



Exploring the Impact of Supervisor Knowledge Hiding on Supervisee Job Performance in the Manufacturing Industry: A Moderated Mediation Model

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Previous studies indicate that knowledge hiding has adverse impact on subordinate performance. The current study investigates how SKH (supervisor knowledge hiding) effects on SJP (supervisee job performance) in manufacturing industry. Furthermore, how alleviate this adverse impact on supervisee job performance. By integrating conservation of resource (COR) theory, we hypothesize that SKH adverse impact on SJP can impede through SJBPO (supervisee job-based PO) and this adverse influence being contingent on SCSE (supervisee core self-evaluation).

Design/Methodology/Approach: A questionnaire was administered to gather the responses. The study utilized the convenience sampling technique to select 287 supervisees from the manufacturing industry in Southern Punjab, Pakistan. The study utilized Smart-PLS and SPSS as its method of analysis.

Findings: Current study results offer contributions towards existing literature on SKH and SJP and as well providing practical and theoretical implications.

Implications/Originality/Value: Therefore, the study suggests that in order to improve the performance of their subordinates, the manufacturing industry should implement the study's conclusions.



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Introduction

Knowledge management is crucial to every organization and has an impact on the both performance of the workforce and for organization (Omotayo et al., 2024). KH contributes a threat towards organizational productivity and subordinate performance. KH is the deliberate concealing of unneeded information and knowledge, typically without considering that how useful it is to others (Qiao et al., 2023). It's has also been found that supervisor engaged in concealing of

knowledge when s/he considers various potential costs linked with sharing their knowledge i.e., loss of status power (Chatterjee et al., 2021), departmental competition and prosocial competition (Rasheed et al., 2022), threat of job security (Serenko & Bontis, 2016). Antecedents showed that knowledge hiding decline the performance in workplace (Kakada, 2023). KH is “an intentional attempt by an individual to withhold or conceal the knowledge that has been requested by another person” (Arain et al., 2020; Connelly et al., 2012). KH has three distinct aspects. The first aspect of KH is *playing dumb*, when it seems that the concealer is unaware of the facts, they desire (Bari et al., 2020); in the second aspect, the *evasive hiding* occurs when a knowledge hider intentionally withholds information and makes false promises of providing it in the future. In the third aspect, the *rationalized hiding* happens when a knowledge hider claims to be unable to offer the information due to a specific reason or organizational norms (Arain et al., 2020; Connelly et al., 2012a). Pushpakumari, (2008) defined performance as “the amounts to which an individual contributes to the achievement of the organization's objectives”. Suliman, (2001), explains that employee performance forms the cornerstone regarding the organizational success and effectiveness. Organizational performance, productivity, team work, efficiency may decrease when organizations encounter challenges due to fail to move smoothly the expertise, important information towards across departments and subordinates. A sense of PO fosters favorable outcomes for individual and organization both (Peng et al., 2015).

Research received little attention, in which supervisees develop a psychological attachment in the presence of SKH at workplace. "A state in which individuals perceive that the object of ownership (or a part of it) belongs to them (i.e., it is 'MINE')" is the definition of PO, according to (Pierce et al., 2003). PO acts as a powerful force that encourage and inspire the subordinate to perform excellent in their jobs (Batool et al., 2019), even in the context of knowledge hiding. Core self-evaluation is an appraisal of self-worth (Brunborg, 2008). The current study intends to emphasize SKH's harmful impact on SJP. Employees with high core self-evaluation can access their expertise, and capabilities positively (Zhang et al., 2014). Researchers find that core self-evaluation buffer the negative effect when individuals find themselves in negative situation (Kacmar et al., 2009). The study's context focuses on assessing the performance levels of subordinates in the manufacturing industry and sheds light on the factors and behaviors that contribute to the reduction in subordinate performance, as well as the factors that motivate subordinates to voluntarily engage in work and acquire knowledge.

