuing, participation and cooperation in organizational decision-making, and interest in the private life of employees. Justice, on the other hand, is shaped by behaviors such as behaving objectively and not discriminating in the reward and punishment system. Although the supervisor has a formal position in which he has power over employees, the fact that the employee is deprived of any resources reinforces the effect of trust and support. Even if the organizational outputs (for example, performance) are negative due to external reasons in an environment where the supervisor builds trust, both the supervisor and employees

can take on failure together and learn from the negative results and create stronger motivations for the future. It can be a sign of trust and support that the supervisor and employees undertake success and failure together. Trust and support can be seen as the main factors that strengthens the relationship of two people (Fukuyama, 1995). In relationships where trust and support are dominant, the parties can derive maximum benefit from the relationship in terms of both psychological and other dimensions (Dunning, 2012).

In organizational terms, trust is defined as the expectation and belief regarding the behavior and discourse of the supervisor (Dirks, 2000). When the positions and situations of the supervisor and the employee in organizations are compared, since the supervisor has power over the employee, the supervisor is motivated by this power and the main tool that motivates the employees is accepted as support from the supervisor (Bass, 1990). It is thought that the need for support will increase as individuals' interdependence increases while performing their duties and responsibilities in the organization. The fact that the supervisor's achievement of his duties and responsibilities depends on the employee's performance makes the dependency between the supervisor and the employee undeniable, and this reveals the necessity of trust and support (Hogan et al., 1994). The fact that support is a function of the dependence between the supervisor and the employee has made the phenomenon of "support" the subject of many studies. It has been revealed in many studies that thanks to mutual support, employees can internalize the vision and wishes of the organization, and the active participation of employees in organizational processes can be ensured (Kirk, 2000). Support from the supervisor has also been shown as one of the basic dimensions of some leadership approaches such as transformative leadership and charismatic leadership (Yukl, 1998; Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1996).

Dirks (2000) claims that the level of support in the organization is related to the motivation, performance, positions, roles of the employees, and the goals and strategies of the organization. The level of support of the employee towards the people to whom he or she is dependent on many different issues in the organization

affects his performance on that subject. According to the expectancy theory, the expectations of the individual determine the motivation. As the motivation of the individual will be uncertain as his expectations are uncertain, his performance will also be uncertain. There are studies showing that employees' perceptions of support in the organization can play a mediating or regulatory role in outputs such as their performance and satisfaction (Podsakoff et al., 1990). Although support from the supervisor is prominent in the organizational literature, its differences with trust in the employee or in the organization are not emphasized (Dirks, 2000).

In a study conducted by Edmondson, 2002 on healthcare workers, he asked the nurses in his sample whether their supervisors support them or not, and how this support affects their behavior. It is emphasized that nurses who get support from their supervisor show more transaction behavior, take more roles in organizational processes and try to contribute, while it is emphasized that nurses who do not get support from their supervisor act with the motive of self-protection in every behavior.

2.2 Loneliness

Loneliness is defined as the qualitative and quantitative deprivation of social relations of individuals (Wright, 2005). However, studies show that individual inadequacy and social restrictions also have an effect on loneliness. Although there are many studies on loneliness in the psychology literature, the number of studies dealing with loneliness in business life is negligible. It is thought that the perception of loneliness of employees in the workplace may have a negative effect on individual and organizational performance. Loneliness, which is seen as a fact of individualized modern life, is also accepted as the determinant of many ailments. The reason why the phenomenon of loneliness is less explored in psychology or organizational psychology is that people do not describe themselves as lonely and lonely people are seen negatively by other members of the society in terms of psychosocial characteristics (Lau and Green, 1992). In addition, people's tendency not to remember negative experiences also prevents them from giving reliable answers to surveys about loneliness (Wright, 2005).

2.2.1. Workplace Loneliness

The negative impact of loneliness on societies is becoming more and more visible. The effect of loneliness on stress and burnout has been revealed in studies, and the perception of loneliness causes the individual to perceive himself as unnecessary (Killeen, 1998). The perception of loneliness turns into a vicious circle by causing the individual to interpret his environment with more subjective evaluation. Since the perception of loneliness is based on subjective evaluations, the number of times when the individual feels it, the perception of loneliness in his life changes, which makes the measurement of the phenomenon difficult. Sometimes, when there is a negative event in the workplace, individuals see themselves as very lonely, while in a positive event on the same day, individuals can feel like a family at the workplace. Although the feeling of loneliness is subjective, it can be thought that it has a relationship with the general climate of the organization.

