

Workplace Ostracism and Knowledge Sharing in Projectized Organizations of Pakistan

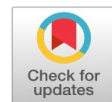
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Abstract: The study aims to find the relationship between ostracism and knowledge sharing in the context of a varied environment of Pakistani projectized organizations by examining the moderating role of willpower and way-power and by considering trust as a mediating factor for ostracism. By choosing a cross-sectional time frame, data was collected from 162 employees of Pakistan-based projectized organizations. As predicted, it is discovered that a negative connection between ostracism and knowledge sharing and a positive ostracism-mediating impact of trust exists. However, the results in the case of moderating factors are different. This study concludes that there is no effect of willpower and way power on the relationship of ostracism and knowledge sharing. This study will add to the current literature by firstly enhancing the concept of knowledge sharing by identifying workplace ostracism leading to knowledge sharing. Furthermore, by analyzing the effect of trust on ostracism and the relationship between ostracism and knowledge sharing.

Keywords: Workplace ostracism, Knowledge hiding, Knowledge sharing, Diversified environment, Projectized organizations, Will power, Way power, Trust

Received: 29 September 2020 / Accepted: 27 February 2021 / Published: 21 April 2021



INTRODUCTION

Ostracism is defined as “excluding, prohibiting or ignoring an individual by general assent from regular benefits or social acknowledgment” (Williams & Nida, 2014). On the other hand, knowledge sharing is described as “the systematic acquisition of knowledge through study and experience, the management and storage of knowledge and information for quick access, and the transmission or dissemination of knowledge, including the transfer of knowledge in two directions.” Knowledge is regarded as one of the most essential and valuable resources in any company. Due to development and advancements in science and technology, projectized organizations need to cope with the innovation, which in return would help them gain the confidence and trust of their customers. In addition, it would help them in their development. Knowledge transfer and knowledge exchange are two essential aspects that assist projectized companies in enhancing their performance (Hsu & Wang, 2008). Especially in organizations where individuals from diversified backgrounds, e.g., belonging to different genders, caste, race, and ethnic background, work. Asim, Malik, Raza, and Shahid (2019) describes trust as, “trust measure indicates the presence of an association among trustor and trustee.” As the notion of trust has been diversely used in literature, in this research work, the definition of trust in computer science as presented in Hobfoll (2001) is considered. It elaborates trust as a subjective measure in which a given person A can have his own opinion about another person B to consider the latter trusted or not.

On the other hand, knowledge concealment is defined as “an intentional attempt by an individual to withhold or hide the knowledge that another person has sought” (Demirkasimoglu, 2015). Despite the critical need for information sharing in many companies, information hoarding is prevalent (Connelly, Zweig, Webster, & Trougakos, 2012). Knowledge sharing has beneficial repercussions and repercussions on the company. Moreover, the factor considered responsible for knowledge hiding and not for knowledge

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sharing is workplace ostracism. Workplace ostracism affects an individual's interaction with others in an organization, and it can also result in an inclination towards withholding his knowledge whenever it is asked about or requested (Richman & Leary, 2009). Consequently, all of this results in declining or affecting projectized organizations' performance (Leung, Wu, Chen, & Young, 2011; Zhang & Ng, 2012). Promoting diversity at the workplace has been proven fruitful for the organizations to extend and enhance their services and operations both at national and international levels.

Research significance

The purpose of this research is to highlight the underlying core reasons that lead to ostracism and the boundary conditions under which the respective ostracized employ withholds the requested knowledge (in respect to varying demographics). The study focuses on projectized organizations where knowledge sharing plays a major role as project completion requires extensive teamwork and knowledge sharing. The results of this study will help organizations cope with this massive hindrance in achieving their corporate goals.

Ostracism is believed to be the worst form of punishment as socializing is an essential part of human nature (tested and proven by psychological tests). This study, through theoretical and empirical literature, will provide a path to follow and eliminate ostracism.

This research also plans to spotlight the effect of a diverse environment and workforce on ostracism and knowledge sharing: Pakistani organizations are saturated with a highly diversified workforce. The study results will include the direction required to deal with organizational diversity and ostracism.

Problem statement

The study aims to discover how ostracism has a detrimental impact on knowledge sharing in the context of a varied environment of Pakistani projectized organizations by examining the moderating role of willpower and way-power and by considering trust as a mediating factor for ostracism.

