

## Article

# Supervisor Support, Self-Efficacy, and Employee Performance: The Mediating Role of Office De-Clutter

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**Abstract:** The study aims to test the impact of social support from supervisors and self-efficacy on employee performance through office de-clutter (a mediator) in banks. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the supporting factors (social support and self-efficacy) to de-clutter for maintaining employee performance is a novel contribution to the literature and is supported by the social exchange theory—SET. The employee's performance can be maintained with lower levels of office clutter (de-clutter). The office clutter can be managed through the availability of managerial social support and employee self-efficacy. The impact of supervisor support and self-efficacy on employee performance is examined through the lens of the social exchange theory. A cross-sectional and quantitative study was conducted with 202 primary responses from bank employees. The responses were recorded using closed-ended questionnaires. A response rate of 73.9% was achieved. Reliability and validity were assessed using Cronbach's alpha scores and AVE, respectively. PLS-SEM was used as a data analysis and hypotheses testing technique. The results revealed that supervisors' social support and self-efficacy significantly and positively affect employee performance. Moreover, supervisors' social support and self-efficacy helped in office de-clutter, further ensuring better performance.

**Keywords:** bank employees; performance; supervisors' support; office de-clutter; self-efficacy; social exchange theory; COVID-19



**Citation:** Saleem, Farida, Muhammad Imran Malik, and Awais Qasim. 2022. Supervisor Support, Self-Efficacy, and Employee Performance: The Mediating Role of Office De-Clutter. *Administrative Sciences* 12: 177. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci12040177>

Received: 26 October 2022

Accepted: 22 November 2022

Published: 28 November 2022

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## 1. Introduction

Employees' work performance is critical for the achievement of organizational goals. These goals can be achieving the set targets, delivering quality service, and so forth (Rabbane et al. 2015), which is possible by removing workflow inconsistencies (Pang and Lu 2018). The need for smooth workflow becomes more critical in times of unstable conditions, such as during pandemics (Siswanto et al. 2019). Organizations are curious to identify the factors that positively affect employees' ability to work. Factors such as supervisors' social support and self-efficacy are critical. In particular, support from the supervisor plays a crucial role in creating a conducive work environment. The supervisors can provide awareness and training along with other resources to manage a workflow that can enhance employees' performance (Park et al. 2018). Supervisor support boosts their employees' encouragement, knowledge, skills, and attributes (Chen and Wu 2020). Supervisors are the key to showing the path to handling haphazard work and running the office activities in a well-chromized order (Dhir and Dutta 2020). The supervisor acts as a coach and their support shapes the employee's in-role and extra-role performance (Zeb et al. 2022), and it diminishes the employees' withdrawal behaviors.

Roster and Ferrari (2019) argued that office clutter arises under unstable situations because it causes indecision and hampers employee performance. Roster and Ferrari (2019) highlighted that office clutter is ever-increasing which impedes the performance of

employees. They suggested examining the qualities of an individual that affect their work. Self-efficacy, a strong belief in one's capabilities can ensure organizational goal achievement (Chae and Park 2020) can help in improving employee performance. Employees with high self-efficacy have a sense of organizational identity and try their best to manage work by minimizing disruptions (Elsbach and Kramer 1996).

COVID-19 disruptions had negative implications for employees' work lives (Abbas et al. 2021) and provoked employees' indecisions (Roster and Ferrari 2019) that resulted in generating office clutter. The clutter takes the form of jumbled-up work and piles of papers on the table that is to be dealt with and can distort employees' attention from work and impede workflow (Roster and Ferrari 2019). Any move to reduce such piled-up work is called a de-clutter. Support from the supervisor in terms of guidance, motivation, help in problem-solving, and so forth, enables employees to avoid office clutter (de-clutter). Jumbled-up work and employees' indecision to handle work result in poor employee performance. Similarly, de-clutter is the employees' capability to address such jumbled-up work which can improve their performance. Employees can meet the organization's demands by ensuring a smooth flow of work (Al Masaeid 2020), which is possible via de-clutter. This is possible through the support provided by the supervisor and the belief of an individual to work confidently to seek out such jumbled-up work. The employees need supervisors' social support that levels their motivation, knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform work (Pang and Lu 2018).

This study has two major aims. First, to predict the direct impact of supervisor social support and self-efficacy on employee performance, as well as the indirect impact of supervisor social support and self-efficacy on employee performance through office de-clutter while using the social exchange theory perspective. The social exchange theory, SET, states that environmental factors, such as social support from the supervisor, contribute positively to employee performance (Ekeh 1974; Bandura 1977; Vischer 2007). As a result, the employees become confident in removing hazards. However, searching on Scopus, Google Scholar, and other databases showed limited evidence available on such relationships. Second, to test the proposed model in the banking sector of a developing economy, such as Pakistan. The banking sector is pivotal to the economic development of a country. The frequency of customer visits in banks is ever more than other organizations to fulfill their financial demands. For this, the banks demand uninterrupted employee performance (Samartha et al. 2010) to meet the competitive requirements.

