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Effect of Perceived Over Qualification on Knowledge Hiding: Mediating Role of Shame

Ismael Afzal (Corresponding Author)
Lecturer HRM, Department of HRIM, Institute of Business Studies & Leadership (IBL), Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan (AWKUM)
Email: ismael@awkum.edu.pk

Dr. Sajid Rehman
Associate Professor, IBMS, The University of Agriculture Peshawar
Email: srkhattak@aup.edu.pk

Abstract

Purpose- This study examines the relationship between perceived overqualification (POQ) and knowledge hiding among faculty members in higher education institutions, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of shame.

Design/methodology/approach- A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was employed. Data were collected from 335 faculty members using established measures of perceived overqualification, shame and knowledge hiding. The data were analyzed using SPSS, including regression analysis and Hayes' PROCESS Model 4 with 5,000 bootstrap samples to examine the proposed mediation mechanism.

Findings- The findings indicate that perceived overqualification is positively associated with knowledge hiding. Perceived overqualification is also positively associated with shame, while shame is positively related to knowledge hiding. The mediation analysis further indicates that shame partially mediates the relationship between perceived overqualification and knowledge hiding, suggesting that emotional responses to qualification–job mismatch can contribute to knowledge-related defensive behavior.

Originality/value- This study extends perceived overqualification research by examining knowledge hiding as a behavioral outcome and identifying shame as an emotional mechanism underlying this relationship. The findings contribute to the higher education literature by highlighting how perceived underutilization of faculty capabilities may influence knowledge-sharing behavior. The study also provides practical implications for universities seeking to improve qualification–job fit, psychological safety and knowledge-sharing practices.

Keywords: Perceived Overqualification; Knowledge Hiding; Shame; Higher Education; Faculty Members; Person–Job Fit; Workplace Emotions

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Introduction

In recent years, the labor market has experienced a significant structural change, with a greater proportion of workers in jobs that do not fully leverage their skills, knowledge, and experience (SKE) (Khattak and Khattak, 2026; Khattak & Adnan, 2017). Thus, this subjective sense of overqualification defined as employees' perceived education, skills and experience exceeding the demands or rewards of their job (Mukhtar et al., 2019; Rahman et al., 2019; Khattak et al., 2019) has gained a persistent focus in the scholarly literature as a unique type of person-job misfit. A recent meta-analysis study discovered that perceived overqualification has a legitimate "two faces": sometimes it triggers proactive, compensating reactions, but at other times it triggers withdrawal, cynicism, and counterproductive reactions in response to the appraisal of the situation as unfair or out of control (Liao et al., 2025).

One of the negative consequences associated with perceived overqualification is knowledge hiding, which is a poor consequence for organizations relying on the free flow of knowledge to sustain innovation and competitive advantage (Khattak & Khattak, 2018; Rahman et al., 2023). The systematic and meta-analytical review of the literature have demonstrated that knowledge hiding negatively affects creativity, team cooperation, and task performance in a variety of scenarios in the workplace (Khattak et al., 2016; Arain et al., 2024; Batool et al., 2016). However, there is a growing stream of literature that specifically investigates perceived overqualification as an antecedent of knowledge hiding that has been published between 2022 and 2025, including the hospitality and tourism industry (Zada et al., 2024; Yeşiltaş et al., 2023; Almagharbeh, 2024); the technology sector (Ma et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2023); and the frontline sector in general (Khan et al., 2024).

Although there is a growing body of evidence, the psychological process of concealing knowledge from colleagues when one thinks he or she is overqualified for the position is not fully understood. Previous research has tended to focus on the cognitive-relational constructs like relative deprivation, ego depletion, and social comparison (Bibi et al., 2023; Yeşiltaş et al., 2023), whereas comparatively few studies have focused on the specific, self-conscious emotions that can be elicited by being overqualified. This is a significant gap, as appraisal theory of emotion proposes that when employees feel their abilities have been neglected or ignored, they feel the mismatch—shame, envy or anger typically (Ur Rahman et al., 2025). Shame is a relatively unstudied powerful emotion in the workplace theorized as occurring when employees evaluate a facet of their work context as a negative deviation from an identity-relevant norm and dismiss the deviation as a failure of the self (Iramnaz et al., 2024; Xing et al., 2021).