Problem Statement

The manufacturing industry in Pakistan, faces unique challenges related to employee performance and management practices. One critical issue is the behavior of supervisors, specifically the phenomenon of SKH, which refers to the intentional withholding of important job-related information from subordinates (Connelly et al., 2012b). This practice can have detrimental effects on supervisee job performance, a core determinant of organizational success (Wang & Noe, 2010). Previous research has established that SKH negatively affects supervisee job performance (Janssen et al., 2004). The current study is to investigate the intricate impact of SKH on SJP through both direct and indirect paths. However, the mechanisms through which this impact occurs and potential moderating factors remain underexplored. This study proposes that SJBPO, a state in which employees sense ownership over their jobs (Pierce et al., 2001), mediates the link between SKH and SJP. Additionally, SCSE is proposed as a moderating factor that can weaken the negative relationship between SKH and SJPO. High levels of SCSE may buffer the adverse effects of SKH, thereby sustaining higher levels of PO and, consequently, better job performance.

Literature Review

Over the last decade of the twentieth century, organizations began to face a rapidly increasing need to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency (Tsai, 2018). Consequently, the notion of knowledge management has been officially presented and acknowledged as a significant managerial endeavor

(Wiig, 1997). In today's competitive era, knowledge is definitely the primary source (Anwer et al., 2024; Ahmad et al., 2023; Arshad et al., 2024; Junaid et al., 2023), that increase performance in manufacturing sector (Ahmad et al., 2023; Connelly & Zweig, 2015). However, research conducted by (Arain & Ashraf, et al., 2020), have redirected their attention to the "top-down" form of information concealment, which occurred within the hierarchical relationship between supervisors and their subordinates. Antecedents discovered that KH has a negative impact on job performance (Chatterjee et al., 2021), and on organization (Connelly et al., 2019).

The act of concealing knowledge within the structure of an organization has a deeply rooted historical background, dating back to the beginning of organizations (Connelly et al., 2012a). Deliberately keeping information or knowledge that other members of the organization have requested, is known as KH (Arain et al., 2020). To clarify the concept of information hiding, let's examine this example. Before the organization underwent a restructure, John was in charge of overseeing Mary. Several months before the reorganization, John renewed a substantial contract upon learning that Mary will take over his position. However, the agreement would end after the effective date of the restructuring. Subsequently, John clandestinely brought along this protracted agreement to his new job without informing Mary. John desires to retain ownership of the contract, regardless of whether his new position and duties necessitate it. Leaders, like John, establish a negative precedent for their employees when they behave in this manner. This hiding of knowledge may encompass a range of transgressions in addition to blatant misbehavior.

We argue that SKH decrease the supervisee performance level in the organization. There is very little work on knowledge hiding in relation to SJBPO, particularly within the manufacturing industry. This study primarily focuses on supervisee self-action at workplace. Job-based PO fosters favorable sentiments in individuals (Belk, 1988). The more an individual has influence over an object, the more it is regarded a part of the self (Furby, 1978). According to the literature, humans form a strong emotional bond with objects and establish a sense of ownership when they invest themselves in them (Lee & Chen, 2011). In the service sector, employee performance has direct impact on organizational performance (Babcock, 2004). A study (Arain et al., 2021), revealed that 2,700 individuals from more than 100 countries identified a negative workplace environment as one of the primary obstacles to job performance. The research suggests that core self-evaluation buffer the adverse effects at workplace (Brunborg, 2008). Having high levels of core self-evaluation can act as a protective barrier, increasing the ability of supervisees to bounce back from resource depletion and reducing the harmful effects of supervisor's KH on SJBPO (Van et al., 2004).

Our study investigation builds the conceptual framework and shape the research methodology. With an emphasis on methodology, key findings, limitations, and future study aims, the literature is presented chronologically.

