

Workplace Ostracism and Project Success: Exploring mediating Role of Knowledge Hiding and the Moderating Role of Neuroticism

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Abstract

Knowledge is a vital asset for any organization, particularly knowledge-intensive firms. Research and Development (R&D) departments play a pivotal role in organizational success, relying on innovative practices and effective knowledge transfer. This study examines the impact of workplace ostracism on knowledge-hiding behavior among employees in Pakistan's Information Technology (IT) sector, emphasizing its implications for project success. Furthermore, it explores the moderating role of neuroticism in the relationship between workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding. Drawing on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, this quantitative study analyzed data from 300 technical staff, middle managers and senior managers in Pakistan's IT sector. The results reveal that workplace ostracism significantly fosters knowledge-hiding behaviors, which undermine project success. Neuroticism was found to exacerbate this dynamic, as neurotic individuals are more prone to ostracism, leading to heightened knowledge-hiding tendencies and project failures. This study offers novel insights into how workplace ostracism drives knowledge-hiding behavior, ultimately impacting project outcomes in Pakistan's IT sector. The investigation of neuroticism as a moderating factor enriches the understanding of these dynamics, shedding light on an overlooked area in existing literature.

Keywords: Workplace ostracism, Project success, Knowledge hiding, Neuroticism, IT sector

Introduction. Workplace ostracism, defined as the act of ignoring or excluding individuals in professional settings, has emerged as a critical issue influencing employee behavior and organizational outcomes. Rooted in the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, this study investigates how workplace ostracism depletes employees' resources, leading to adverse behaviors like knowledge hiding, which ultimately impacts project success. The study further explores how neuroticism, a personality trait marked by emotional instability, moderates these dynamics. Despite the significant role of workplace ostracism in project-oriented sectors, limited research exists on the interplay between workplace ostracism, knowledge hiding and project outcomes. This study addresses this gap by examining these variables within the IT sector of Pakistan, which is characterized by rapid technological advancements and intense competition. The research aims to provide insights for fostering a positive workplace environment, thereby enhancing project success.

Background of the Study. The term "ostracism" originates from the ancient Greek practice of *ostrakismos*, wherein individuals were exiled from their community for a decade as punishment around 500 B.C. This social phenomenon of exclusion is deeply impactful, and its manifestations in the workplace have been extensively explored in research (Williams et al., 2007). As theorized by Williams and Sommer (1997), ostracism undermines self-esteem, belongingness and meaning, leading to negative emotional outcomes such as sadness, worthlessness, rejection and loneliness (Samolis & Williams, 1994). The workplace, being a critical social arena, is particularly prone to

ostracism (Fox & Stallworth, 2005; Miceli & Near, 1992). Ferris et al. (2008) define workplace ostracism as the perception of being disregarded, excluded, or ignored by colleagues. Workplace ostracism commonly occurs in hierarchical organizations, where employees perceive exclusion, discounting and neglect by peers (Leung et al., 2011). Its consequences are detrimental, depleting employee resources and negatively impacting performance, engagement and behavioral outcomes (Zhao et al., 2013). These behavioral competencies, such as self-control, motivation, and openness, are critical for project success. Moreover, communication conflicts and silent treatment further disrupt collaboration and project outcomes. Employee engagement is a key driver of organizational productivity and project success (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2009; Liao & Chuang, 2004). However, workplace ostracism significantly undermines engagement, causing stress and impairing cognitive and functional capacities (Williams, 1997). Baumeister and Leary (1995) emphasize that the need for belongingness motivates individuals to form and maintain social bonds, which are essential for positive organizational outcomes. When ostracized, employees experience helplessness and may display aggressive behaviors, further diminishing their performance (Buckley et al., 2004; Williams et al., 2002). While workplace ostracism's negative effects on individual and organizational performance are well-documented, its impact on project success remains underexplored. Ostracism depletes employees' resources, adversely affecting their contributions to projects. Neuroticism, a personality trait characterized by anxiety, aggression, and emotional instability, exacerbates this effect, making neurotic individuals particularly vulnerable to ostracism (McCrae & Costa, 1987; Robbins et al., 2013). Employees with high neuroticism exhibit low confidence, poor self-image, and diminished performance, which negatively influence team and project outcomes (Judge & Ilies, 2002; Halfhill et al., 2005). In Pakistan's telecom industry, where competition is fierce, effective communication, engagement and team collaboration are vital for project success. However, workplace ostracism poses significant challenges to achieving these outcomes. This study aims to examine the relationship between workplace ostracism and project success, with a particular focus on the moderating role of neuroticism. By addressing this gap, the study provides insights into managing ostracism and mitigating its adverse effects in organizations, contributing to sustainable projects and organizational success. Workplace ostracism has garnered significant attention due to its immediate and far-reaching consequences, including decreased performance, increased interpersonal deviance, and diminished engagement (Ferris et al., 2008; Wu et al., 2012). The phenomenon, often described as "cold violence," includes behaviors such as silent treatment, withholding information, and avoiding communication (Williams, 2001). Its dual impact on organizational and individual perspectives necessitates a deeper understanding of its influence on project success, particularly through the lens of Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. According to COR theory, the depletion of organizational, job, and individual resources due to ostracism affects engagement and performance (Song et al., 2023). Neurotic individuals are especially prone to perceiving and reacting to ostracism, leading to knowledge hiding and reduced work engagement (Al-Dhuhouri & Shamsudin, 2023). This study investigates these dynamics, offering a nuanced understanding of how workplace ostracism influences project success in Pakistan's telecom sector. A critical review of the literature on workplace ostracism reveals significant attention to its impact on various organizational outcomes. Hua et al. (2023) investigated its influence on interpersonal deviance and helping behaviors, while Sajjad et al. (2023) examined its role in employees' intention to leave the organization. Similarly, Chung et al. (2023) highlighted its effect on in-role behaviors and organizational citizenship. Workplace ostracism is also linked to counterproductive work behaviors, adversely affecting both individuals and organizations. However, limited research has directly explored the impact of workplace ostracism on project success. The mechanisms connecting ostracism to project outcomes remain underexplored, with knowledge hiding emerging as a potential mediator in this relationship. Additionally, the moderating role of neuroticism, particularly within Pakistan's IT sector, warrants further investigation. Neuroticism may either amplify or diminish the adverse effects of ostracism, creating a nuanced dynamic that influences project success. To address