The results of a recent study with a large sample showed that perceived overqualification positively correlated with shame which in turn correlated positively with work withdrawal and employee silence, highlighting the role of shame as an affective mechanism through which overqualification is connected to employee withdrawal and concealment behaviors (Liu et al., 2024). Research on workplace emotion validates the negative association between shame and a self-protective inward orientation that dissuades employees from voluntarily showing themselves to

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others for evaluation or scrutiny, which is different from anger (Ullah et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2025). Knowledge hiding is a self-protective and avoidance behavior, and thus, shame is a theoretically sound, but not empirically validated, mechanism between perceived overqualification and knowledge hiding behavior in particular.

The present study seeks to fill this gap by proposing and testing a mediation model: Knowledge hiding is positively related to perceived overqualification, and this relationship is mediated by discrete emotion shame. The study combines the person-job fit and affective events perspectives which have independently been the center of research in the overqualification (Xing, Sun, & Jepsen, 2021) and workplace-emotion literatures (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021), providing a more comprehensive understanding of why overqualified employees do not share their knowledge instead. The rest of this paper follows. The literature review that follows, in section 2, addresses perceived overqualification, knowledge hiding and shame before formulating and elaborating the two hypotheses. The study conducted on the cognitive mediators to the specific emotional routes between person-job misfit and workplace deviance (Liu et al., 2024; Shen et al., 2025).

Literature Review

Perceived overqualification

Perceived overqualification is defined as an employee's belief that the job they are performing doesn't require the skills, knowledge, and experience they possess in their educational programs (Imran and Khattak, 2019; Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). Theoretically, the construct is based on person-job fit theory, the latter part of which is the misfit of person-job when someone's skills and needs exceed the requirements and returns of the job (Ullah et al., 2018; He & Li, 2024). Perceived overqualification is thus a stronger and more consistent predictor of employee attitudes and behavior compared to objective measures of overqualification (Zhang et al., 2024). A recent meta-analysis described perceived overqualification as a double sword, as in some cases, it has the effect of stimulating proactive behaviors and creativity, while in others, it leads to cynicism, relative deprivation, and disengagement (Liao et al., 2025). Researchers have started to recognize that the effects of perceived overqualification are positive or negative based on situational factors like leadership style, organizational support, and occupational instrumentality (Almagharbeh, 2024; Liu et al., 2024). The construct has also been explored in a variety of settings, such as hospitality, aviation, and technology companies, which demonstrates its applicability to today's increasingly credentialed workplaces (Yeşiltaş et al., 2023; Jiang et al., 2024). The literature is unanimous about perceived overqualification being an identity-relevant chronic stress that influences working relationships between employees, the workplace and coworkers (Debus et al., 2023; Zhu et al., 2024).

Knowledge Hiding

The phrase knowledge hiding refers to employees' deliberate efforts to withhold or hide knowledge that has been explicitly requested by another member of the organization (Shen et al., 2025). The construct is usually understood to be

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multidimensional and involve evasive hiding, playing dumb and rationalized hiding, each a unique interpersonal strategy in withholding expertise (Xiao, 2024). Meta-analytic syntheses recently confirm the evidence that individual characteristics, interpersonal relations, situational and organizational factors shape knowledge hiding, and that it consistently has the negative effects on creativity, innovative work behavior, and task performance (Arain et al., 2024). In a recent follow-up (ten years later) of the original meta-analysis of this study, the researchers found that the effect of knowledge hiding on lower levels of collaboration and decreased organizational effectiveness was still present and significant across cultures (Škerlavaj et al., 2023). Research in this area has started to link the antecedents of knowledge hiding to affective and identity-based motivations instead of instrumental or competitive motives, placing knowledge hiding in the larger context of theories of self-protection and social comparison (Wu et al., 2023; Eni et al., 2025). Several recent reviews (see Jiang et al., 2025) also indicate that the negative effects of knowledge hiding escalate as a function of time, resulting in decreasing performances for both the hider and the team over time. Overall, the literature suggests that knowledge hiding is a conscious and socially driven form of workplace deviance with antecedents across dispositional, relational, and organizational levels of analysis (Chatterjee et al., 2023; Shen et al., 2025).