Knowledge Hiding by Supervisor and Supervisee Job Performance in Manufacturing Industry

Liao et al., (2016), indicate that organization in today's dynamic market need to be innovative in their approach to ideation, dissemination, and implementation if they want to keep up with the competition. Proposed by (Connelly et al., 2012a), this idea has been around for a while and comes from knowledge management (Issac et al., 2021). KH can also be defined as a "lack of willingness to share knowledge with others" (Connelly et al., 2012a). Ford et al., (2008), when employees are willing to divulge little information while keeping other critical information under wraps, a situation known as "knowledge hiding" can arise. Zhang et al., (2023), argue that seniors may deliberately hide the indispensability information from their subordinates. Ghani et al., (2020), elucidate that knowledge hiding diminishes organizational performance, undermines working relationships, inhibits learning and growth, weak the knowledge gaps, and diminishes the

individual performance. Employees that experience workplace knowledge concealment may exhibit a lack of personal initiative and performance (Kakada, 2023), resulting in reduced levels of inventive job performance. Various research has shown that KH has a negative impact on the work atmosphere (Arain et al., 2020; Bari et al., 2020; Ghani et al., 2020; Jena & Swain, 2021; Kakada, 2023; Mahmood et al., 2023; Sukumaran & Lanke, 2021; Yuan et al., 2020; Z. Zhang & Min, 2023). This study indicates that supervisors in the manufacturing sector deliberately withhold information from their subordinates, resulting in a negative impact on the performance of the employees being supervised.

Hypotheses 1: Supervisor knowledge hiding is negatively associated with supervisee job performance in manufacturing industry of South Punjab, Pakistan.

Knowledge Hiding by Supervisor and Supervisee Job-based PO in Manufacturing Industry

A study conducted by Labafi, (2017), shown that individuals tend to conceal their expertise in order to preserve their existing benefits. Negative emotions like frustration, disappointment, or tension can have a big impact on employees' motivational dynamics that occur in response of knowledge hiding (Kakada, 2023; Peng et al., 2015). These negative emotional states may interfere with an employee's motivation to perform well at work, as well as their feeling of excitement and engagement with work (Avey et al., 2009). Moreover, negative emotions may hinder a person's ability to maintain motivation and focus on their responsibilities, which may lower their degree of job satisfaction (Pushpakumari, 2008), output, general performance (June, 2021), and make subordinate feel unsafe and threatened on the job. Brown et al., (2014), indicate that the PO's goal is to empower subordinates to develop a sense of ownership over their work, which leads to improved job performance in the workplace. PO acts as a motivator for subordinates, inspiring them to perform exceptionally well in their jobs (Van et al., 2004).

Hypotheses 2: Supervisor knowledge hiding is negatively associated with supervisee job-based psychological ownership in manufacturing industry of South Punjab, Pakistan.

Supervisee Job-based Psychological Ownership and Supervisee Job Performance in Manufacturing Industry

JBPO refers to employees' dedication and emotional investment in their work (Pierce et al., 2001). With strong PO individuals feel control, authority over their job and improve their overall performance (Liu et al., 2012). Individuals are more likely to perform at a high level when they feel a personal investment in their work (Olckers & Du Plessis, 2012). Md-Sidin et al., (2009), assert that PO has positive correlation with job performance. Past studies investigate the positive relation between psychological ownership and performance at workplace (Batool et al., 2023; Peng et al., 2015). The current study discovered that SJBPO has a favorable and substantial impact on an individual's performance.

Hypotheses 3: Supervisee job-based PO is positively associated with supervisee job performance in manufacturing industry of South Punjab, Pakistan.

Mediating Role of Supervisee Job-based PO Between the Relationship of Supervisor Knowledge Hiding and Supervisee Job Performance in Manufacturing Industry

KM has become a competitive advantage for organizations (Issac et al., 2021), withholding information is seen as harmful to the organization (Peng et al., 2015). PO posits the dark side of knowledge hiding at workplace. Supervisors' knowledge hiding creates ambiguity and reduce the resources among supervisees, also effect on their PO of job responsibilities (Moin et al., 2022), in this situation COR theory is used with SJBPO between the relationship of SKH and SJP.

Knowledge hiding has adverse impact on dedicated employees who perceive their organization as their "home" or as a place of ease, camaraderie, and personal sanctuary (Bhattarai et al., 2023). It is assumed that supervisees with strong PO are less effected by SKH. When the owner and the object of ownership have a close relationship, we say that there is a strong PO (Van et al., 2004).

