How Do Toxic Environments, Negative Gossip, And Islamic Workplace Spirituality Influence Knowledge Hiding?

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Abstract
This study examines the impact of toxic workplace environments and negative workplace gossip on information concealing among lecturers. Furthermore, this research also investigates the influence of spirituality in the workplace from an Islamic standpoint as a moderating factor. This study centres on the academicians of private universities in Lampung, Indonesia. Data collection was conducted by delivering questionnaires to participants through both offline and online channels. The software application for data analysis is Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program (JASP). These results indicate a positive correlation between toxic workplace environments, unfavourable gossip, and knowledge hiding. Hence, it has been shown that workplace spirituality moderates the relationships inside toxic workplace environments. Negative workplace gossip correlates favourably with knowledge hiding. This study enhances the existing body of knowledge on social exchange theory by providing empirical evidence that validates the existence of social exchange in interpersonal interactions among academicians.

Keywords: Toxic workplace, Negative workplace gossip, Islamic Workplace Spirituality, Knowledge hiding

Bagaimana Lingkungan Beracun, Gosip Negatif, dan Spiritualitas Islam di Tempat Kerja Memengaruhi Penyembunyian Pengetahuan?

Abstrak
Penelitian ini menguji dampak dari lingkungan tempat kerja yang beracun dan gosip negatif di tempat kerja terhadap penyembunyian informasi di kalangan dosen. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menyelidiki pengaruh spiritualitas di tempat kerja dari sudut pandang Islam sebagai faktor moderasi. Penelitian ini berpusat pada akademisi universitas swasta di Lampung, Indonesia. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan mengirimkan kuesioner kepada peserta melalui saluran offline dan online. Aplikasi perangkat lunak yang digunakan untuk analisis data adalah Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program (JASP). Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan adanya korelasi positif antara lingkungan tempat kerja yang beracun, gosip yang tidak menyenangkan, dan penyembunyian pengetahuan. Oleh karena itu, telah terbukti bahwa spiritualitas di tempat kerja memoderasi hubungan di dalam lingkungan tempat kerja yang beracun. Gosip negatif di tempat kerja berkorelasi positif dengan penyembunyian pengetahuan. Penelitian ini meningkatkan pengetahuan yang ada tentang teori pertukaran sosial dengan memberikan bukti empiris yang memvalidasi keberadaan pertukaran sosial dalam interaksi interpersonal di antara para akademisi.

Kata Kunci: Tempat kerja *toxic*, Gosip negatif di tempat kerja, Spiritualitas Islam di tempat kerja, Penyembunyian pengetahuan

INTRODUCTION

This study employs social exchange theory, which examines the mutually beneficial connection between two parties (Blau, 1964). Social exchange theory is a fundamental paradigm employed to analyze the behaviour of an organization in the exchange of resources. This hypothesis posits that the limited availability of resources drives participation in social trade, necessitating the assistance of other parties to fulfil it (Das & Teng, 2002). The application of social exchange theory in elucidating organizational behaviour is justified due to its capacity to comprehend not only the social behaviour of society in connection to resource exchange but also its comprehensiveness in encompassing concepts such as resource requirements, reciprocal relationships, trust, interdependence, and long-term relationships (Ali, 2013).

There is an intriguing aspect to the application of social exchange theory. According to Masterson *et al.* (2000) and Sora *et al.* (2021), when an organization or firm bestows gratitude, respect, fairness, and other such qualities upon its personnel, it will cultivate a strong sense of confidence in the organization and enhance their motivation to exert more significant effort. Conversely, if employees perceive the employer to be unjust in handling or distributing outcomes, they are prone to engage in unlawful activities (Jeewandara & Kumari, 2021; Lim, 2002; Putri *et al.,* 2017). One potential violation that may arise is the concealment of information within the workplace.