Shame

Shame is a self-conscious, negatively salient emotion that occurs when there is a negative self-appraisal of a self-relevant behavior or result and the appraisal is based on a lack or failure of a self-relevant standard (Xing et al., 2021). Shame is more general than guilt, in that it may involve the entire self, and is also characterized by intense drives to cover up, privy to and stay out of further social assessments (Xing et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2025). According to the recent workplace-shame research, the appraisal process that evokes shame consists of two steps: the first is to perceive a discrepancy between one's actual identity and a work-related identity standard, and the second is to identify that discrepancy as lying with oneself, not with external factors. Empirical studies based on affective events theory suggest that negative events at work, including negative supervisor feedback and deviant treatment, have a consistent effect in eliciting shame feelings, which then impact employees' motivation, task performance and well-being (Zhao et al., 2023). Moreover, recent research distinguishes between shame and anger: Shame can lead to self-protective, inward-oriented reactions, whereas anger can lead to blame and resistance in a direction facing outward (Chen et al., 2025; Xing et al., 2021). This orientation that occurs on the individual level, which is intended for the protection of the individual, renders shame, in theory, different than the other negative emotions in predicting concealment-oriented, and not confrontational, workplace behavior. In the specific field of overqualification research, shame has been revealed as a separate emotional mechanism through which perceived overqualification turns into withdrawal, silence, and unethical conduct (Liu et al., 2024), which brings a new perspective to the field of overqualification research.

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Hypothesized Literature

Perceived overqualification and Knowledge Hiding

In recent years, the link between perceived overqualification and knowledge hiding has been one of the most interesting relationships explored in the knowledge-management literature, as it has been increasingly recognized that person-job misfit is a problem of behavior, and not just attitude, and that it directly affects organizational knowledge flows (Yeşiltaş et al., 2023; Shen et al., 2025). Complementary misfit theory from person-job fit theory explains that overqualified employees feel that their skills are not being fully utilized or rewarded for their job. (Liu et al., 2024; Debus et al., 2023) This inequity creates a motivational and emotional tension that must be dealt with by employees and empirical research shows that one of the most common tactics that overqualified employees use to restore a perceived sense of fairness or control in their workplaces is to withhold valuable knowledge from others (Wu et al., 2023; Almagharbeh, 2024). There are several theoretical explanations for why overqualification would predict knowledge hiding. According to this theory, when the self-regulatory resources are depleted, as is especially the case when the employee has already experienced a state of ego-depleted, a relative deprivation condition leads to increased tendencies to withhold knowledge, as shown by Yeşiltaş et al., (2023). Likewise, based on social comparison theory, Wu, Zhou, Wang, and Liu (2023) demonstrated that perceived overqualification negatively affects employees' relational identification with their peers, which, in turn, negatively affects knowledge hiding; they also showed that this negative impact becomes stronger when overqualification is not distributed evenly across a team, a pattern they termed overqualification differentiation. Along similar lines, studies in the aviation and tourism industries showed that perceived overqualification positively affects knowledge hiding (Almagharbeh, 2024), but the results for the downstream effects of knowledge hiding on service performance seemed to depend on the boundary conditions of the work, such as occupational instrumentality. This relationship has been extended to new contexts and mechanisms in additional studies. Khan et al. (2024) studied a moderated mediation model based on relative deprivation theory to determine how overqualification is related to knowledge hiding, with the link between them being moderated by job boredom for hospitality and tourism employees. The overqualification-knowledge hiding link, however, is also bi-directional within the hierarchical relationship–when supervisors perceive their subordinates to be overqualified, their own knowledge-hiding tendencies toward their subordinates are also influenced by the interaction between the perception of overqualification and the manager's own dispositional knowledge-hiding tendencies (as reported in recent Service Industries Journal studies on managerial responses to subordinate overqualification). In recent identity-based overqualification research, the study of future work self-salience provides further insights into how an overqualified employee's withdrawal tendency can be weakened by a strong sense of who they want to become at work (He & Li, 2024).