Loneliness, which Robert Weiss referred to within the framework of emotional and social isolation in his book published in 1973, started to take place more in psychology studies. Until the 1970s, in limited studies on loneliness, it was defined as a psychiatric disorder that is generally shaped within the framework of psychopathology and clinical dysfunction (Wright, 2005). The loneliness research program conducted by Peplau at UCLA, which came to the fore in the studies carried out during this period, became famous. This program focuses on the relationship between personality traits and loneliness.

Loneliness has been defined in several dimensions in the work of Peplau and Perlman (1982). These are:

- Loneliness is defined by the qualitative and quantitative deprivation of the individual's social relationships.
- Loneliness is a subjective perception and cannot be explained by objective isolation.
- Loneliness is a negative and unwanted emotion.

The ideas that social relations can be effective on productivity and efficiency have been the subject of more studies contrary to the

economics approach of the eastern countries. In a study conducted in Japan, Taiwan and South Korea, it was revealed that social relations within business organizations are effective on the structure of organizations (Orru, 1991). However, classical and neoclassical economics approaches do not focus on the impact of interpersonal relations in organizations on the efficiency and effectiveness of organizations. Interpersonal relations can positively affect the productivity and efficiency of enterprises by satisfying the needs of individuals and providing access to information about opportunities and threats that businesses need. The network of interpersonal relationships that includes all members in business life provides the parties with business opportunities, investment opportunities, challenges, practices and strategies of other businesses, innovations and similar information that will enable them to take important decisions, while increasing motivation and life satisfaction by satisfying individual psychological needs (Cacioppo et al., 2003). Many studies (Pfeifer and Veiga, 1999) revealed the effect of employee well-being and satisfaction on performance have made it essential to investigate interpersonal relationships. However, it is stated that loneliness can be caused by personal factors or environmental factors. Factors such as low self-esteem and self-confidence, anxiety, low self-perception, and behavioral inadequacy are counted as personal factors. In particular, it does not explain why managers who work in leadership positions in businesses perceive themselves as lonely while they have self-confidence, self-esteem and self-perception. Because managers need to show a minimum level of personal skills and abilities in order to reach these positions. Self-esteem, self-confidence, assertiveness can be counted among these abilities. In this case, it can be thought that some of the situational factors may be effective on the loneliness perception of the employees.

Studies on workplace loneliness show that cultural values and social institutions can be effective on the loneliness of individuals (Slater, 1976). The norms of institutions such as schools and workplaces that shape the life of the individual can also isolate individuals, especially in modern societies, as they fuel individual success with the feeling of competition and independence. In these

institutions, individuals have psychological needs such as belonging, social bonding, etc. They may become lonely because they cannot satisfy their needs. Slater (1976) claimed that individuality denied the reality of interpersonal dependence and numbed the individuals with a sense of competition and independence in order to constantly deny this reality. In this case, Slater limited the determinants of loneliness to situational factors, namely social norms. It can be seen in infancy and childhood, when individuals naturally tend to interact with each other. Individuals are sometimes pushed into loneliness by the pressure of competition and freedom, as they are subject to social institutions outside the family. However, while competition and freedom satisfy the achievement needs of individuals (McClelland, 1961), the need for success can generally be effective in any area for a limited time in any individuals' life (Seidenberg, 1980). The pressure of competition and freedom creates temporary gratifications and leaves a huge void in place when their effect wears off. As the physical characteristics of individuals prevent them from competing continuously in life, these gaps may increase and create more dissatisfaction after a while. In addition, success from competition can satisfy individuals' need for success in a particular area of life. In other areas of life, individuals may experience more emptiness (Peplau and Perlman, 1982).

2.3. Perception of Psychological Safety

The perception of psychological safety is measured by the level of reactions of other employees such as ridicule, pressure, and devaluation in the feedback, suggestions and ideas of employees in favor of the organization (Edmondson, 2002). In other words, it is thought that employees in an organization where the perception of psychological safety is high can act proactively in favor of the organization without hesitation and fear (Yener and Saka, 2017). Today's organizations consist of teams in which individuals with different needs and expectations work together for a common purpose. The fact that the working conditions are variable and harsh necessitates the employees to work interdependently in the background, even if they work physically autonomously. The dependency of employees on each other makes them vulnerable to each