this gap, our research examines the detrimental effects of workplace ostracism on project success, focusing on the mediating role of knowledge hiding and the moderating impact of neuroticism. This study aims to provide empirical insights into these underexplored dimensions, contributing to the literature on workplace behavior and project management. The research problem which we have identified and same will be discussed and tried to be addressed in this study is the absence of importance on creating a helpful and fair work environment in Pakistan's IT sector. The rapid growth is being experienced in this IT sector due to technological developments and increased usage of smartphone usage ultimately resulting in a competitive landscape with numerous projects. The aims of this study is to investigate the relationship between workplace dynamic forces and employee well-being and providing insights into managing strategies and encouraging a more positive workplace environment. Workplace ostracism has a detrimental impact on project success which requires innovative solutions from experts and dealing with this problem to address the same is crucial. Unfortunately, there is a lack of emphasis on promoting a supportive and unbiased work atmosphere. Thus, through this study we will try to solve this neglected aspect/problem by offering managing strategies for employees and encouraging a more positive workplace. In fact, tackling workplace ostracism is essential, as it has a detrimental impact on project success, necessitating innovative solutions from practitioners.

Significance of the Study.

This research extends the existing literature by investigating workplace ostracism's impact on project success, with a specific focus on Pakistan's IT sector. While extensive studies highlight the adverse consequences of workplace ostracism on employees, limited attention has been given to exploring strategies to mitigate these effects (Sajjad et al., 2023; Sahabuddin et al., 2023; Widhiastuti et al., 2022; Al-Dhuhouri & Shamsudin, 2023; Song et al., 2023). By addressing this gap, the study makes a theoretical contribution, emphasizing the interplay between workplace ostracism, neuroticism, and project success. This nuanced exploration aims to inform strategies for alleviating workplace ostracism and improving project outcomes, thereby contributing to project management and workplace behavior literature. The study has significant implications for project managers, practitioners, and researchers in Pakistan's IT sector a rapidly growing industry driven by technological advancements and fierce competition. Despite this growth, there is a lack of emphasis on creating supportive work environments. This research addresses this gap by examining how workplace ostracism influences project success and identifying strategies to foster a positive workplace culture. Rooted in the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, the study investigates how knowledge hiding mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and project success. It also examines how neuroticism moderates the effects of workplace ostracism on knowledge hiding and effort, highlighting both positive and negative outcomes. The COR theory posits that resource threats lead individuals to prioritize retention, which can impair their ability to meet job demands. By linking these concepts, the study underscores the importance of understanding workplace stressors and their implications. The empirical findings of this research provide a deeper understanding of the mediating role of knowledge hiding in the relationship between workplace ostracism and project success. It also examines the conditions under which this relationship is more pronounced, acknowledging the varying coping responses of individuals. For instance, highly loyal employees may experience heightened stress, leading to knowledge hiding and affecting project outcomes. By exploring the underlying mechanisms and conditions shaping this dynamic, the research goes beyond identifying workplace ostracism's detrimental effects. It offers practical insights for practitioners, enabling them to develop strategies that foster supportive environments and mitigate negative outcomes. Ultimately, this study enhances the understanding of workplace dynamics within Pakistan's IT sector, providing a foundation for informed decision-making and healthier work environments.

Pinning Theory and Hypotheses Development.

Conservation of Resource Theory (COR)

