

**CAPITAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY, ISLAMABAD**



**Antecedents, Outcomes, and
Consequences of Workplace Ostracism:
Psychological Hardiness as Moderator, a
Comprehensive Study in the Education
Sector of Pakistan**

by

Madiha Abid

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the
degree of Master of Science

in the

Faculty of Management & Social Sciences

Department of Management Sciences

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*Dedicated to my family who dedicated their lives to teach me how to step
forward...!*



CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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Ostracism: Psychological Hardiness as Moderator, a
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Acknowledgement

“Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you deny.”

(Surah Ar-Rehman)

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Abstract

The study looked into the process through which perception of politics negatively affects the creative performance of employees in the education sector. The more the politics perceived by employees the more will be workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding that ultimately leads to a decreased level of creative performance. Nevertheless, the process that reduces the negative impact of perception of politics on creative performance remains unexplored. For this purpose, a cross-sectional survey was conducted to examine the moderating effects of psychological hardiness on the given relationship while investigating the antecedents, consequences, and outcomes of workplace ostracism in the education sector of Pakistan. Perception of politics was found to be a major predicting factor that facilitates workplace ostracism in organizations. Individuals in politically affected as well as ostracized environments seem to be more encountered with knowledge hiding. An overall effect of these variables was found to be negative on creative performance however workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding were sequentially mediating the relationship between perception of politics and creative performance. In the survey, a total of 283 responses were obtained from teachers, and results indicated that perception of politics does not directly affect creative performance but negatively affects it through a sequence of negative factors such as workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding. Results also revealed that psychological hardiness does not moderate the perception of politics and outcome variables. Drawing on Spillover's theory workplace ostracism seems to have various antecedents, consequences, and outcomes. The research also provides practical and theoretical implications with limitations and future recommendations. The study concluded that an equal opportunity system should be introduced to avoid workplace ostracism and other related issues.

Keywords: Perception of Politics; Workplace Ostracism; Knowledge Hiding; Creative Performance; Psychological Hardiness.

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Abbreviations

CP	Creative Performance
DV	Dependent Variable
H	Hypothesis
IV	Independent Variable
KH	Knowledge Hiding
Med	Mediator
Mod	Moderator
PH	Psychological Hardiness
POP	Perception of Politics
WO	Workplace Ostracism

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background of Study

Ostracism is considered to be a key social phenomenon having significant impacts on organizational performance as it elaborates the idea based on which people treat their companions and are treated by them (Williams, 2007). It is the extent of employees' perception of being ignored at the workplace by others (Ferris, Brown, Berry, & Lian, 2008). In prior research, workplace ostracism has been denoted as surrounding social rejection or being out of the loop in the context of employees' workplace ignorance. Furthermore, many researchers studied this phenomenon with various other names that mainly include abandonment, social isolation, social exclusion, and coequals' rejection (O'Reilly et al., 2015). Most often it proves to be a tough experience and while tackling such ostracizing behaviors the employees report psychological discomfort that further leads to various reactions (Kwan, Liu, & Lee, 2021).

Workplace negligence has a wide set of unwelcoming outcomes and its aftermaths on employees' feelings, attitudes, and behaviors, and therefore the workforce gets involved in various self-sabotaging practices (Haldorai et al., 2020). Letting an employee feel excluded at the workplace may deviate from the overall organizational objectives as if they are not perfect, their participation for organizational betterment will not be up to the mark then ultimately organizational performance

will be compromised (Ali & Usman, 2021). Ostracism, being a significant stressor at the workplace leads to multiple unwanted and contradicting upshots on the behavioral, instinctual, and intellectual outcomes of the suffering employees (Zimmerman et al., 2016).

As a result, it ultimately leads to reduced performance and blows up the futile and detrimental behaviors at the workplace (Hsieh & Karatepe, 2019). The concept of workplace ostracism is based on two basic models aligned by the scholars (Chung, 2018); the first idea elaborates the idea of being ostracized or excluded at the workplace (Quade et al., 2017) whereas the other model is based on the idea that leads an employee to ostracize his coworkers (Hales, Wesselmann, & Williams, 2016). Various factors incorporate in ostracizing the workplace and increase or decrease the extent to which it affects the resultant outcomes (Clercq, Haq & Azeem, 2019).

Workplace ostracism significantly affects the personal outcomes of a victim (Eickholt & Goodboy, 2017) and the work-related outcomes of an organization (Purvis, & Cruz, 2014). The personal outcomes affected by WO mainly include employees' emotions, behaviors, and attitudes whereas the organizational outcomes that are involved include performance, etc. In both forms of ostracism relationship that is victim-perpetrator, the power relations seem to be significant (Sanderson, 2017), and ostracism is perceived differently at different levels by the workforce because of a different set of behaviors (Fiset et al., 2017).

A very few researchers examined the antecedents of ostracism according to which being ostracized in a political organizational environment may lead to destructive outcomes (Karim, Majid & Omar, 2021) so this research mainly focuses on studying workplace ostracism in the context of perception of politics, knowledge hiding, and its impact on employees' creative performance however the study also considers their personality trait that is psychological hardiness as a moderator. Being an important antecedent of workplace ostracism, perception of politics is the significant predictor of employees' creative performance. It is the extent to which an employee perceives the politics being exercised within an organization (Gill, Lapalme & Seguin, 2014). However, when politics is perceived negatively leads

to reduced creative performance, therefore the researchers suggested cultivating an environment where individual benefits are linked with politics and promoting the notion of positive perception of politics (Kaya, Aydin & Ayhan, 2016).

However, in a situation of the ostracized and political workplace, there will be lesser employees' involvement in achieving organizational objectives (Ford, 1996) therefore there will be more tendency of knowledge hiding in two ways. In the first case, an individual who is being ostracized tends to hide knowledge from his co-workers because he feels ignored by them so he won't be interested to share what he knows. On the other hand, an individual who ostracized some employees intentionally usually involves people of his own choice and shares the useful knowledge only with his desired group of people. All these conditions ultimately have long-lasting impacts on the creative performance of employees.

Creative performance needs an internal connection with a motivating power that stimulates the employees to cope with the challenging situations they face (Bandura, 1997). Performance is the most studied part of literature in organizational setup as numerous factors can have a huge impact on it. However, performing with creativity or creative performance is a next-level explanation of the organizational output. Employees with the perception of politics in an ostracized workplace exhibit reduced creative performance. However, in the case of having a resilient personality trait employees have the ability to take over challenging situations and to maintain the outputs they are delivering in an organization. Therefore psychological hardiness is considered to be a positive personality factor that helps employees to survive even in a situation that seems to be tough for them. Overall workplace ostracism is a negative element that can diminish the organizational prestige in front of employees. The study was conducted in the education sector where we mainly targeted schools. Research in the education sector helps us to develop the appropriate teaching processes and to eradicate the negative predictors through the empowerment of data. The results of the research based on the data collected from the relevant sector can assist the teachers more effectively and strategically. This Educational research let the teachers implement their knowledge practically while avoiding the negative antecedents that can lead to adverse organizational outcomes.

1.2 Gap Analysis

Ostracism is the most spotlighted issue in recent years as it reports a set of employees' behaviors that are quite different in a few aspects from the rest of the organizational members (Uslu, 2021). The ostracized workforce has different behavioral patterns that ultimately provoke further organizational problems. The scholar has investigated some antecedents and outcomes of workplace Ostracism; however, there is a need to study the comprehensive list of new outcomes and the predicting variables (Bedi, 2021; Liu et al., 2019). Therefore it would be a good addition in literature to dig out the determinants that can shape workplace ostracism and the mechanism of how WO is affected by these factors (Zhang & Dai, 2015). Being an important outcome, employee performance is the most studied part of literature with multiple IVs, the relationship of studying workplace ostracism with employee creative performance seems to be useful for extant literature.

Workplace ostracism is closely associated with organizational norms and values. Ostracizing certain individuals is considered to be an immoral act as it goes against the social norms, which has widespread effects i.e., creative performance, and persuades the people to ignore the standards and code of conduct (Yang & Jang, 2012). There is limited research on workplace ostracism in the context of the spillover effect so literature suggested investigating the impacts of workplace ostracism on the creative performance of employees.

The more political the organizational environment, the more will be the workplace ostracism as when employees perceive being excluded it provokes the idea of perception of politics (Viorica & Parahyanti, 2020) so the present study is taking the perception of politics as an antecedent or predictor. Perception of organizational politics affects employees differently as per their personality traits, so employees' perception of politics needs to be investigated about their personality trait that is psychological hardiness (Chang, Rosen & Levy, 2009) as limited researcher spotlighted the idea of studying this relationship. Furthermore studying workplace ostracism with personality characteristics of perpetrators is also recommended to see the perception and justification of their ostracizing behaviors (Bedi, 2021). Ostracized employees usually face a lack of knowledge in companies (Jones et

al., 2009), as ostracizing individuals tend to hide knowledge from them, and ultimately their participation in organizational progress declined (Reilly & Robinson, 2009). Overall there is a negative relationship of ostracism with the employee and organizational creative performance (Sanderson, 2017).

Researchers studied the idea of knowledge hiding with different variables by taking it as an outcome (Zhao et al., 2016) or predictor (Bogilovic et al., 2017). The concept of knowledge hiding at the workplace has been studied with negative leadership behavior that suggested exploring the other possible predictors of ineffective knowledge sharing named as workplace ostracism (Farooq, 2021). Workplace ostracism is closely associated with an organizational set of norms and values. The overall impact of workplace ostracism is quite disturbing for the creative performance of an organization (Yang & Treadway, 2018).

The present study is going to look at the moderating role of psychological hardness in the relationships between creative performance and the perception of politics. However, workplace ostracism and knowledge are considered as sequential mediators between both of these variables. The research specifically going to target the education sector to test and verify the assumption associated with the perception of politics and workplace ostracism as we have a great possibility to get a unique response from this sector.

1.3 Problem Statement

In any organization, there is always a diversity of people with different perspectives, which leads to a range of attitudes and actions. Scholars take little heed towards workplace ostracism and responsive knowledge hiding in the context of different political views. The existing research implies that these occurrences should be investigated further using personality factors as a starting point. As a result, the main objective of this study is to explore the factors that have an impact on workplace ostracism and its results on overall organizational performance.

Furthermore, the study tries to uncover the mechanism that promotes individuals to engage in knowledge-hiding behavior, lowering their creative output at work.

Employees in Pakistan's education sector have negative views of politics, which leads to several reactive actions. In the given study psychological hardiness is also advocated as a moderator in the relationship between POP and creative performance. As a result, both theoretically and contextually, the study would be a valuable addition to the literature.

1.4 Research Questions

The paper aims to explore the solution to the following research queries:

Question 1:

How does the perception of politics affect employees' creative performance?

Question 2:

What is the relationship between perception of politics and workplace ostracism?

Question 3:

Does workplace ostracism affect knowledge hiding?

Question 4:

How knowledge hiding is related to creative performance?

Question 5:

How does workplace ostracism mediate the relationship between perception of politics and knowledge hiding?

Question 6:

Does knowledge hiding mediate the relationship between workplace ostracism and creative performance?