The paper is divided into five major sections. The Section 1 is an introduction to the topic and gap identification, followed by the Section 2, theoretical framework and review of literature in the area. The Section 3 is related to the methods adopted for analysis. Section 4 is regarding data analysis while using SEM and the results. Finally, Section 5 is about the discussion of the results, implications, limitations with future directions, and conclusion.

## 2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

### 2.1. Social Exchange Theory

The social exchange theory illustrates the interaction of two parties that implement a cost-benefit analysis to determine risks and benefits (Ekeh 1974; Emerson 1976) and want to develop a win-win situation. It is also seen as a social behavior involved in social exchanges where people are motivated to attain some valued rewards for which they must forfeit something of value (efforts). This theory has repeatedly been tested in different social relationships (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005). The employer-employees try to create a win-win situation for the employer and the employees. Social exchange theory posits that employees who perceive their supervisors as supportive adopt the principle of reciprocity. They remain thankful to their supervisors and try to oblige them through hard work and productivity. Hence, they put in their best efforts and ensure error-free work.

Further, supervisors' social support helps employees address their problems. Supervisors' support as an exchange mechanism (open communication between manager and employee) helps employees to regulate their work and not let the work accumulate, thus

enforcing de-clutter. Moreover, the confidence gained during communication and problems solving discussions enables the employees to manage a smooth flow of work that counts towards less clutter. When the clutter is minimized or removed, it helps run the functions smoothly and ensures positive employee performance.

### 2.2. Supervisors' Social Support and Employee Performance

Supervisors' social support is the measure of employees' perception of the relationship with their supervisor based on trust, the supervisor's willingness to help, fairness in dealing, and so forth (Gagnon and Michael 2004). Employee performance results from frequent interaction with the supervisor to achieve organizational goals (Pang and Lu 2018; Rabbanee et al. 2015). Service-providing employees must frequently communicate with their immediate boss to clarify instructions and goals (Dhir and Dutta 2020). One viable mechanism for removing negative occurrences is the availability of social support from the supervisors (Afzal et al. 2019). Social support from the immediate boss helps resolve problems and develop employee-supervisor trust (Zeb et al. 2022). It diminishes negative feelings and makes them remain productive (Schreurs et al. 2012). It is theorized that favorable treatment by the manager makes employees better engaged in their work (Ismail et al. 2013). Employees' perception of being dealt with as humans gives them the confidence to concentrate on work. This also gives them the sense that they are assets to the organizations (Cascio 2003). Moreover, as support, practicing justice in the workplace enhances their performance (Mehmood and Ahmad 2016).

Muse and Pichler (2011) looked at supervisors as supporters. Supervisors with the authority to exercise the rules and policies help employees and reduces employees' work problems, such as office clutter, thus enabling them to maintain the desired work pace. Heaney and Israel (2008) argued that supervisors could display four types of social support such as emotional support (esteem, trust, affect, concern, and listening), appraisal support (affirmation, feedback, and social comparison), informational support (advice, suggestions, directives, and information), and physical support (aid in-kind, money, labor, time, and environmental modification). The presence of all such supports directly impacts employees' work performance.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, employees with adversely affected morale lost their capacity to work. Solid social support from their immediate supervisors is a repair mechanism for them and can result in achieving the desired employee performance. Talukder and Galang (2021) argued that supervisors' social support contributes to employees' performance. They provide opportunities to balance their work and life and provide flexibility for their employees. Yorgancioglu Tarcan et al. (2021) found that inadequate information sharing, communication, and lack of participatory management can hurt employees' performance. Hence, based on the argument provided above, the following hypotheses are developed.

**Hypothesis 1 (H1).** *Supervisors' Support Positively Affects Employee Performance.*

### 2.3. Self-Efficacy and Employee Performance

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's beliefs about their ability to accomplish a specific task (Bandura 1977). Employees who feel confident about themselves firmly believe in their abilities to perform. As a result, they have a boosted morale to work (Heslin and Klehe 2006). They can remove hurdles that come their way in the workplace (Tschannen-Moran and McMaster 2009).

The COVID-19 pandemic has lowered employees' self-efficacy. This affects their ability to perform. At the same time, self-efficacious employees set their goals and try to achieve them even under uncontrollable conditions (Giran et al. 2014). They tend to fight out the difficulties coming in the way of their work and hence, maintain their performance levels (Cherian and Jacob 2013). Moreover, such employees try to learn new skills to figure out their way in times of internal and external changes taking place in the workplace (Riggs

et al. 1994). While performing their duties, they refine their knowledge, skills, and abilities to deal with various situations.

Successful performance is directly related to one's self-efficacy. The efficacy arises from acquiring cognitive, social, and multiple other skills through experience. People with high self-efficacy are more courageous than people with low self-efficacy. People with low self-efficacy adopt withdrawal behaviors quickly (Randhawa 2004), especially in difficult situations. The high self-efficacious people try their best to control the situation and try hard to master the rising challenges. Self-efficacy enables employees to learn from the feedback they receive from their supervisors, colleagues, and customers and translate their learning into improved performance. The hypothesis developed is as follows.