The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory introduced by Hobfoll (1989), emphasizes the importance of personal resources—characteristics, conditions, or energies valued by individuals to achieve their objectives. According to the theory, individuals experience stress when they perceive a threat to or loss of these resources (Costa, 2023). These resources, which include objects, states, and social elements, are shaped by unique experiences and circumstances (Neveu et al., 2023). To mitigate the negative effects of resource loss, individuals strive to conserve their resources, and organizations play a critical role in fostering environments that support this conservation (Arshad et al., 2023). The COR theory suggests that resource-poor individuals are more vulnerable to further losses, exhibiting disengagement, reduced motivation, and diminished performance. Conversely, personal and job resources, such as self-esteem and co-worker support, bolster emotional resilience and enhance work engagement (Raja et al., 2023; Arshad et al., 2023). However, in environments marked by workplace ostracism—a significant threat to social resources—employees may prioritize resource protection over engagement, leading to adverse outcomes (Jain et al., 2023). Ostracism depletes individuals' resources, requiring them to exert effort to cope, which often results in stress and exhaustion (Widhiastuti et al., 2022; Song et al., 2023). As an interpersonal stressor, workplace ostracism undermines social resources, assets individuals rely on to solve problems and navigate challenges (Adil et al., 2023). Resource loss often leads to depression and a cycle of further depletion, making recovery difficult (Costa, 2023). Continuous exposure to ostracism can lead to despair and helplessness, as individuals strive to conserve remaining resources (Williams & Sommer, 1997). This study aligns with the COR theory in arguing that workplace ostracism threatens both personal and organizational resources, prompting employees to emotionally disengage in an effort to prevent further losses. Neuroticism, as a moderating factor, exacerbates these effects by amplifying employees' sensitivity to perceived ostracism. Employees with high neuroticism are more prone to psychological distress, physical health issues, and turnover intentions, further hindering their ability to contribute effectively to project success (Hua et al., 2023; Chung et al., 2023). The central premise of COR theory—that individuals are motivated to conserve existing resources and acquire new ones—supports this study's investigation into the negative relationship between workplace ostracism and project success. By examining the moderating role of neuroticism and the mediating effect of resource loss, this research contributes to understanding how workplace ostracism influences organizational outcomes, with a focus on the detrimental impact on project success in Pakistan's IT sector. Workplace ostracism refers to the emotional experience of feeling unnoticed, isolated, or disregarded by colleagues or superiors in a professional setting. It is characterized by an individual's perception of exclusion, being ignored, or overlooked in their work environment (Ferris et al., 2008). Beyond mere isolation, workplace ostracism affects psychological well-being, reducing engagement and productivity. Investigating its antecedents and consequences is critical for fostering inclusive environments that enhance collaboration and employee satisfaction. Neuroticism encompasses traits such as anxiety, aggression, depression, and self-consciousness (Cotterill, 2023). Individuals with low neuroticism tend to exhibit emotional stability and calmness, leading to improved performance across various roles (Robbins et al., 2013). Research underscores neuroticism's impact on workplace dynamics, emphasizing the value of emotional stability in professional settings (Borst & Knies, 2023). Promoting emotional intelligence and resilience can help organizations cultivate a more adaptive and positive work culture. Knowledge hiding is the deliberate act of withholding relevant knowledge, even when it is critical to professional responsibilities (Evans et al., 2022). Unlike knowledge hoarding, which requires a specific request to disclose concealed information, knowledge hiding involves intentionality in keeping information inaccessible (Butt et al., 2023). This behavior can hinder communication and collaboration, underscoring the need to address its underlying causes and promote a culture of openness within organizations. Project success is a multidimensional concept encompassing the fulfillment of project

objectives, strategic alignment, stakeholder satisfaction, and optimal user satisfaction (Alawag et al., 2023). It extends beyond traditional metrics, emphasizing holistic outcomes. Understanding how workplace ostracism, neuroticism, and knowledge hiding influence project success is crucial for evaluating organizational dynamics comprehensively. Recognizing these interpersonal factors provides a deeper insight into achieving sustainable project outcomes.

Literature Review

This review delves into various concepts and experimental findings that form the foundation for ongoing research. It examines the relationship between workplace ostracism, knowledge hiding, project success, and neuroticism, drawing insights from prior studies. Relevant theories and previous findings are discussed to identify key variables for this research. The aim is to address the identified research gap and provide a theoretical framework validating the statistical relationships among the variables under investigation. By building on prior investigations, this study tests the interplay of variables central to the current research work.

Relationship Between Workplace Ostracism and Project Success

The model of ostracism, developed by Williams (1997) and revised in 2001 and 2005, suggests that ostracism drains four fundamental needs: belonging, self-esteem, control, and meaningful existence. Positive social relationships are universally essential, making workplace ostracism a critical threat to these needs. Experiences of exclusion and rejection lead to negative emotions such as anger, sadness, and diminished engagement, significantly affecting performance and project success (Bhatt et al., 2023). Ostracized employees experience demotivation, reduced job satisfaction, and diminished well-being. These effects weaken teamwork and social interactions, which are vital in today's workplaces (Jain et al., 2023). Workplace ostracism's ambiguous nature manifesting as silent treatment or being ignored further exacerbates these negative outcomes. Employees deprived of vital information become disengaged, leading to poor performance and negatively impacting project outcomes (Williams, 2007). Research shows that ostracism lowers affective commitment, satisfaction, and engagement, all crucial for project success (Ferris et al., 2008; Balliet & Ferris, 2013). Social interaction and communication are essential for team performance (Sundstrom et al., 2000), and workplace ostracism reduces employee contributions and a sense of belonging (O'Reilly & Robinson, 2009). These reductions directly correlate with project failures. Studies emphasize the need to understand ostracism's effects on employee work outcomes and project success (Kutz et al., 2023). Using Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, it is anticipated that individuals facing ostracism will conserve their resources, resulting in disengagement and poor performance, ultimately affecting project success (Hobfoll, 1989). Hence, we hypothesize:

H1: Workplace ostracism negatively impacts project success.

Workplace Ostracism and Knowledge Hiding

Workplace ostracism compels individuals to adapt their behaviors to reintegrate into the group. Studies reveal that ostracized individuals experience heightened psychological distress, such as anger, diminished belonging, and reduced engagement (Liu et al., 2023). Neuroimaging studies show ostracism activates brain regions associated with physical pain, underscoring its profound impact (Nelson, 2023). This distress often leads to behaviors like knowledge hiding, driven by a need to protect personal resources (Gao et al., 2023). Knowledge hiding is a deliberate act of withholding information, often rooted in personal motives such as distrust, pro-social intentions, or cultural factors (Connelly et al., 2012; Bakry & Alfantookh, 2012). While sometimes intended to protect relationships, knowledge hiding undermines collaboration and innovation, impairing team and organizational performance (Evans et al., 2015). Retaliatory behaviors, such as reciprocal distrust loops, further exacerbate knowledge hiding (Rhee & Choi, 2017). From the perspective of COR theory, workplace ostracism depletes resources, leading individuals to hoard remaining resources, including knowledge. This behavior, although self-preserving, hinders teamwork and

project success. Ostracized individuals are prone to feelings of helplessness and frustration, further diminishing their ability to contribute effectively (Buckley et al., 2004; Bourgeois & Leary, 2001). Such dynamics are particularly pronounced in neurotic individuals, who are more susceptible to the adverse effects of ostracism. Addressing workplace ostracism requires effective coping strategies to mitigate its negative impacts. However, focusing on such strategies often diverts attention from work tasks, reducing engagement and creativity, and negatively impacting project outcomes (Cheng et al., 2023). Hence, we hypothesize:

H2: Workplace ostracism positively correlates with knowledge hiding.