Job-based PO enable the employees to arouse the possession over job (Peng & Pierce, 2015). According to the COR theory, if subordinates are feeling demotivated and frustrated as a result of withholding information, a lack of trust, or poor leadership, providing them with additional resources such as support, training, or growth opportunities can help them get out of the bad situation (Hobfoll et al., 2018).

Hypotheses 4: Supervisee job-based psychological ownership mediates between the relationship of supervisor knowledge hiding and supervisee job performance in manufacturing industry of South Punjab, Pakistan.

Moderating Role of Core Self-evaluation

Researchers presently advocate focusing on practices that aimed lessen the impacts of workplace hiding. We propose that core self-evaluation may be seen as a human resource. van et al., (2015), demonstrated that core self-evaluation can function as a protective barrier against the adverse consequences of employee strain reactions, that arise in the result of SKH. High self-monitors can solve problems by self-power and improve performance. Proactive conduct affects individual and organizational transformation, improving performance and innovation. In this context, we argue that core self-evaluations are relevant and significant due to their ability to function as coping resources. According to (Hobfoll, 2014), conservation of resource (COR) theory, not only buffer the negative effects during job demands and also contribute significantly to the management of job-related resources. An employee with high levels of person-related resources should be able to better manage the resources relevant to their profession, enabling to better handle the responsibilities of the current job. The authors conclude (Debusscher et al., 2017; Kacmar et al., 2009), that those with high CSE are more effective at utilizing available resources. According to (Neves et al., 2015), core self-evaluation is considered a resource. Additionally, high CSE persons are motivated by approach motivation towards positive stimuli, as stated by (Chang et al., 2012). Therefore, it is projected that core self-evaluation will create larger resources by creating positive behavior in the presence of supervisor knowledge hiding. (Neves et al., 2015), asserted that high core self-evaluators have the capability to cultivate and extract resources from their immediate surroundings.

Hypotheses 5: Supervisee core self-evaluation moderates the relationship between supervisee job-based psychological ownership and supervisor knowledge hiding performance in manufacturing industry of South Punjab, Pakistan.

Conceptual Framework

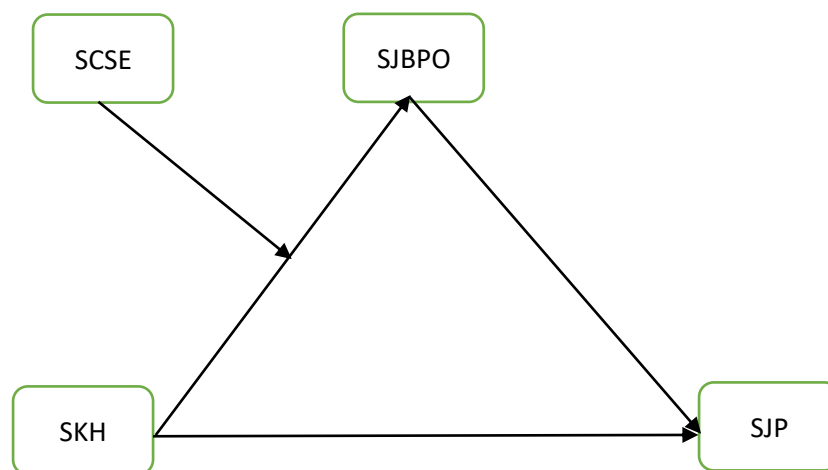


Fig 1. The conceptual framework

Research Methodology

In this study quantitative method was utilized to examine the proposed relationships within the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework has three direct relationships, one mediation and one moderation hypotheses that were investigated using Smart-PLS 4. The data collection method utilized was a cross-sectional design, with participants selected using a convenience sample technique. The 287 supervisees in the manufacturing industry were contacted for this objective. Self-administered questionnaires were given to supervisees within the selected manufacturing industries. Data collected through a recognized seven-point Likert measuring scale. English-language was followed in this study, as example of previous research in Pakistan (Butt, 2020).