The work environment significantly influences lecturer behaviour and attitudes (Hernaus *et al.,* 2019). In recent years, scholars and practitioners have seen a growing interest in comprehending the influence of organizational dynamics on lecturer behaviour, namely knowledge management and information sharing (Arain *et al.,* 2022). A significant finding of this study is information concealing, a phenomenon characterized by the deliberate withholding or concealment of knowledge that may be shared with colleagues (Yang & Ribiere, 2020b). Scholarly knowledge hiding in an academic setting is the act of a lecturer deliberately withholding or concealing information that they are expected to communicate with leaders or other colleagues (Akhlaghimofrad & Farmanesh, 2021; Zaheer *et al.,* 2022). The motivations for this behaviour are diverse and encompass personal interests, apprehensions about unjust acknowledgement, fierce internal rivalry, interpersonal issues with colleagues, daunting workloads, and job insecurity (Abdillah *et al.,* 2022; Arain *et al.,* 2020; Kmieciak, 2021). Nevertheless, these methods can impede the transfer of information, hamper collaboration and creativity, erode trust, promote voluntary departure, and diminish organizational performance (Anand & Hassan, 2019; Jasimuddin & Saci, 2022; Serenko *et al.,* 2016). Hence, examining the elements that impact knowledge concealment is crucial to formulate efficient approaches to encourage information sharing and establish a facilitative organizational culture.

Two elements contributing to knowledge concealment include a toxic work atmosphere and unfavourable workplace gossip. Toxic workplace environments are defined by elevated levels of conflict, incivility, workplace ostracism, and mistreatment among employees, resulting in a hostile and emotionally distressing work atmosphere

(Aboramadan, 2021). Ultimately, these factors contribute to the deliberate withholding or concealment of knowledge (Anjum et al., 2018). Employees may opt to suppress crucial information due to concerns that their ability to succeed is directly linked to the failure of their colleagues (Kang, 2016). Hence, employees who perceive themselves as being devalued or unappreciated tend to exhibit low morale and disengagement, suppressing their knowledge as a means of passive resistance or emotional protection.

Moreover, the absence of acknowledgement and gratitude for the initiatives and contributions made by employees can further diminish their incentive to share knowledge beyond their fundamental job obligations (Khan et al., 2022b). Ambiguous or conflicting expectations about knowledge sharing can lead employees to withhold their valuable insights and exercise caution (Kumar Jha & Varkkey, 2018). In general, a toxic work environment fosters a hostile culture that obstructs the exchange of knowledge and promotes the concealment of knowledge (Khan et al., 2023). This phenomenon might adversely affect organizational performance, innovation, and employee welfare (Tiwari & Jha, 2022).

The deleterious effect of negative workplace gossip on the hiding of knowledge is highly significant (Cheng *et al.,* 2023). Negative talk in the workplace tends to promote the concealment of knowledge among employees (Aboramadan, 2021; Yang & Ribiere, 2020a). Interpersonal gossip that disparages colleagues or disseminates unfavourable information about them fosters an environment of suspicion and unease (Farooq & Sultana, 2021) and intensifies concealed knowledge by eroding personal self-esteem (Khan *et al.,* 2022b) and generating a climate of mistrust and unease (Yao *et al.,* 2020). Upon hearing unfavourable information about their colleagues, employees may be reluctant to divulge their valuable knowledge, ideas, or abilities due to the apprehension of being the target of rumours (Ye *et al.,* 2019). Without trust, honest communication and collaboration may be impeded (Wu *et al.,* 2022). Thus, the detrimental effect of nasty workplace gossip on the concealment of information is a highly significant issue that can impede overall performance and productivity in the workplace.

Although earlier studies have established the harmful impact of toxic work environments and negative workplace gossip on several employee outcomes, there are still significant gaps in our understanding of how these elements specifically influence knowledge hiding (Khan et al., 2022b; Shrestha & Jena, 2021). Additionally, there is a shortage of literature on the role of Islamic Workplace Spirituality as a contributing factor.

A toxic work environment is characterized by deeply ingrained negative, hostile, or bullying conduct within the organizational culture (Iqbal *et al.,* 2022). Under such circumstances, employees encounter elevated stress levels, communication is restricted, a culture of guilt prevails, and unethical or hazardous attitudes and behaviours are incentivized. Key factors contributing to a toxic work environment are leaders who misuse authority, exhibit avarice, and exhibit narcissism, resulting in mistreatment, harassment, intimidation, and unjust degradation of others (Tiwari & Jha, 2022). In addition, the physical infrastructure of buildings, obstacles to unrestricted movement of personnel, constraints on in-person and digital communication, and the absence of personal privacy all