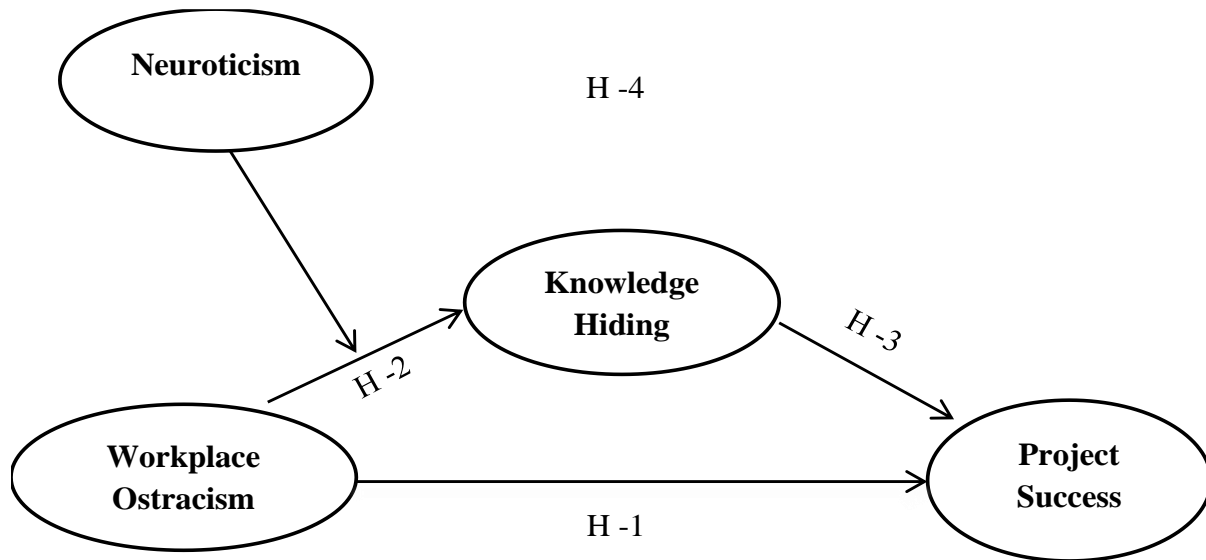


Figure.1: *Research Model*

Knowledge Hiding and Project Success Knowledge hiding involves the intentional act of withholding information, even when it is relevant to professional responsibilities (Evans et al., 2022). This behavior differs from knowledge hoarding, where concealed knowledge requires a specific request for disclosure (Butt et al., 2023). Unlike counterproductive workplace behaviors, knowledge hoarding does not intentionally harm others but negatively impacts trust, justice, and performance (Serenko et al., 2023; Zamrudi, 2023). Recent research highlights organizational culture and employee commitment as critical factors influencing knowledge hoarding, yet antecedents like workplace ostracism remain underexplored (Zieba et al., 2023). Workplace ostracism significantly impacts employee engagement, diverting resources and energy towards self-preservation (Jain et al., 2023). The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory suggests that ostracized individuals conserve their resources, leading to decreased engagement and productivity (Bhatti et al., 2023). This resource guarding can create stress and further exacerbate resource depletion (Chung et al., 2023).

Organizations must foster environments that support knowledge sharing and reduce the adverse effects of ostracism to enhance productivity and collaboration (Hu et al., 2023). Knowledge sharing is essential for innovation, competitiveness, and efficiency. However, counterproductive knowledge behaviors, such as knowledge hiding, impede organizational progress (Serenko et al., 2023). According to COR theory, individuals experiencing ostracism are more likely to engage in knowledge hiding, protecting resources at the expense of collaboration and project outcomes (Sahabuddin et al., 2023). Thus, we hypothesize:

H3: Knowledge hiding negatively impacts project success.

Knowledge Hiding as a Mediator Knowledge hiding encompasses three dimensions: evasive hiding, playing dumb, and rationalized hiding (Al Hawamdeh et al., 2023). Evasive hiding involves

vague promises to provide information in the future, while playing dumb entails feigned ignorance. Rationalized hiding occurs when individuals provide excuses, such as organizational restrictions, to avoid sharing knowledge (Connelly & Zweig, 2021). These behaviors often stem from perceived mistreatment or a need for displaced retaliation against organizational abuse (Erkutlu et al., 2023). In project teams, where members juggle multiple tasks, knowledge sharing is critical but often perceived as burdensome due to limited recognition and rewards (Katupao et al., 2023; Ehimuan, 2023). Employees prioritize primary responsibilities over extra-role behaviors, fearing negative performance appraisals, which further discourages knowledge sharing (Olewnik et al., 2023). This lack of motivation fosters apathy and promotes knowledge hiding, especially when workplace ostracism amplifies fears of resource depletion (Frank et al., 2023). The fear of ostracism drives employees to conserve resources, including knowledge, harming collaboration and project outcomes. Knowledge hiding mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and project success, as ostracized employees are less likely to share knowledge, impacting work engagement and overall performance. This aligns with the COR theory, which posits that resource conservation behaviors can inadvertently hinder organizational objectives. Thus, we hypothesize:

H4: Knowledge hiding mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and project success.