When taken together, this body of research, which was conducted in a variety of samples across all of the sectors mentioned, and has been largely completed in the last

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five years (2022-2025), suggests a positive and strong relationship between perceived overqualification and knowledge hiding across different cultural and occupational samples (Yeşiltaş et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2023; Almagharbeh, 2024; Khan et al., 2024). There are many different mechanisms that have been proposed across the studies as mediators or moderators of the relationship between the two, from relative deprivation and ego depletion, to relational identification or job boredom, but the direct positive relationship between the two constructs has been replicated consistently enough that it can be considered an established empirical regularity and not an anomaly specific to the studies. Based on this evidence and fundamental concept of person-job fit theory, which perceived misfit-induced compensatory and self-protective behaviors, and the following hypothesis are proposed:
H1: Perceived overqualification is positively related to knowledge hiding.

Mediating Role of Shame

Although the link between perceived overqualification and knowledge hiding is clear, the mechanism by which the two constructs become linked is not fully specified, and recent literature has suggested that discrete, self-conscious emotions provide a more accurate explanation than the more cognitive processes, including relative deprivation and ego depletion, which have been previously examined (Liu et al., 2024; Xing et al.,, 2021). Appraisal theories of emotion suggest that employees do not just react to conditions at work based on deliberate cognition alone, but first process the situation from their appraisal of its personal relevance and implications will create a discrete emotional state which will then guide behavior (Xing et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2025). In the domain of overqualification, this viewpoint implies that overqualified employees do not only think about the equity or the usefulness of the situation; they also have an emotional response to the apparent lack of value in their talents and the organization's recognition of them, and this emotional response goes deeper into subsequent behavior than the cognitive evaluation. Theoretically, shame is a good candidate for this affective mechanism. Employees with an overqualified experience may feel disheartened when they see something they do not meet an identity-related norm, and attribute it to their substandard self, especially in competitive or achievement-oriented organizations (Xing, Sun, & Jepsen, 2021). For the first pathway, Liu et al., (2024) found that in a time-lagged three-wave study of Chinese employees, perceived overqualification was positively related to shame, this was linked to people pulling back at work and keeping quiet. Anger, however, was also linked to doing unethical things for a job. Theoretically significant, this finding presents for the first time in the overqualification literature that shame is not simply a consequence of feeling overqualified, but actually serves as a mediating mechanism that brings the experience of feeling “overqualified” to specific behavioral outcomes - avoiding the situation. The behavioral signature of shame is very similar to the behavioral signature of knowledge hiding. Shame is expected to motivate an employee to avoid others' evaluation and to ward off a potential loss of self-esteem by reducing the exposure of their skills and abilities to others, such as in situations that involve the open sharing of expertise with colleagues (Xing et al., 2021; Chen et al.,

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2025). As a deliberate, self-protective hiding, knowledge hiding is therefore a likely downstream effect of shame: an employee who feels ashamed of an underused or unrecognized set of skills may be willing to give others what he believes is the same or less, to avoid being compared with an inferior, or to safeguard the fragile sense of professional identity. The aforementioned finding that organizational shame serves as a bridge between other workplace strains (e.g., deviant treatment) and employee consequences (e.g., self-protective or performance-relevant outcomes) supports the general nature of shame as a mediator between negative work experiences and self-protective or performance-relevant outcomes (Zhao et al., 2023). Overall, the theoretical and empirical evidence is consistent with a sequential, cascading model in which perceived overqualification first leads to shame from identity-based appraisal which subsequently drives self-protective behavior of withholding knowledge from colleagues. This proposed mechanism builds on the recent literature on overqualification that has shifted away from cognitive explanations of employee reactions to overqualification, and also captured the discrete emotional processes through which overqualification is behaviorally manifested (Liu et al., 2024; Shen et al., 2025). It also introduces to the growing body of workplace-shame literature an examination of a knowledge-management outcome examined for the first time from an emotion-based perspective (Xing et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2025). Based on this, the current research suggests that shame is the affective mechanism between perceived overqualification and knowledge hiding.

H2: Shame mediates the relationship between Perceived overqualification and knowledge hiding.