**Hypothesis 2 (H2).** *Employee Self-Efficacy Positively Affects Employee Performance.*

#### 2.4. Supervisors' Social Support and Office De-Clutter

Social support from the supervisor is considered medicine for resolving work problems. This support helps reduce stress (Ray and Miller 1994) and develops understanding among employees and their bosses. It helps improve adaptation outcomes (Cutrona et al. 1986). Social support from supervisors in the form of abundant information resolves hurdles in performing activities (AbuAlRub 2004). The people with the soft backing remain alienated and feel difficulties in sharing problems with others, hindering their work speed, thus resulting in jumbled-up work.

Moreover, supervisors' social support is favorable to resolving work–family conflicts (Adams et al. 1996; Kossek et al. 2011). Employees with resolved work–family conflicts concentrate on work by avoiding procrastination. This ensures a smooth flow of work (Kossek et al. 2011). Supervisors' social support reduces depression and negative moods, enabling employees to concentrate on their work and meet performance standards (Park 2003). Finally, social support extended to form the supervisors curb employees' difficulties by reducing office clutter (de-clutter). The following relationship is proposed based on the above arguments.

**Hypothesis 3 (H3).** *Supervisors' Social Support Positively Impacts Office De-Clutter.*

#### 2.5. Self-Efficacy and Office De-Clutter

Bandura (1977) proposed self-efficacy as “how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations.” Simply put, it is belief in one's ability to perform well. Self-efficacy adds to employees' work abilities. Employees with high self-efficacy have better control over their workflow and accomplish tasks on time (Raub and Liao 2012). They require less guidance from their immediate bosses and utilize the resources to remove barriers to their work. People who believe in their abilities and, by creativity, make autonomous decisions to prioritize work (Jaiswal and Dhar 2015) that diminishes clutter. Removing work problems allows them to move in the right direction at the right time with a sequence. As their problem-solving ability increases, the employees can perform positively (Pourmovahed et al. 2018).

Through their self-efficacy, the employees remain motivated to perform with a clear path to follow (Garcia 2015; Cherian and Jacob 2013), thus avoiding clutter. They can prevent increased workload (Raub and Liao 2012). It is posited that the employee's confidence in their ability to manage work provides clarity and reduces jumbling up work. Based on the argument, the following hypothesis is proposed.

**Hypothesis 4 (H4).** *Self-Efficacy Positively Affects Office De-Clutter.*

### 2.6. Office De-Clutter as a Mediator

Office clutter is scattered stacks of paper, files, and other disorderly lying material that distract employees' attention and slows down work movement. The unstructured and jumbled-up work makes employees feel overwhelmed. When the employees have to perform tasks rapidly and remain indecisive about managing their work pace, it creates clutter. The overwhelmed employees lose control over their work activities and fail to perform as desired by the organization. This decreases the ability of employees to complete the allocated tasks (Roster and Ferrari 2019). On the contrary, the office de-clutter removes impeding factors that slow down work, enabling files to move from place to place on time.

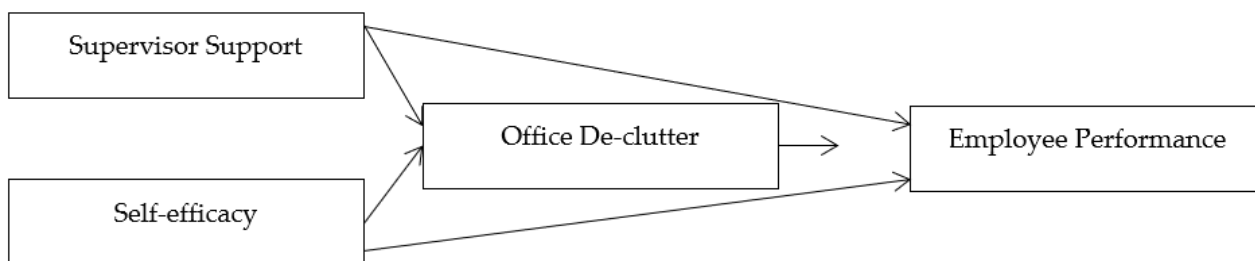
Supervisors' social support enables employees to receive advice and feedback from their managers (Kossek et al. 2011) to accomplish their work targets. It allows employees to work as per schedules. The office decluttering results in getting social support from the managers. Thus, it is assumed that social support helps de-clutter and enables employees to perform adequately. De-clutter avoids the workplace's mess (Counts 2017) and a subsided lot allows employees to work without interruption. However, the clutter is a challenge for managers and employees. It is created as a result of disorganized work and unequal distribution of work that further creates chaos and hampers performance; that is why it becomes necessary to de-clutter the workplaces. At times "there is clutter" is joined with "my clutter" to create a situation of chaos and it becomes essential to remove not only the visual clutter but the physical clutter (Rosenholtz et al. 2007).