Neuroticism Acting as a Moderator

Neuroticism and workplace ostracism together significantly influence employee performance within organizations (Sahoo et al., 2023). Employees with low levels of neuroticism exhibit weaker reactions to workplace ostracism, minimizing its impact on their overall performance (Henle et al., 2023). In contrast, highly neurotic individuals, characterized by limited behavioral control due to their personality traits, are more vulnerable to workplace ostracism and experience significantly lower performance levels (Iqbal et al., 2023). These individuals tend to have less job satisfaction and reduced capacity to deliver high-quality services on projects in the presence of ostracism (Gray, 2023; Makholwa et al., 2023). Highly neurotic individuals, who are prone to anxiety, anger, and impulsiveness (McCrae & Costa, 1997), react more negatively to workplace ostracism (Huang et al., 2023). This emotional instability is associated with lower motivation and poor performance (Judge & Ilies, 2002). Conversely, employees with low neuroticism are emotionally stable, which enables them to perform better in various job settings (Robbins et al., 2013). Emotionally stable employees also contribute to positive organizational outcomes, including improved team performance (Halfhill et al., 2005). By contrast, neurotic employees' lack of confidence and self-esteem negatively impacts individual and team outcomes (Li et al., 2015). In the context of the telecom industry in Pakistan, where competition and technological advancements demand flexibility, innovation, and collaboration, neuroticism's negative effects on workplace dynamics are particularly concerning. Highly neurotic employees who perceive workplace ostracism are likely to exhibit lower motivation and engagement, leading to decreased performance and weakened project outcomes (Zhang et al., 2023). Studies indicate that neuroticism is closely linked to reduced work engagement, a critical factor for project success (Yildiz et al., 2023). Moreover, such individuals scrutinize their work environments more intensely, exacerbating the adverse effects of ostracism (Fernando et al., 2023). Aligned with the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, ostracized individuals tend to conserve their resources, resulting in diminished work engagement and performance, which negatively impacts project success. Thus, we hypothesize:

H5: Neuroticism strengthens the positive impact of workplace ostracism on knowledge hiding.

Research Methodology

This study adopts an explanatory research framework, as proposed by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009). The research aims to explore the influence of workplace ostracism on project success with a particular focus on the mediating role of knowledge hiding and the moderating effect of neuroticism. By establishing causal relationships between these variables, the study seeks to

uncover how workplace ostracism impacts project outcomes in Pakistan’s IT sector. The study hypothesizes that neuroticism positively correlates with workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding while negatively affecting project success. Additionally, knowledge hiding is posited to mediate the relationship between workplace ostracism and project success, acting as a bridge between the two variables. This research design enables an in-depth examination of these dynamics within the IT sector.

Procedures and participants

This quantitative study targets middle managers and employees within Pakistan’s IT sector. Data was collected from 449 participants during their regular working hours using structured questionnaires. Efforts were made to ensure the research process remains non-intrusive, thereby minimizing any potential biases in the findings. Data was collected through self-administered questionnaires featuring a five-point Likert scale. These were distributed to supervisors and employees engaged in project management and service delivery across IT offices. A purposive sampling technique was employed, targeting managers and supervisors who actively oversee projects and interact with employees. To optimize response rates, questionnaires were disseminated through both physical and electronic channels.

Measurements

The questionnaire included adapted scales to measure workplace ostracism, project success, knowledge hiding and neuroticism. All instruments were rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (“Strongly Disagree” or “Never”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree” or “Always”).

Workplace Ostracism. The Workplace Ostracism Scale by Ferris et al. (2008) was employed to assess workplace ostracism. This 10-item scale required participants to rate their experiences using a five-point Likert scale (“Never” to “Always”).

Project Success. Project success was evaluated using a 10-item scale developed by Guangdong Wu, Cong Liu, Xianbo Zhao, and Jian Zuo (2017). Participants provided responses on a five-point Likert scale (“Never” to “Always”).

Neuroticism. The personality trait of neuroticism was measured using the Big Five Inventory (BFI) originally developed by John and Srivastava (1999). The BFI comprises 44 items, of which 8 specifically measure neuroticism. Participants rated their responses on a five-point Likert scale (“Never” to “Always”).

Knowledge Hiding. Knowledge hiding was measured using a four-item scale adapted from Peng (2013). Respondents provided feedback on these items using a five-point Likert scale (“Never” to “Always”).

Control Variables. To see the impact of any demographic variables on the primary variables in this study, we conducted the one way ANOVA test. From the findings we concluded that no demographic factor has an impact on our research and we did not include and account the demographics in this study. Values of all demographics are greater than p 0.05 through ANOVA analysis which makes them insignificant in this study.

TABLE 5.2.5: One Way-ANOVA Analysis (Control Variable)

Demographics	Project Success	
	F Statistics	Sig
Gender	2.365	.128
Age	.301	.759
Education	1.493	.232
Work Experience	.517	.672

Scale Reliability

The Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the reliability of the scale. The Cronbach alpha values for the scales used in this study are listed in Table 5.2.6 below. Cronbach alpha values are greater than 0.80 for workplace ostracism, project success, knowledge hiding and neuroticism which make them more reliable scales to measure the variable in the on-going study in context of Pakistan.

