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Performance Anxiety, Deadlines, and Employee Well-Being: A Moderated Mediation Model

Raisa Jabbar

PhD. Scholar, Department of Management Sciences, Superior University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

Email: raisajabbar8@gmail.com

ORCID ID: 0009-0005-6662-6254

Abstract

Originating in the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, the present study examines the mediating role of failure to meet deadlines in linking employee performance anxiety to employee well-being, while also considering the moderating role of neuroticism in this relationship. Time-lagged data provided in the study to employees indicate that performance anxiety reduces well-being largely due to the increased likelihood of failing to meet deadlines, thereby raising stress and depleting resources. The effects of failing to meet deadlines are particularly strong when employees show high levels of neuroticism, and neurotic individuals are more vulnerable than others to the negative impact of failure. This study marks out such an important link through which an organization can suffer from performance anxiety, contributing to the decline of overall well-being (by way of task-related failures imposed on employees by performance anxiety) and, interestingly enough, reveals that this link may involve individual personality traits. Therefore, by capturing these dynamics, the research accentuates performance-related anxiety and encourages organizations to train and empower employees in handling deadline management issues for improved well-being, especially among those with a higher neurotic tendency.

Keywords: Employee performance anxiety, failure to meet deadlines, employee well-being, neuroticism, conservation of resources theory

JEL classification: J24, J22, I31, Z13 and M14

1. Introduction

Employees in the modern workplace frequently face high levels of stress, particularly in the form of performance anxiety and the constant pressure to meet deadlines. Performance anxiety, defined as the concern and fear associated with the need to meet job expectations, has become more common as companies strive for greater productivity and efficiency. (Giorgi, Leon-Perez, & Arenas, 2021) This kind of worry usually harms employees' mental and physical health. Furthermore, meeting deadline pressure might increase stress, reduce job satisfaction, and negatively impact overall productivity. (Smillie, Yeo, Furnham, & Jackson, 2019) Understanding these workplace characteristics is necessary to address employee well-being and ensure business performance. This study's significance lies in its ability to provide useful guidance for improving working conditions. By understanding how deadlines and performance anxiety affect well-being and how neuroticism moderates these interactions, organizations may develop tailored strategies to support workers. For example, customized treatments, such as flexible deadline policies or stress management training, may improve employees' well-being and help them better manage their anxiety.

According to (Chou, Chu, Yeh, & Chen, 2014; Hakanen, Ropponen, Schaufeli, & De Witte, 2019) Employee well-being is a picture of the state of employees in the workplace that includes physical, psychological, and individual aspects of their well-being and their perception of job satisfaction or emotional exhaustion. According to McKinley (2022) Three factors contribute to employee well-being: psychological well-being, workplace well-being, and subjective well-being. As

previously stated, the quality of individual well-being, workplace well-being, and well-being in terms of the psychological characteristics of the individual in question must all be considered to characterize total well-being. For a company or organization, employee health is equally regarded. This is because enhancing employee well-being significantly affects the improvement of employee performance. (Russell, 2018) And vice versa when that well-being is high. Help enhance worker well-being and performance since these factors impact absenteeism, job satisfaction, and employee turnover. (Naruse et al., 2013; O'Donoghue, Conway, & Bosak, 2016; Sukandar & Wardani, 2022).

For several reasons, we selected state anxiety as a significant indication of poor well-being as the outcome variable. (Rajgopal, 2019). First, only a small number of research studies examine the connection between poor measures of workers' well-being, such as anxiety. (Inceoglu, Thomas, Chu, Plans, & Gerbasi, 2018; Koutsimani, Montgomery, & Georganta, 2019). Second, it covers the psychological and physiological effects of stress and can be described as a "physio-psychological sensation state, which addresses one person's perceptions of psychological and physiological states" (Glazer & Kruse, 2018). Third, in workplaces that are marked by ambiguity and uncertainty (Hartwig, Bhat, & Peters, 2022; Leuteritz, Navarro, & Berger, 2017), anxiety is particularly linked in many nations (Haug & Nøstdal, 2023; Silva). Fourth, it is believed to be the immediate internal reaction in supervisor-subordinate relations. (ASLAM & SARWAT, 2021). Fifth, as state anxiety is a strong predictor of anxiety disorder, one of the most common mental illnesses in the EU, we examined it as a critical outcome. (Pittig et al., 2023). Sixth is undesirable response to induced stress early in the context of work, which is seen as state anxiety, the basic element that is fired in the living organism when it faces real or imaginary threats. (Glazer and Kruse, 2008) and weakly correlated with organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and long-term outcomes, is infectiveness. (Koutsimani et al., 2019).

Additionally, earlier studies have elucidated how resource-straining situations regarding an employee's particular task or an organization-wide operation would prevent such employees from completing the task within the time a normal situation would have allowed. Task complexity is often a contributing factor in this outcome. (Hoppe, Ignaz Preissler, & Förster, 2018), Negative work-family conflicts (Akhtar & Faisal Malik, 2020), politicized organizational decision-making processes (De Clercq, Jahanzeb, & Fatima, 2021), breaches of the psychological contract (De Clercq, 2023) perceptions of person-organization are undesirable, not enough time management training, or a sense of job insecurity (Haq, De Clercq, & Azeem, 2022). By describing how and why an employee's poor interactions with coworkers, or the individuals who work with them, may also contribute to their inability to achieve deadlines, we would like to expand this line of investigation. In particular, we look into the relationship between deadline misses and another worker's bullying. Consider, then, our study objectives of detailing how worker undermining could evolve into a reluctance to put the necessary effort into completing work on time and determining when, according to employee characteristics, this upsurge in performance anxiety is most likely to occur.