Question 7:

How the relationship between perception of politics and creative performance is sequentially mediated by workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding?

Question 8:

How does psychological hardiness moderates the association between perception of politics and creative performance?

1.5 Research Objectives

The present study will be conducted to attain the following objectives:

1. To find out the way perception of politics affects employees' creative performance.
2. To examine the association between perception of politics and workplace ostracism.
3. To explore the relationship between knowledge hiding and workplace ostracism.
4. To find out the impacts of knowledge hiding on creative performance.
5. To explore the underlying explanatory mechanism of workplace ostracism between the perception of politics and knowledge hiding.
6. To investigate the mediatory mechanism of knowledge hiding between workplace ostracism and creative performance.
7. To examine the extent to which workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding sequentially mediate the association between perception of politics and creative performance.
8. To find out the extent to which psychological hardiness moderates the relationship between creative performance and perception of politics.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The given study contributes in various ways to existing literature. First of all the research investigate the predictors, and outcomes of workplace ostracism. Being a major antecedent perception of politics plays a key role to identify the involvement and influence of employees at the organizational level. Furthermore, the research is focused to identify the mediating effects of knowledge hiding along with the

workplace ostracism between the relationship of perception of politics and creative performance. Lastly, the study contributes to how psychological hardiness significantly determines the overall effects of various variables on the creative performance of employees. It also highlighted the employees' perception of politics in the education sector, as limited studies focused on undergrad-level teachers and their ultimate reaction. Workplace ostracism is becoming the major aspect in all types of organizations so by indicating its predictors and outcomes the study will contribute significantly contextually and theoretically.

The study highlighted an important point that workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding are not created by themselves, they require certain driving forces as antecedents that cause them to happen. The antecedent or driving force identified for workplace ostracism is the perception of politics. Similarly, the motivating factor for knowledge hiding in any way is been identified as workplace ostracism. The sequential mediating and joint moderating models were extensively emphasized in the previous literature but mechanism that underpin relationships among antecedents, consequences, and outcomes of workplace ostracism is rare. The study pointed out the reasons that promote workplace ostracism in an organization and gave theoretical and practical implications to overcome these issues in the education sector of Pakistan.

1.7 Supporting Theory

1.7.1 Spillover Theory

The spillover effect speaks of the capability of an individual when his perception affects the way people feel in their surroundings. A theoretical foundation to explore the antecedents and outcomes of the ostracized workplaces and the impact of perception of politics on the creative performance of employees is being drawn on spillover theory. The theory pays attention to the spillover effects of one's perceptions and conceptions on output that he or she is delivering. It indicates that there is a considerable impact of ongoing organizational events. For example, employees develop their perceptions according to the environment provided to

them that ultimately have a spillover effect on their behaviors, attitudes, and emotions.

Spillover is the idea where facing one aspect at the workplace will lead to cause another aspect, therefore, the perception developed by an employee about the political environment in the organization will alter their behavior accordingly. Similarly, when employees perceive being ostracized at the workplace and they are not involved in various formal or informal organizational activities they will start to adjust themselves. The change in employees' behavior due to the spillover impact of perception of politics and workplace ostracism leads further to hiding knowledge for others because they don't want to lose the power they have because of that knowledge.

Due to the overall spillover effect of POP and WO, the employees will exhibit reduced creativity and innovation in their performance. But, if the employee is resilient enough and copes up with the circumstances he is facing, it significantly helps them to work in the politically ostracized workplace and behavioral reactions that mainly include knowledge hiding and reduced creative performance.

According to spillover theory, human perception has a remarkable impact on a worker's emotional response and output he is delivering. The higher the psychological hardiness in an individual the higher will be the outcome as the spillover effect on one variable leads another to be affected. The spillover effect relies on the psychological assumptions of individuals that interpret the effects of one domain on another domain. It is mainly concerned with the transmission of employees' work-related emotions to their activities and the way they work. It means in individuals who perceive politics in an organizational environment will start to ostracize others or get ostracized by others. It is a negative form of emotions that leads them to hide knowledge from others and again this effect is negative. The ultimate results of all these negative variables will affect the domain of creative performance of the employees as the spillover does affect the way employees work and behave at the workplace.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Perception of Politics and Creative Performance

Politics has occupied a wide part of organizations either formally or informally for decades. Politics may be practiced for different purposes that mainly involve maximizing an entity's control over resources, achieving personal interest, or increasing power over decision-making (Ferris et al., 2019). However, politics is an essential part of an organization in terms of workplace power relationships (Peffer, 2013). Perception of politics is defined as the way people perceive about self-centered activities of their coworkers who exploit the strategies of the organization in any way for their desired outcomes (Abbas et al. 2014).

The people practicing politics mainly focus on their interest rather than their organizations (Vigoda, 2000). While experiencing politics in the organization an employee may develop a negative perception about the organization because in such cases there is a focus on self-centered objectives. When everyone got involved to attain their desired outcomes it ultimately pushes the organizational goals back and results in decreased employee satisfaction, engagement, creativity, and performance.

Organizational politics is a discouraging form of administration that has wide impacts (Mintzberg, 1983). The area of its effect includes individual, group, and

organizational level at the same time (Hochwarter, Ferris, Laird, Treadway & Gallagher, 2010; Fedor, Maslyn, Farmer & Bettenhausen, 2008).

It affects individuals and organizations differently but the results seem to be alike in both cases. At the individual level, there will be a lack of psychological comfort and an increase in stress level whereas at the organizational level there will be a lack of social exchange and mutual trust however in both cases the ending results are similar. When employees perceive politics at their organization they react differently as a response to the environment provided to them, therefore, the perception of politics leads to various significant negative outcomes (Abbas & Raja 2014), and the major effects include decreased employee performance, creativity, etc.

Due to these negative outcomes, the perception of politics threatens the survival of the organization. Various research papers declared politics as an extensive experience and urged on its further investigation (Pfeffer, 1992; Mintzberg, 1983; Gandz & Murray, 1980). It has been stressed for more attention because it has a greater influence on work-related outcomes. The point raised in a study elaborates that if an employee is having the perception of politics this conception will ultimately hinder the routine organization procedures that mainly include recognition, promotion, or decision making.

Furthermore, it brings a transformation in attitudes and behaviors of an employee because they tend to behave according to the conditions they have been provided to work with. Along with affecting day-to-day organizational processes the perception of politics plays a key role in the defacement of creativity and performance. In an organization, creative performance encompasses the formation of a novel and innovative solution to organizational problems that need to be potentially useful (Amabile, 1996; also Mumford & Gustafson, 1988). Working with new and updated strategies in a more dedicated way needs a workplace that works for both employee and organizational development. Using new and smart ways to perform the given tasks is an efficient way to save time and other resources. If employees are given the opportunities to work smartly there will be more productivity and quality. An equally facilitating environment for all employees motivates them

to perform effectively in favor of the organization's objective (Rawwas, Javed & Iqbal, 2018).

In the absence of perception of politics the availability of resources, application of power, and working for the same organizational goal will be equally distributed among all employees that influence them to perform well with creativity (Nauman, Tariq & Saleem, 2021). It means if there is no politics there will be an increase in creative performance. On the other hand, employees facing politics at the workplace may not give their best level of productivity and hence stop performing with creativity (Abbas & Raja, 2014; Jam et. al., 2016). The perception of politics directly affects the resultant outcomes of individuals and organizations as it is closely related to equity, fairness, and justice. Perception of politics is considered to be an important measure of organizational politics (Ferris et al., 1989).

In literature, employee creativity is considered to be an origin of novelty and ingenious ideas that govern organizational success (Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, & Herron, 1996). To achieve this success across the organization allowing employees to perform with a broader vision can bring a favorable change. The opportunities that motivate employees to perform innovatively is a form of employee empowerment because they can get a high-performance work system by following which there is a great probability of creative performance. However in the presence of perception of politics the overall mechanism get disturbed as the employees are not getting appropriate opportunities and that leads them towards down the mark intrinsically and their job commitment, engagement, satisfaction, and creative performance start decreasing. Various researchers pointed out a major conception that politics itself does not affect the outcomes of organizations but the perception of organizational politics whether it exists or not severely affects the cognitive and emotional responses of employees (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992).

It means they do not respond to what they see or what is going on in the organization but they responded to what they perceive or think of. Usually, politics in an organization results in self-serving behaviors among employees that bring a decline in creative performance. This decrease in creative performance depends

on the extent to which an individual perceives these self-serving behaviors of others, the more the perception of politics the more will be a decline in creative performance. It is because a politically charged workplace is characterized by unpredictability, obscurity, and vagueness that facilitate preferences and egotism among employees and wrapped them up in their own self-centered goals (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991). For any organization to perform with creativity certain norms and values are highly required that make them vigilant towards their workplace behaviors and attitudes. Perception of politics has both direct and indirect effects on the creative performance of employees, either it directly affects or indirectly affects through a chain of negative consequences and organizational behaviors that employees adopt after perceiving politics at the workplace.

The major consequences of perception of politics through which it indirectly affects creative performance have been studied in this paper that is workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding, however whatever the way it affects there will be a negative impact of perception of politics on the creative performance of employees. The previous research also found a positive link between perception of politics and counterproductive behaviors because people respond to the political environment by getting involved in damaging and detrimental activities that reduce the organizational creative performance.

Perception of politics diverts the thinking and energies of employees to other organizational aspects. In this situation, they got more concerned with other things than their job duties. Meanwhile, they manifest further job stressors and are barely gravitate toward their responsibilities. Collectively less focus on job responsibility due to perception of politics leads to negative outcomes (Bozeamn et al., 1996; Ferris et al., 1996).

In an organization, creative performance encompasses the formation of a novel and innovative solution to organizational problems that need to be potentially useful (Amabile, 1996; also Mumford & Gustafson, 1988). Working with new and updated strategies in a more dedicated way needs a workplace that works for both employee and organizational development. Using new and smart ways to perform the given tasks is an efficient way to save time and other resources. If employees

are given the opportunities to work smartly there will be more productivity and quality. An equally facilitating environment for all employees motivates them to perform effectively in favor of the organization's objective (Rawwas, Javed & Iqbal, 2018).

It means if someone perceives a greater level of politics at the workplace, eventually he perceives a low level of fairness, equity, and justice (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). The political workplace provokes negative employee behavior that leads to a decrease in creativity and performance (Naseeretal, 2016) and a decline in creative performance threatens the organizational objectives. Overall we found miscellaneous deleterious effects of perception of politics on individual creative performance that is more perception of politics leads to a decrease in creative performance of the employee. Based on these findings and arguments, we proposed the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: Perception of politics is negatively related to creative performance.

2.2 Relationship between Perceptions of Politics & Workplace Ostracism

Workplace ostracism is a widely studied phenomenon in today's organizational setups. It is the extent to which an employee feels that he or she is being excluded at the workplace by his coworkers. Employees confronting the workplace ostracism is due to the coworkers' behaviors (Valdivia et al., 2019; Chen & Li, 2019) and negative interpersonal factors. Usually, the people who are ostracizing others are not following the standard guidelines provided by the organizations and transform their behaviors and attitudes. The behavioral transformation leads them to make their specific grouping where they can work as per their choice by including or excluding certain groups or individuals.