Objectives

Along with the direct relation of ostracism with knowledge transition, we also want to figure out what factors influence this association. We are also excited to investigate the role of trust as a moderator in this particular connection. This will provide us with a better understanding of the conditions under which knowledge sharing is most likely to occur. We are excited to investigate the mediating influence of trust and the moderating effects of willpower and way power on the relationship that ostracism has on knowledge sharing. One of the goals for doing this study is to determine the effects that when people encounter unfavorable treatment (workplace ostracism), individuals' behavior (degree of the intention of knowledge sharing) may differ depending on gender, beliefs, ethnicity, and other factors.

Theoretical and practical implications

This study will add to the current literature by firstly enhancing the concept of knowledge sharing by identifying workplace ostracism leading to knowledge sharing. Moreover, by analyzing the effect of trust on ostracism and the relationship between ostracism and knowledge sharing.

In addition, we would add to the literature on the conditions under which ostracized employees respond to knowledge sharing by investigating how power and way power in a diverse environment (including gender and culture) in project-based companies moderate the effect of workplace ostracism on knowledge sharing.

This research gives understanding into the components that help support the relationship between workplace ostracism leading to knowledge sharing in the context of the diversified environment in project-based companies by analyzing the moderating effect of will power and way power and mediating effect of trust.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Workplace ostracism and knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing is defined as “the exchange of knowledge between and among individuals, and within and among teams, organizational units, and organizations.” This exchange may be focused or unfocused, but it usually does not have a single clear objective (Paulin & Suneson, 2015). On a very basic level, knowledge management is about making the correct information or the correct information sources (including people) accessible to the right people at the ideal time. Knowledge sharing is, therefore, the essential viewpoint in this procedure, since by far most of knowledge management activities rely on it (Rubenstein-Montano et al., 2001).

Information sharing can be depicted as either push or pull. Knowledge sharing relies upon the person’s propensity and ability to search out and be responsive to these information sources. The correct culture, motivators, etc., should accordingly be available. (Takhsha, Barahimi, Adelpnah, & Salehzadeh, 2020)

Workplace Ostracism and knowledge sharing have an inverse relationship with each other. It is commonly acknowledged that ostracism can hurt physical and mental well-being, harm work fulfillment and authoritative duty, repress organization citizenship behavior, and reduce performance (Ferris, Brown, Berry, & Lian, 2008; Wu & Zhu, 2012). As of late, scientists have begun to concentrate on the effect of workplace ostracism on representatives’ relational practices. Ferris et al. (2008) presumed that workplace ostracism positively affects representatives’ interpersonal deviance. Zhang and Ng (2012) discovered that workplace ostracism was unequivocally recognized with employees’ interpersonal counterproductive behaviors. Nevertheless, specifically talking about how ostracism affects knowledge sharing in the context of a diversified environment of projectized organizations of Pakistan, it can be said that the higher the workplace ostracism, the lower would be the chances of sharing knowledge with the individuals within the organization. Consequently, it is not difficult to envision that information sharing may not essentially increase alongside the unfavorable interpersonal experience.

The study of ostracism began with examining interpersonal bad treatment and has evolved into an extensive look into a hotspot in the organizational sector (Howard, Cogswell, & Smith, 2020; Ferris et al., 2008; Wu & Zhu, 2012). According to Ferris et al. (2008), it is “the degree to which a person believes that he or she is neglected or excluded by others in the workplace”. There are three ways to describe workplace ostracism. To begin with, just a single gathering or group inside a company does not execute workplace ostracism. An individual might be segregated by any of his employees, supervisors, subordinates, associates, or clients. Second, a person’s sense or experience of being or not being shunned is abstract. Third, persons who perceive themselves to be marginalized may characterize interpersonal encounters in various ways and contexts, such as negative, difficult, painful, unpleasant, adverse, and upsetting (Howard et al., 2020).

Many scholars have brought it under the spotlight in the context of business and workplace environments. Knowledge sharing has been discussed with lots of connections like communication, organizational behavior (Bencsik, Godany, & dr Mathe A., 2019), and human resource management (Grant, 1996) and other connections like organizational behavior. Researchers have mainly worked on the strategies and practices related to knowledge sharing (Currie & Kerrin, 2003).