Measures

The measurement scales for each construct were derived from previous research studies conducted in the education service sector (Arain, Bhatti, Ashraf, et al., 2020; 2020). The constructs were assessed using a seven-point Likert scale with a range of 1 to 7 (strongly disagree to strongly agree) (i.e., knowledge hiding, job-based PO and core self-evaluation and job performance) came from the previous study (Connelly et al., 2012; Judge et al., 2003; Van et al., 2004; Williams et al., 1991). The 12-items measurement scale for knowledge hiding was used from the research of (Connelly et al., 2012a). The 06-items measurement scale for job-based PO was taken from (Van et al., 2004). The 07-items measurement scale for job performance was taken from (Williams et al., 1991). The 12-items measurement scale for core self-evaluation was taken from (Judge et al., 2003). We collected data on gender, age, level of education, and SSRT in order to control the potential impact of demographic variables on SKH, as demonstrated by previous studies (Arain et al., 2019; Fong et al., 2018).

Statistical Analysis

This study used SPSS and Smart-PLS for data analysis. Three phases are utilized to evaluate data in this study. Firstly, after examining demographic factors, then in second phase measurement model was tested for validity and reliabilities to assure data validity and variable measurement. Hypotheses are tested by analyzing the structural model in the third stage. This study analyzes data using SPSS and Smart-PLS partial least squares structural equation modeling.

First, the **table 1** showed the frequency and percentage of responses were analyzed to determine demographics.

Profile of the respondent.

Demography Variable N=287	Groups	f	%
Gender	Male	243	85%
	Female	44	15%
Age	21 to 30 Years	36	12.54%
	31 to 40 Years	97	33.79%
	41 to 50 Years	111	38.69%
	51 and more than 60 Years	43	14.98%
Education	Matriculation	24	08.36%
	Intermediate	32	11.15%
	Graduate	58	20.20%
	Postgraduate	104	36.25%
	Professional	69	24.04%
Supervisor-Supervisee Relationship Tenure	1 to 8 Years	36	12.51%
	09 to 16 Years	66	23%
	17 to 24 Years	86	30%
	25 and Above	99	34.49%

Measurement model (step-1): The measuring model was assessed using two primary forms of validity: (a) convergent validity and (b) discriminant validity. According to Hair et al., (2021), all constructs have good reliability and convergent validity as outer loadings of all indicators, Cronbach's Alpha and CR values are > 0.7 , and AVE values are > 0.5 . All indicators have outer loadings more than 0.7 (SKH 0.729 - 0.852, SJP 0.718 - 0.835, SJBPO 0.738 - 0.809) and SCSE (0.782 - 0.859).

Table 2 present the CR, Cronbach's alpha, and AVE and these are statistically accepted. On the other hand, Figure 2 illustrates the assessment of the measurement model developed by partial least squares PLS.

Table 2 | Construct reliabilities and AVE.

Variables	α	CR	AVE
SCSE	.822	.833	.651
SJBPO	.873	.888	.612
SJP	.870	.876	.607
SKH	.778	.778	.529

Discriminant validity (step-2): This part assesses the construct validity, while the discriminant validity is evaluated based on the provided measurements (Hair et al., 2018). Demonstrating discriminant validity requires that the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) be greater than the correlation values of the other variables. The findings on discriminant validity are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3 | HTMT ratio.

	SCSE	SJBPO	SJP	SKH
SCSE	-			
SJBPO	.492	-		
SJP	.410	.794	-	
SKH	.507	.790	.769	-

Structural model (step-3): The section provides information on the β , t and p-values, SRMR, R^2 , f^2 , and Q^2 of the included routes. The suggested model has 0.07 statistics for SRMR that is below the 0.08 criterion (Kenny, 2012). The results showed R^2 score for SJP was 0.464 showing moderate relationship. Hair et al., (2011), reported that the SJBPO's R^2 score was 0.503, indicating relatively strong or substantial. Second, the model's endogenous constructs are predictively relevant. The presence of predictive relevance in this research model is confirmed by the fact that it is bigger than 0.