contribute to creating such environments (Harvey & Too, 2012). Workplace toxicity is a significant contributor to mental and psychological health issues among employees (Tiwari & Jha, 2022). In addition, the enduring consequence of a Toxic Workplace Environment is the concealment of knowledge (Khan *et al.,* 2022b). Knowledge hiding is the deliberate act of withholding or concealing information, expertise, or ideas from others inside an organization, impeding knowledge sharing and collaboration (Connelly *et al.,* 2012). Information concealment can have far-reaching detrimental consequences for colleagues and the entire business. Deliberate concealment of knowledge by team members or employees might impede team collaboration, prohibiting the exchange of information and creativity (Han *et al.,* 2020). Organizations also face the possibility of encountering a knowledge disparity, in which specific individuals possess crucial knowledge, depriving others of access that impedes their performance. In addition, the repercussions can be experienced in the levels of employee satisfaction, leading to conflicts and a dearth of mutual trust within the workplace (Singh, 2019). Moreover, an organization's overall productivity and performance might be negatively impacted by mistakes arising from a deficiency of appropriate and timely information. Considering the currently available arguments and references, the initial hypothesis of this study is:

H1: Toxic Workplace Environment has a positive effect on Knowledge hiding

Workplace gossip refers to casual and critical conversations about coworkers or leaders who are not physically present to participate in the conversation (Ellwardt *et al.,* 2012). Negative gossip in the workplace pertains to disseminating rumours or false information, discussions concerning personal details, colleagues' performance, and misconduct by supervisors, regardless of their presence or absence from the debate. As demonstrated by Kurland and Pelled (2000), this type of lousy gossip frequently takes place in the absence of the employee or leader who is being targeted. Workplace gossip can be broadly classified into two basic types: general and harmful. General gossip is an informal mode of communication that encompasses exchanging information, updates, or opinions regarding matters within the workplace. Specific instances of general gossip might exhibit neutrality or positivity, facilitating the establishment of social networks and enhancing cohesion among colleagues (Kong, 2018). Yet, it is the lousy talk that has the more potential to be harmful. In the present context, negative gossip pertains to disseminating rumours or false information, discussing personal details, colleagues' performance, and misconduct by leaders in their absence or absence from the conversation (Bari *et al.,* 2020). Negative gossip can harm an individual's reputation and generate conflicts among individuals and teams (He *et al.,* 2021). The circulation of nasty gossip can lead to an unpleasant work atmosphere, diminish trust, and impair the team's overall effectiveness. In the workplace, negative gossip can result in adopting knowledge-hiding methods (Yao et al., 2020). As a result of mistrust, conflict, and lack of motivation, employees who are the subjects of gossip often conceal their knowledge. This hampers collaboration suppresses innovation and adversely affects the entire work culture. Considering these factors, it is possible to formulate a hypothesis:

H2: Negative workplace gossip has a positive effect on Knowledge-hiding

The notion of spirituality in the workplace has steadily become more prominent, with a specific emphasis on Islam. Bhatti *et al.* (2016) proposed the theoretical framework of Islamic Spirituality (IS), which focuses on Taqwa. In addition, Adawiyah and Pramuka (2017a) expanded on this notion by combining Islamic Spirituality with behavioural elements, formulating the idea of Islamic Workplace Spirituality (IWS). IWS is a spiritual framework based on Islamic teachings, consisting of three fundamental aspects: taqarrub (the endeavour to seek closer proximity to Allah), muraqabah (the recognition of spiritual susceptibility), and istiqamah (the unwavering commitment to the straight way). To achieve a respectable status in the eyes of Allah, Taqarrub entails strict obedience to Allah's laws and avoiding prohibited acts and ideas. Muraqabah promotes a watchful consciousness of spiritual vulnerability, inciting Muslims to self-evaluate for spiritual growth. In addition, istiqamah emphasizes the need to maintain an unwavering commitment to the correct course, a quality mandated by Allah. The notion above substantially impacts the organizational climate and productivity (Adawiyah *et al.,* 2020). The impact of murabahah finance on organizational commitment is extensively explored in studies such as Heykal (2021) and Lutfi (2023). Moreover, I Caniago's (2023) study demonstrates the investigation of the impact of workplace spirituality and organizational culture on employee performance. An analysis conducted by Adawiyah and Pramuka (2022) on Islamic leadership and its effects on performance demonstrates the interdependence of spiritual aspects, leadership, and performance.