Several studies have worked on finding the factors that influence the knowledge sharing behavior, and the researchers acknowledged those factors through organizational cultural, social, individual psychological, and technological factors (En, 2011; Fong, Ooi, Tan, Lee, & Chong, 2011; Rao, Abdul, & Kamel, 2021). Liu (2008) and Hendriks (1999) concluded that information technology is becoming the most prominent factor due to the advancement and improvement and knowledge transmission. Considering all the factors, it can be said that advancement in technology influence knowledge transmission, but human factors are still the key factors (Al-Hawamdeh, 2003; Liu, 2008). The most important factor is the individual perspective which influences knowledge sharing. The result of previous studies showed that factors like attitude (En, 2011; Zhang & Ng, 2012), trust (En, 2011), enjoyment (Wu & Zhu, 2012) and self-efficacy (Zhang & Ng, 2012) influence knowledge sharing critically.

Another perspective of this is, people may share knowledge when they get something in return. As Hsu and Wang (2008) contribute that “employees are more motivated to share their knowledge through

incentive.” People tend to contribute to knowledge sharing when they get some incentive. So it can be said that incentives can be used to enhance knowledge sharing within an organization. However, on the other hand, (Wu & Zhu, 2012) argue that incentives do not influence such behaviors (Zhang & Ng, 2012). So the conclusion could be that incentives can trigger such motives, but they don't need to sustain this force.

On the other hand, some of the studies have taken cultural impact on knowledge sharing (Issac, Baral, & Bednall, 2020). The authors concluded that there are some factors which act as a barrier in the knowledge sharing process. However, on the other hand, some factors influence it positively, which majorly involves emotional intelligence, age and gender differences, conflict avoidance, conflict of motivation, and managers' commitment. One of the major results also shows that sometimes employees get restrained by a culture that is unwilling to share or transfer knowledge to others. This also makes it tough for employees to continue knowledge sharing. Besides all these factors, the link between ostracism and knowledge sharing is not as clear, and we aim to find that link in our research.

Theories that highlight the importance of social relations can explain this relation of ostracism with trust and knowledge sharing. Two of these theories are “Social Capital Theory” (Lin, Vaughn, & Ensel, 1981) and “Structural Empowerment” (Kanter, 1993). These theories discuss a person's network and explain the important benefits of this. These benefits include mutual trust, power, access and control of knowledge, and information sharing (Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001). These researchers concluded that when there is mutual trust present between one's networks, people allow access to knowledge to other people, in other words, sharing knowledge with others. In the light of these two theories, we are going to formulate these hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a. *Workplace ostracism is negatively related to workers knowledge sharing.*

Hypothesis 1b. *Workplace ostracism leads to knowledge hiding.*

Hypothesis 1c. *Trust reduces the chances of ostracism and thus increases knowledge sharing in an organization.*

Hypothesis 1d. *Diversified organizations tend to have less knowledge sharing and more ostracism.*

The moderating role of willpower and way power

We believe that the negative link between ostracism and information sharing in projectile companies is mitigated by employees' willpower, defined as “their motivation or drive toward the attainment of desired goals” (Clercq, Haq, Azeem, & Raja, 2018; Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon, 2002) and completion of projects. According to the (American Psychological Association, 2012), lack of willpower is the most common reason why people are unable to initiate and maintain healthy lifestyle changes. They feel the lack of stronger willpower prevents them from living the life they want and frequently blames defective willpower for their poor choices. As a result, it is reasonable to conclude that willpower plays a significant moderating role in determining whether an employee will pass on the technical knowledge, skill, or other project-related information they learned, especially if ostracism is a part of organizational culture, adversely affecting the overall performance.

Holten, Hancock, Persson, Hansen, and Høgh (2016), in an article, defines knowledge sharing as “as a way to create, sustain, and transfer knowledge, has been found to affect the individual and organizational performance (Hsu & Wang, 2008)”. Divergence to that the organizational behaviors of not sharing the knowledge can be classified into two categories namely: knowledge hiding and knowledge hoarding. As per the article when an individual request for the knowledge and other withholds that knowledge in response, its knowledge hiding (Connelly et al., 2012), while knowledge hoarding can be defined as the withholding of knowledge which has not been requested by any specific individual (Holten et al., 2016).