other's behavior. For example, the results of any behavior of an employee in the work environment may be perceived negatively by other employees and may lead to a disruptive effect. Negative situations in relations between employees can lead to decreased interaction, disconnection and even sabotaging behavior. This sensitive nature of interpersonal relationships has led to the definition of the perception of psychological safety. The perception of psychological safety, which is also defined as the perception of interpersonal risk among employees, can also be an indicator of inner peace in a working environment (Edmondson, 2002). The perception of psychological safety can create a perception that can relieve employees of the responsibility of constantly monitoring the processes and results of their behaviors. For example, in a work environment where the perception of psychological safety is positive, it can be said that employees do not have any reservations about negative understanding of their feedback, suggestions, proposals and interpersonal dialogues (Yener, 2015). Considering the opposite, it can be seen that in a work environment where the perception of psychological safety is low or negative, that is, employees are negatively criticized, isolated, humiliated, etc. due to their behaviors and actions. It can be thought that the lives of employees will be difficult in a working environment where they are exposed to negative reactions. Employees may have to keep under constant control whether there are any misunderstandings or negative misunderstandings in their every behavior and discourse. Employees may need to be constantly alert while behaving, talking and later on. In fact, employees may withdraw themselves from the organizational environment psychologically in order not to be exposed to negative and destructive reactions (Beduk and Kılınc, 2015). Just like in the perception of organizational silence, employees may not share their ideas and suggestions even if they think it will be beneficial in this situation. Employees can become lonely by isolating themselves and objectify their relationships. They can shape all their interactions in a cost-benefit framework. The fact that organizations have such a negative psychological climate while competing at the same time can be considered as a factor that negatively affects competition. Proactive

behaviors of employees are seen as the key to organizational change and development. Considering that organizational learning is formed by the efforts of the employees together, it can be ensured that the employees behave enthusiastically in this regard with the presence of the perception of psychological safety (Yener and Saka, 2017). Organizational learning consists of learning behavior of individuals (Lewin, 1948). Learning is associated with experience behavior.

Individuals' personal professional experiences belong to them and when combined with professional knowledge, they are called tacit knowledge and are seen as an inimitable competitive tool of organizations (Yener and Arslan, 2017). Experiences, which are seen as the key to organizational change and development, are also based on the mistakes of the employees in the workplace. When employees make a mistake, they are exposed to a negative and destructive reaction or sanction, which may cause employees to experience a constant fear of making mistakes. With this fear and anxiety, employees may not be able to act safely and isolate themselves. When employees make mistakes, they can have a working life on the edge of fear that these mistakes can be used against them.

3. Research Model

In the relationship between the variables, the mediating variables are defined as the latent variable that enables the relationship to occur. In such models, it is claimed that the effect of the dependent variable on the independent variable is provided by a latent mediator variable. Research models created based on the fact that the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable will be lost when the mediator variable is statistically withdrawn from the relationship between the dependent and independent variable, has gradually increased in the last two decades, adding depth to the researches. Some minimums need to be met in research models with a mediator variable (Baron and Kenny, 1986). The effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable should be significant. In this respect, it is expected that the support from supervisor will significantly affect workplace loneliness.

- The effect of the independent variable on the mediating variable should be significant. It is expected that the support from supervisor will create a perception of psychological safety.
- The effect of the mediator variable on the dependent variable should be significant. It is expected that the perception of psychological safety will affect workplace loneliness.
- When the mediator variable is withdrawn from the relationship, the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable should decrease completely or partially. When the perception of psychological safety is withdrawn from the relationship

between the support from supervisor and workplace loneliness, it is expected that the support from supervisor on workplace loneliness will decrease.

In this context, it is suggested in this research that the support from supervisor (independent variable) can affect the workplace loneliness (dependent variable) of the employees by creating the perception of psychological safety (Mediator Variable). The hypothesis and model of the research are presented below.

H1: The perception of psychological safety plays a mediating role between the support from supervisor and workplace loneliness.

Figure 1. Research Model



4. Method, Analysis and Findings

This study aims to reveal the mediating role of participants' psychological safety perceptions in the relationship between support from the supervisor and workplace loneliness with the relational survey method. It was applied to the members of the nursing profession, which is a profession that has been criticized with negative feelings. The population of the research consists of nurses working in National Capital Region of India. It was observed that 98% (167 participants) of the sample were female and 2% (3 participants) were male. Looking at age groups, 15% are in the 18-25 age group (27 participants), 27% are in the 26-33 age group (45 participants), 44% are in the 34-41 age group (74 participants) and 2% (4 participant) was observed to be in the age group of 42 and above. It was observed that 35% of the participants were single (59 participants) and 65% were married (111 Participants). It was observed that 59% of the participants had children (101 Participants).

