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**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Examining the Relationship between Perception of Politics, Coworker Incivility, Job Stress and Knowledge Hiding behavior in Educational Settings**

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**ABSTRACT**

Researchers have recently become quite interested in the knowledge-hiding behaviors of employees. Therefore, the study aims to examine the effects of perception of organizational politics, coworkers' incivility on knowledge hiding behavior of employ with moderating role of job stress. The researcher adopted a cross sectional research design to collect data from the education sector employees of Islamabad and Rawalpindi regions by using purposive sampling technique. Data was analyzed through SPSS 24. The findings confirmed the effects of perception of organizational politics, coworkers' incivility on knowledge-hiding behaviors. Furthermore, the finding also confirmed the moderating effect of job stress on the relationship perception of organizational politics, coworkers' incivility on knowledge-hiding behaviors.

**KEYWORDS** Coworker Incivility, Job Stress, Knowledge Of Hiding Behavior, Organizational Politics

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**Introduction**

The effective exchange of knowledge is essential for organizational success. However, the deliberate concealment of knowledge, referred to as knowledge hiding, presents a significant hurdle (Wang & Noe, 2010). This behavior, observed in both employees and leaders, is connected to adverse consequences (Arain et al., 2021; Bernatovic et al., 2021). Regardless of the growing attention to comprehending the hiding of knowledge and its determinants, there remains a limited understanding, particularly concerning various forms of knowledge hiding and the factors that drive them (Rezwan and Takahashi, 2021). Having the intention of expanding upon this body of knowledge, the study centers, on the social aspect of knowledge hiding, aligning with prior research on its social determinants. Former research studies explored the impact of abusive supervision on employees' participation in knowledge hiding (Jahanzeb et al., 2019; Feng and Wang, 2019). Furthermore, some studies indicated that supervisor knowledge hiding, a relatively unexplored manifestation of destructive leadership behavior characterized by the deliberate retaining of the demanded information (Arain et al., 2019).

Recent investigation suggests that political perception, considered a form of ability, may not directly prevent knowledge-hiding behaviors. Instead, a moderating mechanism exists that allows political skills to realize their potential. Responding to current research calls in the domain, this work proposes that worker job stress acts as a key underlying mechanism by which awareness of politics of the organization influences behaviors of knowledge hiding. Employees who face interpersonal mistreatment and disrespect from group member' resort to defensive attitude by hiding their knowledge to safeguard the capability they have established. Workers exposed to incivility are level

to unforgiving actions, consciously refraining from knowledge sharing with their group members due to revenge (Aldrich and Pfeffer, 1976; Evans, Hendron, and Oldroyd, 2015). Job stress, representing a mental psychological state reflecting an inequality between coping ability and perceived workplace demands, has been related to job dissatisfaction, distressing KM behaviors like sharing and hiding (Ma et al., 2020; Lindebaum and Jordan, 2014). The key objective of this manuscript is to increase understanding of how worker-specific emotional and psychological factors affect knowledge hiding behaviors. Hence the goal is to explain how the perception of worker workplace politics at the workplace effects in can have significantly and positively stopping workers from engaging in knowledge-hiding activities and to examine the impact of partner incivility on such behavior. So, overall, this research work adds sizable knowledge into the relevant disciplines of political and KM. Our work study establishes two noticeable precursors, explicitly political sensitivity, and job stress as an influential element in workers knowledge-hiding behaviors. Also, our study examines the nexus between worker politics and knowledge hiding at workplace by studying the effects of worker job stress. Likewise, it stresses the essential for a adapted theoretical framework for current study as portrayed in Figure 1 to discover the processes of workers knowledge-hiding behavior at the workplace.