Similarly, employees' self-efficacy enables them to overcome the work bombardment problem. Self-efficacy is the belief in the abilities of the employees to handle the chunks of work confidently. Employees' self-efficacy makes them autonomous; they make their own decisions and decrease dependability. Self-efficacy induces the problem-solving ability of the employees and provides strength to regulate work (Pourmovahed et al. 2018). The above arguments provide support for the development of the following hypotheses.

**Hypothesis 5 (H5).** *Office De-Clutter Mediates the Relationship between Supervisors' Support and Employee Performance.*

**Hypothesis 6 (H6).** *Office De-Clutter Mediates the Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Employee Performance.*

The following research framework is proposed based on the above arguments illustrated by the literature review and the social exchange theory. Office de-clutter is proposed as an explaining factor in the relationships between supervisor support, self-efficacy, and employee performance. See Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Research Framework.

### 3. Results

The results are divided into two main sections: the demographic information of the respondents and the examination of the developed framework through structural equation modeling. Table 1 presents the demographic information recorded.

**Table 1.** Demographics and COVID-19 Questions,  $n = 202$ .

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age (Years)	26–30	11	5.50%
	31–35	22	10.80%
	36–40	87	43.00%
	41–45	68	33.60%
	45–50	14	6.90%
Education	Bachelors	28	13.80%
	Masters	97	48.00%
	MS	77	38.10%
Gender	Male	157	77.70%
	Female	45	22.30%
Experience	>1 year	11	5.40%
	1–3 years	91	45.00%
	4–6 years	55	27.20%
	<5 years	45	22.20%
Job Status	Permanent	167	82.60%
	Contractual	35	17.30%
COVID-19 threatened	Yes	202	100%
	No	0	0%
COVID-19 use protection	Yes	202	100%
	No	0	0%
COVID-19 job insecurity	Yes	133	65.80%
	No	69	34.20%
COVID-19 leaving job	0	0	0%
	No	100	100%

Source: Respondent's information.

The maximum number of employees who participated in the survey were aged between 36 and 40 years (43%). Nearly half (48%) of the Master's degree holders took an interest in responding to the questionnaire. Male respondents were 77.7% and, at the same time, more than half (45%) of the people had work experience from 1 to 3 years. The majority (82.6%) had permanent positions and worked from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The characteristics mentioned above of the respondents explain that they were mature enough to understand the statements asked in the questionnaire and were aware of the threat prevailing while their responses were recorded.

Moreover, all the bank employees felt threatened by the contagious disease and completely used protections such as sanitizers, gloves, and masks, and washed their hands after regular intervals. The contractual employees were feeling the threat of job insecurity. However, at the same time, they saw no further prospects in the job market due to prevailing unemployment and wanted to retain their current job. Similarly, those who worked on short-term contracts felt the threat of job insecurity.

### 3.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis/Measurement Model Analysis

The measurement model was assessed first, as [Anderson and Gerbing \(1988\)](#) suggested. Then, the internal consistency was measured through composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach alpha having required values of more than 0.7. Moreover, the convergent validity was assessed through average variance extracted (AVE), having values of more than 0.5 for each construct. Further, the confirmatory factor analysis was conducted, and the outer loadings are reported in [Table 2](#).

**Table 2.** Factor Loadings and Composite Reliability.

Construct	Items	Loadings CR
Supervisor Support		0.976
	SS1	0.95
	SS2	0.961
	SS3	0.943
	SS4	0.939
	SS5	0.949
De-Clutter	SS6	0.85
		0.967
	DC1	0.891
	DC2	0.932
	DC3	0.922
	DC4	0.934
Employee Performance	DC5	0.93
	DC6	0.853
		0.967
	EP1	0.916
	EP2	0.906
	EP3	0.939
Self-Efficacy	EP5	0.929
	EP6	0.933
		0.962
	SE1	0.878
	SE2	0.902
	SE3	0.911
	0.901	
	SE4	0.906
	SE5	0.906
	SE6	0.896

Source: Smart PLS Results.

Considering the standard criterion for the composite reliability (CR), Table 2, and average variance extracted (AVE), Table 3, the constructs mentioned above fulfill the requirements to run the structural model. Additionally, the Fornell and Larcker criterion was used to examine the discriminant validity. The cross-loadings are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Correlation coefficient and AVE.

Constructs	DC	EP	SE	SS	AVE
De-Clutter	0.91				0.829
Employee Performance	0.896	0.924			0.855
Self-Efficacy	0.809	0.817	0.898		0.808
Supervisor Support	0.899	0.887	0.769	0.932	0.87

Source: Smart PLS Output.

The values across the diagonal are the square root of the AVE values are reported in Table 3. The discriminant validity was assessed using [Fornell and Larcker's \(1981\)](#) criteria. It was achieved by having the square root of the AVE greater than all the correlations in the same row and column of the particular construct ([Hair et al. 2012](#)). The square root of the AVE for de-clutter is 0.910, employee performance is 0.924, self-efficacy is 0.898, and supervisor support is 0.932.