The role of Islamic Workplace Spirituality (IWS) in the correlation between a toxic work environment and knowledge concealment conduct is of moderate significance. Experimental evidence has demonstrated that IWS effectively reduces the harmful effects of a toxic work environment and practices of concealing knowledge (Pertiwi *et al.,* 2023). Insufficient spirituality in the workplace exacerbates the detrimental effects of a poisonous atmosphere on knowledge concealment practices. Evidence suggests that increased levels of Islamic Workplace Spirituality can mitigate the negative impact of a toxic work environment on employees' inclination to conceal information (Pertiwi *et al.,* 2023). The present study suggests that Islamic Workplace Spirituality may be a moderating factor in the association between a Toxic Workplace Environment, Negative Workplace Gossip, and knowledge-sharing practices. Within the framework of IWS, the main emphasis is placed on Islamic principles such as fairness, openness, and responsible communication ethics. The application of these values entails the use of theories of justice in the treatment of employees and the establishment of an equitable working environment (Amilin *et al.,* 2018). The values of taqarrub, istiqomah, and Muraqabah can mitigate a toxic work atmosphere that may induce employee discomfort and insecurity. Therefore, a hypothesis can be formulated:

H3: Islamic Workplace Spirituality moderates the relationship between Toxic Workplace Environment and knowledge-hiding

Individuals who exhibit robust Islamic spiritual principles and engage in regular practices may have an enhanced ability to manage stress and resolve workplace issues more

effectively (Pariyanti *et al.,* 2021). Their motivation to persist in sharing knowledge may be enhanced, even in a demanding work setting, due to their adherence to Islamic values emphasizing honesty, integrity, and teamwork (Pariyanti *et al.,* 2022). In addition, a robust Islamic Workplace Spirituality can serve as a safeguard or mitigating element against the adverse effects of workplace gossip on implementing knowledge-hiding methods (Karakas & Sarigollu, 2019). Employees with elevated levels of Islamic spirituality may possess superior abilities to handle unfavourable talk with composure and sagacity (Bhatti et al., 2015). Religious beliefs can be a reliable source of focus for maintaining integrity, honesty, and mutual respect in communication with colleagues (Egel & Fry, 2017).

Consequently, individuals may be more motivated to exchange information and minimize susceptibility to unfavourable rumours. This phenomenon is especially noticeable in workplace gossip, where workplace spirituality might serve as a moderating element that diminishes the influence of lousy gossip on instances of knowledge concealment (Khan *et al.,* 2023). Moreover, scientific research indicates a favourable correlation between a toxic work environment and workplace gossip with knowledge-hiding behaviours (Pertiwi *et al.,* 2023). Hence, spiritual principles in the working environment, particularly within the Islamic framework, can successfully tackle knowledge concealment and foster a more open and cooperative work atmosphere (Adawiyah *et al.,* 2020). This research concludes with the following hypothesis:

H4: Islamic Workplace Spirituality moderates the relationship between negative workplace gossip and knowledge hiding.

The relationship between the variables in this research model can be explained in Figure 1.
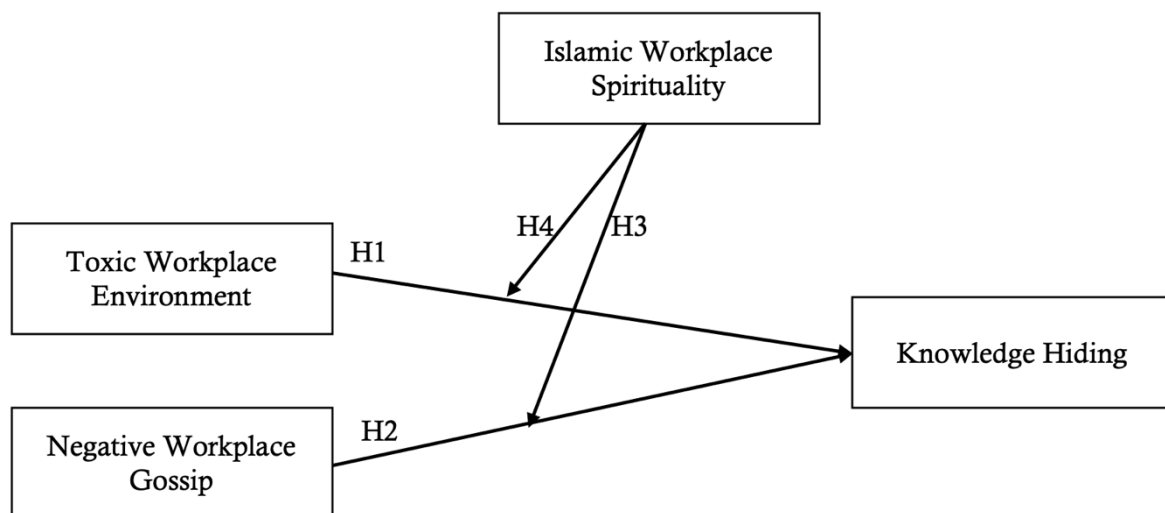