The competitive and growth position of a firm heavily depends on its team and individual workers' effective KM (Koopman et al., 2020). The achievement of knowledge sharing is complicatedly connected to willingness and emotions of workers in the workplace (Shrivastava et al., 2021). But, when encountered with stress, incivility and stress, workers may feel fear in knowledge sharing and may possibility to knowledge-hiding at workplace (Qureshi and Evans, 2015). Workers' thoughtful purpose to reserve or cover key information that is vital and demanded by other group members, described as worker Knowledge hiding at workplace (Syed et al., 2021). It has been known as harmful to workers efficiency and performance during job work (Kyriacou, 2001; Ma et al., 2020). Although it has harmful consequences for firms, study aims to find the elements causing such behavior. This activity negatively affects group member creativity, innovation as well as relationships, which ultimately affecting organizations' performance and future success (Černe et al., 2023). Especially service company, in particular, face significant issue due to the ineffective of services, inconsistency in the service delivery, and direct service and production consumption, requiring wide-ranging information exchange between service workers (Kirillova et al., 2020). In the dynamic nature of demands by customer in this sector needs continuous innovation, creativity and effective workers knowledge hiding within group members to tackle this challenging demand and tasks (Altinay & Taheri, 2019). Therefore, to address the challenge of worker's knowledge-hiding, it is must to analyze the elements causing this issue and identify possible solutions. Prior study of Wang and Dong (2022) investigated as a moderator the job stress on the linkages between workers knowledge-hiding behavior and EI. Though their work study recommended investigative the moderating effect of motivation in the domain of behavioral finance, they also suggested the requirement for a more comprehensive research analysis of the several an important dimension of emotional intelligence and their impact on various characteristics of workers knowledge-hiding behaviors. Particularly, their manuscript suggested including workers personal features, for instance political perception, because an worker difference variable that could effect social competencies connected to influencing and understanding others group members in the working setting. Future research, then, could research into studying the effect of individual political perception on the indirect hiding and informed hiding could deliver valuable results. Present literature admits the linkages between workers incivility and knowledge hiding at workplace (Venz and

Shoshan, 2022). Nevertheless, a theoretical framework void still exists because the circumstances in which group member discourtesy influences knowledge-hiding behavior at the workplace in an working setting have not been adequately separated by present study (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2011).

## Literature Review

### Perception of organizational politics and Knowledge hiding behavior

In the realm of workplace dynamics, political skill emerges as a crucial personal asset. This skill empowers employees to comprehend and adhere to social reciprocity norms, fostering excellent social associations that yield positive correspondence (Kimura, 2021). Politically adept individuals demonstrate a nuanced understanding of both them and others in social connections (Ferris et al., 2022), enabling them to effectively respond to coworkers' needs, such as providing assistance when required (De Clercq et al., 2019). Additionally, politically astute workers consider the possible consequences of their decisions when responding to requests from colleagues. They understand that helping colleagues strengthens social bonds, but that hiding information can have unfavorable effects like retaliatory knowledge hiding (Connelly and Zweig, 2015). In order to prevent such unfavorable consequences, politically astute people abstain from knowledge concealment.

Similar to the idea that abusive supervision only predicts ambiguous hiding and playing dumb, the authors argue that political competence is unlikely to be associated to justified concealing. In efficient hiding, individuals provide explanations for withholding requested knowledge, which can be either honest or deceptive (Connelly et al., 2011). Politically expert workers are deemed less prone to confront directions to maintain confidentiality as such actions could jeopardize their status. In essence, they resort to rationalized hiding only when warranted. Conversely, politically skilled individuals are less inclined to deceitfully claim inability to share information. Consequently, no overarching association is anticipated between political skills and rationalized hiding (Jawahar et al., 2008). As a result, we do not anticipate a general association among political talent and justified concealing.

**H1:** There is a negative relationship between perception of organizational politics and Knowledge hiding behavior.

### Coworker Incivility and Knowledge hiding behavior

According to Hobfoll (1989, 2002), people have an inherent and acquired motivation to generate, nurture, conserve, and safeguard their resources. Once resources are depleted, their restoration becomes challenging (Hobfoll, 1989; Byrne et al., 2014; kakar et al., 2022). According to Brown, Treviño, and Harrison (2005), Chan, Li, and Pierce (2014), and Jiang et al. (2019), knowledge is a valuable and scarce asset that cannot be replaced. It is perceived as an instrument of authority and an edge over others that individuals want to retain (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Holloway and Galvin, 2016). The creation of knowledge is a rigorous procedure, and those involved in its generation often feel a sense of ownership and control (Von der Trenck, 2015). When workers face disrespect and mistreatment from colleagues, they may defensively withhold their knowledge to shelter their self-created assets. Instances of discourtesy may lead victims to seek revenge by consciously refraining from sharing knowledge (Evans, Hendron, and Oldroyd, 2015; Aldrich and Pfeffer, 1976). However, our proposition suggests that incivility doesn't directly cause knowledge hiding. Deliberate refusal of non-cooperation

and knowledge sharing in data exchange can negatively influence efficiency and task performance due to the interdependence of tasks. Employees who intentionally withhold information may face constraints in organizational processes.