As per studies, willpower signifies the existence of goal-directed thinking or an inclination to allocate continuous personal energy toward goal attainment (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007; Snyder et al., 2002). This personal resource may be useful in the context of project completion, as when employees are distressed by their exposure to discourteous treatment by a colleague. It can be concluded that willpower may enhance their perseverance in finding solutions to challenging situations. However, there is

also a chance that it will promote the knowledge withholding concept if they get alone appraisal of the supervisor.

In other scenarios, the negative relationship of ostracism and knowledge may be shared weakened by an ostracised victim's willpower, as his determination towards the goal achievement as a collaborative team might be greater than his desire to withhold knowledge as an act of vengeance or individual recognition. As studies suggest, "the belief that willpower is a limited resource that is easily depleted seems to undermine self-control and cause people to fall short of their potential" (Job, 2016). Therefore it can be assumed that people who encourage self-control, strengthen their willpower, exceed the estimated potential, and rise above one's desires for contentment by retaliation. Implicit theories about willpower conclude and suggest that; people fail to control themselves or cannot achieve their personal goals. This may result from their beliefs about self-control resources and not from a true lack of them (Job, 2016).

According to studies, employees who perceive willpower related problems as challenges or learning opportunities, rather than threats (Rego, Sousa, Marques, & Cunha, 2012), exhibit a great intrinsic motivation to make use of their knowledge to cope with their challenging work situation and ostracism indulged organization culture, implying that strong willpower will negatively affect the relationship between ostracism and knowledge sharing.

We expect that the negative relationship between ostracism and knowledge sharing in projectile organizations is buffered by employees' way of power. The employees scoring high on way power likely investigate diverse procedures that may empower them to meet their work commitments and work targets (Cheavens, Feldman, Woodward, & Snyder, 2006; Snyder et al., 2002). For example, they may turn out to be increasingly productive in meeting their goals to be achieved by distinguishing distinctive techniques to complete their work assignments (Hobfoll, 2001; Snyder et al., 2002). It can be said that way power plays a huge moderating role in determining whether the ostracized employee would do the knowledge sharing and interact in the project-related technical work activities, which would affect the project's overall performance. In a comparable vein, past research proposes that workers' way of power increments their innovativeness to find satisfactory solutions to the demanding problems (Rego, Marques, Leal, Sousa, & e Cunha, 2010).

The buffering job of way power additionally may result from workers' inclination to depend more on their organizational colleagues to accomplish work objectives (Snyder et al., 2002). Since workers high on way power may invest more energy and time building differing social associations with peers, they can acquire more contribution about how to adapt to difficulties that they face (Ford, Heinen, & Langkamer, 2007), which should increment their certainty that they can insure themselves against such difficulties (Lim & Tai, 2014) and in this manner relieve their emotional exhaustion. At the point when their way power is low, however, representatives are more averse to get differed criticism from their associates regarding how to secure against such overflows (Snyder et al., 2002), and their sentiments of being candidly overextended at work may develop (Ford et al., 2007). So it can be said that in this case, employees scoring high on way power would find more ways or solutions to the demanding problems and make use of their creativity to cope with the challenges. Moreover, they would do knowledge sharing in the organization enforcing ostracism which means that strong way power will negatively affect the relationship between ostracism and knowledge sharing.

These researches have been extremely beneficial in varied contexts. However, they failed to recognize the impact of ostracism on knowledge sharing and hiding and how the relationship is affected by a lower or higher willpower and way power. Therefore, we plan to conduct quantitative research in this context, as nowadays, teamwork is the key for quality work and project completion in many renowned organizations of Pakistan and around the globe. Thus, knowledge sharing without any hindrance is crucial for the ultimate goal of achievement, especially in the projectile organization that is highly dependent on sharing knowledge.

Hypothesis 2a. *The negative relationship between ostracism and knowledge sharing in projectile organizations is moderated by their willpower, such that this negative relationship is weaker at higher levels of willpower.*

Hypothesis 2b. *The negative relationship between ostracism and knowledge sharing in projectile organizations is moderated by their way of power. This negative relationship is weaker at higher levels of way power.*

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

Target population refers to the entire group of individuals or objects to which researchers are interested in generalizing the conclusions. So for our research topic, our target population is the projectized organizations of Pakistan. Sample frame refers to the subset of the target population since our target population is the projectized organizations of Pakistan, so our sample would only be the projectized organizations of Islamabad and Rawalpindi for this research.