TABLE 5.2.6: Scale Reliability

Variables	Cronbach Alpha	Items
Workplace Ostracism	.871	10
Project Success	.901	10
Knowledge Hiding	.798	4
Neuroticism	.924	8

Research Data Analysis and Results

Descriptive data was used for correlation analysis results. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the reliability of the scales. Data used in tabular form and the findings of linear, mediation and moderation analyses are discussed in detail to conclude our study on facts.

Descriptive Analysis

Workplace Ostracism, Knowledge Hiding, Project Success and Neuroticism are the variables which are used in this study. Important and essential information about these variables are appended below same are derived from the descriptive analysis and statistics used. This descriptive statistics analysis provides a complete summary of all data received and compiled during the survey and from questionnaire. The mean and standard deviation of each variable are included in these descriptive statistics analysis and the maximum and minimum values of all variables are noted. The standard deviation is obtained from the difference between the mean and the average of the replies received from the respondents. The overall sample size for this study is 449 and same is reflected and shown in Table 6.1. 5-point Likert scale was used for measuring these variables where 1 indicating Never and 5 always. Averages of responses are indicated and reflected by these mean values. Mean of workplace Ostracism is 1.86. Value of project success is 3.43. Mean values of knowledge hiding and neuroticism are 1.93 and 2.08 respectively.

Table 6.1: Descriptive Characteristics

Variables	Sample	Min	Max	Mean
Workplace Ostracism	449	1	5	1.86
Project Success	449	1	5	3.43
Knowledge Hiding	449	1	5	1.93
Neuroticism	449	1	5	2.08

Sample Characteristics

During the demographic tests we included the gender of the respondents, their educational background, the job sector of respondent and their experience in the field in this study. The Following demographic results were obtained,

Gender

The gender equality was ensured through inclusion of gender in demographic tests in our study and to see if there is any biasness with respect to the gender of the respondents. Although the study was designed to minimize bias towards a single gender however the male to female answer ratio was found greater. According to the statistics obtained, male respondents percentage is 63.7 from the

sample of 449 responses received whereas female response accounted for 36.3 percent of the total sample.

6.2.1 TABLE 1: Gender

Demographics	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	286	63.7	63.7
Female	163	36.3	100
Total	449	100	

Experience of Respondent

This section deals with the details on the respondent's experience. Different ranges for the experience were offered to make it easy understanding for respondents to reply as per the experience range from the demographic questions. The experience range started from less than 5 years to more than twenty years. The experience received from the respondents is displayed in the table. The majority of respondents (38.1%) fall in the category having the experience less than 5 years of experience. 24.7 percent of the candidates have 5 – 10 years of experience. 19.8% respondents have the experience of 11-15 years whereas 17.4 percent respondents have the experience of 16-20 years.

TABLE 6.2.2: Work Experience

Variables	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 5 Years	171	38.1	38.1
5 – 10 Years	111	24.7	62.8
11 – 15 Years	89	19.8	82.6
16 – 20 Years	78	17.4	100.0
Total	449	100.0	

Education of Respondents

The value of education cannot be denied as it plays vital role in the development of any country and it is considered as a critical aspect in any country's development. Through quality of education horizon of citizens is broaden and it helps people of the country in becoming better human beings. From above we can perceive that it is an essential and important demographic dimension which must be included in the study. The information about the respondent's qualifications is displayed in the table below. From the data we can get the information that 10.7 percent respondents have attained the intermediate standard, 57.2 percent of students have passed Bachelor's degree, 28.1% respondents have the master degree, 28.4% respondents have passed the MS/Mphil degrees and whereas .04 percent have the education level as PhD.

TABLE 6.2.3: Education of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Intermediate	48	10.7	10.7
Bachelor	257	57.2	67.9
MS	126	28.1	96.0
PhD	18	0.04	100.0
Total	449	100.00	

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is used for investigation to determine the intensity and direction of the variables. The relationship between variables is investigated through correlation analysis to determine their correlation. This relationship can be positive or negative which means direct or inverse relationship are common in correlation analysis and -1 to +1 are set as Pearson correlation ranges. Correlation

analysis was used in this study to investigate the relationship between Workplace Ostracism and Project Success and also for Knowledge hiding as a mediator and Neuroticism as moderation in this way stated hypothesis were validated. 0 values show no relationship between the variable at all and they have to do nothing with each other.

TABLE 6.3: Correlation Analysis

Variables	1	2	3	4
Workplace Ostracism (IV)	1			
Neuroticism (Mod)	0.024**	1		
Knowledge Hiding (Med)	0.310***	0.051**	1	
Project Success (DV)	-0.069***	-.032*	-.021	1

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). *Correlation is significant at the 0.10 level (2-tailed).

Demographics are mostly overlooked by most of the researchers during the study while conducting correlation analysis. We used Pearson correlation and values from the table reveal that there is a relationship between these variables. Relationship between workplace ostracism (independent variable) and knowledge hiding (mediator) is positive and significant correlation $r = 0.310$. Association between workplace ostracism (independent variable) and neuroticism (moderator) is very strong with significant value $r = 0.024$. Substantial association between workplace ostracism and Project Success is observed with significant value $r = -0.069$. A positive association is also observed between knowledge hiding and neuroticism with significant value $r = 0.051$. There is a negative correlation between neuroticism and project success with significance value $r = -0.032$ and also negative correlation between knowledge hiding and project success is determined with significance value $r = -0.021$ and knowledge hiding is significantly connected to project success.