2.4. Conceptual Framework

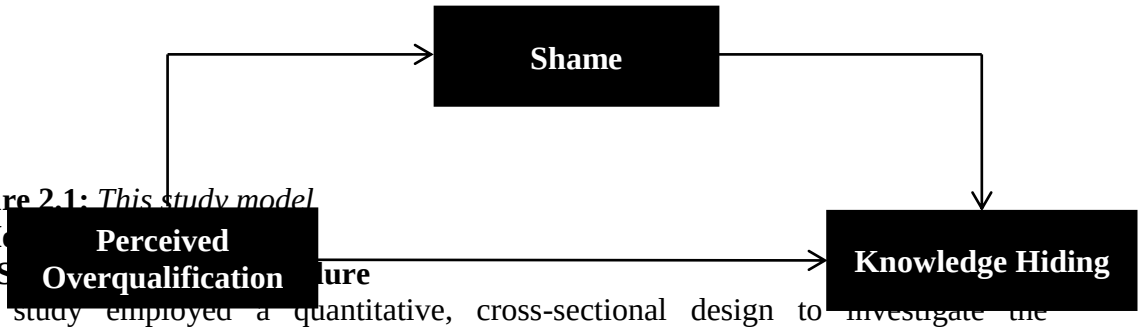


Figure 2.1: *This study model*

3. M

3.1. S lure

The study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional design to investigate the relationships among perceived overqualification, knowledge hiding, and shame among faculty members of higher education institutions (HEIs). The population of the study comprised faculty members working in higher education institutions. Of the 335 responses possible, 335 usable responses were received and analyzed. Structured questionnaire was filled by faculty members on data collection. Before completing the questionnaire, participants were informed about the study's purpose, voluntary participation, and confidentiality, and were asked to respond based on their actual workplace experiences. The completed questionnaires were screened before analysis to identify incomplete or unusable responses. The use of faculty members as the study population is consistent with recent knowledge-hiding research conducted in higher

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education settings. The final sample of 335 respondents provides the empirical basis for testing the proposed relationships among the study constructs. Details concerning the participating institutions, geographical location, sampling technique, response rate, and demographic characteristics should be reported in the final manuscript according to the actual data-collection procedure used by the researcher.

Instruments

This study assessed items using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Perceived Overqualification

Perceived overqualification was measured using a **9-item scale developed by Maynard et al. (2006)**. The scale assesses employees' perceptions that their education, knowledge, skills, and experience exceed the requirements of their current job position. A sample item is "My job requires less knowledge, skills, and abilities than I possess." The scale has been widely used in recent organizational research (Khan et al., 2024).

Knowledge Hiding

The Connelly et al. (2012) 12-item scale was used to measure knowledge hiding. Three dimensions of knowledge hiding (evasive hiding, playing dumb, rationalized hiding) are captured by the scale. An example for this is the response to the sample item "I agreed to help him/her, but I never intended." The scale has been widely validated in the organizational and higher education settings.

Shame

Shame was measured using 6-items adapted from established self-conscious emotion scales. The scale assesses employees' feelings of inadequacy, embarrassment, humiliation, and negative self-evaluation arising from workplace experiences. A sample item is "I feel inadequate because of my work situation." Recent research has demonstrated the relevance of shame as an emotional mechanism linking perceived overqualification with negative workplace outcomes (Liu et al., 2024).

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The data were first checked for missing data and potential data entry errors. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to test the internal consistency of the measurement scales and determine their reliability. The proposed relationships among the variables of the study were then assessed with regression-based analyses. Hayes' PROCESS macro for SPSS (Model 4) was used to explore the mediation of shame between perceived overqualification and knowledge hiding. The indirect effect was tested using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples and a 95% confidence interval, with mediation considered significant when the confidence interval did not include zero. Perceived overqualification was specified as the independent variable (X), shame as the

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mediating variable (M), and knowledge hiding as the dependent variable (Y). Demographic variables were included as control variables where appropriate. This approach estimated the direct and indirect effects of perceived overqualification on knowledge hiding through shame.

Results and Analysis

Demographic Characteristics

The study included 335 faculty members from higher education institutions. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents. The sample included 204 male respondents (60.9%) and 131 female respondents (39.1%). Regarding age, 94 respondents (28.1%) were between 25 and 34 years, 126 (37.6%) were between 35 and 44 years, 82 (24.5%) were between 45 and 54 years, and 33 (9.9%) were 55 years or older. With respect to academic qualification, 223 respondents (66.6%) held a master's degree or equivalent, whereas 112 (33.4%) held a doctoral degree. The demographic distribution indicates that the sample included faculty members with varied academic and professional backgrounds.