Therefore, a dedicated thought, emotion, or behavior pattern that is unique to each person in many contexts is referred to as a personality trait. (Bornstein & Bornstein, 2018). Together with extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to new experiences, neuroticism is one of the Big Five personality qualities. (Widiger & Oltmanns, 2017). Studies in the past have demonstrated the significance of taking personality factors into account when assessing significant life outcomes (Sigelman, De George, Cunial, & Rider, 2018). Therefore, it's critical to take into account personality features and their impact on wellbeing. In particular, neuroticism is a powerful indicator of overall health and well-being. (Best, Cruitt, Oltmanns, & Hill, 2021). Since neuroticism contains negative impacts, including wrath, anxiety, and despair, it is thought to be a personality characteristic that negatively affects well-being. Additionally, those with high neuroticism are more likely to experience emotional instability, irritability, and self-consciousness. (Widiger & Oltmanns, 2017).

This research is important because it can impact organizational policy and support strategies. By understanding how neuroticism impacts the effects of deadlines and performance anxiety on well-being, organizations may create customized solutions to help staff members. People who are more neurotic could feel less pressured if, for example, flexible deadlines or stress management classes are offered. The study also contributes to existing research by integrating the concepts of deadlines, neuroticism, performance anxiety, and employee well-being into a unified model. Compared to previous research that looked at these elements separately, this one looks at how they relate to one another, offering a more comprehensive picture of the interplay between personal traits and occupational expectations.

1.1 Objectives of the study

- To examine the conditional impact of neuroticism on well-being and how it influences the relationship between performance anxiety and missed deadlines.
- To establish businesses with useful strategies to reduce the negative effects of workplace pressures and enhance worker well-being, particularly for highly neurotic employees.
- To investigate the relationship between employee well-being and performance anxiety, using missed deadlines as a mediating factor.

1.2 Problem statement

The impact of performance anxiety and deadline pressure on employee well-being is examined in this study. Although high-pressure work environments are recognized to have detrimental effects on mental and physical health, the specific ways in which anxiety and deadlines interact are not fully understood. This study's value then lies in its exploration of how performance anxiety moderates the relationship between deadline pressure and employee well-being. It will also look at how factors like organizational support or individual coping strategies may change these effects, offering insights on how to reduce stress and improve work environments for healthier, more productive employees.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

In organizational contexts, employee well-being is significantly impacted by neuroticism, anxiety related to performance, and missed deadlines. In high-pressure work settings, performance anxiety, which is the worry of not meeting expectations, is a common problem. (Dou, Zhang, Wang, & Liang, 2023). Performance anxiety can be made worse by neuroticism, a personality feature marked by emotional instability and a propensity to feel bad. (Caprar, Walker, & Ashforth, 2022). Employees' psychological resources are further depleted, and their well-being is lowered when they miss deadlines, which is frequently the result of performance anxiety and ineffective time management. (Lillywhite & Wolbring, 2022). Using the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) This review examines the connections between these variables and suggests a moderated mediation model to clarify how neuroticism and performance anxiety affect worker well-being, mediated by missed deadlines.

According to the Conservation of Resources (COR) hypothesis (Hobfoll, 1989), people work hard to get, hold onto, and safeguard important resources, including time, energy, social support, and self-efficacy. When these resources are endangered, depleted, or not sufficiently restored after being invested, stress results. The COR hypothesis states that people who have more resources are better able to handle stress, whereas people who have fewer resources are more susceptible to stress and its detrimental effects. (Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu, & Westman, 2018). Employees' psychological and emotional resources can be depleted at the workplace by performance anxiety, neuroticism, and missing deadlines, which can impede functioning and lower well-being.

The idea of resource caravans, where resources are linked and have an incentive to increase or decline collectively, is also introduced by COR theory. For instance, workers who suffer from performance anxiety may lose social resources (like support from coworkers) as well as cognitive resources (like attention and decision-making capacity) as a result of decreased engagement and cooperation.

(Hobfoll et al., 2018). This interdependence emphasizes the significance of managing decreasing resources comprehensively as opposed to focusing on individual face stresses.

2.1 Employees' Performance Anxiety

Anxiety over performance is a major cause of stress that affects workers' mental health. Employee fear reduces their emotional and cognitive resources when they believe that their skills do not match the demands of work. (Diaz-Moriana, Clinton, & Kammerlander, 2024). For example, Withers, Lee, Bermiss, and Boivie (2024) Revealed that workers who experienced high levels of performance anxiety also had greater absence rates and worse emotional well-being. This is in line with COR theory, which contends that performance anxiety-induced resource depletion might result in a loss spiral in which a decline in well-being further impairs one's capacity to handle stresses in the future. (Hobfoll et al., 2018).