Regression Analysis

In this study, we used Pearson correlation technique was used to verify the association between variables in this study. Correlation analysis should not be relied always to check the relationships between variables as it does not provide a complete picture about degree of relationship between variables and also it does provide strong evidence to back up the relationship. So keeping in fact and limitations we use regression analysis to confirm that two variables are interrelated. Through regression analysis we determine the dependency of one variable on the other or how it is independent variable when it is regressed. When only two variables are involved in the research we use simple and linear regression to establish a causal relationship and association. However when more than two variables are used in the model or framework we use multiple regressions. The findings of a simple linear regression in the study are listed and noted in the table below. Preacher and Hayes, (2004) technique was used for both mediation and moderation regression analysis. We used model 1 of preacher & Hayes to test moderation. During the process, we used model 4 of Preacher & Hayes, (2004) for mediation. These both processes are carried out independently, and in the way we recorded the outcomes.

Linear Regression

Workplace Ostracism and Project Success

TABLE 6.5.1: Simple Regression Analysis

Predictor	Project Success			
Workplace Ostracism	R ²	AdjR ²	B	Sig
	.341	.304	.174	.000

Un-standardized regression coefficient reported. N=449

The values recorded through investigation of our study for the initial hypothesis is shown in Table 4.5.1. We investigated the hypothesis as H₁: Workplace Ostracism has a favourable impact on project success. As per the findings of our study we recorded, there is a favourable and significant relationship between workplace ostracism and project success. The value of R² is 0.341 and significance value *p* is 0.000. The significance of R² specifies the coefficient of determination and the value indicates the rate of change. This value is indicating that one unit change in workplace ostracism results in 0.341-unit change in project success. The *p*-value 0.00 shows that these factors have a very significant relationship therefore Hypothesis 1 are therefore accepted.

Workplace Ostracism and Knowledge Hiding

TABLE 6.5.2: Simple Regression

Predictor	Knowledge Hiding			
Workplace Ostracism	R ²	AdjR ²	B	Sig
	.406	.314	.264	.000

Un-standardized regression coefficient reported. N=449

As per assumption in H₂: workplace ostracism has positive impact on knowledge hiding. The result values of regression analysis for this hypothesis are noted in table 4.5.2. Workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding have a positive and significant association. According to the findings, the value of co-efficient is 0.264 and the value of R² is 0.406 whereas the *p*-value is 0.000. The coefficient of determination is R² whereas the rate of change is shown by the co-efficient B value. As per the values it reveals that 1 unit change in workplace ostracism can result in 0.406-unit change in knowledge hiding. The *p*-value 0.000 shows that this relationship is strong. As per result of our observations, we can conclude that H₂ is acceptable.

Knowledge Hiding and Project Success

TABLE 6.5.3: Simple Regression Analysis

Predictor	Project Success			
Knowledge Hiding	R ²	AdjR ²	B	Sig
	.117	.094	-.123	.000

Un-standardized regression coefficient reported. N=449

Knowledge hiding is associated negatively with project success. According to the hypothesis, H₃. Relationship between knowledge hiding and project success is negative. The values recorded in the table 4.5.3 show the regression findings for this hypothesis. The results of regression analysis demonstrated that knowledge hiding and project success had a favourable and statistically significant negatively association. The value of co-efficient B is -0.123, the R² is 0.117 and the *p* is 0.000. The R² represents as the coefficient of determination and its value represents the rate of change. The value of R² indicates that 1 unit change in knowledge hiding results in 0.117-unit change in project success. The link is very significant as obvious from the value of significance *p* 0.000. From the values hypothesis 3 is also accepted.

Mediation Effects

Knowledge hiding is used as mediator and through mediation analysis we can see how much it mediates between workplace ostracism and project success. To test the mediator's impact on project success and workplace ostracism, model 4 of Andrew F. Hayes' Hayes Process macro (Hayes & Scharkow, 2013) was used in SPSS. We used three paths as a, b, c and d to the test the mediation effect. Three types of mediation effects were checked while running the preacher and have processes. We found three types of effects as total, direct and indirect.

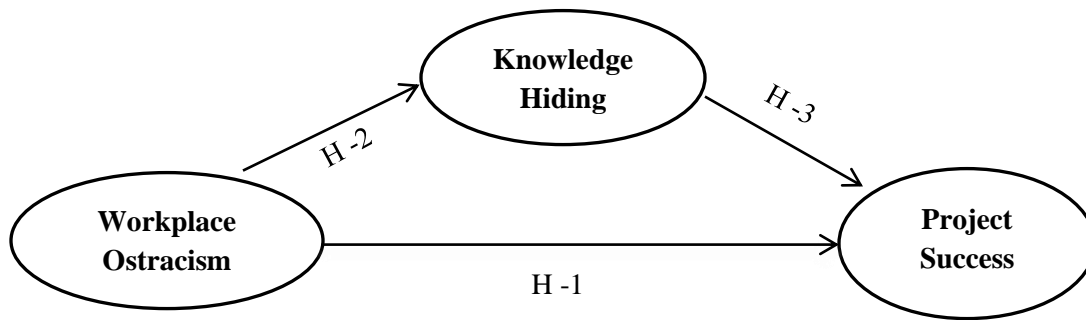
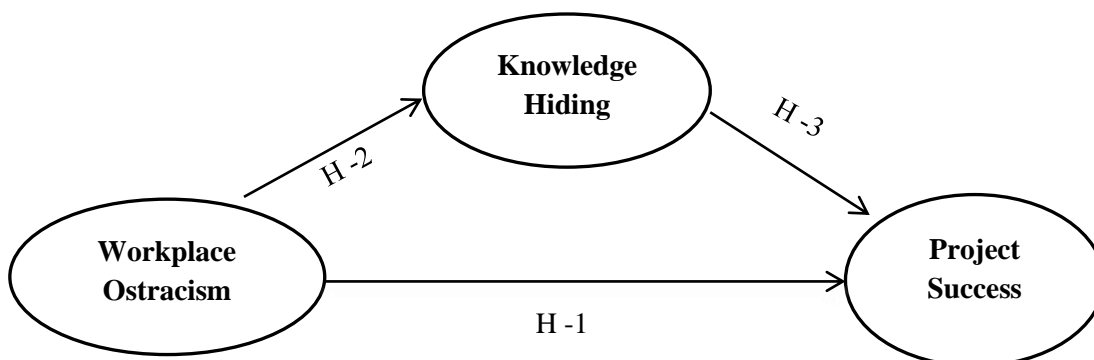