The behavioral change might be a major cause of workplace ostracism. However, usually, organizations face employees' behavioral transformation when there are

greater chances of perception of politics (Karim, 2021). Collectively these antecedents play a crucial role in terms of administrating the employee's perception of workplace ostracism (Ferris et al., 2008). Therefore many studies suggested that interpersonal distrust and perception of politics restore workplace ostracism among employees. Organizational politics is usually based on achieving the desired and self-centered goals (Bauer & Erdogan, 2012) therefore it is considered to be an unethical form of management and administration (Bodla et al., 2014; Başar et al., 2018).

Various studies identified the perception of politics as a major factor that gives rise to multiple negative consequences (Karatepe, 2013; Saleem, 2015; Baloch et al., 2017; Landells and Albrecht, 2019). When employees are perceiving the politics they assume that organization is not much concerned with their personal development so they look for other loopholes through which some of the members start grouping for their development. In groupings, they look for the people whose interests are similar to each other so that they all can easily work in the same direction. In the process of grouping, the organizational members who might have different perceptions also have different interests from the rest of the employees and hence they won't be included by the others in their activities that ultimately give rise to workplace ostracism. A greater level of perception of politics influences individuals to create an environment that can facilitate their self-centered benefits and hence the creative performance of employees start decreasing (Kaya, Aydin & Ayhan, 2016). Perception of politics revitalizes employees to alter their attitudes and behaviors for their benefit as others are doing (Baer & Frese, 2003). POP consider being the strongest predictor in terms of facilitating employees' workplace behavior and perceptions (Ling et. al, 2017).

In a political workplace, there is a great probability of employees being excluded or ignored as most people work for their interests (Hennes, al, 2017) when someone is focused to get his or her desired outcomes he may include people of his choice in various activities and exclude those he is not concerned with, therefore politics in a company facilitate the idea of workplace ostracism. Not involving all employees in formal and informal activities equally is the key reason for the company's decline (Chung, 2018). Further, the personal grudges of employees and management can

also be a factor of politics. In such cases, both parties do not meet each other's expectations and start to politicize the organizational environment.

When individuals join any organization they have certain expectations from the organization, similarly, the organization expects certain behavioral and performance levels from the employees. When politics is being practiced in the organizations both individuals and organizations will not be able to perform up to the mark as per the expectations. This is because the environment is more characterized by self-interest and it develops the negative perception among both parties for each other (Kickul, 2001).

A higher level of politics provides extra privilege to some groups in organizations whereas some of the people got ignored. This ignorance mainly comes from an unequal distribution of power and resources therefore people involved in politics ignore the irrelevant person while working for their interest. Ultimately this conception lowers the integrity of the organization. People who are more involved in politics use to develop various contacts that can be beneficial for them. By grouping with their desired people, they work for their self-interest with more manpower and take advantage of opportunities and organizational resources. In this regard, while working for something other than organizational objectives they exclude a few people. The excluded people develop hatred feeling for the organization and tend to defend themselves by various counterproductive behaviors. In this study, the perception of politics has been taken as an antecedent of workplace ostracism where the perception of politics is considered to be a root cause of workplace ostracism (Jervis, 2017). Further, there is a positive relationship between both variables which means a higher level of perception of politics will result in a higher level of workplace ostracism.

The overall impact of perception of politics and workplace ostracism on organizational survival seems to be adverse that further provokes many other negative factors in the organization. A higher level of politics brings injustice and inequality in organizations that demotivate the organizational members towards their job responsibilities. Perception of politics is the way how people interpret the negativities in an organizational climate, the more he perceives negativities the more he will be reluctant to work in such an organization. Further, as it leads

to workplace ostracism, the people feel themselves be degraded at the workplace, their self-esteem gets down due to which they cannot perform well up to the mark (Ferris, Harris, Russell & Maher, 2018)

An increase in perception of politics wakes the employees' emotions up due to which they modify themselves to cope with the situations they are experiencing with. It eventually causes an increased level of powerlessness, injustice, and stress among employees because now they have more awareness about the organizational environment and they start working for their self-protection by exploiting the interpersonal relationship. This state activates the dissociation among coworkers (Sun & Xia, 2018).

Further after perceiving the politics in an organization conflict of interest gets increased at the workplace which means it will bring about interpersonal distrust and self-serving behaviors between organizational members. These all emotions and responses result in raising awareness of being excluded by their colleagues (Bai et al., 2016; Ullah et al., 2019). According to the spillover theory, the POP leads to negative outcomes, and as it destroys the concept of organizational social exchange relationship and the individuals consider themselves as delicate part of the organization and go through the sensation of keeping out of one another.

Moreover, many researchers identified the several negative consequences of perception of politics (Bukhari & Kamal, 2017; Labrague et al., 2017; Landells & Albrecht, 2017; Asrar-ul-Haq et al., 2019; Malik et al., 2019), of which workplace ostracism is considered to be the most damaging outcome. In the process of grouping, the organizational members who might have different perceptions also have different interests from the rest of the employees and hence they won't be included by the others in their activities that ultimately give rise to workplace ostracism. A greater level of perception of politics influences individuals to create an environment that can facilitate their self-centered benefits and hence the creative performance of employees start decreasing (Kaya, Aydin & Ayhan, 2016). Perception of politics revitalizes employees to alter their attitudes and behaviors for their benefit as others are doing (Baer & Frese, 2003). POP consider being the strongest predictor in terms of facilitating employees' workplace behavior and perceptions (Ling et. al, 2017).

POP has a direct impact on employees' perception of ostracizing others or being ostracized by others. Literature suggests equal opportunities for all employees in terms of participating in various working and non-working activities. Overall we found a positive impact on workplace ostracism, so these findings favor the given hypothesis

Hypothesis 2: Perception of politics is positively related to workplace ostracism.

2.3 Relationship between Workplace Ostracism and Knowledge Hiding

Ostracized workplaces are a negative factor that has adverse effects on employee and organizational development as it leads to a huge decrease in creative performance (Feng, Li, Feng & Jiang, 2019). In an environment that excludes a chunk of employees intentionally or unintentionally, there is a greater probability of hiding knowledge (Riaz & Hussain, 2019). People are afraid of losing the power or position that they have because of certain information therefore they avoid sharing knowledge with others (Butt, 2019). People who have been ostracized do not have a good perception of the organization so if they have a kind of useful information they would hesitate to share it with their coworkers (Riaz & Hussain, 2019).

Similarly, people who are ostracizing others do share knowledge with others because they want to hold the power and position in their hands (Mahmood, Imran, Fayaz & Ahmad, 2021) so the more is workplace ostracism the more will be ineffective knowledge sharing. The literature argued that although effective knowledge sharing is a highly promoted concept in all sectors still in service organizations knowledge hiding is a widespread phenomenon that impedes the transfer of knowledge (Connelly et al., 2012).

Knowledge hiding itself is not a self-created experience but it may contain certain predecessors that lead to various negative organizational and individual consequences. In literature, it is considered to be an obscure subject matter as it is not extensively studied with its antecedents. The present study postulate workplace

ostracism as an influencing factor or antecedent of knowledge hiding. In service organizations, the higher the workplace ostracism, the higher will be knowledge hiding that eventually expedites the reduction in creative performance (Leung et al., 2011; Zhao et al., 2013). The studies identified the cause behind it that among organizational members the interpersonal interactions are affected by workplace ostracism (Richman & Leary, 2009). An employee will be more predisposed to keep knowledge under his hat while enduring workplace ostracism.

As a work stressor workplace ostracism evacuate the personal resources that mainly include self-regard and morale of individuals. Further, the targeted person considered himself as an excluded part of the organization that yield a restricted way into social resources. When people think that they are not an active part of an organization then according to the assumptions of reciprocity norms the individual tends to defend himself by the counter-reactions. If the individual is being excluded he will hesitate to share the knowledge he is aware of (Shah & Hashmi, 2019).

Lack of having social resources is a key reason for knowledge hiding because in this case people confront the emotional exertion and keep their valuable information back with them as a defensive behavior (Leung et al., 2011). Individuals' capacity to contend with workplace requirements gets down due to knowledge hiding at ostracized workplaces. Knowledge hiding is a kind of defensive behavior in an ostracized workplace in which a higher level of ostracism causes a higher level of knowledge hiding in organizations. In education sectors, teachers tend to avoid and exploit others either to achieve dominancy or higher rewards.

In service organizations, the higher the workplace ostracism, the higher will be knowledge hiding that eventually expedites the reduction in creative performance (Leung et al., 2011; Zhao et al., 2013). The studies identified the cause behind it that among organizational members the interpersonal interactions are affected by workplace ostracism (Richman & Leary, 2009). An employee will be more predisposed to keep knowledge under his hat while enduring workplace ostracism.

In ostracizing organizational environment employees may perceive this situation as hurtful and get involved in knowledge hiding (Xiao & Cooke, 2019). Knowledge

hiding is considered to be an intentional attempt to put a required set of information out of sight, as the person who is being ostracized uses it as a defensive behavior and gets involved in such behaviors. Despite this existing relationship, it has not been given much attention as per its importance. Based on these findings we can draw a hypothesis as follows:

Hypothesis 3: Workplace ostracism positively related to knowledge hiding.

2.4 Relationship between Knowledge Hiding & Creative Performance

The culture of ineffective knowledge-sharing considers being the worst predictor of the growth of any organization (Jiang, 2019). Knowledge hiding is a conscious decision to incarcerate or lockup the useful knowledge from others (Fong et al., 2018). Most people are involved in process of concealing knowledge because they are afraid of losing the position and power that they are having because of that specific information (Jiang, 2019). Further, mostly the people consider specific knowledge as their property (Connelly, Zweig, Webster & Trougakos, 2012).

The reasons for hiding information may vary from person to person therefore it is not a regular set of inappropriate attitudes and behaviors (Connelly & Zweig, 2015). The literature pointed out that hiding what you know may lead to ineffective performance and innovation in an organization (Gagne et al., 2019). When a specific form of information is reserved for a specific person or group it will prohibit the development of remaining individuals and groups (Xiao & Cooke, 2019) meanwhile prohibiting the growth of an organizational member or group will lead to a decrease in creative performance. In the present study, knowledge hiding is serving as a mediator and predictor of creative performance. An increasing level of knowledge hiding tends to decrease creative performance (Connelly & Zweig, 2015), especially in a political organizational environment.

There are three main dimensions of knowledge hiding (Connelly et al., 2012) that mainly include playing dumb, rationalized hiding, and evasive hiding. The idea of

misleading or providing inappropriate information is termed evasive hiding (Connelly & Zweig, 2015). In other words, it is based on double-dealing and encourages deception among organizational members. Another form of deception is playing dumb, where the person who holds useful information pretends to be unaware of the subject matter of which the requester is asking.

In this case, the hider has no intention to help others (Connelly & Zweig, 2015). In rationalized hiding, the information hider explains not sharing it with others and it does not directly involve the deception like in other dimensions (Connelly & Zweig, 2015). In this case, the hider blames the third party to cover himself for not providing the requested information.