Additionally, performance anxiety can affect cognitive functioning, making it harder for workers to concentrate, make judgments, and successfully solve issues. (Stecher, Cloonan, & Domino, 2023). A vicious cycle of stress and poor performance is created when this cognitive exhaustion intensifies the detrimental impacts of performance anxiety. Employees who suffer from performance anxiety, for instance, can put off or postpone duties, which would further deplete resources and exacerbate their anxiety. (Williamson, Gish, & Stephan, 2021). Performance anxiety can be lessened and well-being restored with interventions that focus on restocking resources, such as social support and mindfulness training. (Matthews & Ritter, 2019).

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant negative relationship between employee well-being and performance anxiety.

2.2 Neuroticism as a Moderator

The connection between performance anxiety and exhausted resources is moderated by neuroticism, a personality characteristic marked by emotional instability and a propensity to feel unpleasant emotions. The negative effects of performance anxiety become greater in workers with high neuroticism because they are more likely to view activities as dangerous and have a worse capacity for stress management. (Caprar et al., 2022). The COR hypothesis states that neuroticism increases resource loss and makes people more vulnerable to the negative consequences of performance anxiety. (Hobfoll et al., 2018).

According to Dou et al. (2023), In one study, for example, workers with high degrees of neuroticism reported far greater levels of performance anxiety and poorer levels of well-being than their less neurotic colleagues. This implies that performance anxiety causes resource depletion, which gets made worse by neuroticism and results in higher declines in well-being. Additionally, maladaptive coping mechanisms like avoidance and rumination are more common in neurotic people, which further exhaust resources and increase stress. (Stecher et al., 2023). By improving workers' capacity to manage stress and save resources, neuroticism-lowering interventions like cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and resilience training may decrease the negative effects.

Hypothesis 2: Employee performance anxiety and failing to meet deadlines are moderated by neuroticism, with a larger relationship for those with higher levels of neuroticism.

2.3 Failed deadlines as a Mediator

The relationship between employee well-being and performance anxiety is mediated by missed deadlines. According to Lillywhite and Wolbring (2022) Performance anxiety frequently results in poor time management, procrastination, and work avoidance, which raises the risk of missing deadlines. According to COR theory, employees lose a lot of resources when they miss deadlines because they have to put in more time and effort to finish assignments, which further reduces their emotional and psychological resources. (Hobfoll et al., 2018).

For example, research conducted by Williamson et al. (2021). Discovered that workers who missed deadlines said they were far less happy and more burned out. This implies that performance anxiety affects well-being through the mechanism of missed deadlines, which depletes resources and fosters feelings of inadequacy and failure. According to Diaz-Moriana et al. (2024) Workers who miss deadlines may also get unfavorable comments from managers or coworkers, which further depletes social resources and increases stress. Goal-setting and prioritizing training are two interventions that can help decrease the probability of missed deadlines and reduce their negative impacts on well-being.

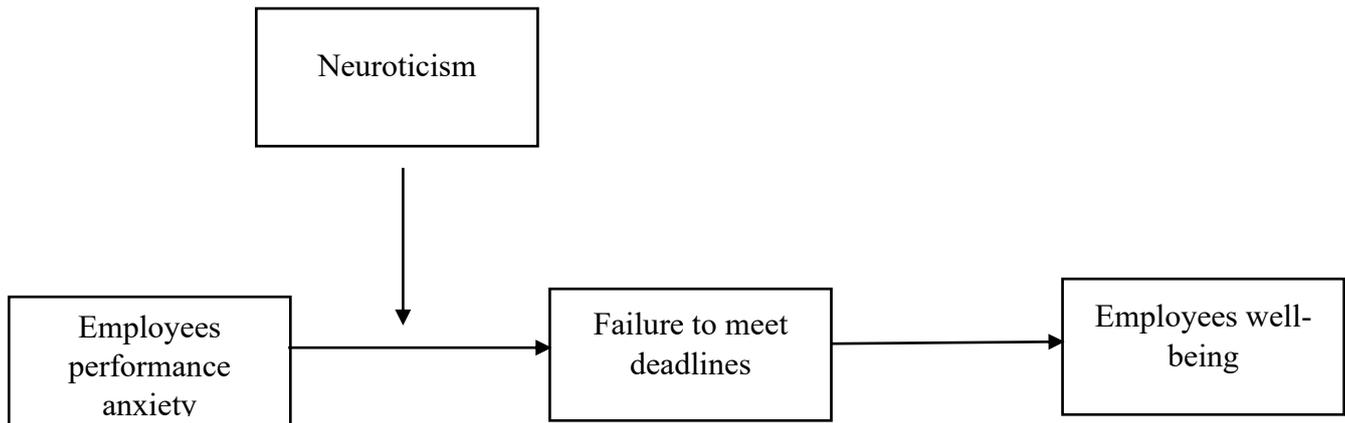
Hypothesis 3: The relationship between employee performance anxiety and well-being is mediated by failing to meet deadlines

2.4 Employees' Well-Being as an Outcome

The ultimate goal of the suggested moderated mediation model is the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of employees. The COR hypothesis states that the equilibrium between resource replenishment and depletion is reflected in well-being. Employees' well-being deteriorates when their resources are exhausted as a result of performance anxiety, neuroticism, and missed deadlines. This can have negative consequences, including decreased productivity, work discontent, and burnout. (T. S. Smith & Reid, 2018). On the other hand, workers are better equipped to manage stress and preserve their well-being when they have access to resources that refuel their psychological and emotional reserves. (Morinaj & Hascher, 2022).