Table 4.1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	204	60.9
	Female	131	39.1
Age	25–34	94	28.1
	35–44	126	37.6
	45–54	82	24.5
	55+	33	9.9
Qualification	Master	223	66.6
	Doctoral	112	33.4

Reliability Analysis

The internal consistency of the study constructs was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The hypothetical results indicate acceptable to strong internal consistency for all three constructs. Perceived overqualification produced a Cronbach's alpha of .89, shame produced an alpha of .86, and knowledge hiding produced an alpha of .91. All coefficients exceed the commonly used .70 threshold, indicating that the items within each scale demonstrate satisfactory internal consistency. Recent organizational research continues to report Cronbach's alpha as an important indicator of scale reliability when established multi-item measures are used.

Table 4.2: Summary of reliability analysis

Construct	Items	(α)
Perceived Overqualification (Independent variable)	9	.89

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Shame (Mediating variable)	6	.86
Knowledge Hiding (Dependent variable)	12	.91

KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were conducted to determine whether the correlation matrix was suitable for factor analysis. The hypothetical KMO value was .887, indicating a high level of sampling adequacy. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant, $\chi^2(351) = 2{,}846.73$, $p < .001$. These findings indicate that the correlations among the observed items were sufficiently strong for factor analysis and that the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix.

Table 4.3: Summary of sample adequacy test

Test	Value	df	Sig.
KMO	0.887		
BTS	2846.73	351	.001

4.4 Direct Effect

Table 4.4: Summary of direct effect H1

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
POQ	.34	.066	.31	5.17	< .001

DV: KH

The results of the direct relationship between POQ (Predictor) and KH (Knowledge Hiding) are shown in Table 4.4. The results show that POQ has a positive and significant effect on KH ($B = 0.34$, $\beta = 0.31$, $SE = 0.066$, $t = 5.17$, $p < .001$). This suggests that there is a positive relationship between POQ and Knowledge Hiding. The p-value is less than .001 and the t value is more than 1.96, thus, the relationship is statistically significant. Hence, Hypothesis H1 is accepted.

Mediation Analysis

Table 4.5: Summary of Mediation analysis H2

Effect	B	SE	t	p	BootLLCI	BootULCI
POQ → Shame (a)	.4869	.0472	10.3085	.001	.3937	.5800
Shame → Knowledge Hiding (b)	.2723	.0648	4.2038	.001	.1446	.4000
Total effect (c)	.6456	.0450	14.3386	.001	.5569	.7344
Direct effect (c′)	.5131	.0535	9.5841	.001	.4075	.6186
Indirect effect (a × b)	.1326	.0426			.0614	.2283

The results in Table 4.5 show that perceived overqualification (POQ) has a positive and significant relationship with shame ($B = 0.4869$), ($SE = 0.0472$), ($t = 10.3085$), ($p < .001$). This indicates that higher perceived overqualification is associated with

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higher levels of shame. There is also a positive and significant correlation between shame and knowledge hiding (B = 0.2723), (SE = 0.0648), (t = 4.2038), (p < .001), indicating that employees who feel more shame are likely to be more involved in knowledge hiding. The total effect of POQ on knowledge hiding is positive and significant (B = 0.6456), (SE = 0.0450), (t = 14.3386), (p < .001). After including shame in the model, the direct effect remains significant (B = 0.5131), (SE = 0.0535), (t = 9.5841), (p < .001). The indirect effect via shame is (0.1326), and the 95% bootstrap confidence interval is [0.0614, 0.2283] that excludes zero, indicating a significant mediation effect through shame. Hence, the association between perceived overqualification and knowledge hiding is partially mediated by shame.