The literature argued that knowledge hiding affects the psychological perceptions of members that eventually result in reduced job commitment, satisfaction, hinder the positive or constructive behaviors, and decrease the creative performance in service organizations (Ferris et al., 2008; Wu et al., 2012; Leung et al., 2011). Kouchaki & Wareham, (2015) also raise the point on the consequences of knowledge hiding on the interpersonal behaviors of organizational members. Knowledge hiding is considered to be a negative factor for creative performance as it encourages interpersonal deviance among the employees (Ferris et al., 2008).

In organizations, there are set of tasks divided among various members that they have to perform. To accomplish those responsibilities they need relevant and precise knowledge. In case of not having that accurate knowledge, their outputs might be affected and they won't be able to perform with creativity (Singh, 2019).

Thus, knowledge hiding at any level harms the overall results at the workplace. The negative relationship between knowledge hiding and creative performance concludes that a greater level of knowledge hiding in the education sector leads to the interpersonal counterproductive behaviors of employees that eventually results in a lower level of creative performance of employees (Zhao et al., 2013). From these findings we may formulate the hypothesis as follows:

Hypothesis 4: Knowledge hiding is negatively related to creative performance.

2.5 Mediating Role of Workplace Ostracism

In human beings, there are multiple forms of ostracism with several antecedents and consequences (Robinson, O'Reilly, & Wang, 2013). Similarly, ostracizing behaviors also report various forms that may include an individual's complete isolation, avoiding eye contact, or lack of verbal communication (Zadro, 2003). Workplace ostracism being an important component of a working environment have significant effects on individuals' personal, social, and professional lives (O'Reilly et al., 2014). The workplace would be ostracized when an employee is excluded to participate in an activity that involves other employees and it is appropriate to do so (Robinson et al., 2013). This definition points out some important aspects of ostracism that as facilitating unwanted behavior and prohibiting wanted behavior (Clercq, Haq & Azeem).

The concept of ignoring an individual may prove to be harmful as it seems to be menacing for an individual who is being ostracized (Robinson et al., 2013). There can be intentional and unintentional ostracism however in both cases the target person suffers and may lose interest in performing his job duties (Chung, 2018). In the present study, workplace ostracism is behaving as a mediator among the perception of politics and knowledge that ultimately leads to decreased creative performance. Perception of politics is an important antecedent of ostracism and also plays a key role in disturbing the overall working environment (Karim, Majid, Omar & Aburumman, 2021) such a workplace facilitates the ineffective sharing of knowledge with coworkers and ultimately bring a decline in creative performance.

An organization's value is presented by the outcomes it is delivering (Howard, Cogswell & Smith, 2020) but decreased creative performance as a negative consequence of ostracism adversely puts the company down in various aspects. Being a mediator between the perception of politics and knowledge hiding, workplace ostracism is triggered by POP and accelerates the knowledge hiding as a result (Connelly et al., 2012). By considering the norms we can justify this relationship. According to some behavioral norms, others should be treated in the same way which means that people should treat others in a good way if they give you a

favor. This rule is based on returning the favors which is a positive reciprocity belief (Gouldner, 1960).

On the other hand, people can adopt a retributive strategy for someone who maltreats them and it is called negative reciprocity beliefs. It can be elaborated in a way that workplace ostracism is considered to be a negative factor in which people exclude their coworkers, it affects them psychologically being interpersonal harm. This will ultimately accelerate the negative reciprocity beliefs among the suffering employees (Fatima, 2017) and they get involved in interpersonal mistreatment for those who excluded them at the workplace. The mistreatment adopted by ostracized employees may include interpersonal counterproductive behaviors, knowledge hiding, and excluding those who did the same with them.

In the present study, workplace ostracism provides an underlying explanatory mechanism to the association between knowledge hiding and perception of politics. In a political environment, people tend to hide knowledge and if there is an element of workplace ostracism there will be more politics and knowledge hiding at the workplace (Xiao & Cook, 2019). Human beings are involved in interpersonal social relationships triggered by reciprocating norms according to which the social exchange is highly based on the actions and behaviors of the people. If an organizational environment is characterized by the self-interests of its members there will be more interpersonal distrust and conflict (Wang et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2009) and the employees will be more reluctant towards interrelations among each other. Therefore it is considered that a great level of perception of politics results in a great level of workplace ostracism. The various authors argued that politics cause competition among people for limited resources even against the interest of others. This will ultimately shoot up the backstabbing and chaos by the collapse of mutual understandings and employees will be reluctant for the knowledge sharing. The evidence from the previous studies found a positive relationship between interpersonal distrust and perception of politics (Ullah et al., 2019; Sun and Xia, 2018; Utami et al., 2014). When the organization gets overloaded with interpersonal distrust and workplace ostracism, then its members start to avoid each other because they found everyone to be skeptical and they seem to build

their interest circles where they hide knowledge from the rest of the people. The hiding knowledge results in a decline in organizational performance that is by ostracizing others (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2016).

Based on these arguments we can assume that the higher the workplace ostracism, the higher will be the knowledge hiding it means workplace ostracism mediates the relationship between perception of politics and knowledge hiding, hence we come up with the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 5: Workplace ostracism mediates the relationship between Perception of politics and Knowledge hiding.

2.6 Mediating Role of Knowledge Hiding

Knowledge hiding is the concept of ineffective sharing of fruitful knowledge with other organizational members, however, the current study is focused to investigate its mediation mechanism of knowledge between workplace ostracism and creative performance. Workplace ostracism creates a suppressing working space for employees (Howard, Cogswell & Smith, 2020). When people feel to be excluded in working or nonworking activities they tend to change their behavior against the organization (Kwan, Zhang, Liu & Lee, 2018).

Employees already working in a political and ostracized workplace may develop negative perceptions for the organization and reduce their contribution towards the achievement of the main company's objective in the presence of knowledge hiding element (Singh, 2019) and start to lag in performing well with creativity. Knowledge hiding is considered to create a crushing environment (Cui, Park & Paik, 2016) that strengthens the overall negative effect of perception of politics and workplace ostracism. The perception of politics lead employees to develop adverse assumption about the organization and they work for their desired goals (Parker, Dipboye & Jackson, 1995). Further knowledge hiding strengthens the negative relationship between workplace ostracism and creative performance (Zhao, Xia & Wan, 2016) that is the more knowledge hiding in an ostracized workplace the less will be the creative performance.

Being a mediator between workplace ostracism and creative performance knowledge hiding is triggered by WO and result in reduced creative performance. For example, if any kind of information is requested from an ostracized individual he seems to be reluctant and tries to hold what he knows (Connelly et al., 2012). For this purpose, he may use any of two dimensions that are playing dumb or evasive hiding. The more is workplace ostracism the more will be the knowledge hiding. Consequently, the lack of information and level of discomfort among ostracized employees result in a decrease in creative performance. The higher level of knowledge hiding brings a low level of creative performance (Chatterjee, Chaudhuri, Thrassou & Vrontis, 2021).

By investigating the phenomenon of knowledge hiding we found its negative impact on creative performance. The knowledge hiding is experienced among the coworkers therefore the quality of relationships affects the way they work and respond to the requisition for knowledge. Interaction among organizational members is based on the reign over by individuals' unuttered social exchange (Blau, 1964).

Stability and harmonious associations employ congruence and assumptions of trust, integrity, and kinship (Buller & Burgoon, 1996). If a person adopts positive behaviors for others then essentially it will supplicate alike corresponding behavior. Steadily these exchanges dilate, as commitments let out while creating the new ones. Based on this analysis we elaborate that the behavior of one member effect the behavior he practices with. Individuals who tend to face difficult situations in organizations will be more likely to hide knowledge to retain the at least power they have because of that knowledge dual (Webster et al., 2008). The perception of politics lead employees to develop adverse assumption about the organization and they work for their desired goals (Parker, Dipboye & Jackson, 1995). Further knowledge hiding strengthens the negative relationship between workplace ostracism and creative performance (Zhao, Xia & Wan, 2016) that is the more knowledge hiding in an ostracized workplace the less will be the creative performance.

The ultimate results of knowledge hiding are directly related to organizational outcomes. It means more knowledge hiding will result in more declined creative

performance. Furthermore, for the success of any individual, project, or organization relevant knowledge plays a key role through which we can employ the appropriate resources at appropriate places. The lack of knowledge cause ambiguous and obscure outcomes that can lead to counterproductive operations in organizations. So it is assumed that a great level of knowledge hiding in an organization will be more likely to have reduced creative performance (Serenko & Bontis, 2016). The negative impression of workplace ostracism gets intensified in the presence of knowledge hiding. In this study, knowledge hiding is behaving as a mediator between workplace ostracism and creative performance. Hence based on the theoretical background and a comprehensive analysis we favor the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 6: Knowledge hiding mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and creative performance.

Hypothesis 7: Relationship between Perception of politics and creative performance is being sequentially mediated by workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding.

2.7 Psychological Hardiness

The present study is focused on the moderating effect of a personality construct that is psychological hardiness that includes an idea of devotion, perception of authority, and being resistant (Kobasa, 1979) that particularly facilitate in handling issues associated with stress (Maddi, 1999). In previous studies, scholars have investigated the personality traits with the outcomes of perception of politics (Rosen et. al., 2006) however the contribution of psychological hardiness came by lean attention. Psychological hardiness is supposed to be an appropriate mitigating factor in opposition to drawbacks of perception of politics.

It has also been stressed to study the moderating effect of psychological hardiness in relationship with perception of politics (Chang, Rosen & Levy, 2009). Perception of politics has negative outcomes, but as a result of the strong effect of psychological hardiness, there would be a restitution process to buffer the overall

impacts of POP. Psychological Hardiness is the capability to manage and respond to a tough situation by using useful strategies (Shahsavari, Ghaffari & Nejhad, 2018), that mainly facilitates the employee and wakes the intrinsic motivation up among individuals.

It is based on a few aspects that include devotion, perceived control, and provocations (Lambert & Lambert, 1999). Devotion is the commitment that someone has for his achievements, control over multiple facets and provocations is the ability to cope with challenges (Kobasa, 1982; Maddi, 2007).

There is a tendency of facing problems and converting them into opportunities in Hardy employees, as they can encourage themselves to grow potentially (Lambert & Lambert, 1999). It provides shelter between the perception of politics and its negative consequences (Faiz, 2018). Therefore it ultimately leads an employee to work with more commitment and avail the opportunities (Faiz, 2018), and hence there will be an upward movement in the creative performance graph, and employees will perform with creativity. Psychological hardiness provokes positive attitudes and behaviors among the individuals (Kash et. al., 2000; Kobasa, 1982) so the desired set of behaviors will promote high creative performance.