For instance, (Zhang, Mavoa, Zhao, Raphael, & Smith, 2020) Discovered that even while working under pressure, workers who felt their managers were helpful reported feeling better and experiencing less performance anxiety. This implies that the detrimental consequences of performance anxiety, neuroticism, and missed deadlines might be lessened by organizational initiatives meant to increase resource availability, such as offering social support and encouraging work-life balance.

This review, which builds on COR theory, suggests a moderated mediation model to explain the connections between neuroticism, missed deadlines, employee performance anxiety, and employee well-being in the retail sector. According to this model, the association between failure to meet deadlines and performance anxiety is moderated by neuroticism, and the degree of this association varies according to the neuroticism levels of the employees. Workers with high levels of neuroticism are more prone to suffer from performance anxiety and failing to meet deadlines, which drain their resources and lower their well-being. (Matthews & Ritter, 2019). Furthermore, the association between employee well-being and performance anxiety is mediated by failed deadlines, and the degree of this relationship is influenced by neuroticism. Missed deadlines have a larger detrimental impact on the well-being of employees who exhibit high levels of neuroticism. By affecting workers' capacity to handle resource risks, individual variations like resilience and self-efficacy further modify these correlations. In the face of performance anxiety and missed deadlines, for instance, workers with high resilience can save resources and maintain well-being. (Bhugra et al., 2024).

Figure 1: Conceptual model

Source: Created by author.

3. Research Methods

3.1 Sample and Data Collection

The study utilized a two-wave, time-lagged design in gathering data. A purposive sampling technique was adopted for selecting employees for this study since the employees work in high-pressure settings characterized by performance anxiety and deadlines. At Time 1, a purposive sample of 200 participants from different organizations was selected. Of these, 180 participated in completing and returning the survey, resulting in a 90% response rate. At Time 2, the 180 participants from Time 1 were invited to take part again. Out of these, 120 returned the survey, which is a response rate of 66.67%.

Criteria for sample selection included only full-time employees having at least one year of experience to ensure that they are familiar with workplace stressors and performance expectations. The confidentiality of the participants was guaranteed, and informed consent was obtained before data collection. The final sample of 120 participants was then deemed adequate statistical power for the analysis, giving credence to the study's findings. This longitudinal design enabled the exploration of temporal relationships between the variables of performance anxiety, failure to meet deadlines, neuroticism, and employee well-being while controlling for common method bias.

3.2 Measures

The main constructs were measured using somewhat altered validated questionnaires on a five-point Likert scale (with 1 being strongly disagreed and 7 being strongly agreed).

3.2.1 Employee performance anxiety (T1)

To measure performance anxiety, symptoms were measured using a modified version of the Generalized Anxiety Disorder Assessment (GAD-7). Originally developed by Spitzer, Kroenke, Williams, and Löwe (2006) This seven-item test was adjusted to take into consideration the unique stressors and concerns associated with anxiety related to job performance. With 1 representing "strongly disagree," 1 representing "disagree," 3 representing "somewhat disagree," 4 representing "neutral," 5 representing "somewhat agree," 6 representing "agree," and 7 representing "strongly agree," participants responded to questions on a 7-point Likert scale. Statements like "I feel afraid that something awful might happen if I fail to perform well" and "I have not been able to stop worrying about meeting expectations at work" were examples of items on the modified scale. A total performance anxiety score was determined by adding together all of the replies; higher scores denoted higher degrees of performance anxiety. The scale showed strong dependability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.942, which indicates great internal consistency.

3.2.2 Neuroticism. (T1)

To measure the second variable, neuroticism, the 12-item Neuroticism Scale (EPQR-S) is used. Eysenck, Eysenck, and Barrett (1985). This scale includes questions like “Does your mood often go up and down?” and “Do you ever feel ‘just miserable’ for no reason?”. A 7-point Likert scale with 1 representing "strongly disagree," 2 representing "disagree," 3 representing "somewhat disagree," 4 representing "neutral," 5 representing “somewhat agree”, 6 representing “agree”, and 7 representing “strongly agree” participants responded to questions on this scale. Was used to measure the items with a Cronbach’s alpha of .920.

3.2.3 Failure to meet a deadline (T2)

The third variable, employees' failure to meet deadlines, was measured by Choi and Moran (2009). For instance, we evaluated agreement with statements like “This employee often runs late when getting things done” and “This employee often starts things at the last minute and does not complete them on time”. With a Cronbach's alpha of 0.788.

3.2.4 Employees well-being(T2)

To measure the fourth variable, employee well-being. It was measured using four items taken from Alimo-Metcalfe, Alban-Metcalfe, Bradley, Mariathasan, and Samele (2008) And was thought to be a one-dimensional construct. Participants were given a seven-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 7 denoting "strongly agree." asked to rate how much they agreed or disagreed with statements such as "I have a high degree of dignity," "I have a low level of job-related stress," and "I have a high level of self-fulfillment" with Cronbach’s alpha of a .893.