Figure 1. Research Framework

METHOD

Samples and procedures

A privately owned institution in Lampung, Indonesia, conducted the study. The research participants consist of lecturers located at 9 universities. A simple random sample method

was used to distribute questionnaires to respondents from 9 colleges. Questionnaires are administered offline, through direct interaction with respondents, and online. 226 questionnaires were distributed, and 201 were returned. Out of these, 187 responses were considered valid. A comprehensive breakdown of respondent information is available in Table 1.

Measurement

Islamic Workplace Spirituality (IWS) used 13 items from Adawiyah and Pramuka (2017) with a seven-point Likert scale format. Questions include "My religion gives me wisdom in adapting to conditions at work" and "I believe working hard is a sign of strong faith. Negative workplace gossip was measured with 3 items from (Chandra and Robinson, 2009) with the example question, "In the last six months, my coworkers and superiors communicated damaging information about me at work." Then, the Toxic work Environment was measured with items from (Anjum et al., 2018), an example of the question "My supervisor/colleagues/subordinates spoke rudely to me in public". Lastly, knowledge hiding was measured with 6 question items from (Connelly et al., 2012), an example of the question "I agreed to help him but instead gave him different information than he wanted".

Data analysis

Statistical analysis was conducted using Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program (JASP). The initial phase involves assessing the validity and dependability. A satisfactory value is indicated by a standardized reliability coefficient above 0.70 (Hair et al., 2013). All variables exhibited factor loading values over 0.50, therefore proving their validity. We employed the moderation analysis feature previously included in JASP to evaluate the hypothesis.

Table 1. *Respondent Description*

Demography	Category	Amount	%
Gender	Male	101	54
	Female	86	46
Age	(20 y.o. - 30 y.o)	42	22.4
	(31 y.o - 40 y.o)	54	28.8
	(41 y.o - 50 y.o)	52	27.8
	>50 y.o.	39	20.8
Level of education	Master's Degree/S2	176	94
	Doctoral Degree/S3	11	6
Length of work	(1y – 5y)	49	26.2
	(6y – 10y)	82	43.8
	(>11y)	56	30

The data presented in table 1 indicates that women comprise the majority of respondents (54%). Regarding age, all categories are represented, and none dominate. In

terms of education level, master's degrees were the most common (94%), and the most extended duration of work falls within the range of 6-10 years.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The validity and reliability testing results indicate that the variables Toxic Workplace Environment, Knowledge concealment, Negative Workplace gossip, and Islamic Workplace Spirituality have satisfied the applicable benchmarks. According to the validity test results, all of these variables have a significance value below 0.05, which suggests they possess substantial validity. Moreover, the reliability tests conducted using Cronbach's alpha revealed that all variables exhibited Cronbach's alpha values within the range of 0.773 to 0.874. These values surpass the criterion of 0.70, therefore confirming the reliability of the questionnaire employed in this study for assessing these variables. Hence, the validity test findings indicate that all variables possess strong validity, while the reliability test results validate that the questionnaire exhibits a satisfactory degree of dependability. Provided that the validity and reliability requirements are satisfied, the data obtained from the questionnaire can be considered trustworthy for the analysis and interpretation of the research findings.