Table 6.6: Mediation Analysis

IV	Effect of IV on M (a path)	Effect of M on DV (b path)	Total effect of IV on DV (c path)	Direct Effect of IV (d path)	Bootstrap results for indirect effects	
					LLCI	ULCI
PL	0.797***	0.577***	0.459***	0.272	0.2785	0.6257

Un-standardized regression coefficient reported. Bootstrap sample size was 1000. Confidence Interval was = 95%. Sample Size 449 IV as independent variable, DV as Dependent Variable and M Mediator Variable, LLCI = Lower Limit Confidence Interval; ULCI = Upper Limit Confidence Interval. Hypothesis 3 states that knowledge hiding will act as a mediator between workplace ostracism and project success.

The results of investigation for the mediation effects in the study are presented in table 4.6. From this data we have the convincing explanation as the LL and UL confidence intervals for the indirect effect of workplace ostracism on project success are 0.2785 and 0.6257, respectively. Both the upper and lower limits have the same sign and they both are positive and there is no value between them. From the result, we can conclude that there is considerable mediation between the independent and dependent variables. Hence, H⁴ was proved and accepted and knowledge hiding strongly mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and project success.



Moderating Effects

For checking and validating the moderating effect we used the moderation model 1 of Process macro through SPSS to test our last hypothesis. As we assumed in our hypothesis H⁵ that neuroticism moderates the association between workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding (Hayes & Scharkow, 2013). Hypothesis 5 argues that neuroticism moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding suggesting that workplace ostracism has a stronger positive

relationship with knowledge hiding for project managers or members. Table 4.7 provides the data for an explaining the results for Hypothesis 5. The interaction term of neuroticism moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding. The findings suggest that neuroticism strengthens the relationship between workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding by moderating it. Hence we reveal from the findings that our H⁵ is agreed and proven.

Table 6.7: Moderation Analysis

Predictor	Beta	R2	Sig
Workplace Ostracism	-.133	.154	0.001
Workplace Ostracism x Neuroticism	.094	.081	0.000

Summary of Accepted/Rejected Hypothesis

TABLE 6.8: Hypothesis Summary Result

Hypotheses	Statement	Status
Hypothesis 1	There is negative relationship between workplace ostracism and project success	Accepted
Hypothesis 2	Relationship between workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding is positive	Accepted
Hypothesis 3	Relationship between knowledge hiding and project success is negative	Accepted
Hypothesis 4	Knowledge Hiding mediates between the IV and DV	Accepted
Hypothesis 5	Neuroticism moderators the relationship between IV and Mediator	Accepted

Limitations of the Study Future and Research Future Directions

This study has limitations that should be addressed in future research. Data collection was limited to Rawalpindi and Islamabad, restricting generalizability. Expanding data collection across Pakistan and employing longitudinal and qualitative methods would provide deeper insights. Including additional variables, such as motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational loyalty, could further enhance understanding. Future studies should consider expanding the scope to include a broader geographical area, encompassing diverse regions across Pakistan. Employing longitudinal research strategies and qualitative methods, such as interviews and case studies, can provide a deeper understanding of workplace ostracism's effects. Additional variables, such as employee performance, family satisfaction, and work-life balance, should be incorporated to explore the broader implications of ostracism on personal and professional domains. Investigating these factors can provide actionable insights for fostering healthier workplace environments and improving organizational outcomes.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study highlights the detrimental effects of workplace ostracism on project success, with neuroticism exacerbating these effects. Ostracized employees experience reduced morale, motivation, and engagement, negatively impacting project outcomes. Drawing on COR theory, the findings underscore the need for organizations to foster supportive environments that promote inclusion, fairness, and resource accessibility. To achieve project success, organizations must prevent workplace ostracism and support employees through transparent policies, teamwork, and fair treatment. The telecom sector can utilize these findings to create environments that encourage engagement and performance. Future studies should expand the scope to explore workplace

ostracism's broader implications on family satisfaction and other life domains. Overall, preventing ostracism and promoting positive workplace dynamics are essential for achieving organizational goals.

Practical Implications

This study offers several practical implications for managers and organizations. First, raising awareness about workplace ostracism's negative effects and equipping managers to address it can prevent performance declines. Second, transparency, trust-building, and discouraging ostracism as a punitive measure are crucial. Third, fostering collaboration and positive interactions within teams can improve engagement and performance. Fourth, using network analysis tools can identify sources of information withholding, enabling managers to mitigate these issues. Lastly, programs should focus not only on enhancing employee skills but also on addressing workplace ostracism and its impact on performance.

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