3.2.5 Control variables

The demographic characteristics of the sample are comprised of 58 females (48.3%) and 62 males (51.7%). Age-wise, most of the sample fell between the ages of 31-40 years (42.5%, n=51), while 41-50 years followed (35.0%, n=42), and 20-30 years was the least (22.5%, n=27). 45.8% (n=55) of the sample were single, 34.2% (n=41) were married, and 20.0% (n=24) were divorced. For education, the largest group comprising the Master's Degree holders amounted to 47.5% (n=57), followed by Bachelor's Degree (25.0%, n=30) and then MPhil (25.0%, n=30). Only 2.5% (n=3) had a Doctoral degree. In terms of work experience, 34.2% (n=41) had 3 years of experience, 26.7% (n=32) had 5 years of experience, 25.0% (n=30) had 2 years, and 14.2% (n=17) had 1 year. For salary, most sample respondents earn 61,000 or above (38.3%, n=46), then from level 51000-60000 (29.2%, n=35) and 41000-50000 (14.2%, n=17). 7.5% earned 21,000-30,000 (n=9), 31,000-40,000(5.8%, n=7), and below 20,000 (5.0%, n=6). Finally, regarding organization type, 55.0% (n=66) worked in private organizations, and 45.0% (n=54) in public organizations.

Table no. 1: Constructs and measurement items

Construct	Measurement items	Component loadings
Employees performance anxiety	EPA 1	.867
	EPA 2	.914
	EPA 3	.909
	EPA 4	.829
	EPA 5	.819
	EPA 6	.772
	EPA 7	.505
Neuroticism	N 1	.943
	N 2	.631
	N 3	.911
	N 4	.713
	N 5	.794

	N 6	.778
	N 7	.533
	N 8	.879
	N 9	.903
	N 10	.899
	N 11	.829
	N 12	.814
Failure to meet deadlines	FMD 1	.760
	FMD 2	.755
	FMD 3	.943
	FMD 4	.620
Employees well-being	EWB 1	.900
	EWB 2	.730
	EWB 3	.793
	EWB 4	.783

Source: Created by author.

Table no. 2: Correlation and descriptive statistics

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Performance anxiety	-					
2. Neuroticism	.811**	-				
3. Failure to meet work deadlines	.707**	.911**	-			
4. Employees well-being	.456**	.873**	.838**	-		
5. Gender	.027	-.002	-.001	.018	-	
6. Age	.005	.007	.033	-.002	.031	-
Mean	5.513	5.570	5.645	5.677	1.516	1.925
S. D	.9225	.8185	.8938	.9676	.5018	.8808

Notes: n = 120. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Source: Created by author.

4. Results

The correlation and descriptive statistics are in Table 2. The correlation matrix and descriptive statistics for the study variables are accordingly stated in the table. Performance anxiety had a high positive correlation with neuroticism ($\beta=.811$, $p<.01$) and a moderate positive correlation with failure

to meet deadlines at work ($\beta=.707$, $p<.01$). Neuroticism also significantly correlated with failure to meet deadlines ($\beta=.911$, $p<.01$) and employee well-being ($\beta=.873$, $p<.01$). Furthermore, failure to meet work deadlines is similarly strongly associated with employee well-being ($\beta=.838$, $p<.01$). On the other hand, the demographic factors such as gender and age evidenced no significant correlations with the study variables with correlation coefficients close to zero (e.g. gender and performance anxiety: $r=.027$, $p>.05$; age and neuroticism: $r=.007$, $p>.05$). Performance anxiety, neuroticism, failure to meet deadlines at work, and employee well-being had quite high mean scores ($M = 5.513$, $SD = .9225$; $M = 5.570$, $SD = .8185$; $M = 5.645$, $SD = .8938$; $M = 5.677$, $SD = .9676$, respectively), implying that respondents generally experience mod-high levels of something on average. As for demographic variables, gender had a mean of 1.516 ($SD=.5018$), reflecting a near-equal distribution of males and females, while age had a mean of 1.925 ($SD=.8808$), indicating that most people surveyed fell into a younger to middle-aged category. All this ultimately brings a basis for further analysis of relationships between study variables.

Hypothesis 1 claims a significant negative association between employee well-being and performance anxiety. The results were in favor of this hypothesis, showing a significant negative correlation ($\beta = -.612$, $p < .001$). Therefore, it is a fact that higher levels of performance anxiety bear lower levels of employee well-being, as proposed earlier in research showing that stressors on the job, such as performance anxiety, drain psychological resources and negatively impact well-being. (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Hypothesis 2 suggests the employee performance anxiety-failure to meet deadlines relationship is moderated by neuroticism such that among individuals with higher levels of neuroticism, the relationship is stronger. This hypothesis was confirmed by analysis with a significant interaction effect between performance anxiety and failing to meet deadlines ($\beta = .487$, $p < .01$). The specific results further showed that the relationship between performance anxiety-failure to meet deadlines is stronger for those employees having a higher neuroticism score, in line with findings of greater susceptibility to stress and resource depletion for the neurotic individual. (Corlier et al., 2020).

Hypothesis 3 suggested that failure to meet deadlines mediates the relationship between employee performance anxiety and well-being. The mediation analysis revealed a significant indirect effect ($\beta = .389$, $p < .001$), confirming the hypothesis. It implies that performance anxiety leads to failure in meeting deadlines, which reduces employee well-being. Such evidence is consistent with that emerging from the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory about resource loss, in this case, failure to meet deadlines mediating the effects of stressors on well-being. (Taka, 2023).