Table 2. *Hypothesis Testing Results*

Relationship	B	Sig	Result
H1: Toxic Workplace Environment has a positive effect on Knowledge hiding	0.45	0.001	Accepted
H2: Negative workplace gossip has a positive effect on Knowledge-hiding	0.28	0.002	Accepted
H3: Islamic Workplace Spirituality moderates the relationship between Toxic Workplace Environment and knowledge-hiding	-0.21	0.013	Accepted
H4: Islamic Workplace Spirituality moderates the relationship between negative workplace gossip and knowledge-hiding	-0.23	0.032	Accepted

Table 2 demonstrates that Hypothesis 1, which states that a toxic workplace environment benefits knowledge concealment, is confirmed. The study findings indicate that the Beta coefficient (B) is 0.45, with a statistical significance level (Sig) of 0.001. By the significance value being below 0.05, this hypothesis is deemed valid. These findings suggest a direct correlation between a toxic workplace environment and the extent of knowledge concealment. Conversely, a positive correlation exists between the degree of a hazardous work environment and the extent of knowledge concealment behaviour exhibited by employees. A second hypothesis, which suggests that negative workplace gossip benefits knowledge concealment, is also confirmed. It is supported by the observed Beta coefficient (β) of 0.28, which has a significance level (Sig) of 0.002. By the significance value being below 0.05, this hypothesis is deemed valid. It implies a direct correlation exists between

exposure to unfavourable workplace gossip and the extent of knowledge concealment. This finding suggests a positive correlation between the frequency of bad talk in the workplace and the extent to which people conceal information.

The third hypothesis, Islamic Workplace Spirituality, moderates the relationship between Toxic Workplace Environment and Knowledge hiding, which is also accepted with a Beta coefficient (B) value of -0.21 with a significance value (Sig) of 0.013. By the significance value being below 0.05, this hypothesis is deemed valid. The observation above suggests that Islamic Workplace Spirituality is a mitigating element in the correlation between Toxic Workplace Environment and knowledge concealment. The existence of a significant degree of Islamic Workplace Spirituality can mitigate the adverse impact of a toxic workplace environment on knowledge hiding. Consequently, employees with a robust level of Islamic spirituality may exhibit greater motivation to persist in sharing knowledge, even in a toxic work environment. Therefore, Hypothesis 4, which states that Islamic Workplace Spirituality moderates the connection between Negative workplace gossip and Knowledge concealment, is upheld. The computed Beta coefficient (B) is -0.23, and its associated significance value (Sig) is 0.032. By the significance value being below 0.05, this hypothesis is deemed valid. Therefore, it may be inferred that Islamic Workplace Spirituality is a moderating element in the correlation between negative workplace gossip and knowledge hiding. A high degree of Islamic Workplace Spirituality can mitigate the adverse effects of negative workplace gossip on knowledge concealment. Consequently, employees with a robust level of Islamic spirituality are more inclined to persist in sharing knowledge despite negative gossip in the workplace.

To provide additional evidence for the proposed findings, we employ graphical representations to demonstrate the mechanisms by which the moderation interactions occur. This procedure involves categorizing the variable Islamic Workplace Spirituality in the workplace into high and low groups. The categorization is determined by comparing the average score with the median value. Lecturers with an Islamic Workplace Spirituality score above the median possess a high degree of Islamic Workplace Spirituality. In contrast, those with a score below the median are assessed to have a low degree of Islamic Workplace Spirituality. Furthermore, an examination was conducted on the correlation between an unfavourable work atmosphere and detrimental rumours in the workplace throughout both spirituality level cohorts (Figure 3).