### 3.2. The Structural Model

The structural model comprising coefficient values, t-statistics, and p-values, in addition to the R<sup>2</sup>, is given in Figure 2 and Table 4.

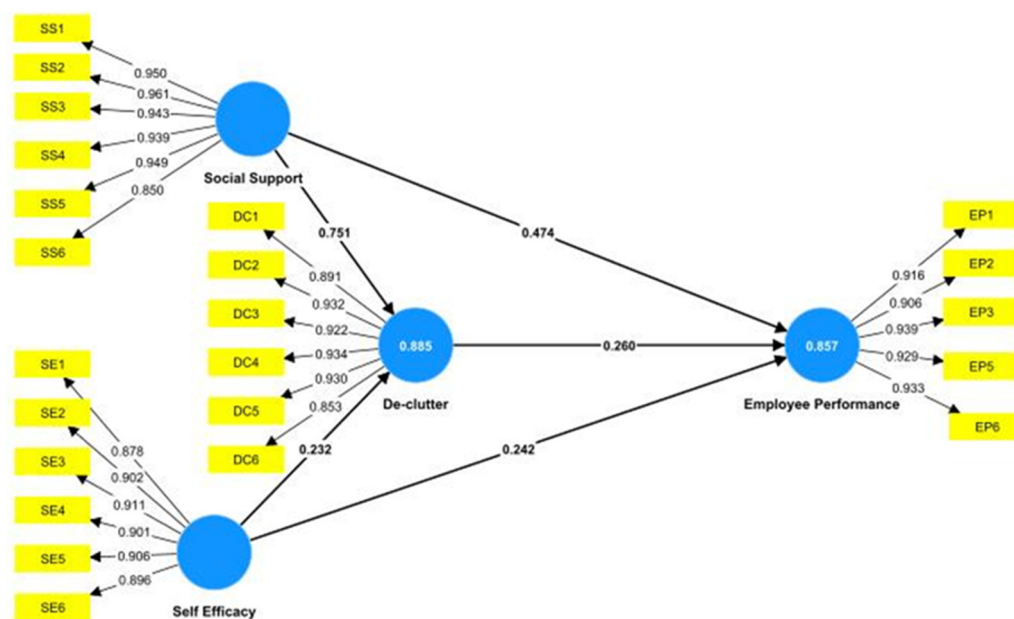


Figure 2. Structural Model.

Table 4. Path Coefficients and Significant Values.

Relationship	Coefficient	T-Statistics	p-Value
SS→EP	0.474	5.248	0
SE→EP	0.242	4.506	0
SS→DC	0.751	16.663	0
SE→DC	0.232	4.667	0
DC→EP	0.259	3.381	0.015
SS→DC→EP	0.194	2.343	0.019
SE→DC→EP	0.06	2.239	0.025
R <sup>2</sup> De-Clutter	32.60%		
R <sup>2</sup> Employee Performance	40.40%		

Source: Smart PLS Results.

Hair et al. (2012) recommended examining R-square, beta coefficients, and the corresponding t-values via a bootstrapping procedure for assessing the structural model. Supervisor support, self-efficacy, and office de-clutter had a positive and significant relationship with employee performance (beta = 0.474, 0.242, and 0.259, where  $p < 0.05$ , respectively). Moreover, the relationship between supervisor support and self-efficacy with office de-cluttering was positive and significant (beta = 0.751, 0.232,  $p < 0.05$ , respectively). All hypotheses were upheld.

The role of office de-clutter was examined as a mediator. It was found that the office de-clutter mediated both the relationships between supervisor support and employee performance, and self-efficacy and employee performance (beta = 0.194, 0.060, and  $t > 1.96$ ). The coefficient of determination states that the variance explained by the variables was 32.6% for the office de-clutter and 40.4% for the employee performance. All the hypothesized relationships were supported statistically.

#### 4. Methodology

##### 4.1. Sampling and Data Collection

The bank employees were selected from different commercial banks working in the territory of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, Pakistan. This region was selected because almost all the banks operated in this region and had a good completion. The sample size was calculated using the online sample calculator “Raosoft” with a 5% margin of error, 85% CI, 50% response distribution, and a population size of 200,000 or more. The quantitative study



was conducted by collecting cross-sectional data to examine the causal effects to examine the hypotheses. Two hundred and two employees (male and female) working full-time were sampled on a convenience basis. The data were collected in a span of four months, i.e., from March 2020 to June 2020. The researchers distributed 500 questionnaires and retrieved back 273. Out of these 273, only 202 usable questionnaires were used for data analysis, resulting in a 73.9% response rate. Seventy-one questionnaires were dropped due to the incompleteness or inappropriateness of the responses. According to Roscoe (1975), the most appropriate sample range lies from 30 to 500. The selected employees had a separate desk and a chair to perform their chores. It was ensured that the employees had at least one year of experience in the same branch where they worked. The data were collected using questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed and collected by following the standard order procedures to avoid any possible threat of COVID-19 during the visit. The banks have already written the instructions about interacting with the employees. It was mandatory to wear hand gloves and a face mask. Moreover, the use of sanitizer was ensured by the attendant standing at the entrance gate.