Type of research

The nature of our research would be applied, i.e., deductive, as our research seeks to solve practical problems and find the relationship between two factors, majorly workplace ostracism and knowledge sharing. We would treat our data based on quantitative techniques in which we would be conducting a survey and filling in the questionnaires from the employees working in project-based organizations. Moreover, the data collection source that we used is secondary data, i.e., mainly through the internet by reading different articles on workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding. The main objective of our research would be conclusive, also known as explanatory, as we will be talking about the relationship between different variables, cause, and effect, and also exploring the reasons.

Time horizon

Talking about the time horizon, our research would be based on cross-sectional studies. It is a kind of observational investigation that breaks down information from a population, or a representative subset, at a particular point in time and is a one-time activity, e.g., filling in a questionnaire.

Unit of analysis

The units of analysis for our research would be employees of project-based organizations and, therefore, individuals.

Theoretical framework

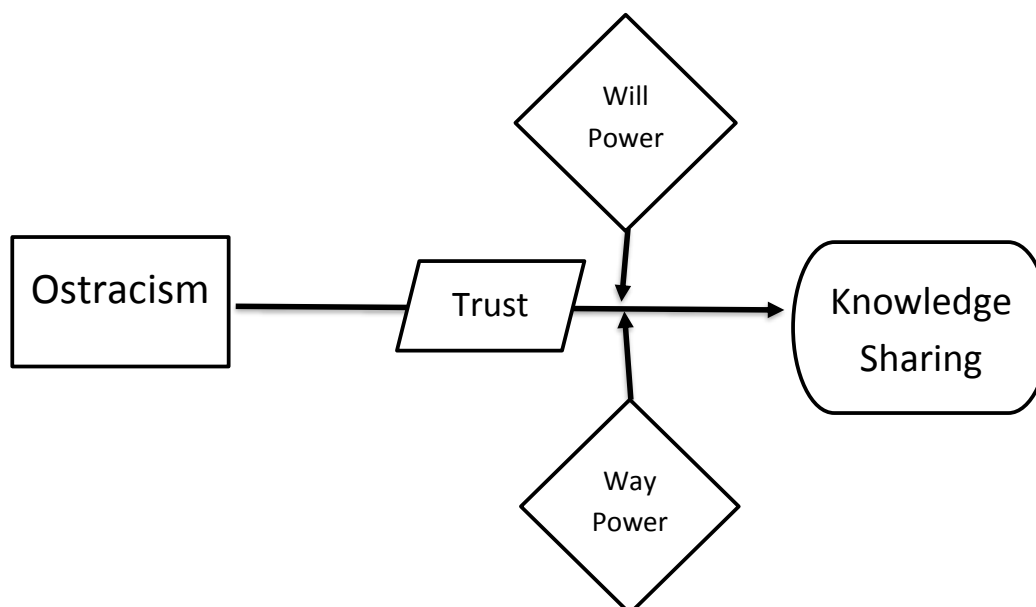


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Ostracism

We measured ostracism using the ten-item scale made by Ferris et al. (2008). It also includes three inverted questions to determine if the responder is indulged or not. It features a 7-point Likert scale where 1 = Never 2 = Once in a while 3 = Sometimes 4= Often 5 = Constantly 6 = Always.

Knowledge sharing

We measured knowledge sharing using a ten-item scale developed by Hussain, Konar, and Ali (2016). Respondents completed the measures using a 6-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree).

Will power and way power

Using six-point Likert scales, we assessed way to power and willpower with three items each (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree) (Luthans et al., 2007; Rego et al., 2012). Three questions were used to identify bullied respondents, witnesses of bullying, and the bullies themselves as ostracism is a form of behavioral bullying and is greatly impacted by one's willpower and power to inflict, witness, or bear it. The local ethics committee approved the study (KF 01 302955). A definition of bullying was mentioned as well before the questions: "Bullying takes pperiodoyees are exposed to negative or offensive acts repeatedly over a longer period of time, which it is difficult to defend oneself against." These items were responded to on a five-step scale: 1=never, 2=now and then, 3=yearly, 4=monthly, 5=weekly, 6 = daily.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics and correlations

In order to analyze and interpret the data collected, we ran several basic and advanced tests on a sample size of 162 using the SPSS software. The table below consists of the correlations and descriptive statistics for the studied variables. A reliability check was carried out first to analyze the reliability of the items employed on the scale.