Adhering to our research hypothesis, we have collected significant evidence that supports the moderating effect of workplace spirituality on the correlation between negative workplace gossip and the concealing of information. The results of our study indicate a direct correlation between unfavourable workplace gossip and the inclination to conceal information. Lecturers characterized by low levels of Islamic Workplace Spirituality and subjected to nasty gossip often conceal their expertise in response to the gossip. Conversely, university professors with a strong sense of Islamic Workplace Spirituality tend to disregard unfavourable rumours, minimizing the degree of information suppression as they remain open to sharing their expertise.
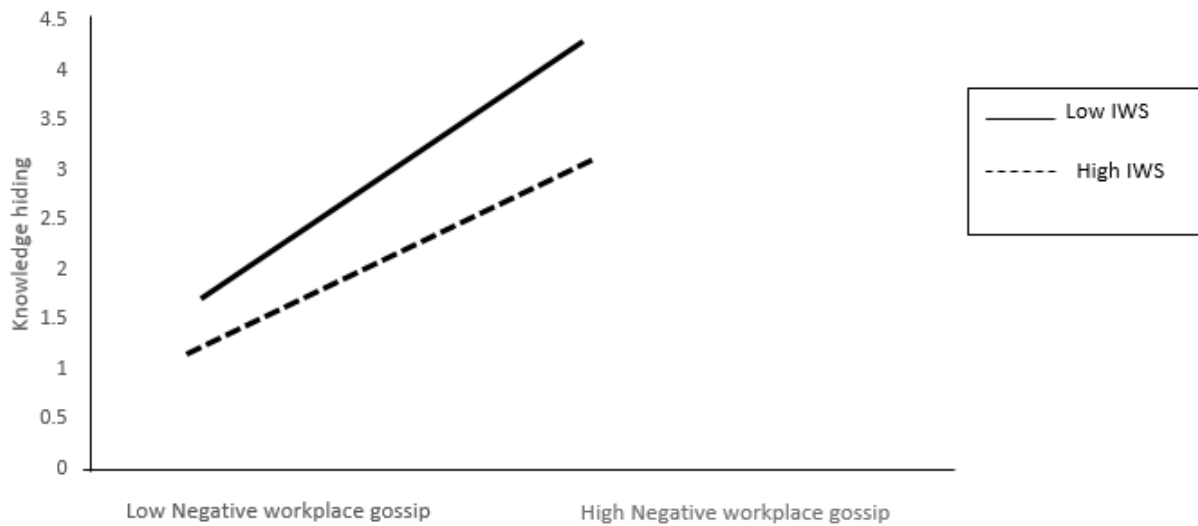
Figure 3. The moderating effect of Islamic workplace spirituality on the relationship between negative workplace gossip and knowledge hiding

The analytical findings indicate a favourable correlation between a toxic workplace environment and negative gossip and information hiding. Nevertheless, the influence of Islamic Workplace Spirituality as a moderating factor can mitigate the adverse effects of a toxic work environment and negative gossip on the tendency to hide knowledge.

Our early research findings have conclusively shown a significant correlation between the existence of a Toxic Work Environment and the inclination to conceal knowledge. The present discovery validates prior studies that have similarly demonstrated a favourable impact of a hazardous work environment on the phenomenon of expertise concealing (Han *et al.,* 2020). Academic environments characterized by toxicity sometimes elicit feelings of threat, insecurity, and a lack of trust among lecturers towards their colleagues and superiors. The lack of confidence might stem from detrimental conduct, unhealthy rivalry, coercion, or even harassment inside the professional environment. This phenomenon has the effect of lecturers feeling obligated to conceal their information to safeguard themselves against possible adverse outcomes that may occur when they divulge knowledge to others (Anjum & Ming, 2017). They may be concerned that the information they disclose will be misappropriated, manipulated, or perhaps provide a toxic colleague or leader with a chance to instigate further conflict or difficulties for them.

Furthermore, these emotions of uneasiness and mistrust might impede effective collaboration and communication among instructors. Experiencing a sense of betrayal or fear to communicate ideas, engage in conversations, or share knowledge with others can lead to isolation and a reduced sense of connection among faculty members. In turn, it can harm the overall efficacy and performance within the academic setting. Consequently, concealing knowledge is becoming more prevalent, impeding the dissemination of knowledge and innovation inside educational establishments (Mohsin & Ivascu, 2022). Suppose faculty members perceive the academic environment as unsupportive or even

hazardous. In that case, they are more likely to suppress knowledge and ideas that could enhance the institution to safeguard themselves or mitigate potential hazards.

Furthermore, the second discovery is acknowledged, indicating that negative workplace gossip positively impacts the concealment of information. The consistent presence of negative gossip within a workplace setting poses a significant risk to the overall well-being and cohesion of the team (Cheng *et al.,* 2023). The dissemination of negative rumours often cultivates an unfavourable environment within the workspace. Individuals who receive such rumours may experience feelings of vulnerability, unjust criticism, or judgment. Consequently, employees subjected to this harmful rumour may adopt a defensive position, concealing confidential information to safeguard themselves (Aboramadan, 2021). To avoid consequences, individuals may hide information or insights that can be exploited or utilized to sustain additional rumours (Bergh *et al.,* 2019).