Strengthening of psychological hardiness enhanced an individual's ability to deal with difficult situations and stress. This personality trait of employees facilitates their endurance and continuation by developing them. It is based on three major factors that are commitment, control, and challenge. All these building blocks of psychological hardiness follow the ideology of the existential theory of personality. It is an individuals' attitude towards themselves while considering these factors (Kobasa, Maddi & Kahn, 1982; Kobasa, 1979). Psychological hardiness is supposed to be an appropriate mitigating factor in opposition to drawbacks of perception of politics. The present study considers psychological hardiness as a buffering variable or moderator and proposes that the employees can enhance their hardiness to cope with stress and challenges at the workplace and reduce the negative effect of perception of politics on their creative performance. Thus, based on theoretical foundation and findings we propose the following relationship:

Hypothesis 8: *Psychological hardiness is moderating the relationship between perception of politics and creative performance.*

2.8 Research Model

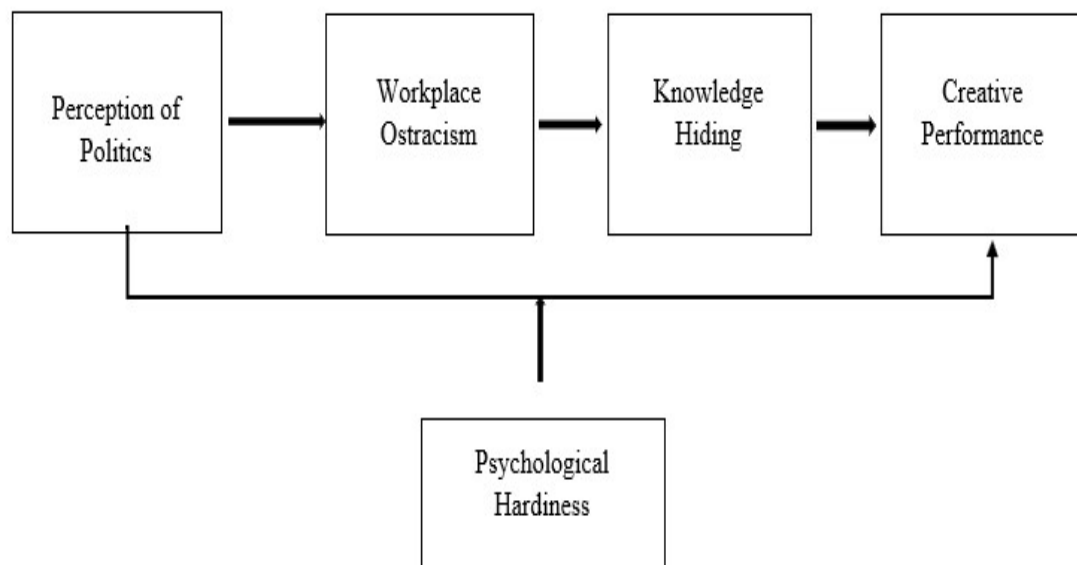


FIGURE 2.1: Research Model: Antecedents, Outcomes, and Consequences of Workplace Ostracism: Psychological Hardiness as Moderator. A Comprehensive Study in the Education Sector of Pakistan

2.9 Summary of Research Hypotheses

H_1 : Perception of politics is negatively related to creative performance.

H_2 : Perception of politics is positively related to workplace ostracism.

H_3 : Workplace ostracism positively related to knowledge hiding.

H_4 : Knowledge hiding is negatively related to creative performance.

H_5 : Workplace ostracism mediates the relationship between Perception of politics and knowledge hiding.

H_6 : Knowledge hiding mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and creative performance.

H₇ : Relationship between Perception of politics and creative performance is sequentially mediated by workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding.

H₈ : Psychological hardiness is moderating the relationship between perception of politics and creative performance.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

The research methodology is the process of identifying and analyzing the given problems and their solutions. By using various techniques, we investigate the validity and reliability of the study as well. It elaborates the sample, population, data collection procedures, and techniques to conduct the study in a given sector.

3.1 Research Design

A technique to conduct and evaluate research by supporting the research questions through determining a framework is called a research design (Emma, Alan & Bill, 2018). The present study investigates the antecedents and outcomes of workplace ostracism in the educational institutions of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. However, it also examines the explanatory mechanism of knowledge hiding along with workplace ostracism while taking psychological hardiness as a moderator and their overall impacts on employees' creative performance. To collect the data regarding these variables' questionnaires have been used.

3.1.1 Type of Study

To conduct the research process there are two choices either to conduct quantitative research or qualitative research however it depends upon the study's nature.

The present research followed a survey-based research design or quantitative research for data collection. It is a highly desirable tool for quantitative data collection based on structured questionnaires. By using the Likert scale we collected the data to investigate the antecedents, consequences, and outcomes of workplace ostracism in the context of psychological hardiness in the education sector of Pakistan (schools).

3.1.2 Research Philosophy

In the process of knowledge development research philosophy is a system of assumptions and beliefs. It is based on giving rise to knowledge in a specific sector or area. In the present study, the research philosophy is positivism. Positivism states that real and trustworthy knowledge comes from observations and measurements. To validate our proposed hypotheses, we took support from the previous literature being focused on data collection and its interpretation objectively.

3.1.3 Cross-Sectional Study

The present study is cross-sectional concerning the time horizon. The data was collected from respondents at one specific period for analysis. Being the most important part, the education sector needs more creativity specifically at the school level while serving in society. In this cross-sectional study total of 384 questionnaires were distributed in schools of Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Wah Cant, and Taxila, out of which we got 330 responses. However, the most genuine responses were used for the analysis that was about 283.

3.1.4 Unit of Analysis

The purpose of the study was to examine the proposed model in the education sector of Pakistan by mainly targeting schools. The Unit of Analysis for the present study was individuals that are employees or teachers of the targeted schools from whom we gathered the required data.

3.2 Population and Sample

3.2.1 Population, Sample, and Sampling Technique and Data Collection Procedure

The data was collected from the education sector of Pakistan. The study was more limited to the school teachers working in Rawalpindi Islamabad, Wah Cantt, and Taxila. School-level education is considered to be the backbone for the survival of smooth operations in a country. Therefore, various factors residing in educational institutes result in an effect on teachers' performance that ultimately transforms the overall system of society. The purpose of targeting the educational sector is that it has to deliver on regular basis and the presence of ostracism may lead to an undesirable work behavior that ultimately leads to affect the creative performance from teachers' perspective.

Through a survey questionnaire, data were collected from teachers working in various schools. For data collection through cross-sectional study, sampling is the most commonly used technique. To manage the study well, by keeping in view the time constraints as well, just four cities were targeted specifically for data collection. Self-administered questionnaires were also used. To indicate the purpose of the research cover letter was attached, assuring the participants about confidentiality and anonymity to get a genuine response. However, for quick access to data, an online survey method was used and family and friends' networks were also part of the effort. In non-probability sampling, the purposive sampling technique was used to carry out the survey. However, to avoid social desirability bias multiple standard measures have opted for smooth research.

3.3 Sample Characteristics

To investigate the characteristics of the sample and get more reliable data, the demographic profile of participants was also examined in the survey. The demographics variables included Gender, Age, Qualification, and Experience of the respondents.

3.3.1 Gender

For the category of gender, the result indicated that a majority population was comprised of female school teachers and the total percentage was about 65%, whereas 35% were male teachers in the survey. The table represents the total percentage of males and females who participated in the study.

TABLE 3.1: Frequency by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	99	35
Female	184	65
	283	100

3.3.2 Age

For the age, we created various categories to make it comfortable for the participants to respond to their age without any hesitation. The results indicated 30.7% of respondents were between 20-25 years whereas most of the participants were young that is between 26-33 years with a percentage of 31.8%. Further 27.6% were between 34-41 years, 9.2% were between 42-49 years, and however, a very small part that is 0.7% of the selected population included people above 50 years.

TABLE 3.2: Frequency by Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
20-25	87	30.7
26-33	90	31.8
34-41	78	27.6
42-49	26	9.2
50 and above	2	0.7
Total	283	100

3.3.3 Qualification

To investigate the qualification four categories were made that is Bachelors', Masters', MS/MPhil, and Ph.D. The majority of the school teachers that 31.8% were at the Master's level of education, 30.7% were Bachelor's degree holders, 27.6% were MS/M.Phil. Degree holders and a few respondents that are 9.2% were Ph.D. degree holders. This demographic division exhibit the scenario of school setting and criteria that at school level there is a small percentage of people with higher education however the master level of education is considered to be more common for the school system in Pakistan. Although, the portion of PhDs was limited still their existence at the basic level was surprising, on inquiry we found that majority was owing to these private schools like business and a few were working temporarily.

TABLE 3.3: Frequency by Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor	87	30.7
Master	90	31.8
MS/M.Phil.	78	27.6
PhD	26	9.2
Total	283	100

3.3.4 Experience

In the experience category, the majority of the population had experienced between 0-5 years with a percentage of 34.3%, whereas 29.0% had experienced between 6-10 years, 19.8% had between 11-16 years and 9.2% had 17-22 years. A small part of selected populations that is only 3.9% of respondents claimed that they have experienced between 23-28 years and the same percentage 3.9% claimed more than 29 years of experience in the school. Based on the data collected from the respondents the result is presented in tabular form along with the total percentage and frequencies.

TABLE 3.4: Frequency by Experience

Experience	Frequency	Percent
0-5	97	34.3
06-10	82	29
11-16	56	19.8
17-22	26	9.2
23-28	11	3.9
29 and above	11	3.9
Total	283	100

3.4 Instrumentation

For data collection, the adopted questionnaires were used. Four demographic variables that mainly include information of participant's age, gender, experience, and qualification were part of the questionnaire. However other major variables of study include perception of politics, workplace ostracism, knowledge hiding, psychological hardiness, and creative performance. For accurate results self-reported responses were used.

3.4.1 Scales and Measures

The credible and authentic sources were used to adopt all scales and measures. On account of testability in other settings, face validity was ensured. However, a summary of scales is given below:

3.4.2 Perception of Politics

Perception of politics was measured by using 15 items scale, developed by Kacmar & Carlson (1997). According to Kacmar et al. (1997), an employee's perception of politics gives a comprehensive explanation of the extent to which politics exist in an organization. The rating was given on a seven-point Likert scale ranging

from 1 (Never) to 7(Always). A sample item included in the scale was “People in this organization attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down”.

3.4.3 Workplace Ostracism

Workplace Ostracism was measured by using 12 items scale used by Bass, Cascio, and O’Connor (1974). The rating was given on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 7(Always). The sample item included in the scale was “Your greetings have gone unanswered at work”.

3.4.4 Knowledge Hiding

To investigate the idea of Knowledge hiding a 12-item scale developed by Connelly et al. (2012) was utilized. The rating was given on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 7(Always). A sample item in this scale is “In this incident, I pretended I did not know the information”.

3.4.5 Creative Performance

We used an 8-item scale developed by Zhou & George (2001) to measure the creative behavior of employees however three of the items were adapted from Scott and Bruce (1994). Rating given on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = not at all characteristic to 5 = very characteristic to rate the 13 behaviors of employees. A sample item in this scale is ”Suggests new ways to achieve goals or objectives”; ”Comes up with new and practical ideas to improve performance”.

3.4.6 Psychological Hardiness

We used a revised 14-item Dispositional Resilience Scale (DRS) by Bartone et al., (1989) to measure psychological hardiness. The rating was given on a four-point scale ranging from 1= (not at all true) to 4= (completely true). The sample item included in the scale is “Most of my life gets spent doing things that are meaningful.”