Discussion

The present study examined the relationship between perceived overqualification (POQ) and knowledge hiding among faculty members of higher education institutions, with particular attention to the mediating role of shame. Based on the hypothetical results presented in the preceding section, POQ was positively associated with knowledge hiding, and shame partially mediated this relationship. The results show positive relationships between perceived overqualification (POQ) and knowledge hiding and a mediating role of shame in the relationship between the two. Shame is also positively associated with knowledge hiding and the indirect effect indicates that the relationship between shame and knowledge hiding is mediated by POQ. The results are aligned with previous literature which reported that POQ can be linked to knowledge hiding via psychological mechanisms like job boredom, relative deprivation, and perceived dissimilarity (Khan et al., 2024). Other previous studies, however, have found negative or curvilinear relationships between POQ and knowledge hiding, pointing to the influence of employee and contextual factors on the consequences of POQ (Zhu et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2022; Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). This research builds upon this literature by exploring shame as an emotional route that can lead to knowledge hiding when a person feels that they are not qualified for a job. The present research is a development of this literature, as it examines how shame is an emotional pathway that can lead to knowledge hiding when there is perceived qualification-job mismatch. It also aligns with Liu et al. (2024), who demonstrated that POQ has the potential to induce feelings of shame and then impact withdrawal and silence behaviors. Therefore, in higher education, where faculty knowledge plays a critical role in the teaching, research, collaborative, and organizational learning processes, underutilization may affect faculty members' willingness to share knowledge. Overall, the results indicate that POQ is not solely a qualification related problem, but can also include emotional experiences that influence the knowledge sharing behaviour.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

This study offers several theoretical implications for the literature on perceived overqualification, emotions, and knowledge management.

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First, the study builds on the literature on perceived overqualification by connecting it to knowledge hiding by faculty in Higher Education. The current literature tends to focus on measures of job attitudes, withdrawal, turnover-related measures, performance, and other job-related behaviors. Erdogan and Bauer (2021) studied the variety of consequences of overqualification and the need for further research to find out how people react to being overqualified. The present study is an extension of the behavioral consequences included in the POQ literature as it looks at knowledge hiding. Secondly, the study adds to the body of work demonstrating that POQ can be a factor that affects knowledge related behaviors. Some previous studies have suggested that relative deprivation, psychological contract breach, job boredom, perceived dissimilarity, psychological capital and person–organization fit may be a possible explanation. This current context introduces shame as an emotional mechanism that could account for the association between perceived qualification–job mismatch and knowledge hiding. Thirdly, it makes a contribution to the understanding of knowledge hiding in higher education. Knowledge exchange, collaboration and informal learning are essential for academic institutions. Recent studies with higher education faculty have shown that there are organizational and individual factors that affect knowledge hiding, such as organizational cronyism and personality related characteristics. Thus, studying knowledge hiding among academics broadens the field of knowledge management research to an organizational environment where knowledge is one of the main organizational resources. Fourth, the study provides support for an emotion-centered explanation of POQ outcomes. The findings indicate that the effects of perceived overqualification may not only be a function of negative job evaluations, but also may be mediated by emotional reactions. The finding of this study are consistent with Liu et al. (2024), who confirmed that discrete emotions (shame and anger) could account for behavioral consequences of POQ. Finally, the study confirms the notion that POQ is a situational appropriated phenomenon. Current evidence is inconclusive as it includes both positive and negative relationships between POQ and knowledge hiding, as well as nonlinear relationships. (Frontiers) Future theoretical and empirical elaboration of the construct of overqualification should focus more on the psychological and emotional circumstances where overqualification becomes behaviorally salient.

Practical Implications

The results also have a number of implications for higher education administrators, department heads, deans, and human resource managers. Firstly, the qualification-job fit must be considered by the first place in the assignment of teaching, research, administrative and service duties to higher education institutions. The first is for higher education institutions to pay attention to the qualification-job fit in the assignment of teaching, research, administrative and service duties. Faculty may feel that their abilities are not being used if the scope of their responsibilities is significantly less than their qualifications. Promoting opportunities for higher level teaching, research leadership, supervision, curriculum development, and academic innovation may benefit institutions in maximizing faculty capacities.