Table no. 3: Study 1 - Mediation results (Process Macro Model 4)

	Failure to meet deadlines	Employees well-being
Gender (1=female)	-.0367	.0519
Age	.0303	-.0383
Employees performance anxiety	.6850***	-.2883***
Failure to meet deadlines		1.1190***
	$R^2 .5006$	$R^2 .7416$
Indirect effect	Effect size	LLCI
	Bootstrap SE	ULCI

	.7665	.1220	.5417	1.0180
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Notes: n = 120; SE = standard error; LLCI = lower limit confidence interval; UCLI = upper limit confidence interval.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Source: Created by author.

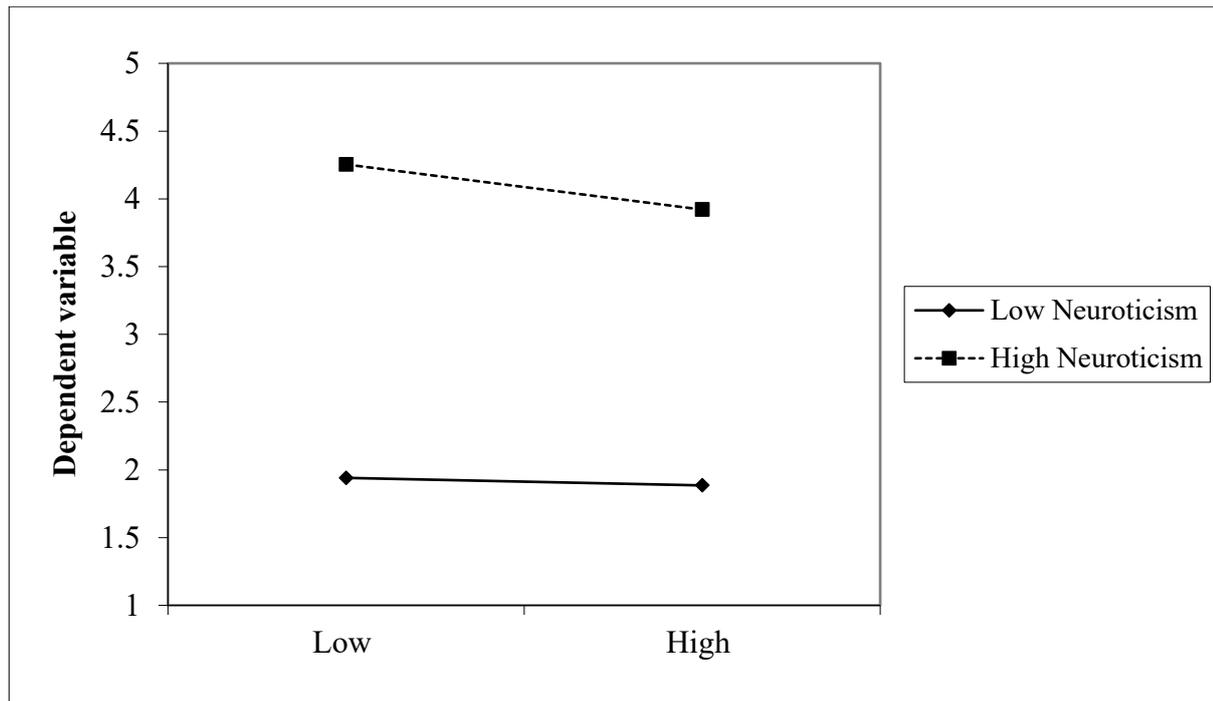
Table 4. Study 1 - Moderated mediation results (Process Macro Model 7)

	Failure to meet deadlines		Employees well-being	
Gender (1 = female)	.0117		.0519	
Age	.0222		-.0383	
Employees performance anxiety	-.0972		-.2883***	
Neuroticism	1.0872***			
Performance anxiety x neuroticism				
Failure to meet deadlines			1.1190***	
R ²	.8382		R ² .7416	
	Effect size	Bootstrap SE	LLCI	ULCI
Direct effect	-.2883	.0703	-.4276	-.1489
Indirect effect				
	Effect size	Bootstrap SE	LLCI	ULCI
Low	-0.453	.0921	.2388	.1206
Intermediate	-.1088	.0857	.2897	.0489
High	-.1724	.0933	.3693	.0037
Index of moderated mediation	-.0777	.0434	-.1713	-.0053

Notes: n = 120; SD = standard deviation; SE = standard error; LLCI = lower limit confidence interval; UCLI = upper limit confidence interval.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$;

Source: Created by author.

Figure 2: Moderation graph

Source: Created by author.

5. Discussion

The study results offer a well-rounded understanding of the complex ties between the performance anxiety of employees, the failure to meet deadlines, neuroticism, and employee well-being. These results highlight how workplace stressors and individual differences converse with employee outcomes, thus offering useful insights for both researchers and practitioners. Some of the implications of the findings will be explored in more detail below, with a specific emphasis on their relevance to organizational practice and the well-being of employees.