Reliability statistics for the variable of knowledge Sharing was conducted. According to the value of Cronbach's Alpha, which is 0.924, our data is highly reliable as the alpha value should be greater than 0.7. All the variables that are: are highly reliable except for the variable of willpower with a Cronbachs Alpha value of 0.403 significant below 0.7

Moreover, the table below represents the Correlation among the various variables employed here. According to these results, Knowledge sharing has a negative yet highly significant relation with ostracism that is about -0.568, as well as with gender, age, and religion; except it has a positive and highly significant relationship with trust and way power, although the relationship is not significant with will power. This strengthens our first hypotheses and proves that knowledge sharing and good relations are less likely to occur with ostracism in the work environment. That trust and way power plays a major role here while willpower is insignificant in this context. The results also parallel with the alternative of first hypotheses that ostracism and lack of trust lead to knowledge hiding (Currie & Kerrin, 2003).

Ostracism has a negative and highly significant relationship with Knowledge sharing, trust (Currie & Kerrin, 2003; Holten et al., 2016), and way power. However, with other variables, the relation is highly significant and positive except for age which is not significant. Again the First hypothesis is strengthened here, whereas willpower has a negative influence on the negative relation between ostracism and knowledge sharing.

Table 1: Correlations statistics

| | KS_M | O_M | T_M | WayP_M | WillP_M | Gender | Age | Religion |
|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|----------|
| KS_M | - | | | | | | | |
| O_M | -.568** | - | | | | | | |
| T_M | .329** | -.361** | - | | | | | |
| WayP_M | .602** | -.296** | -.032 | - | | | | |
| WillP_M | .103 | .222** | -.247** | .331** | - | | | |
| Gender | -.214** | .335** | -.074 | -.196* | .088 | - | | |
| Age | -.277** | .130 | .011 | -.200* | -.060 | -.056 | - | |
| Religion | -.526** | .402** | -.107 | -.382** | .060 | .178* | .364** | - |

KS_M = Knowledge Sharing; O_M = Ostracism; T_M = Trust; WayP_M = Waypower; WillP_M = Will power

Hypotheses test results

Hypothesis 1a, predicted that Workplace ostracism will be negatively related to workers' knowledge and that Workplace ostracism leads to knowledge hiding. To support this, we ran a simple regression analysis. This is the ideal test to understand the research goal, especially in this context and scenario, as it explicitly defines the relation and link between various independent and dependent variables. In simpler terms, regression analysis outlines which independent variable is in a casual relationship with the dependent variable.

In support of this scenario, we found a highly significant yet negative relation between Knowledge sharing and ostracism in the regression model ($\beta = -0.5467$, $p < .01$). This justifies in favor of our 1st Hypotheses and represents that ostracism has a strong effect on knowledge sharing within the organization. Know trust as a mediator also affects this relation and has significant and positive relation as displayed in the model ($\beta = 0.1592$, $p < .05$). This means that the relation between amplified and well explained by trust, as lack of trust results in knowledge sharing, consistent with previous researches (Currie & Kerrin, 2003).

Hypothesis 1b predicted presence of trust reduces the chances of ostracism and thus increase the knowledge sharing in an organization and by doing regression analysis, the results were in favor as showed in model 4, which results in exception of the hypothesis that the relationship between the presence of trust. As a mediator reduces the chances of ostracism and increases the knowledge sharing in the organization is highly significant as $p < 0.05$. It means individuals high in trust level within the organization would increase knowledge sharing and reduce the chances of ostracism.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that the negative relationship between ostracism and knowledge sharing in projectile organizations is moderated by their will power, such that this negative relationship is weaker at higher levels of will power. Preacher and Hayes test were run. The results were not in favor to our prediction as displayed in model 1. The relation of will power as a moderator weakening the negative relationship between ostracism and knowledge sharing in the projectile organization is not significant at all as $p > 0.05$. This means an ostracized individual, even if high on will, will not prefer to share knowledge within an organization. This is why the hypothesis is rejected. This rejection of the hypothesis could be due to various other factors (e.g., culture, personality, etc.)