170 nurses working in the National Capital Region of India constitute the sample of the research. The results of the surveys made by providing online data entry with the Google form application with the face-to-face survey method were evaluated in the SPSS 21 analysis application.

4.1. Measuring Tools

The Perceived Supervisor Support Scale (Cheng et al., 2015) to measure the nurses' perception of support from the supervisor, UCLA Loneliness scale to measure the perception of loneliness in business life, Amy Edmondson's (1999) Psychological Safety Scale to measure the perception of psychological safety were used in the study. The sphericity test (KMO Bartlett Test) together with the reliability and construct validity results of the measurement tools are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Results of the Scales

Scale Name	KMO Bartlett Sphericity Test	No. of Explanations, No. of Items, No. of Factors	Reliability Results
Workplace Loneliness	.926 (p< .01)	62%, 16 Items, 2 Factors	.857
Support from the Supervisor	.928 (p< .01)	74%, 9 Items, 1 Factor	.955
Psychological Safety	.809 (p< .01)	60.4% 7 Items, 2 Factors	.764

4.2. Relationship Between Variables

The results of the analysis of the relations of the variables in the research model in line with the model are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Level and Direction of Relationship Between Variables

MODEL VARIABLES		Support from the Supervisor	Workplace Loneliness	Psychological Safety
Support from the Supervisor	Pearson Correlation	1	-.171*	.159*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.026	.038
	N	170	170	170
Workplace Loneliness	Pearson Correlation	-.171*	1	-.354**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026		.000
Psychological Safety	Pearson Correlation	.159*	-.354**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.038	.000	

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Considering the results of the research, a low level of significant and negative relationship was observed between support from the supervisor and workplace loneliness at the 5% significance level ($R = -.171$, $p < .05$). A low level of significant and positive correlation was observed between support from the supervisor and perception of psychological safety ($R = .159$, $p < .05$). A moderately significant and negative relationship was observed between psychological safety and workplace loneliness ($R = -.354$, $p < .01$) in table 2.

4.3. The Test Results of the Research Model; The Effects of the Variables on Each Other

The research model was applied within the framework of Baron and Kenny's mediator variable research model proposal. In this framework, firstly, the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable was observed. The negative and significant effect of the perception of support from the supervisor on workplace loneliness was observed ($\beta = -.171$, $p < .05$) in table 3.

Table 3. The Effect of the Independent Variable on the Dependent Variable

R	R ²	Harmonized R ²		Std. Estimated Error	
.171 ^a	.029	.023		.35596	
a. Independent Variable: Support from the Supervisor; Dependent Variable: Workplace Loneliness					
	Non-Standardized Coefficient β	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficient β	t	Sig.
Constant	3.166	.063		50.058	.000
Support from Supervisor	-.055	.025	-.171	-2.244	.026

Secondly, the effect of the independent variable on the mediating variable was observed. A positive and significant relationship was observed between the perception of support

from the supervisor and the perception of psychological safety ($\beta = .159$, $p < .05$) in table 4.

Table 4. The Effect of the Independent Variable on the Intermediary Variable

R	R ²	Harmonized R ²		Std. Estimated Error	
.159 ^a	.025	.020		.50035	
a. Decisive: (Fixed): Support from the Supervisor; Dependent Variable: Psychological Safety					

	Non-Standardized Coefficient β	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficient β	t	Sig.
Constant	2.902	.089		32.645	.000
Support from Supervisor	-.072	.035	.159	2.091	.038

It was observed that the perception of psychological safety, which is a mediating variable, has a negative and significant effect on workplace loneliness, which is a dependent variable ($\beta = -.354$, $p < .01$) in table 5.

Table 5. The Effect of the Intermediate Variable on the Dependent Variable

R	R ²	Harmonized R ²	Std. Estimated Error		
.354 ^a	.125	.120	.33791		
a. Decisive: (Fixed): Perception of Psychological Safety; Dependent Variable: Workplace Loneliness					
	Non-Standardized Coefficient β	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficient β	t	Sig.
Constant	3.812	.160		23.820	.000
Psychological Safety	-.252	.051	-.354	-4.900	.000

When the effect of the perception of psychological safety, which is the mediating variable, was statistically subtracted from the total effect, it was observed that the effect of the perception of support from the supervisor, which is the independent variable, on the dependent variable, workplace loneliness, decreased and became meaningless ($\beta = -.038$, $p > .01$) in table 6.