There are two main reasons employees might engage in knowledge hiding. Firstly, individuals may be motivated to safeguard their resources when considering leaving the association due to colleague discourtesy (Khodakarami et al., 2018; De Clercq, Haq, and Azeem, 2018). Having information obtained through time and effort can offer a political advantage over competitors (Brown, Treviño, and Harrison, 2005; Jiang et al., 2019). Second, if personnel expect to be with the present organisation for a short amount of time, the implications of concealing information may be insignificant. Therefore, we propose that.

**H2:** There is a positive relationship between Coworker Incivility and Knowledge hiding behavior.

### **Job Stress as a moderator:**

Workplace stress is a personal, subjective experience that is defined by a person's cognitive evaluation of external circumstances and their capacity for adaptation. This evaluation differs from external cues like work needs or a certain level of mental and physical health (Ladegaard et al. 2019). According to Loh et al. (2019), an unsatisfactory work environment has a detrimental effect on employees' physical and mental well-being as well as their motivation to perform well and the cost of the company as a whole because of high staff turnover. Managers are advised to consider the effects of job stress because of its importance. According to Li et al. (2019), rather than the stresses themselves, employees' reactions to stress are determined by how they perceive possible stressors. Stress at work has an impact on not just the individual workers but also the organization's future growth. Certain work-related pressures might cause workers to use unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as hiding or holding onto information to increase their unique selling proposition (Hernaus et al., 2019) and negotiating favorable terms with employers in return for reducing work-related stress (Lu and Kao, 2013). This demonstrates how job stress affects employees' tendency to conceal knowledge. Individual differences are viewed as resources by the Conservation of Resources (COR) hypothesis, which enables people to manage stressful situations well (Treadway et al., 2017).

It is noteworthy that political skill—which has been classified as an individual difference construct—plays a critical role in determining how workers perceive and respond to pressures at work (Jawahar et al., 2008). When employees sense job-related nervousness or anxiety, they may intentionally withhold information through rationalized hiding or make promises to share information but later retract from this commitment (evasive hiding). Workers who feel anxious or frightened about their jobs may firmly withhold information from coworkers by claiming it is secret (a tactic known as rationalized concealing) or by making a commitment to reveal it but then breaking it (a tactic known as evasive hiding). Consequently, we postulate the following: Workers who feel anxious or frightened about their jobs may firmly withhold information from coworkers by claiming it is secret (a tactic known as rationalized concealing) or by making a commitment to reveal it but then breaking it (a tactic known as evasive hiding). Consequently, we postulate the following:

**H3:** Job stress moderates the relationship between organization perception of politics and employees` knowledge hiding behaviors such that the relationship becomes weaker

**H4:** Job stress moderates the relationship between Coworker Incivility and employees` knowledge hiding behaviors such that the relationship becomes stronger

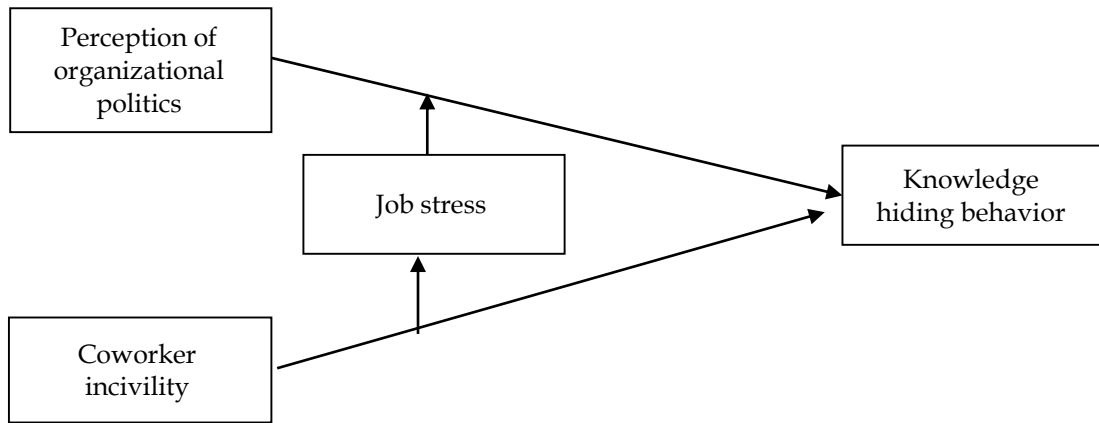


Figure1. Conceptual model

**Material and Methods**

This study collected data from workers employed in different universities located in Islamabad and Rawalpindi region through purposive sampling techniques. A total 560 survey questionnaires were distributed in which 420 were received with complete information. To assess the variables, this study used adopted scale of prior studies. Since data analysis is regarded as the foundation of research, it is an essential component of all studies (Johnson, 2014).. For analyzing the data collected through questionnaires and deducing the results. For the data analysis SPSS and Process Hayes. Correlation, reliability Validity and regression analysis was done through SPSS (Sekaran & Roger, 2003). While moderation analysis was done through Hayes (2013) process macros in SPSS.