TABLE 3.5: Instruments

Variables	Scales	Items
Perception of Politics	Kacmar & Carlson (1997)	15
Workplace Ostracism	Bass, Cascio, & O'Connor (1974)	12
Knowledge Hiding	Connelly et al. (2012)	12
Creative Performance	Zhou & George (2001) & Scott and Bruce (1994)	8
Psychological Hardiness	Dispositional Resilience Scale (DRS-15) Bartone et al., (1989)	14

3.5 Statistical Tool

To check the relationship between variables Spss 22 was used. Correlation and regression analysis was performed. In the present study perception of politics is an independent variable whereas creative performance is taken as the dependent variable. Knowledge hiding and workplace ostracism are mediators whereas psychological hardiness is a moderator in the present study. To check the mediation Process Hayes's Model 6 was conducted and to check the moderation Process Hayes's Model 1 was used. Further to check the reliability and validity of the research, path analysis, Descriptive mean, Correlation was performed. While AMOS 22 was used to identify fit statistics of data through CFA.

3.6 Pilot Testing

To prevent the risk of wastage of resources like money and time pilot testing was done before analysis. On the initial 40 responses, a pilot testing was conducted to see whether respondents understand these constructs well or not. On obtaining the required statistics we proceeded for further data collection. Cronbach alpha is mostly used by researchers to check the reliability as it gives information about the variable's internal consistency.

3.6.1 Reliability Analysis of the Scales Used

The purpose of assessing the reliability is that we are using the same scales and items that are generating reliable and valid results repeatedly. In the present study reliability test was conducted through Cronbach alpha and the results revealed all variables' internal reliability. Cronbach alpha standard scale ranges from 0 to 1 in which higher value near 1 exhibit that scale has greater reliability to investigate the proposed relationship. However, results show that a relationship keeps going among variables as our values of Cronbach alpha for all variables are above 0.7 is near to 1 which is considered to be more reliable and consistent. Table 3.6, exhibits all Cronbach alpha scales ratings analyzed for reliability.

TABLE 3.6: Scale Reliabilities

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Items
Perception of Politics	0.934	15
Workplace Ostracism	0.971	12
Knowledge Hiding	0.852	12
Creative Performance	0.937	8
Psychological Hardiness	0.962	14

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis exhibits the mean descriptive values through various statistical tools. For all variables that is perception of politics, workplace ostracism, knowledge hiding, creative performance, and psychological hardiness descriptive were calculated by using SPSS. If the mean values are higher than it means respondents seem to agree with the proposed questions and if the values are lower it means the individual seems to disagree with the proposed variables.

TABLE 4.1: Descriptive Analysis

Variables	Sample	Mean	S. Division
Perception of politics (IV)	283	4.873	1.955
Workplace Ostracism (Med)	283	4.764	1.796
Knowledge Hiding (Med)	283	3.663	1.152
Creative Performance (DV)	283	3.044	0.984
Psychological Hardiness (Mod)	283	3.105	0.725

Complete information of all variables is given in tables. The statistical analysis shows that perception of politics has a mean value of 4.873, workplace ostracism has a mean value of 4.764, and knowledge hiding has a mean value of 3.663. Furthermore, the mean value calculated for creative performance was 3.044 and for psychological hardiness it was about 3.105. The results for all values show that these values are higher than the least acceptable values therefore we can say that respondents seem to be more towards the agree side.

4.2 Validity Analysis

In the present research confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to validate the theoretical model.

4.2.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

For the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), AMOS 22 was used. It is a four-factor model. In the initial model, values were according to the desired scale therefore the further analysis went easy to work with. The standard value was greater than 0.9 as it shows a good fit for the model. Thus, we can proceed with the data analysis.

TABLE 4.2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Measurement Model

Model	CMIN/DF	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	IFI
Initial Model	2804.489	0.046	0.941	0.938	0.941

4.2.2 Measurement Model

To prove the validity of the proposed model we conducted CFA (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988). There were five variables involved in the model that include perception of politics, workplace ostracism, knowledge hiding, creative performance,

and psychological hardiness. In CFA getting the values above standard values is considered to be a good fit model.

The main components included in this analysis are the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), the incremental fit index (IFI), and the root mean square of approximation (RMSEA). The initial values meet the criteria therefore there was no need to make any modification as all required values were up to the threshold. The values of the comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and incremental fit index (IFI) were greater than 0.9.

Further, the standard value for root means square is less than 0 .05 however in our model we get RMSEA of about 0.046. All four values are up to the mark that makes our model the best fit model. Overall, we can say the values evaluate that the four-factor model exhibit excellent model fit.

4.3 Control Variable

For control variables, a one-way ANOVA test was applied to see the impact of demographic variables on the dependent variable that is creative performance. The results of the one-way ANOVA test showed that all demographic variables including gender, age, qualification, and experience were insignificant on the creative performance which is a dependent variable. This result lets us independently analyze the proposed relationships.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

To investigate the relationship between all variables correlation analysis was conducted. The Pearson correlation analysis assists to determine the robustness of the relationships among variables. It ranges from -0.1 to +0.1. If the relationship appeared with a positive sign it means that variables are moving in the same direction whereas the negative sign indicates a negative relationship between variables. If the value lies between the range of 0.1 to 0.2 there is a weak correlation but if

the value range goes above 0.3 there will be a greater correlation among variables, however, a value between 0.3 to 0.5 is considered to be a good correlation.

In the table given below results of correlation exhibit significant positive relationships of perception of politics with workplace ostracism ($r = .597^{**}$ at $p < 0.01$), knowledge hiding ($r = .520^{**}$ at $p < 0.01$), and psychological hardiness ($r = .354^{**}$ at $p < 0.01$). The correlation of POP with creative performance was negative ($r = -.450^{**}$ $p < 0.01$). Similarly, the analysis of workplace ostracism shows its significant positive relationship with knowledge hiding ($r = .469^{**}$ at $p < 0.01$) and psychological hardiness ($r = .343^{**}$ $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, the results show a significant negative correlation of workplace ostracism with creative performance ($r = -.490^{**}$ at $p < 0.01$).

While analyzing knowledge hiding we find its significant positive correlation with psychological hardiness ($r = .422^{**}$ at $p < 0.01$) and a significant negative correlation with a creative performance ($r = -.605^{**}$ at $p < 0.01$). Similarly, a significant negative correlation of creative performance with psychological hardiness was found ($r = -.519^{**}$ at $p < 0.01$). The overall interpretation of correlation evaluated that all variables have a significant relationship with each other and all these relationships seem to be strong as per the values of Pearson's coefficient.

TABLE 4.3: Correlation

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Perception of Politics (IV)	1				
Workplace Ostracism (DV)	.597**	1			
Knowledge Hiding (Med)	.520**	.469**	1		
Creative Performance (Med)	-.450**	-.490**	-.605**	1	
Psychological Hardiness (Mod)	.354**	.343**	.422**	-.519**	1

TABLE 4.4: Direct and Indirect Effect

Direct Effect	β	S.E	P	LLCI	ULCI
Perception of Politics → Creative Performance	-0.037	0.03	0.223	-0.096	0.022
Perception of Politics → Workplace Ostracism	0.548	0.043	0.000	0.462	0.635
Workplace Ostracism → Knowledge Hiding	0.158	0.039	0.000	0.08	0.236
Knowledge Hiding → Creative Performance	-0.39	0.046	0.000	-0.482	-0.298
Indirect Effect	β	S.E	P	LLC	LUCI
Perception of politics → Workplace ostracism → Creative performance	-0.069	0.022	0.000	-0.113	-0.027
Perception of politics → Knowledge hiding → Creative Performance	-0.085	0.02	0.000	-0.129	-0.049
Perception of politics → Workplace ostracism → Knowledge hiding → Creative Performance	-0.034	0.013	0.000	-0.062	-0.012

$N=283$, $*p<.05$, $**p<.01$, $S.E=$ Standard Error, $LL=$ Lower Limit, $UL=$ Upper Limit.

4.4.1 Regression Analysis

To indicate a causal relationship between independent and dependent variables regression analysis is applied. In the present study, we conducted multiple regression, process macro by Andrew F Hayes (2013) for mediating and moderating relationships.

Table 4.4 provides a summary of all results and the significance level of the relationships among proposed hypotheses. It includes regression coefficient value, significance value, S.E, LLCI, and ULCI. Both direct and indirect forms of relationship are given in the table. However, for mediation regression Process Hayes' model 6 was used and for moderation regression Process Hayes' model 1 was used.

Hypothesis 1: Perception of politics is negatively related to creative performance.

The regression analysis for hypothesis 1 indicates that an insignificant negative relationship exists between perception of politics and creative performance. The β value or regression coefficient is $-.037$ whereas the p-value is 0.223 . The negative sign coefficient (β) indicates the negative relationship and the 0.223 p-values indicate that the relationship is not significant. It means with an increase in perception of politics will not directly affect the creative performance of employees. Based on these findings hypothesis 1 is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: Perception of politics is positively related to workplace ostracism.

The regression analysis demonstrates the relationship of perception of politics with workplace ostracism. The value of coefficient $\beta = .5488$ with a positive sign means there is a positive relationship between both variables. Furthermore, the p-value for this link is 0.000 , which means that this relation is significant. Hence these results validate the acceptance of the second hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3: Workplace ostracism positively related to knowledge hiding.

In this relationship, workplace ostracism acts as a mediator between the perception of politics and knowledge hiding. The results indicate that the value of the regression coefficient for workplace ostracism is $\beta=.1585$ which is positive with a p-value of 0.0001. This shows that there is positive relations exist between workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding. The more is workplace ostracism the more is knowledge hiding, hence it validates the acceptance of hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4: Knowledge hiding is negatively related to creative performance.

The regression analysis finds out the value of regression coefficient for the relationship between knowledge hiding and creative performance which is $\beta= -.3908$ with a p-value of 0.000. The β value is negative demonstrating that there is a negative relationship exist between knowledge hiding and creative performance. However, the 0.000 p-values indicate that the negative relationship among variables is significant. It means more knowledge hiding will lead to less creative performance however the significance of this link validates our hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 5: Workplace ostracism mediates the relationship between Perception of politics and knowledge hiding.

The regression analysis shows that by demonstration of workplace ostracism between the perception of politics and knowledge hiding, whereas the β value for workplace ostracism for this relationship is .158 with a p-value of 0.000. The value is positive which shows that workplace ostracism mediates between POP and knowledge hiding. It means in the presence of workplace ostracism positive relationship of perception of politics will be strengthened with that of knowledge hiding. In this case, the p-value is 0.001 which proves to be a significant positive relationship among variables and leads us towards the acceptance of hypothesis 5.

Hypothesis 6: Knowledge hiding mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and creative performance.

The results of the analysis indicate that workplace ostracism is negatively related to the creative performance of employees. This negative significant relationship

between workplace ostracism and creativity is mediated by knowledge because the β value of knowledge hiding in this relationship is -.390 whereas the p-value is 0.000. A p-value of 0.000 confirms that the mediation of KH between WO and creative performance is significant. It means knowledge hiding at the workplace intensifies the negative impact of workplace ostracism on creative performance. Hence it validates the acceptance of hypothesis 6.