The responses from the bank employees working from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. were recorded by visiting various branches personally. Before the distribution of the survey, permission was requested from the branch manager to conduct the research survey. In addition to the threat of COVID-19 and workload, employees spared some time for filling out the survey. The unanimity was ensured, and they were asked to respond without showing their identity on the questionnaire. At least two years of experience was set as inclusion criteria.

#### 4.2. Instrumentation

The questionnaire was used to collect data from bank employees during the smart lockdown period of COVID-19. All the items of the questionnaires were assessed on five-point Likert scale. The full questionnaire used for data collection is presented in Appendix A. The sources of each scale are given below.

##### 4.2.1. Supervisor Support

The supervisor's social support was measured using Yang et al.'s (2016) scale with six items. The sample items used to record responses included phrases such as "My supervisor is willing to extend help to me perform my job", "My supervisor helps me in a crisis", and "My supervisor helps in difficult tasks". The reliability score, as per the requirements for the scale used, was more than 0.70.

##### 4.2.2. Office De-Clutter

The office de-clutter was assessed using the office clutter quality of life scale earlier used by Roster et al. (2016). The sample statements used to determine the responses included the phrases "I get to use spaces in my office the way I would like to," "I find things easily when I need them", and "I do not neglect taking care of things that need to be done". The reliability of the questionnaire was more than 0.70.

##### 4.2.3. Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy was measured using Sherer et al. (1982) scale. The sample items used to record the responses of the bank employees included the phrases "I can do well all the tasks required by my job", "I have confidence in my ability to do my job", and "I am an expert at my job". The reliability requirements were met well before proceeding to the statistical analysis.

##### 4.2.4. Employee Performance

Employee performance was assessed using a scale earlier used by Tabouli et al. (2016). The sample items used were phrases such as "I feel dedication, seriousness, and ability to take responsibility", "I do my work according to specific policies and procedures", and

"I have the ability to plan my work and its accomplishment according to the planned schedule". The reliability scores were more than 0.70. There were few modifications introduced to the items to match the context of the study.

#### 4.3. Data Analysis

The partial least squares (PLS) method was used for the data analysis. The two primary reasons were considered for using the PLS. First, the PLS method is used when the research model is in an early stage of development and needs extensive testing (Hair et al. 2012). The model tested in this study is at the infancy stage and has covered a single sector vis-a-vis COVID-19. Second, the PLS method is adequate for small samples (Vinzi et al. 2010). Further, the statistical significance for the coefficients was determined using a bootstrap re-sampling procedure (500 subsamples).

### 5. Discussion

The study was conducted to capture responses of individuals working in banks under the COVID-19 partial lockdown. The study examined the impact of supervisor support, self-efficacy, and office de-clutter on employee performance and found significant results for all the hypotheses examined. Firstly, the impact of supervisors' social support on employees' performance was examined (Hypothesis 1). The results revealed that supervisors' social support significantly impacts employee performance. The results follow the earlier studies having the same direction of the impact (Yorgancioglu Tarcan et al. 2021; Talukder and Galang 2021; Park et al. 2018). The workloads and other disruptions harm the individual's physical and psychological states, preventing them from performing well at the workplace. Supervisors' social support is a better remedy to overcome such conditions (Nugraha et al. 2018). In addition, social support from supervisors develops a sense of security, enabling employees to focus on their work (Yorgancioglu Tarcan et al. 2021).

Supervisors' social support reduces work stress, reduces problems at work, and helps maintain a smooth workflow that enhances employee work outcomes (Tabouli et al. 2016). A meta-analytic study by Kossek et al. (2011) revealed that the manager's support significantly contributes to employee performance compared to the general organizational support. As per the findings of this study, employees felt dedicated to working and capable of taking responsibility at the workplace after availing support from their supervisors. At the same time, such support added to their planning capabilities, and technical and professional capabilities enriched their achievement of work goals.

Secondly, the study examined the impact of employees' self-efficacy on their performance (Hypothesis 2). Self-efficacy is seen as a strong, vital contributor to the performance of employees (Chae and Park 2020; Afzal et al. 2019). Self-efficacy keeps employees motivated to work (Cherian and Jacob 2013), even during disruptions such as COVID-19. Employees with high self-efficacy take up tasks voluntarily to show better performance. On the contrary, a lack of self-efficacy harms work activities (Pourmovahed et al. 2018). The social support from their supervisors added to the employees' confidence to do work by developing the required skills. The skills learned added to their capability of doing a job not only to work in this organization but wherever needed; they felt proud of their skills and abilities.