Table 6. Direct Impact

R	R ²	MSE	P	
.372 ^a	.138	.1131	.000	
a. Decisive: (Fixed), Support from Supervisor, Psychological Safety; Dependent Variable: Workplace Loneliness				
	Standardized Coefficient		t	Sig.
	β	Std. Error		
Constant	3.812	.161	23.830	.000
Support from the Supervisor	-.038	.023	-1.611	.1090
Psychological Safety	-.2388	.051	-4.604	.000
	Effect	Se	z	p
Normal Theory Test (Sobel Test)	-.017	.0093	-1.8674	.042

According to the findings obtained in the research model established in this framework, a full mediation effect of the perception of psychological safety was observed between support from the supervisor and workplace loneliness. Considering the results of the Sobel test, which was also applied in the established model, it can be said that the theory is supported ($\beta = -.017$, $p < .05$).

5. Conclusion

Considering the results of the analysis of the data collected in this study, in which the mediating role of the perception of psychological safety in the relationship between the nurses' perception of support from the supervisor and their feelings of loneliness was examined, it can be said that the research model established and the hypothesis created were confirmed. Considering the results of the analysis, when the perception support from the supervisor is a mediating variable, a significant

effect on workplace loneliness is observed ($\beta = -.171$, $p < .05$), when the perception of psychological safety is withdrawn from the relationship, the effect coefficient decreases and the relationship becomes meaningless ($\beta = -.038$, $p > .01$) was observed.

Recent studies (Rokach, 2018) revealed that the intense, flexible and stressful working conditions of healthcare professionals, especially nurses, lead to burnout and alienation over time which may be a sign of great negativities in the future. Although it was not conducted directly on nurses, a study revealed that 52% of the sample of healthcare professionals experienced alienation. It is claimed that the negative psychological climate in the workplace and the deprivation of emotional resources prevent employees from struggling with the negative situations they encounter, causing them to experience stress, burnout and alienation as a result of chronic stress (Luther et al., 2017). There are also studies showing that the relationships of

healthcare professionals with other employees and leaders can be effective on workplace stress, burnout, and alienation (Gittell and Godfrey, 2013). Considering the results of these studies, it can be said that the results observed in the present research support these studies.

Similar results were also observed in some other studies in the literature, that because of working conditions in health organizations, the nature of the duties, the demands of the patients and the inadequacy of financial returns, the health workers generally experience chronic stress, burnout, and alienation. This study examines the leader member relations as the determinant, and studied the burnout, alienation and isolation of healthcare professionals as the determinant of the supervisor's behavior and the relationship between the supervisor and the member, may open a different perspective to the literature.

Generally, in studies conducted in modern Western societies, the perception of loneliness has been the subject of studies as the loneliness of patients. It is known that healthcare professionals who only intervene in patients often intervene by taking initiative and assuming responsibility in the conditions in which they work and in the situations they encounter. When intensive and stressful working conditions are added, it is thought that nurses may need many physical and emotional resources to respond to these working conditions. It was thought that the lack of these resources would lead nurses to negative emotions. It has been observed in many studies that the negative emotions of the employees in the working environment generally led to results up to leaving the job (Yener, 2015). The average earnings of nurses and other factors force nurses to continue their duties in the current difficult economic conditions despite everything. It causes nurses to seek their motivation sources in the workplace. It was thought that the behaviors and practices of the administrators towards the conditions of nurses and patients would create trust. In the study, which was modeled within the framework of Herzberg's double factor and Marx's alienation theory, management practices and the leader's trust-building behaviors were evaluated as one of the hygiene factors affecting the motivation and performance of the employee. According to

the results of the research, it can be suggested that the perception of psychological safety can occur in environments where the supervisor provides support, and that employees will not experience loneliness by interacting without worry. Observation of the full mediation effect in the study shows that the support factor is one of the main determinants of the perception of psychological safety in interpersonal relationships. Interpersonal relationships are accepted as the key to performance, as the perception of psychological safety is the subject of more and more research. In fact, the configuration approach suggests that the outputs of two different organizations with the same resources may depend on the relationships between the components. When the results of the study are compared with other studies in the literature, it can be said that it opens a new dimension. For example, Edmondson's (2002) study on nurses, observing that support is the determinant of the perception of psychological safety, shows the consistency of the results. According to a much more recent research result (Erkutlu et al., 2019), the results of the research, in which the negative effect of the perception of psychological safety in health institutions on counterproductive work behaviors is observed, contains similar findings with our research.