Hypothesis 7: Relationship between Perception of politics and creative performance is sequentially mediated by workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding.

The analysis highlighted the direct and indirect effect of perception of politics on creative performance. In this process workplace, ostracism and knowledge hiding operate as a mediator between both variables. The analysis gives the following effect key for this relationship. In the model perception of politics affect workplace ostracism that ultimately affects enhance knowledge hiding that ultimately leads to reduced creative performance. The results validate the sequential mediation of workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding between the perception of politics and workplace ostracism. Based on the analysis our hypothesis is valid for acceptance.

Hypothesis 8: Psychological hardiness is moderating the relationship between perception of politics and creative performance.

In the proposed hypothesis there was a moderating effect of psychological hardiness between the perception of politics and creative performance, however, results of the moderation regression analysis revealed an insignificant relation, as the p-value is .0876 which is above the standard value of significance. According to these results, psychological hardiness does not moderate the relationship between perception of politics and creative performance.

TABLE 4.5: Moderation Effect

Direct Effect	β	S.E	p	LLCI	ULCI
Psychological Hardiness	0.5488	0.0439	0.0876	-0.0086	0.1246

Further, the table demonstrates the cause of this rejection that is values of LLCI and ULCI both have opposite signs that show that there is no moderation of psychological hardiness between POP and creative performance. Hence, based on these results we conclude that hypothesis 8 is rejected.

4.5 Summary of Accepted/ Rejected Hypotheses

TABLE 4.6: Summary of Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Statements	Results
H1	Perception of politics is negatively related to creative performance.	Rejected
H2	Perception of politics is positively related to workplace ostracism.	Accepted
H3	Workplace ostracism is positively related to knowledge hiding.	Accepted
H4	Knowledge hiding is negatively related to creative performance.	Accepted
H5	Workplace ostracism mediates the relationship between perception of politics and knowledge hiding.	Accepted
H6	Knowledge hiding mediates the relationship between workplace ostracism and creative performance.	Accepted

H7	The relationship between Perception of politics and creative performance is sequentially mediated by workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding.	Accepted
H8	Psychological hardiness is moderating the relationship between perception of politics and creative performance.	Rejected

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

This part of the study is based on the outcomes of the study. For studying the antecedents, outcomes, and consequences of workplace ostracism we proposed various variables, and study their impact in the presence of a personality trait that is psychological hardiness. The study was conducted in the education sector of Pakistan where we mainly collected data from school teachers, where most of the faculty was master's degree holder whereas a few teachers were Ph.D. degree holder, however, the high level of unemployment and financial issues have been identified for the Ph.D. teachers in schools. This part elaborates on the results of the proposed hypothesis. All of the arguments of the study are supported by the literature that leads to practical and theoretical implications for the school systems in Pakistan.

Furthermore, research also carries a few gaps for which it recommends the future directions for upcoming researchers in the given field. Towards an end, this research suggests some useful recommendations in implications through which school administration can avoid the occurrence of workplace ostracism. Most importantly the study pointed out the perception of politics as a major antecedent, knowledge hiding as a consequence, and low creative performance as an outcome of workplace ostracism.

The study mainly emphasizes identifying the factors that lead schools staff towards reduced creative performance so that organizations can avoid those to be actively operated. By highlighting the mediation of workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding the study proposed a sequential mechanism that reduces creative performance. Furthermore, these organizational issues were discussed in the context of positive personality traits to see their effect on overall outcomes. Based on all these assumptions the theoretical framework of the study was developed. The theoretical framework was generated based on which we identified that there is the adverse negative effect of perception of politics in an organizational environment that ultimately provokes various other organizational problems. However, the proposed psychological hardiness was not found to be significantly affecting the relationship between perception of politics and workplace ostracism. Overall in this chapter, the study is briefly summarized.

5.1.1 Hypothesis No 1: Perception of Politics Negatively Affects Creative Performance

The proposed hypothesis stated a negative relationship between perception of politics and creative performance however the analysis of results obtained from a respondent in real-time proved it to be a false statement. Because the relationship was not significant and results did not support the hypothesis. Although our hypothesis is rejected and perception of politics does not directly affect creative performance. There can be various reasons for this rejection as we have elaborated in the study through the support of literature perception of politics leads to a sequence of negative events happen that ultimately results in negative outcomes in organizations that mainly decrease creative performance.

As we know the perception of politics does have its impact on creativity and performance but in this case, it is not directly linked with employees' output, instead, it is affecting creative performance through creating a chain of negative events that eventually result in decreased creative performance. Firstly when an employee perceives politics in the organizational environment he finds himself to be ostracized or starts to ostracize others. Then both of these ostracism forms

lead to knowledge hiding. Then eventually knowledge hiding results in a decreased creative performance. So we can say that perception of politics is negatively related to creative performance in a way that it creates a chain of negative consequences and then through those negative factors it affects creative performance, which means it does not directly affect creative performance.

5.1.2 Hypothesis 2: Perception of Politics is Positively Related to Workplace Ostracism

Perception of politics is positively related to workplace ostracism and the result of the study proves this correlation among both variables. Literature has widely supported that if there is a higher level of perception of politics there is a greater level of workplace ostracism. Furthermore, we can elaborate that the ultimate result of the perception of politics can be workplace ostracism. Perception of politics is considered to be a major antecedent of workplace ostracism. When people perceive that there is politics in the organization they tend to defend their self-interest at the cost of others and start to ostracize others. The other category is for those who feel being ostracized in the political organizational environment. Both situations can lead to an adverse situation for the organization.

5.1.3 Hypothesis 3: Workplace Ostracism Positively Related to Knowledge Hiding

The study's analysis proves a positive relation existing between workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding and the hypothesis got accepted. In an ostracized workplace, a group of people tends to exclude the other in day-to-day activities. One group that is ostracizing the other is dominant over the other therefore this situation leads the submissive to feel less participative towards the company's goal achievement. This will ultimately cause an increased level of knowledge hiding from both groups. In the case of the first group, people include only desired individuals with whom they are concerned and share knowledge only with their desired group of people. On the other side of the group if people who are being

ostracized tend to respond to the negative behaviors that they are facing in organizations. If they have any kind of useful information they would be reluctant to share it with others because they don't want to lose the only edge that they have based on their knowledge. Usually ostracized workplace is a major factor that brings about an increased level of knowledge hiding. Hence it proves the acceptance of hypothesis 3.

5.1.4 Hypothesis 4: Knowledge Hiding is Negatively Related to Creative Performance

Knowledge hiding is an ultimate consequence of political and ostracized workplaces that make up a negative chain of events in an organization. All these negative factors collectively bring a decline in the organizational outcome whereas the present study focuses on a major outcome that is creative performance. When the employees don't have appropriate knowledge regarding their job roles their efficiency will be affected, therefore literature supports the notion that an increased level of knowledge hiding in organizations results in a decreased level of creative performance. Based on the analysis and significant value for the relationship there is a negative relationship between knowledge hiding with creative performance, it means a great level of knowledge hiding will have a great level of reduced creative performance, hence hypothesis 4 got accepted.

5.1.5 Hypothesis 5: Workplace Ostracism Mediates the Relationship between Perception of Politics and Knowledge Hiding

The proposed model of mediation of workplace ostracism between the perception of politics and knowledge hiding got accepted as the values seem to be significant and support the thesis. Furthermore, literature has wide implications in terms of workplace ostracism contribution in enhancing the overall negative impact of the relationship. According to the results analyzed it is evaluated that the presence

of workplace ostracism intensifies the negative effect of perception of politics on knowledge hiding, and hence the proposed hypothesis got accepted.

Most employees perceive their environment as politically charged, in response, they form networks or in groups and try to facilitate that in all possible ways. While on the contrary, they ostracized undesirable coworkers from that group. The consequences of these attitudes and behaviors are so strange that knowledge hiding becomes a habit. Although on moral grounds it is not justifiable that individuals have some knowledge which they can share i.e., material, methodologies, updated case studies, etc by one way or another staff members perceive it logically and try to even prove it. Thus, based on this empirical evidence we can justify the assumption that workplace ostracism has appeared as an effective explanatory mechanism in this study.

5.1.6 Hypothesis 6: Knowledge Hiding Mediates the Relationship between Workplace Ostracism and Creative Performance

Knowledge hiding as a mediator between workplace ostracism and creative performance behave in a way that increases the negative effects of Knowledge hiding on the dependent variable. The overall relationship based on which model was plotted is negative that ultimately resulting in a decreased creative performance. These results lead us towards the acceptance of hypothesis 6.

The basis reason for a moderate level of performance is that majority of the staff has degree-related knowledge but might not be aware of teaching methodologies, which might contribute to their creative performance. But the basic reason becomes clear through the proposed underlying explanatory mechanism that is knowledge hiding. If existing staff members become cooperative and share their expertise with everyone in their circle, things might improve. But employees prefer to hide knowledge, just share it with a few of their close members and ingroup individuals. The rest of the staff feels alienated and shows a low level of creative performance.

5.1.7 Hypothesis 7: Relationship between Perception of Politics and Creative Performance is Sequentially Mediated by Workplace Ostracism and Knowledge Hiding

The results indicated a sequential mediation process between perceptions of politics and creative performance. It goes through a chain of events in which POP leads to initiate ostracizing behaviors in organizations that ultimately give rise to knowledge hiding and ultimately, the creative performance of employees got reduced. There is a significant mediation relationship between both variables that support the hypothesis for acceptance.

On the logical ground, it is justifiable, as by one way or another employees react as per their perceptions of politics. sometimes they perceive that few favorites are accommodated for extra benefits, courses, or training and they are ostracized. In response, they show a bit of negativity through their attitudes and behaviors. Mostly, in form of knowledge hiding to retain an edge over others. Sometimes they show an average level of performance to just ensure their continuity of job in organizations. Simultaneously try to justify it as a reaction to POP. Thus based on this empirical evidence we can justify this sequential mediatory mechanism that POP doesn't directly affect performance but generates a series of reactionary behaviors that ultimately lower employee performance.

5.1.8 Hypothesis 8: Psychological Hardiness is Moderating the Relationship between Perception of Politics and Creative Performance

According to the analysis and interpretation of the results, psychological hardiness does not moderate the relationship between perception of politics and creative performance. Although the hypothesis has been rejected the overall effect of hardiness to assist the employees to overcome the negative effects of stressful situations. If employees have this trait they remain calm in a tough situation.

They hypothesis couldn't get support. We can try to justify it on logical grounds. The reason might be the majority of respondents weren't aware of their psychological strength. Or they might never perceive things in that logical pattern. If they know that psychologically hard people can become more active while coping with the challenges. But we might have some contextual or cultural issues. Usually, school teachers came from different background with different values, and sometimes they prefer to follow defined traditional norms and seems to be hesitant towards stressful situations. Furthermore in school administration, there are defined rules and regulations that all of the staff members have to follow therefore while following a given pattern it may not be possible for individuals to deal differently.

Although, in previous studies, it appeared as an effective moderator for certain relationships. For example, it appeared as a major interpersonal interaction with workplace ostracism and resulted in reducing the negative effects of employees' service sabotage (Bao, Xing & GongXing, 2019). Another study was conducted in a hostile workplace and it came up with some buffering effects (Nisar, Rehman & Sethi, 2021). This literature supports our view that psychological hardiness can buffer negative relationships.