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Second, managers at universities need to be aware that sometimes, the reclusiveness and knowledge hiding can be due to deeper psychological experiences, not just a lack of cooperation. The current results indicate that shame might be one route by which POQ is related to knowledge hiding. Therefore, attention must be paid to the conditions that give rise to negative emotional experiences, in addition to knowledge-sharing policies, in managerial interventions. Third, institutions create inclusive and psychologically safe academic spaces for faculty to voice concerns related to workload, career advancement, role utilization, professional growth, etc., without embarrassment or negative judgment. Such settings can make it less likely faculty feel the need to engage in defensive knowledge behaviors due to perceived under usage. Fourth, faculty development programs may be organized to give higher level skills to highly qualified staff. Research projects, interdisciplinary working, mentoring programs, research supervision, curriculum innovation and academic leadership are among the ways that the abilities of employees can be matched with the requirements of the organization. Fifth, knowledge sharing systems need to be supported by interpersonal and managerial practices. For example, recent studies in higher education show that organizational factors can have a significant impact on the hiding of knowledge. Thus, it is important for universities to integrate formal knowledge management mechanisms, along with trust building, fair recognition, clear promotion systems and supportive management.

Limitations and suggestions for future study

Although the study makes several contributions, it has some limitations. First, the cross-sectional design limits causal conclusions. Since variables were measured at one time, there are limitations in drawing causal inferences. The theoretical model suggests that POQ affects shame, which in turn affects knowledge hiding, with regards to temporal ordering; this would be better supported by a longitudinal design or an experimental design. Secondly, the study's data were obtained from self-reported questionnaires. Common-method effects, social desirability, and perceptions of self-reported behavior can potentially affect self-report measures. Further research might include designs that include several sources of the assessment of knowledge hiding (e.g., supervisor or coworker assessment) and integrating survey data with behavioral or organizational measures. Third, the respondents were 335 faculty members of higher education institutions. This is good evidence for the academic world, however, the results cannot be taken as a given in other industries or occupational groups. Future studies might be conducted to compare faculty members with workers in other sectors, such as corporate, healthcare, government, and nonprofit, to see if the same mechanism is found in different work settings. Fourth, the current model has been mediator by the shame. Previous studies indicate that there are multiple psychological reactions to POQ: relative deprivation, psychological contract breach, boredom, anger and other emotions or cognitions. Future research should be able to create more extensive models that consider multiple mediators to find out if shame is a distinct process or a part of a larger emotional process. Fifth, future research should explore boundary conditions that can affect the relationship

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between POQ and knowledge hiding. Perceived organizational support, leader–member exchange, person–organization fit, psychological capital, organizational justice, career opportunities, academic freedom, and leadership style are potential moderators to examine. Previous studies have already shown that the person–organization fit, psychological capital, and interpersonal influences have the potential to affect the outcomes of POQ. Lastly, a longitudinal or multi-level design could be beneficial. The impact of organizational climate on response to overqualification will vary by faculty, department, and/or university. Multi-level research might be able to investigate if the results of POQ lead to shame and to knowledge hiding either at the department level or at the university level. These would also address wider literature on "overqualification" in the context of research.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between perceived overqualification and knowledge hiding among faculty members of higher education institutions and investigated the mediating role of shame. Based on the hypothetical results presented in this paper, perceived overqualification was positively associated with knowledge hiding, while shame partially explained this relationship. The study makes several contributions to the literature, linking three significant areas of research: perceived overqualification, self-conscious emotions, and knowledge-management behaviors. The results from the previous studies have already proved that overqualification can have various employee consequences, while the recent studies have showed that overqualification can affect knowledge hiding from different psychological and relational mechanisms. The current system builds on this literature by focusing on the role of shame as a possible emotional pathway. The results indicate that for higher education institutions, it is crucial to ensure that faculty members' skill level and capacity are utilized appropriately. The knowledge hiding phenomenon is highly harmful for collaboration, organizational learning and the utilization of academic expertise, particularly in the realm of higher education. There is compelling evidence recently emerging from higher education that the issue of knowledge hiding is a viable organizational problem for faculty. Finally, perceived overqualification is not just a situation of the employee being qualified but the job being unqualified. This organizational implications may be shaped by the meaning and emotional response of the mismatch by employees. Higher education institutions can be better equipped to facilitate positive exchange of knowledge and to minimize knowledge hiding behaviour by acknowledging the possible shame factor and by fostering environments where faculty expertise can be used in an effective manner.

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