Table 4 | Hypotheses Testing.

H	Paths	"Path coefficients"	"Standard error"	"P-value"	"t-statistics"	Decision
Hypotheses 1	SKH -> SJP	-0.590	-0.055	0.000	10.728	Supported
Hypotheses 2	SKH -> SJBPO	-0.315	-0.070	0.000	04.480	Supported
Hypotheses 3	SJPBO -> SJP	0.214	0.065	0.001	03.293	Supported

N = 287, H = hypotheses, supervisor knowledge hiding (SKH), supervisee job performance (SJP), supervisee job-based PO (SJBPO), supervisee core self-evaluation (SCSE).

Direct hypotheses testing

The direct hypotheses H1 testing that revealed negative significant direct relationship, which meets the significance criteria ($\beta = -0.590$; t -value = 10.728; p -value = 0.000), so hypotheses supporting and statistically significant.

Upon assessing H1, H2 yielded $\beta = -.315$, t -value = 4.480, and p -value = 0.000. Based on these data, it was concluded that H2 meets the significance criteria, indicating that it is statistically significant and negative. The results show a positive significant direct effect on SJP when considering H3, with values ($\beta = .214$, t value= 3.293 and p value = 0.000). Therefore, hypothesis H3 supporting and statistically significant.

Mediation effect

Table 5 showed the studies examine how SJBPO mediates SKH and SJP.

H	Paths	“Path coefficients”	“Standard error”	“P-value”	“t-statistics”	Decision
Hypotheses 4	SKH->SJBPO->SJP	-0.067	-0.023	0.003	2.924	Supported

N = 287, H = hypotheses, supervisor knowledge hiding (SKH), supervisee job performance (SJP), supervisee job-based PO (SJBPO), supervisee core self-evaluation (SCSE).

The study found that SJBPO significantly mediates the link between SKH and SJP ($\beta = -0.067$, t -value = 2.924, $p = 0.003$).

Moderation effect

Table 6 showed the moderation results:

H	Paths	“Path coefficients”	“Standard error”	“P-value”	“t-statistics”	Decision
Hypotheses5	SCSE * SKH -> SJP	-0.197	-0.047	0.000	4.193	Supported

N = 287, H = hypotheses, supervisor knowledge hiding (SKH), supervisee job performance (SJP), supervisee job-based PO (SJBPO), supervisee core self-evaluation (SCSE).