5.2 Research Implications

5.2.1 Theoretical Implications

The study has several theoretical implications to contribute in academia considerably. It validates the relationship between the perception of politics and the creative performance of employees. Further, the study elaborates the consequences of personality traits in the context of perception of politics. Our study postulates that there is a negative relation between POP and creative performance but if there are strong personality traits the negative relation can be minimized. It manifests that employees with positive personal values and high morals counterbalance the negativity of POP.

Moreover, the study highlighted the antecedents, consequences, and outcomes of workplace ostracism. Spillover theory is used to elaborate on the spillover effects of POP and workplace ostracism that ultimately affect the other variables. Being a detrimental impeding factor workplace ostracism inadequately impacts creative performance and ultimately leads to organizational poor performance. The study spotlighted a major consequence of WO that is knowledge hiding that ultimately leads to low productivity and creative performance.

5.2.2 Practical Implications

The study offers various practical implications in the education sector, especially for school teachers that can easily be applied in a school setting. Perception of politics is an unfavorable antecedent of workplace ostracism so it results in an adverse effect on organizational performance, therefore, the school administration should take initiatives to eradicate the root cause of the perception of politics. In schools, job and task-related factors should be simplified. School administration should ensure the involvement of every single organizational member to avoid ostracism.

Teachers with positive personality characteristics need to be appointed as it diminishes the negativities of unfavorable variables. Training sessions must be introduced to make employees aware of the causes and outcomes of workplace ostracism. Employees' objectives must be under the organizational objective to nullify the conception of working for self-interest. The school administration should encourage individuals with strong and moral personal values to motivate the other staff. Overall the study seems to be a useful addition in literature to explore various causes of decreased creative performance. It has been assessed that employees with positive reciprocity norms seem to be an important source therefore educational institutes can overthrow the adverse effects of POP and workplace ostracism by encouraging positive norms and discouraging negative habits.

It also suggests the ways through which the decline in creative performance can be overcome. Additionally, promoting an equal opportunity system for all organizational members can turn the whole cycle.

5.3 Limitations and Future Direction

The study also comprised of certain limitations and future directions that must be taken under consideration while generalizing the results. We have used self-reporting measures due to time constraints, future studies can use a dyadic response for more genuine opinion. Secondly, our study is based on cross-sectional data collection and the possibility that after some time responses might be changed. Therefore longitudinal research design can also be administered for future research. Furthermore, the study was conducted in the education sector of Pakistan, where the main targeted area was school-level educational institutes. Other sectors even in higher education of the same sector might have variations in the results so the study can be conducted in other sectors with a different setting.

The study was conducted irrespective of cultural perspective, however, it is assumed that workplace ostracism is more likely to occur in countries with high power distance cultures; like Pakistan. It is because among organizational members there is a common practice of unequal power distribution that leads to illicit use of authority and people tend to include people of their choice and exclude those they are not concerned with. However, it is the probability that studying the same relationship in a society with a low power distance approach might be different as there is low power distance and it emphasizes the group developed over the individuals. So it would be a great addition to the literature to study the antecedents, consequences, and outcomes of workplace ostracism in a cultural context.

Meanwhile, the present study considers only a single personality trait that is psychological hardiness while investigating the effect of perception of politics on employees' creative performance however different personality traits affect the behaviors and actions differently. Future researchers can consider other personality traits as moderators. Further studies can consider other personality traits or variables for a variety of results with the same model. Additionally, spiritual intelligence enables an employee to access higher values and aspects so it can also be considered as a moderator for the proposed model and relationships.

5.4 Conclusion

The present study emphasizes exploring the antecedents, consequences, and outcomes of workplace ostracism while taking psychological hardiness as a moderator. The major antecedent of the workplace attitudes and behaviors was the perception of politics. Furthermore, the resultant outcomes like workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding were examined, and then their impact on the consequence was identified.

According to the analysis and results, workplace ostracism is not a self-created phenomenon but is caused by an antecedent which is the perception of politics. A great level of POP lets employees feel being ostracized or they start to ostracize others in a political environment that can cause numerous other organizational problems.

Perception of politics is a variable that activates other negative factors in an organization. Similarly, there is a greater probability of knowledge hiding in an ostracized and politically charged workplace. When people are not getting adequate acknowledgment, resources and importance then the ultimate outcomes can be adverse for the organizational setting. In the present study, we focus on creative performance as the final consequence of these negative workplace factors and found that there is significant negative relation of creative performance with other variables.

It means an increased level of any of these factors will eventually result in a decreased level of creative performance of employees. The research was conducted in schools of Pakistan and the purpose of selecting in the education sector was that there is a greater probability to get numerous forms of behaviors and norms so we could conveniently get the outcomes-based results in the context of workplace ostracism and the personality trait that is psychological hardiness.

The study provides the various theoretical and practical implications that can be used to avoid the negative outcomes so that the schools can terminate the sequence of negative events that occurs due to employees' perceptions. The study used spillover theory to elaborate the spillover effects of one variable on another

variable. However, with certain limitations study also provides future directions to be explored by upcoming researchers.

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Appendix-A

Questionnaire

Dear Respondent

I am a student of MS Management Science from Capital University of Science and Technology Islamabad. I am surveying to investigate the “Antecedents, Outcomes, and Consequences of Workplace Ostracism: Psychological Hardiness as Moderator, a Comprehensive Study in the Education Sector of Pakistan”. For this purpose, I have prepared the following questionnaire and request you to please fill given questions. Your participation in this research will be highly appreciated by keeping your responses confidential.

Sincerely,

Madiha Abid,

MS, Research Scholar,

Faculty of Management and Social Sciences,

Capital University Science and Technology, Islamabad.

Section 1: Demographics

Gender	1- Male 2- Female
Age(years)	1(18-25), 2 (26-33), 3 (34-41), 4 (42-49), 5 (50 and above)
Qualification	1(Bachelor), 2 (Master), 3 (MS/M.Phil.), 4 (PhD)
Experience	1 (0–5), 2 (6–10), 3 (11-16), 4 (17-22), 5 (23-28), 6 (29 and above)
Designation	1 (Lecturer), 2 (Assistant Professor), 3 (Associate Professor), 4 (Professor)

Section 2: Workplace Ostracism

Please provide feedback that describes your belief about your work in general:

The scale ranges from 1= Never, 2= Once in a while, 3= Sometimes, 4= fairly often, 5= Often, 6= constantly, 7= Always

Sr. No	Statement							
1	Others ignored you at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Others left the area when you entered.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Your greetings have gone unanswered at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	You involuntarily sat alone in a crowded lunchroom at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	Others avoided you at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	You noticed others would not look at you at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	Others at work shut you out of the conversation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	Others refused to talk to you at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9	Others at work did not invite you or ask you if you wanted anything when they went out for a coffee break.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	You have been included in conversations at work (reverse coded).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	Others at work stopped talking to you.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	You had to be the one to start a conversation to be social at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 3: Perception of Politics

Please provide feedback that describes your belief about your work in general:

The scale ranges from 1= Never, 2= Once in a while, 3= Sometimes, 4= fairly often, 5= Often, 6= constantly, 7= Always

Sr. No	Statement							
1	People in this organization attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down.	1	2	3	2	3	4	5
2	There has always been an influential group in this department that no one ever crosses.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Employees are encouraged to speak out frankly even when they are critical of well-established ideas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	There is no place for yes-men around here; good ideas are desired even if it means disagreeing with superiors.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	Agreeing with powerful others is the best alternative in this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	It is best not to rock the boat in this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7	Sometimes it is easier to remain quiet than to fight the system.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	Telling others what they want to hear is sometimes better than telling the truth.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	It is safer to think what you are told than to make up your mind.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	Since I have worked in this department, I have never seen the pay and promotion policies applied politically.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	I can't remember when a person received a pay increase or promotion that was inconsistent with the published policies.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	None of the raises I have received are consistent with the policies on how raises should be determined.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	The stated pay and promotion policies have nothing to do with how pay raises and promotions are determined.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	When it comes to paying raises and promotion decisions, policies are irrelevant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	Promotions around here are not valued much because how they are determined is so political.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 4: Knowledge Hiding

Please provide feedback that describes your belief about your work in general:

The scale ranges from 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neither Agree/nor Disagree, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

Sr. No	Statement					
1	I agree to help him/her but never really intend to.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I agree to help him/her but instead, give him/her information different from what s/he wanted.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I tell him/her that I would help him/her out later but stall as much as possible	1	2	3	4	5
4	I offer him/her some other information instead of what he/she wants	1	2	3	4	5
5	I pretend that I do not know the information	1	2	3	4	5
6	I say that I do not know. even though I do	1	2	3	4	5
7	I pretend I do not know what s/he was talking about	1	2	3	4	5
8	I say that I am not very knowledgeable about the topic	1	2	3	4	5
9	I explain that I would like to tell him/her but was not supposed to	1	2	3	4	5
10	I explain that the information is confidential and only available to people on a particular project	1	2	3	4	5
11	I tell him/her that my boss would not let anyone share this knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
12	I say that I would not answer his/her questions	1	2	3	4	5

Section 5: Creative Performance

Please provide feedback that describes your belief about your work in general:

The scale ranges from 1 = not at all characteristic to 5 = very characteristic.

Sr. No	Statement					

1	Comes up with new and practical ideas to improve performance.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Searches out new technologies, processes, techniques, and/or product ideas	1	2	3	4	5
3	Suggests new ways to increase quality, Is a good source of creative ideas	1	2	3	4	5
4	Not afraid to take risks, Promotes and champions ideas to others	1	2	3	4	5
5	Exhibits creativity on the job when allowed,	1	2	3	4	5
6	Develops adequate plans and schedules for the implementation of new ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Often has new and innovative ideas, Comes up with creative solutions to problems	1	2	3	4	5
8	Often has a fresh approach to problems, suggests new ways of performing work tasks.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 6: Psychological Hardiness

Please provide feedback that describes your belief about your work in general:

The scale ranges from 1 =Not at all true; 2 = A little true; 3 = Quite true; 4 = Completely true

Sr. No	Statement				
1	Most of my life gets spent doing things that are meaningful.	1	2	3	4
2	By working hard you can nearly always achieve your goals	1	2	3	4
3	I don't like to make changes in my regular activities	1	2	3	4
4	I feel that my life is somewhat empty of meaning.	1	2	3	4

5	Changes in routine are interesting to me.	1	2	3	4
6	How things go in my life depends on my own actions	1	2	3	4
7	I really look forward to my work activities	1	2	3	4
8	I don't think there's much I can do to influence my own future.	1	2	3	4
9	I enjoy the challenge when I have to do more than one thing at a time.	1	2	3	4
10	Most days, life is really interesting and exciting for me.	1	2	3	4
11	It bothers me when my daily routine gets interrupted.	1	2	3	4
12	It is up to me to decide how the rest of my life will be	1	2	3	4
13	Life in general is boring for me	1	2	3	4
14	I like having a daily schedule that doesn't change very much	1	2	3	4