The originality of the study lies in the handling of workplace loneliness, which is the subject of very few studies in the literature. The definition of the relationship between workplace loneliness and support from the supervisor with the perception of psychological safety constitutes the depth of the research. Although the perception of psychological safety is defined by the dimensions of tolerance and initiative in the literature (Yener, 2015), the strong effect of the trust factor in its formation may shed light on future research.

Another originality of the study can be shown as a statistical explanation of a current problem within the framework of Marx's alienation theory. The Theory of Alienation has satisfactorily explained the research model, which proposes that employees will become alienated by objectifying their relationships and efforts in a work process where they are not involved in the process. It has been emphasized that while the involvement of the employees in the process is possible, the perception of

psychological safety can also be based on support. It has been suggested within the framework of Alienation theory that employees will become alienated from the process at their work (Workplace Loneliness) when there is no perception of psychological safety. Kocak Omer Erdem and Serdar Yener (2019) investigated the mediating role of psychological safety on trust in leader and feeling of workplace loneliness, and similar to the present study they found the perfect mediation role of psychological safety in the relationship between trust in leader and loneliness in the workplace.

The hidden determinants and consequences of workplace loneliness may be the subject of future research. Applied studies on establishing the perception of psychological safety can be another research topic. It is thought that the effects of the supervisor's behavior and supervisor-employee interaction are more than expected. In this respect, it may be beneficial to provide inputs in this direction in development programs for supervisors.

References

- [1] Baron, R. M. & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The Moderator-Mediator Variable Distinction in Social Psychological Research: Conceptual, Strategic and Statistical Considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51, 6, 1173-1182
- [2] Bass, B. M. (1990). From Transactional to Transformational Leadership: Learning to Share the Vision. *Organizational Dynamics*, 18, 19-32. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616\(90\)90061-S](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616(90)90061-S)
- [3] Bedük, A. ve Kılınç, S. (2015). The Relationship of Organizational Justice and Organizational Commitment: An Example of Milk and Dairy Product Company, *Global Journal of Human Resource Management*, 3(4), 1- 13.
- [4] Cacioppo, J., Hawkley, L., & Berntson, G. (2003). The anatomy of loneliness. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 12, 71-74.
- [5] Dirks, K. T. (2000). Trust in leadership and team performance: Evidence from NCAA basketball. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85(6), 1004–1012. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.85.6.1004>
- [6] Dunning, T. (2012). *Frontmatter. In Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences: A Design-Based Approach (Strategies for Social Inquiry, pp. I-Vi)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [7] Dutton JE, & Ragins BRE (2007). *Exploring Positive Relationships at Work: Building a Theoretical and Research Foundation*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum .
- [8] Edmondson, A. C. (1999). Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Jun, 44, 2, 350-384.
- [9] Edmondson, A. C. (2002). Managing the Risk of Learning Psychological in Work Teams, West, M. (Ed) *International Handbook of Organizational Teamwork*, London: Blackwell.
- [10] Erkutlu, H. V., Kayacan, M. & Özdemir, H.Ö. (2019). Sağlık çalışanlarında psikolojik güvenlik ile Üretkenlik Karşıtı İş Davranıları Arasında Bir Çalışma. *Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi*, 2(3), 166-179.
- [11] Fukuyama, F. (1995). *Trust: The social virtues and the creation of prosperity*. New York: The Free Press.
- [12] Gittel, J.H., Godfrey, M.M., & Thistlethwaite, J. (2013). Interprofessional collaborative practice and relational coordination: Improving healthcare through relationships. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 27, 210 - 213.
- [13] Hogan, R., Curphy, G. J., & Hogan, J. (1994). What we know about leadership: Effectiveness and personality. *American Psychologist*, 49(6), 493–504. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.49.6.493>
- [14] Killeen, C. (1998). Loneliness: An epidemic in modern society. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 28, 762-770.
- [15] Kirk, J. J., (2000). Web-Assisted Career Counseling, *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 37(3), 146-159.
- [16] Kirkpatrick, S.A. and Locke, E.A. (1996). Direct and Indirect Effects of Three Core Charismatic Leadership Components on Performance and Attitudes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81, 36.