**Results and Discussion**

**Table 1**  
**Descriptive statistics**

Demographics	KHB	
	f statistics	p-value
Gender	0.889	0.348 ns
Age	1.464	0.229 ns
Education	0.857	0.466 ns
Experience	1.736	0.148 ns
Level of Management	0.811	0.447 ns

**Reliability Analysis**

Composite reliability and Cronbach’s alpha are used to determine the reliability scale using SPSS 24. The traditional threshold of 0.7 as a hallmark of suitable reliability (Bretz & Mclary, 2014) and beneath 0.7 is not desirable and to the literature of terrible internal consistency or trouble with instrument (Griethuijsen et al., 2014). All alpha

values are above 0.7, which signifies that the tool used in the research is valid and trustworthy

**Table 2**  
**Reliability estimates ( $\alpha$  coefficient)**

Variable Name	Mean	Cronbach's Alpha
Perception of Politics	3.192	0.777
Co-workers Incivility	3.126	0.756
Knowledge Hiding Behavior	2.160	0.837
Job Stress	2.767	0.093

The correlation between variables' results can be interpreted in a variety of ways. According to Puth et al. (2014), the direction of the link among two variables might be either negative or positive. While the negative sign of the coefficient shows an inverse association among the two variables, the positive sign indicates a direct relationship and is referred to as a positive correlation. Correlation between the current study variables as shown in the Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**Correlation**

Variable Name	1	2	3	4
Perception of Politics	1			
Coworkers Incivility	0.500**	1		
Job stress	0.155	0.084	1	
Knowledge Hiding Behavior	0.101**	0.177*	0.022**	1

The value of 0.101\*\*, 0.177\* & 0.022\*\* shows a positive correlation among the independent and dependent variables, demonstrating the beneficial association between Perception of Politics, Co workers Incivility, Job stress and Knowledge Hiding Behavior

**Table 4**  
**Regression analysis**  
**Coefficient**

Model	Un-Standardize Coefficient Beta	T	Sig
PP	-0.83	-3.126	0.02
CWI	1.51	2.30	0.02
JS	1.10	2.02	0.04
R-Square			0.58
F-Statistics			4.89

The regression analysis's result is displayed in the table. The substantial link between the dependent and independent variables is demonstrated by the fact that all of the t-values are bigger than two and the p-values are less than 0.05. The regression analysis model summary is shown in the above table. The simple correlation is indicated by the value of (R). The R2 number indicates how much of the information concealment can be accounted for by perception politics, rude coworkers, and workplace stress.) The R2 result for this study is 0.583, or 58.3%. This number indicates the "goodness of fit," or how the independent variable affects the dependent variable. The independent variable has a 58.73% influence on the dependent variable, whereas other variables have a 42.3% impact. The total model fitness is represented by the value of F- Statistics, which should be more than 4 (i.e., 4.89 indicates that the model is fit).

**Table 5**  
**Moderation Analysis**

	IV	DV	BETA	S.E	T-Value	P-Value	LLCI	ULCI
1	PP	FD	-1.51	0.65	-2.30	0.02	-0.22	2.79
2	JS	FD	0.54	0.19	2.74	0.01	0.15	0.93
3	Int-1	FD	-0.26	0.118	-2.24	0.02	0.498	0.03
	IV	DV	BETA	S.E	T-Value	P-Value	LLCI	ULCI
	CWI	FD	1.51	0.65	2.30	0.02	0.22	2.79
	JS	FD	0.54	0.19	2.74	0.01	0.15	0.93
	Int-1	FD	0.26	0.118	2.24	0.02	0.498	0.03

For accurate moderation analysis, we use process Hayes process macro model 1 in SPSS (Preacher & Hayes, 2008), according to this process the first value of table 4.71 shows the significant and positive relationship between neuroticism and financial decision as p-value is less than 0.05 similarly t-value is greater than 2 and also upper and lower confidence interval are skewed on the same side and i.e. both LLCI & ULCI. Moderation analysis of the current study as depicted in Table 5.