Thirdly, this study examined the impact of supervisors' social support on office de-clutter (Hypothesis 3). The results found a positive and significant impact of supervisors' support on office de-clutter. Limited studies are found on the examination of such impact. The disrupted work environment due to COVID-19 causes employees' inability to solve problems and makes their work slow, thus causing clutter. This clutter can be dissolved by achieving supervisor social support. Supervisors guide their employees and equip them with knowledge, skills, and abilities that foster their ability to manage workload and workflow, thus reducing clutter. By providing social support, supervisors reduce work stress (Ray and Miller 1994) and help maintain mental health (Ismail et al. 2013), which enables employees to concentrate on work and keep pace with work. The supervisor's

support enabled employees to move things as and when required. They developed their capability to make spaces to perform work well and were merely overwhelmed by the clutter.

Fourthly, the study examined the impact of employees' self-efficacy on office de-clutter (Hypothesis 4). The results found a significant impact of employees' self-efficacy on office de-clutter. Again, the literature is found to be silent about such examinations. The belief in their capability made them capable of managing the workloads, moving the work in a sequence, and lessening their worry about the amount of clutter or accumulated work to be completed. This is because people with self-efficacy are good decision-makers (Tschannen-Moran and McMaster 2009) and can decide about the sequence of work.

Additionally, they are good time managers (Afzal et al. 2019) and can control the pace with which the work is to be performed. They pay attention to the tasks necessary to perform and can easily find the information and other things required to perform work. They develop this capability because they believe in their ability to do work (Talukder and Galang 2021; Chae and Park 2020).

Further, this study examined the mediating role of office de-clutter in the relationship between supervisors' social support and employees' performance. The results found that office de-clutter mediates significantly. The supervisors' support enables employees to acquire professional and technical skills (Talukder and Galang 2021; Yorgancioglu Tarcan et al. 2021; Abbas et al. 2021; Bernal et al. 2003). Furthermore, they better perform their work when equipped with such skills (Dhir and Dutta 2020; Park et al. 2018; Yang et al. 2016; Ismail et al. 2013; Muse and Pichler 2011).

Lastly, this study probed into the mediation effect of office de-clutter in the relationship between employees' self-efficacy and employees' performance. The results found that office de-clutter also mediates this relationship significantly. The employees with high self-efficacy removed the feeling of being threatened by others while doing work, and they felt that they were an expert in their work roles which added to their creativity (Afzal et al. 2019; Chae and Park 2020; Cherian and Jacob 2013; Jaiswal and Dhar 2015). Such qualities enhanced their problem-solving capability and improved their work performance (Pourmovahed et al. 2018; Chae and Park 2020; Raub and Liao 2012).

The above hypotheses were examined through the lens of the social exchange theory. The social exchanges at the workplace create a win-win situation (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005). In this regard, as per the results of this study, the supervisor's social support counts towards employees' office de-clutter and, in return, the employees try their best to perform well without errors. By testing the developed framework, the validity of the social exchange theory is ensured.

### 5.1. Theoretical Implications

The social exchange theory has the strength to develop transactional chains and increase positive activity (Cropanzano et al. 2017). When the employees receive something of value from their supervisors, they try to return it via hard work and intelligent work, enhancing their performance. Increasing positive behaviors among employees is a challenge for supervisors (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005). However, supervisors' support can equip employees to do things at work. On the other hand, as a token of thanks, the employees try to perform without missing deadlines and committing errors. The high-quality social relationships that result from such exchanges lead to enhanced employee confidence, creating beneficial workplace conduct.

Further, these transactional chains of social exchanges decrease the negative and harmful activities in the workplace. The supervisors who intend to minimize office clutter provide training to the employees. This time management training enables them to make decisions promptly, minimizing the indecision problem, as highlighted by Roster et al. (2016), and perform the work as per schedules. This prevents employees from office clutter, and they better achieve their performance goals (Zhao and Detlor 2021).

### 5.2. Practical Implications

Removing office clutter makes employees relaxed and develops a sense of achieving short-term goals that further add to their productivity levels. [Roster and Ferrari \(2019\)](#) found that work stress adds to office clutter that adversely affects employee performance. Our findings suggest that the clutter can be avoided through supervisors' support and employees' self-efficacy.

The clutter in the office may result in stress. Thus, managers must prioritize minimizing clutter for better performance. The bank managers can minimize negative feelings and enhance employees' performance through social support provided by their supervisors (providing communication opportunities to the employees and solving their work-related problems). As a support mechanism, the supervisors facilitate manager-employee communication to de-clutter the offices, improving performance. In addition, the supervisors must address the problems and stoppages coming in the way of work due to COVID-19 that will enhance employees' performance. This communication will provide an opportunity to share information and can be a source to remove negative feelings about work during COVID-19. Moreover, sharing clear goals and setting objectives as support will add to employees' focus on work, and they will direct energy to perform their duties.

Employees who feel confident tend to perform better by removing disruptions. To avoid the threats of COVID-19, supervisors can restructure employee work schedules. The division of work and staff could be an effective strategy for office de-clutter. Supervisors who intend to maintain the performance of their employees must extend every possible support to them. This will make employees work efficiently and will add to their efficacy. The employees will remain confident that someone will take care of them in their times of need.