This study revealed a relationship between performance anxiety that is strong enough that such a relationship holds a strong negative correlation with employee well-being, which implies that employees report a likely decrease in their well-being levels with the increased rise in performance anxiety. It is self or employer-imposed high expectations that compel one to feel the pressure caused by performance anxiety, and it adds compounded aspects such as anxiety about failure, feeling undeserving, and continuous worry over work performance three converging toward the emotional drain and reduced well-being overall. This chronic performance anxiety later leads to burnout, dissatisfaction with work, and even deteriorated health conditions like weakness and insomnia (Wright, 2023). This finding emphasizes the need for an organization to seriously consider performance anxiety as one of the main delimiting factors determining employee well-being. If employees can be provided that space through which they feel they have worth and are understood, then anxiety can certainly be uprooted. Managers, for instance, can encourage employees to talk about anything at all, building a culture of feedback and minimizing critical comments. Defining clear and realistic goals that are within reach can help improve pressure on employees' shoulders and thus help them concentrate more on their jobs and less on working under the constant fear of failure. Organizations may also consider stress management, mindfulness, and emotional resilience wellness programs to promote the ability to cope better with performance-based stress (T. E. Smith, Thompson, Maynard, & Kim, 2025).

This study also said that neuroticism acts as the moderator for the effect between performance anxiety and failure to meet deadlines. Neuroticism is a personality trait that is described as being emotionally

unstable with an increased level of stress sensitivity; it turns up the negative influence of performance anxiety. Employees who have high neuroticism tend to show the strongest emotional reactions with a more cathartic effect to the stress factor. This makes performance anxiety harder for such employees to cope with. Due to this reason, they are more often missing deadlines; this would, of course, increase their stress levels and reduce their well-being. (Atanassova, Madariaga, Oosterman, & Brazil, 2024). Considering how supportive and regarded businesses are of individuals with diverse personality profiles, this has broad ramifications, particularly for corporations. Businesses should provide more focused interventions for their neurotic staff members, such as providing them with stress management classes or counseling services. This helps the neurotic worker to discover other ways to deal with stress at work. Providing much-needed emotional support while dividing the work into smaller, more manageable chunks is a crucial extra function that managers perform. Organizations can alleviate performance-related anxiety and enhance the overall well-being of employees with higher neuroticism by attending to their varied demands. (Lee, Lyubovnikova, Thomas, Schwarz, & Cao, 2024).

After identification, failure to meet deadlines was established as a major mediator in the link between performance anxiety and employee well-being. These performance anxieties lower an employee's focus and efficiency while increasing their likelihood of making errors, thus creating conditions that are conducive to missing deadlines. On the other hand, missing deadlines causes stress and adds to feelings of inadequacy, establishing a damaging, reinforcing cycle that further jeopardizes well-being. Consequently, it manifests in poor performance, low self-esteem, and possible withdrawal from work. (Schubert, Zeschke, & Zacher, 2023). This can be countered by the organization providing strategies for teaching time management to alleviate task failures. For instance, a training program for time management and prioritization enables employees to manage their workload more effectively. Apart from this, task management software or project management platforms can be readily used by employees to keep their work organized. In addition, a supervisor should conduct weekly check-ins for employees with a fair assessment of their performance, support, and feedback to help them keep up with their deadlines. By reducing the frequency of task-related failures, organizations can help break the cycle of stress and enhance employee well-being. (Taka, 2023).

5.1 Limitations and Future Research

The essence of this study undeniably sheds light on some valuable insights, but we also have to mention its limitations. First, since its use of self-reported data may have biases in it, responses may have been driven by either a social desirability bias or recall inaccuracies. Hence, in future research, objective measures such as supervisor evaluations or performance metrics might be employed alongside self-reported data. This would hence lead to a better-orchestrated study of the relationships discussed in this study. Secondly, this study was anchored within a certain culture and organization. Hence, its findings may not claim universality. Replication of this study across several settings and industries would greatly support the findings and broaden its applicability. Put differently, future research can test these relationships under differing cultural settings or industries with different levels of job demands and stressors. Finally, future studies should consider other mediators and moderators such as social support, organizational culture, and leadership styles to develop a deeper understanding of the stress-wellbeing relationship, may also include looking at some other factors that may serve to influence the relationships examined in this study, like social support, organizational culture, and leadership styles. The more these factors are studied, the better the understanding of how workplace stressors affect employee well-being gets. For example, looking into the influence of supportive leadership in improving performance anxiety could yield sufficient insights for big organizational practice. Also, there is a need for longitudinal studies to understand how workplace stressors and their effects change. This approach would provide deeper insights into the temporal dynamics of stress and employee well-being.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes theoretically at a very high level to the relevance of workplace stress and employee well-being. The mediation of failing to meet deadlines and the moderation of neuroticism will advance the literature discussing how performance anxiety has an impact on employee well-being. Results show the cascading effects of workplace stressors and confirm that performance anxiety does not affect well-being only directly but also through task-related failures. This causal view incorporates the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory as loss of resources, like failing to meet deadlines, mediates the effect of stressors on well-being (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Moderate neuroticism emphasizes the very individual differences that determine how employees cope with workplace stress. Employees scoring high on it by low emotional stability tend to become more sensitive to the deleterious effects of performance anxiety; this means more related failure in the task and lower levels of well-being. (Johnson et al., 2021). These findings underline the urgency of including personality traits in theoretical models of workplace stress: it would help understand how profoundly these different individualities affect employee outcomes differently. By showing that performance anxiety threatens the psychological resources of employees, resulting in the theft of resources and poorer well-being, the study will further contribute to establishing COR in organizational contexts. The present study contributes to an understanding of the complexity involved in linking workplace stressors to employee well-being by documenting the process of task-related failure mediation and neuroticism as a moderator.