## Conclusion

The present study contributes to the body of literature by investigating the relationship between employees' knowledge-hiding behaviour and their view of organizational politics and the rudeness of their coworkers. It places special emphasis on finding the underlying elements that may influence this relationship. The current study, which is based on the COR theory, hypothesizes that: (1) Coworker incivility is positively related to knowledge hiding and experiences a significant accelerating moderating effect of job stress; and (2) Perceived organizational politics is negatively related to knowledge hiding and experiences a significant decelerating moderating effect of job stress. Emotional tiredness, according to COR theory (Hobfoll, Citation 2001), establishes important connections between knowledge concealing and decreased extra-role performance. The results of the study provide factual backing for the suggested connections, so offering a more nuanced perspective on the unfavorable responses brought on by information concealing. It also showed that the association between knowledge concealment and political competence is mitigated. Specifically, KH targets with political acumen might believe that by successfully forming social networks with other colleagues, their social resources can be increased. This could lessen the likelihood of their continued exclusion and improve their inclusionary status (Dudenhöffer & Dormann, Citation 2015). As a result, those with strong political acumen are less prone to experience emotional fatigue. As an active kind of workplace abuse that has a detrimental impact on staff members and elicits unpleasant feelings, incivility is defined (Abubakar et al., 2018a; Andersson and Pearson, 1999). When workers encounter rudeness, they interpret it as an emotional reaction that prompts proper conduct (Pearson and Porath, 2012). These research lead us to hypothesize that experiencing or seeing workplace incivility serves as an emotional experience for the focus employee in and of itself, eliciting unpleasant feelings that are then let out by withholding information that is required. In these situations, staff members could try to appear naive, provide ambiguous, noncommittal responses, or just make reasons to justify their concealment. According to earlier research, job stress slows the relationship between employees' political perspective and knowledge-hiding behavior (Li et al. 2019). Moreover. In line with a prior study, job stress accelerates the relationship between knowledge-hiding behavior and incivility among coworkers (Škerlavaj et al., 2018).

## Theoretical and Practical Implications

The present study has made several theoretical additions to the prevailing body of literature and theory. This research examines the Impact of the perception of politics on knowledge-hiding behaviors with the moderating role of job stress in Pakistani enterprises. One of the notable findings of this research is that the impact of co-worker incivility reduces work engagement, subsequently increasing employees' intents to leave their jobs and leading to knowledge-hiding behavior (2024). This fills the theoretical gap through the conditions under which colleagues' discourtesy forecasts knowledge-hiding behavior within an institute (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2011)

Apart from the theoretical implications, this research has practical significance and offers insights into managerial practices aimed at mitigating knowledge hiding. To begin, organizations should assess the occurrence of knowledge hiding within their workforce and gauge the presence of destructive supervision. Drawing from COR theory (Hobfoll, Citation2001; Qahir et al., 2022), emotional exhaustion serves as a pivotal intermediary among knowledge hiding and diminished extra-role performance. The research outcomes substantiate the hypothesized connections, thereby offering a more distinct understanding of the adverse consequences stemming from knowledge hiding. The study offers insights into managerial practices aimed at mitigating knowledge hiding. To begin, organizations should assess the occurrence of knowledge hiding within their workforce and gauge the presence of destructive command. Consistent feedback practices can prove valuable in this assessment. The study underscores the advantageous role of political skill for employees in addressing such situations, especially in managing social stressors. Fortunately, the encouraging aspect is that political skill is a trainable attribute, as highlighted by Ferris et al. (2002). Consequently; we recommend the introduction of training programs within institutes/associations. These programs could involve leaders and employees simulating scenarios where destructive supervisor behaviors occur, prompting participants to employ and enhance their political skills to navigate and resolve such situations. Reducing knowledge hiding not only enhances organizational effectiveness but also contributes to the development of a knowledge-driven society and economy. The free flow of information and expertise benefits industries, communities, and the nation by fostering innovation, productivity, and overall progress.

### **Limitations and future research**

It is critical to acknowledge the limitations of the current investigation. First of all, it is difficult to infer causation from the connections between the variables because of the study's cross-sectional methodology. Longitudinal designs should be used in future studies to investigate the causal nature of these relationships across time. Second, because the study used self-reported data, it was susceptible to flaws such social desirability bias and common method bias. Future studies should think about using a variety of measuring methods and data sources in order to increase the validity of the findings. Thirdly, the study concentrated on a particular industry in Pakistan that employed people with at least a graduate degree. As a result, there may be limitations to the findings' applicability to different sectors or circumstances. Future studies should duplicate these findings in a variety of settings and with distinct participant populations in order to strengthen the external validity of the findings.



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