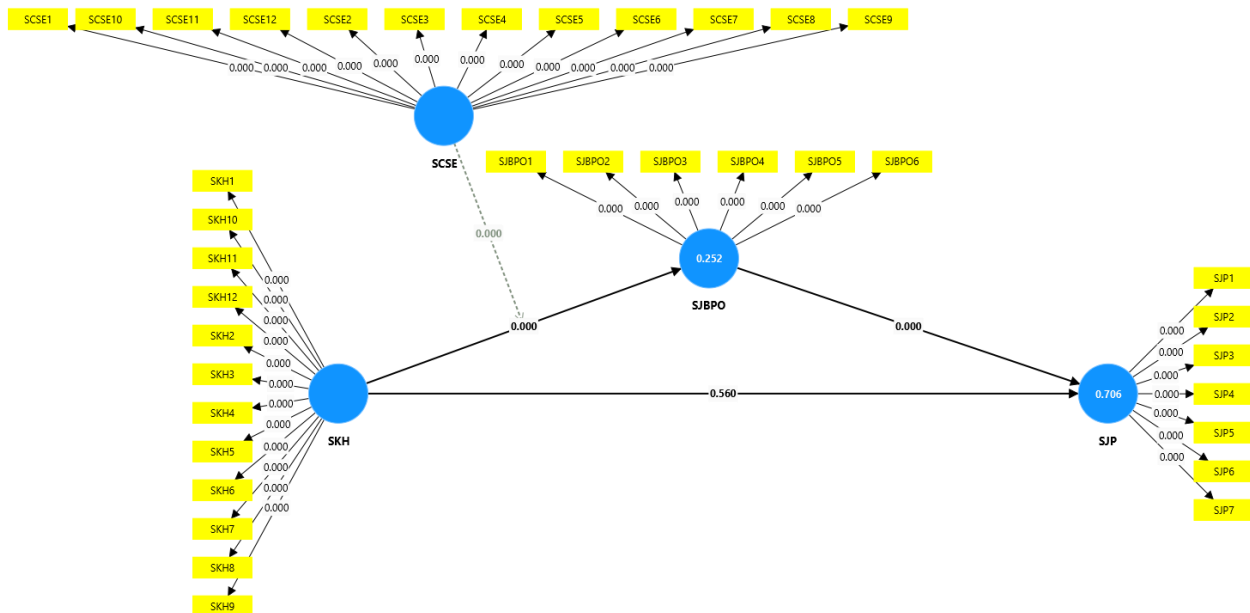


Fig 2. Structural Equation Model

Discussion on Results

All of the hypotheses direct, mediated and moderation showed statistical significance, proving that the model and the hypotheses were well-aligned. Supervisors who hide knowledge and abilities impede the dissemination of information and expertise within the organization, which can result in inefficiencies and missed chances for improvement. The findings indicate that supervisees who possess strong CSE are more likely to engage in high levels of performance (Kacmar et al., 2009), and exhibit effectiveness, self-sufficiency, adaptability in many contexts, and the capacity to find

positive in difficult situations (Judge et al., 1997). The theory of COR is often used as a major theoretical framework in research articles on knowledge concealment (Hobfoll, 2001). We applied the COR theory, incorporating the moderator SCSE that provides insights into techniques for efficiently managing owned resources, minimizing from resource depletion, safeguarding resources, and procuring essential resources to support the sustained performance and profitability of the organization. The study's findings align with the theoretical presumptions. The COR theory, a commonly utilized motivating framework, proves particularly advantageous in situations characterized by limited resources.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study presents various theoretical ramifications. Firstly, we take a close look at how supervisors' knowledge concealment affects their subordinates' performance on the job. Supervisors in the manufacturing industry frequently keep vital information from their subordinates, such as chemical formulas in textile industry. Supervisors perceive this specialized information as a vital expertise that distinguishes them from others. Supervisors also keep some specifics pertaining to process optimization, planning, and troubleshooting protocols. This type of knowledge concealment reduces the subordinate's resources, including as self-assurance, time, opportunities for learning, and expertise. These resources are essential for efficient job performance, as emphasized by (Moin et al., 2022), and are crucial for problem-solving in a manufacturing setting. The deliberate hiding of crucial information can pose difficulties inside the organization. The absence of sharing and collaboration among organizational employees might impede the overall efficiency and productivity of the manufacturing process. Subordinates may have a sense of powerlessness and lack of recognition, which can have a negative effect on their level of job satisfaction, motivation and performance. In order to tackle these problems, textile mills should contemplate adopting strategies that promote information exchange and collaboration. One possible approach is to design training programmes that educate staff.

This study offered valuable insights to the relevant participants, enabling them to implement appropriate actions such as training workshops (Hussain et al., 2023), to improve the manufacturing subordinate's performance on the job. As a result, manufacturing sectors allocate resources to develop tactics that create a favorable work environment, which enhances employee well-being, motivation, and job satisfaction. Organizations prioritize these characteristics to ensure that employees maintain attention, motivation, and positive engagement, leading to improved job performance and overall organizational success (Anand et al., 2019; Moin et al., 2022).

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations are mentioned. First, prior to examining the relationship between SCSE and SJBPO, now the study explores a single mediating variable and one potential moderating variable. Second, study should use time-lagged data to improve outcomes. Third, future longitudinal studies should be implemented. Longitudinal research would provide stronger evidence of causal links between the variables. Psychological satisfaction and organization-based PO should be investigated in future studies to determine their mediating effects.

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