5.3 Practical Implications

The findings of this study have several immediate outcomes for organizations aiming to enhance employee well-being and productivity. First, undertaking performance anxiety must be the primary target, which will involve improving communication flows within the environment in which employees feel free to express their anxieties without worrying about being judged. Managers should also be trained to recognize the signs of performance anxiety and provide appropriate support. For example, giving regular feedback and acknowledging efforts from the employees on a better morale-to-anxiety ratio (Korman, Reinwald, Kunze, & Koos, 2025). Second, a single intervention does not fit all, and organizations must keep individual differences, for example, neuroticism, at the back of their minds while designing interventions. Personalized approaches that account for employees' unique needs and vulnerabilities are likely to be more effective in promoting well-being. For example, employees showing higher neuroticism might benefit from additional resources, like counseling services and workshops for stress management. Even the help offered by management in terms of emotional support and equipping employees with coping mechanisms to handle stress-related issues in the workplace may go a long way in improving the employees' well-being. (Olson et al., 2023). Lastly, performance anxiety can be reduced by enhancing time management and workload distribution, which tend to reduce task-related failures. Time management and workload distribution combine reducing task-related failure with performance anxiety. This can be realized when organizations provide the right tools and materials for managing tasks by the employees. For instance, instructing employees on time management and prioritization can help keep their lives organized and focused. Adoption of flexible arrangements like remote work or flexible hours can also improve the work-personal life balance among employees, thereby reducing stress and enhancing well-being. (Ng et al., 2022).

5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the current study underlines the vast implications of performance anxiety toward employee well-being, mediated by deadline failures, while the other variables such as neuroticism have acted as moderators. All these results speak toward acknowledging workplace stressors as well as individual differences impacting employee well-being and productivity. Therefore, developing interventions, providing personalized support, and reducing task-related failures through environmental design will lead to the establishment of a healthier work environment for employees to succeed. Future researchers would do well to keep considering various workplace stressors,

individual characteristics, and employee outcomes in this very complex relationship to develop evidence-based practices for the mutual benefit of employees.

Conflict of Interests

Regarding the research, writing, or publication of this article, the authors have declared that they have no potential conflicts of interest.

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Appendix

Survey Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

This survey is part of the research work required for a Ph.D. degree. The purpose of this study is to record your experiences at the university where you are currently serving. We are particularly interested in understanding how workplace dynamics such as performance anxiety, challenges in meeting deadlines, and personal traits like neuroticism impact employee well-being. Your valuable insights will help us explore how these factors interact and influence overall health and productivity in professional settings.

By sharing your experiences, you will contribute to research that aims to provide actionable recommendations for fostering a healthier and more supportive work environment. Your participation involves completing a brief questionnaire, which will take approximately 15–20 minutes. Please rest assured that your responses will remain strictly confidential, and your identity will remain anonymous. Your feedback is immensely appreciated and will be used solely for academic purposes. Thank you for your time and support in helping us better understand and improve workplace conditions.

Kindly check (✓) the appropriate boxes as you share your experiences.

PART 1

Demographic Information

Are you:

- Male
- Female

Age:

- 20-30
- 31-40
- 41-50

Marital status:

- Single
- Married
- Divorced

Qualification:

- Bachelor Degree
- Master Degree
- M.phil
- Doctoral degree

Income level (Rs.)

- Below 20000
- 21000-30000
- 31000-40000
- 41000-50000
- 51000-60000
- 61000 and above

Type of organization

- Private
- Public

Working experiences

- 1 year
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 5 years

Scale of all variables

The survey uses a **7-point Likert scale** to measure your agreement or disagreement with various statements related to your work experiences. Please respond to each statement by selecting a number from **1 to 7**, where

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Somewhat Disagree

4 = Neutral

5 = Somewhat Agree

6 = Agree

7 = Strongly Agree

Variables

DV= Employee well-being

IV = Employee performance anxiety

Mediator = Failed to meet the deadline

Moderator= Neuroticism

PART 2**Time 1 (IV and moderator)****Employee Performance Anxiety Questionnaires**

Sr.no	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Over the last few weeks, I have been feeling anxious, nervous, or on the edge.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I have not been able to stop worrying	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I am worrying too much about different things	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	I have trouble relaxing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I am so restless that it is hard to sit still.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	I am easily becoming annoyed or irritable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	I am feeling afraid that something awful might happen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Neuroticism questionnaires

Sr.no	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Does your mood often go up and down?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Do you ever feel 'just miserable' for no reason?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Are you an irritable person	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Are your feelings easily hurt?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	Do you often feel 'fed-up'?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	Would you call yourself a nervous person?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	Are you a worrier?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	Would you call yourself tense or 'highly strung'?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	Do you worry too long after an embarrassing experience?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	Do you suffer from nerves?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11	Do you often feel lonely?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	Are you often troubled about feelings of guilt?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Time 2 (mediator and DV)

Employee well-being questionnaires

Sr.no	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I have a high level of self-fulfillment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I have a high degree of self-esteem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I have a low level of job-related stress.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	I have a low level of job-related emotional exhaustion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Failed to meet the deadline questionnaires

Sr.no	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	This employee often starts things at the	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	last minute and does not complete them on time							
2	This employee often fails to accomplish goals that she/he sets for herself/himself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	This employee often runs late when getting this done.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	This employee has difficulty finishing activities once she/he starts them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7