Moreover, the widespread occurrence of unfounded rumours might undermine the confidence among members of a team (Huang, 2017). Staff members may be reluctant to share their expertise with colleagues due to concerns that it may be exploited to their disadvantage. Nevertheless, there may persist apprehensions regarding external parties' potential manipulation or exploitation of shared knowledge. Knowledge concealment may arise as a coping strategy in reaction to unfair rumours, serving as a means of resistance or self-protection (Khan *et al.,* 2022a). Under such circumstances, persons may perceive a minimal advantage in divulging their knowledge, opting to conceal it to evade the possible consequences of an unfavourable setting. The cumulative effect of knowledge-hiding tactics driven by unfavourable gossip can harm the entire business. The discomfort among employees might impede their ability to collaborate efficiently and hinder the promotion of innovation within the team. Efforts to advance processes and enhance business performance may be hindered when employees hesitate to exchange meaningful ideas or information with their colleagues.

Our proposed hypotheses, namely the third and fourth discoveries, were confirmed. The present study introduces the notion of Islamic Workplace Spirituality as a moderating factor in the association between Toxic Workplace Environment, Negative Workplace Gossip, and Knowledge concealing inside the work environment. Scientific evidence has demonstrated that Islamic Workplace Spirituality is capable of withstanding the adverse effects of a toxic work environment on knowledge concealment behaviours (Ali *et al.,* 2020). Research suggests that employees with a high degree of Islamic spirituality may exhibit more effective strategies for managing stress and conflict in the workplace (Pariyanti *et al.,* 2021). Incorporating Islamic spiritual principles and customs into the conduct of these employees may enhance their motivation to persist in disseminating knowledge, especially in unfavourable work conditions (Amin *et al.,* 2021). Their behaviours might be guided by Islamic ideals that emphasize honesty, integrity, and mutual support. Consequently, they are less prone to being influenced by a harmful work atmosphere that might ordinarily promote the deliberate concealment of information.

Furthermore, a robust Islamic Workplace Spirituality can serve as a safeguard or barrier against the detrimental effects of negative workplace gossip on the concealment of

knowledge. Employees' internalization of a robust degree of Islamic spirituality may enhance their ability to manage negative gossip with composure and sagacity (Adawiyah *et al.,* 2020; Adawiyah & Pramuka, 2017b). By upholding their religious principles, such as integrity, honesty, and mutual respect, they can maintain effective communication with colleagues unaffected by negative gossip. Consequently, employees with a strong sense of Islamic Workplace Spirituality are less susceptible to being influenced by unfavourable rumours, preventing the dissemination of false information. Their primary focus will be on organizational objectives and fostering collaboration with colleagues rather than being trapped in an unhealthy atmosphere engendered by negative talk. To enhance Islamic spiritual principles in their work culture, companies should focus on the significant role of Islamic Workplace Spirituality in moderating the connection between a toxic work environment, negative gossip, and information concealment. Cultivating an inclusive, supportive, and religiously oriented culture helps foster a work climate more conducive to well-being and productivity. It positively influences the overall development and success of the organization.

CONCLUSION

This research has significant theoretical and practical consequences regarding the correlation between toxic work environments, dissemination of negative gossip, Islamic Workplace Spirituality, and the concealment of knowledge. The present study provides theoretical confirmation that a positive correlation exists between a toxic employment environment, negative gossip, and knowledge-hiding techniques among lecturers. Furthermore, this study enhances our comprehension of the moderating influence of Islamic Workplace Spirituality, which safeguards the adverse effects of a poor work environment and negative gossip on knowledge concealment.

The research findings have significant practical significance for managers and organizational leaders in effectively controlling the work environment. Awareness of the adverse effects of a toxic work environment and negative gossip enables the implementation of measures to establish a more healthful and efficient work environment. Islamic spiritual principles in the workplace are pertinent as they can effectively mitigate the adverse effects of a toxic work environment and disseminate negative gossip on the concealment of knowledge. Implementing training programs focused on conflict management, effective communication, and emotional management can help employees navigate complicated work settings and foster improved collaboration and increased information sharing within work teams. Firms can use these pragmatic measures to enhance productivity, performance, and employee happiness.

A disadvantage of this study is its restricted generalizability, which results from its concentration on a single scenario and sample size. To enhance the depth of understanding of the phenomena of knowledge concealing, longitudinal studies, intercultural research, and more extensive qualitative research can be employed to advance further research. Furthermore, future studies should consider other variables that could modify this correlation and potentially devise organizational interventions to mitigate knowledge

concealment behaviours and enhance the work environment's quality. Therefore, additional study is expected to improve comprehension of strategies to address the issue of knowledge concealment and establish a more conducive and efficient work atmosphere in the academic sphere.

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