- <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.81.1.36>
- [18] Gittell, J. H., Godfrey, M., ve Thristlethwaite, J. (2013). Interprofessional Collaborative practice and Relational Coordination: Improving Healthcare Through Relationships. *Journal of Interprof Care*, 27(3), 210-213.
- [19] Koçak, Ömer Erdem, Yener, Serdar. *Yonetim ve Ekonomi*, (2019), The Mediation Role of Psychological Safety on The Relationship Between Trust in Leader and Workplace Loneliness, *Manisa*, 26(3), 937-954. DOI:10.18657/yonveek569344
- [20] Lau, S. & Green, G. (1992). The social stigma of loneliness: Effect of target person's and perceiver's sex. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 18, 182-189.
- [21] Lewin, K. (1948). *Research center for group dynamics*. New York: Harper&Brothers
- [22] Luther, L., Hearhart, T., Fukui, SX., Morse, G., Rollins, A. L., ve Salyers, M. P. (2017). Working overtime in community mental health: Associations with clinicians burnout and perceived quality of care. *Psychiatr Rehabil J*. 40(2), 252-259.
- [23] Mandel, E. & Novack, G. (1975). *Marksist Yabancılaşma Kuramı*, (Çev. Olcay Göçmen), Yücel Yayınları, İstanbul, 1975.
- [24] McClelland, David C., *The Achieving Society* (1961). University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Academy for Entrepreneurial Leadership Historical Research Reference in Entrepreneurship, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1496181>
- [25] Melamed, Y., Szor, H. & Bernstein, E. (2001). The Loneliness of the Therapist in the Public Outpatient Clinic, *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, 31(2).
- [26] Mineo, D. L., (2014). The Importance of Trust in Leadership. *Research Management Review*, 20(1), 1-6.
- [27] Orrù, M., (1991). The explanation of economic structures. *Theor Soc* 20, 539–553. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00157325>
- [28] Peplau, L., & Perlman, D. (1982). Perspectives on loneliness. In L. Peplau & D. Perlman (Eds.), *Loneliness: A source book of current theory, research and therapy*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- [29] Pfeifer, J., & Veiga, J. (1999). Putting people first for organization success. *Academy of Management Executive*, 13(2), 37-51.
- [30] Podsakoff, Philip & MacKenzie, Scott & Moorman, Robert & Fetter, Richard. (1990). Transformational leader behaviors and their effects on followers' trust in leader, satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors. *The Leadership Quarterly*. 1. 107-142. 10.1016/1048-9843(90)90009-7.
- [31] Rokach, A. (2018). Clinicians's Stress and Loneliness: A Review, *Abnormal Psychology and Clinical Psychiatry*, 1(1), 1-4.
- [32] Seidenberg, R. (1980). The lonely marriage in corporate America. In J. Hartog, J. Audy, & Y. Cohen (Eds.), *The anatomy of loneliness* (pp. 186-203). New York: International Universities Press.
- [33] Slater, P. (1976). *The Pursuit of Loneliness: American Culture at the Breaking Point*. Boston, MA: Beacon.
- [34] Wright, S. L. (2005). *Loneliness in the Workplace*. University of Canterbury Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, 2005.
- [35] Yeloğlu, H. O. (2008). Konfigürasyonlar: Koşulbağımlılık Kuramı, Konfigürasyon Yaklaşımı Bağlamında Örgüt Yapıları Üzerine Önergeler. *Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi İİBF Dergisi*, 3(2), 155-170.
- [36] Yener, S. (2015). *Paylaşılan Liderlik Davranışı ve İşten Ayrılma Niyeti Arasındaki ilişkide Psikolojik Güvenlik Algısının Aracı Değişken İlişkinin Araştırılması*. Haliç Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, 2015.
- [37] Yener, S. ve Saka, C. (2017). Örgütsel Öğrenme Bağlamında Psikolojik Rahatlık, Sinop Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 1(1), 45-66.
- [38] Yener, S. & Arslan, A. (2017). Relationship Between the Motivational Language of School Administrators and Tacit Knowledge Sharing of Teachers. Dhouha Jaziri-Bouagina and George Leal Jamil (eds), *Handbook of Research on Tacit Knowledge Management for Organizational Success*, (Chapter 15). Hershey PA, USA ; IGI Global, DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-2394-9, ISBN 9781522523956