### 5.3. Limitations and Future Directions

This study has examined the supervisors' social support and self-efficacy as antecedents to office de-clutter; however, to gain a fuller view, future studies need to go beyond. They may study the consequences of office de-clutter on other variables such as job satisfaction, turnover intentions, organizational commitment, etc. Additionally, constructs such as training, discipline, job insecurity, and so forth may also affect the fundamental relationship between supervisors' social support and employees' performance. Further, comparing male and female staff regarding developing a sense of job insecurity due to COVID-19 will contribute to the existing literature. Similarly, exploring the relationship between supervisors' social support and self-efficacy in the future can also provide more information on the proposed model. Additionally, it is stated that the social exchange theory is used as an underpinning theory. Other theories such as the social learning theory, the dynamic capability theory, and other social science and psychological theories can add to the validation of the extant literature.

## 6. Conclusions

The study found that office de-clutter acts as mediating factor between supervisors' support and employee performance, and self-efficacy and employee performance. Similarly, it is also concluded that supervisors' support and self-efficacy positively impacts employee performance. COVID-19 has brought fear and a sense of insecurity regarding jobs. The people became more health conscious while coming to their workplaces and used protections while coming to work. The study concludes that the employee's performance in times of the COVID-19 pandemic can be maintained through de-cluttering by receiving supervisors' social support from managers in times of partial lockdown. At the same time, self-efficacy, which is the strength to fight out threats and weak morale, also helps employees de-clutter their workplaces and maintain the required performance levels. The managers who need to maintain the performance of their employees need to extend every possible social support and try their best to foster the self-efficacy of their employees that directly de-clutter the office work and enhance performance.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, F.S. and M.I.M.; Methodology, F.S.; Validation, M.I.M.; Formal analysis, M.I.M.; Investigation, A.Q.; Data curation, A.Q.; Writing—original draft, M.I.M.; Writing—review & editing, F.S., A.Q. and M.I.M.; Visualization, M.I.M.; Supervision, F.S.; Project administration, F.S. and M.I.M.; Funding acquisition, F.S. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Funding:** There was no funding available for this study. However, the APC is funded by Prince Sultan University, Riyadh.

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** The study was conducted according to the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by the Institutional Review Board of COMSATS University Islamabad, Attock Campus, Pakistan.

**Informed Consent Statement:** Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

**Data Availability Statement:** The data will be available on request from the corresponding author.

**Acknowledgments:** The authors would like to thank Prince Sultan University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia for providing the APC and the employees who responded in times of the threatening situation (COVID-19).

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors have no conflicts of interest with any other person regarding this research paper.

## Appendix A. Survey Questionnaire

### Demographics

1. Age (Years):	26–30	31–35	36–40	41–45	45–50
2. Education:	Bachelors	Masters	MS		
3. Gender:	Male	Male			
4. Experience:	>1 year	1–3 years	4–6 years	<5 years	
5. Job Status	Permeant	Contractual			
6. Do you feel threatened due to COVID-19 while coming to work				Yes	No
7. Do you use protections for COVID-19 (sanitizers, gloves, masks, wash hands)				Yes	No
8. Do you feel job insecurity due to COVID-19				Yes	No
9. Are you thinking of leaving the job due to COVID-19				Yes	No

### Constructs and Items

Note: please assess the statements on the basis of the scale provided; 1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 7 = Strongly agree

Managerial Social Support ([Yang et al. 2016](#))

SS1—My supervisor is helpful to me in getting the job done.

SS2—My supervisor is willing to extend help to me perform my job

SS3—My supervisor takes pride in my work accomplishments

SS4—My supervisor tries to make my job as interesting as possible.

SS5—My supervisor helps me in crisis situation

SS6—My supervisor help sin difficult tasks

Self-Efficacy ([Riggs et al. 1994](#); [Sherer et al. 1982](#))

SE1—I have confidence in my ability to do my job

SE2—I can do well all the tasks required by my job

SE3—My performance never decreases due to my ability

SE4—I do not ever doubt my ability to do my work

SE5—I have all the required skills needed to perform my job very well

SE6—no one can do this job better than me

SE7—I am an expert at my job

SE8—My future is not limited in this job

SE9—I am very proud of my job skills and abilities

SE10—I do not feel threatened when others watch me work

#### Office Declutter (Roster et al. 2016)

DC1—I have to move things in order to accomplish tasks in my office.

DC2—I get to use spaces in my office the way I would like to.

DC3—I find things easily when I need them.

DC4—I do not neglect taking care of things that need to be done.

DC5—I feel no overwhelmed by the clutter in my office.

DC6—I'm not worried about the amount of clutter in my office environment.

#### Employee's Performance (Tabouli et al. 2016)

EP1—I feel dedication, seriousness and ability to take responsibility.

EP2—I enjoy professional skill or professionalism and technical knowledge required to carry out the work efficiently.

EP3—I do my work according to specific policies and procedures.

EP4—I feel satisfied with the work I do in the bank.

EP5—Planning the work before starting its implementation contributes to setting the goals that need to be achieved.

EP6—I have the ability to plan my work and its accomplishment according to the planned schedule.

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