Hypothesis 2a predicted that the negative relationship between ostracism and knowledge sharing in projectile organizations is moderated by their way power, such that this negative relationship is weaker at higher levels of way power. By running Preacher and Hayes Test, the results were not supported by our prediction as displayed in model 1. Way power as a moderator weakening the negative relationship between ostracism and knowledge sharing in projectile organization relationship is not significant as $p > 0.05$. This means that ostracized individuals, even if high on way power, will not do knowledge sharing within the organization; this is why the predicted hypothesis is rejected.

DISCUSSION

The research in this article looks for the reasons under which the ostracized employees might engage in knowledge sharing in the projectized organizations of Pakistan. As per the designed hypothesis, we found

that a) Workplace ostracism is negatively related to the projectized organizations' knowledge sharing but has a negative but significant relationship with diversity (both age diversity and gender diversity). b) Will power and way power are our moderating variables, but their relationship is not significant but reliable. c) Trust is acting as a mediating variable, and it mediates the relationship with ostracism, and this relationship is also significant.

Our study hypothesized that moderating factors were rejected since the results were insignificant, i.e., will power and pay power neither strengthen nor weaken the relationship between ostracism and knowledge sharing. There could be multiple reasons for this result. It might be due to cultural context. As Pakistan is a collectivist country, people might have different mindsets and approaches towards their behavior or way of dealing with things. These results might be different in western culture or individualistic countries. Secondly, our sample size was 162 individuals. Results could have been different if a larger sample size is considered. Thirdly, everyone has a different personality and analyze/deal with the things their way.

So the individuals of our sample set do not consider moderating the role of willpower and way power when it comes to knowledge sharing of ostracized employees.

Theoretical implications

Workplace ostracism affects the performance and behaviors of employees at the workplace (Ferris et al., 2008). In previous researches, researchers have additionally accepted workplace ostracism as a delegate variable of relational collaboration (Wu & Zhu, 2012). As represented by the hypothesis, ostracized employees reciprocate the workplace ostracism by avoiding the sharing of knowledge at the workplace, thus leading to a negative relationship between the two.

Managerial implications

Workplace ostracism can be an important reason employees withhold knowledge to themselves and not share it with others at the workplace. Therefore, the managers at the projectized organizations should take steps and measures to reduce and ultimately evict workplace ostracism. The steps might include establishing a workplace environment, which encourages transparency and fair competition. They should provide psychological and moral guidance to the ostracized employees. A proper forum or channel should be created where the ostracized employees could register their complaints, and they should be given quick responses in the form of help, guidance, and support. These steps could be difficult to achieve due to a lack of transparency or fairness, but efforts could be made to achieve them.

Most of the time, the less social employees, i.e., those who possess poor social skills and political skills, have many chances of being ostracized at the workplace. However, as mentioned before, managers can play a vital role in reducing this by providing their employees with the required training and counseling. Managers should also make the employees aware of the organization's values and norms and help them adapt to them.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has certain limitations. The first limitation is the generalizability of the results, as this research is carried out only in the projectized organizations of Pakistan. Pakistan is a collectivist country. There is a great difference between Pakistani and western culture. As western nations have more of an individualistic approach, it might influence and affect the responses and behaviors of ostracized employees. In collectivist cultures like Pakistan, People care about one another and value connections; thus when they face or confront ostracism at work, they resist reacting, although they may exhibit some retribution by not sharing knowledge with their coworkers. Collectivists, are more concerned with "creating and sustaining inter-personal harmony". On the other hand, individualist cultures do not care about the interests of others but instead focus on and care about their own. They might react to workplace ostracism and do not conceal the knowledge that they have. Therefore, it could be interesting if our model is tested in different cultural contexts and settings such as service organizations, the hospitality industry, the hotel industry, etc.

CONCLUSION

This research concluded that ostracism and knowledge sharing have a negative relationship, along with finding the mediating effect of trust on the relationship between knowledge sharing and ostracism. Diversity has been kept as a control variable in this study. However, when it comes to the moderating effect of willpower and way power, our study concludes that both do not have any moderating effect on any of the relationships between ostracism, knowledge sharing, and diversity. This research adds to literature by backing up the studies done by other researchers e.g., (Ferris et al., 2008; Fong et al., 2011), who has worked on knowledge sharing and ostracism concludes the same as our study does. Nevertheless, in the case of willpower and way power, the results are different from the other researchers. Hobfoll (2001); Snyder et al. (2002) gives conclusions, which do not match our study's results. There are different reasons behind this finding, which include culture, personality, and mindset, etc.

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