

Silent Leadership and its Role in Promoting Knowledge Concealment in the Workplace: a Survey Study of the Opinions of a Sample of Employees at the College of Administration and Economics, University of Babylon

Dr. Walaa Salman Abdulhamza

Imam Ja'afar Al-Sadiq University/Alnajaf, Najaf Iraq,

walaa.salman@sadiq.edu.iq

Abstract: The research seeks to elucidate the relationship between the independent variable of silent leadership, encompassing its dimensions of avoidant silence, justification of aggressive behavior, silence coupled with uncertainty, and both internal and external influence, and the dependent variable of knowledge concealment in the workplace, which includes evasive concealment, justified concealment, and the feigning of ignorance. The study problem was articulated through the inquiry: (What is the relationship between quiet leadership and knowledge concealment in the workplace) concerning a sample of employees at the College of Administration and Economics / University of Babylon? The significance of the research was elucidated through the findings derived from the analysis of the viewpoints of the research sample, comprising 112 employee responses, and the broader community, totalling over 144 employees, who completed a questionnaire designed in accordance with a five-point Likert scale. We employed both descriptive and analytical statistical approaches with the (SPSS) and (AMOS) programs. Descriptive methods included the arithmetic mean and standard deviation, while analytical methods included linear regression and the correlation coefficient. A series of conclusions was drawn, the most notable being the identification of a positive and statistically significant correlation between a leader's avoidant silence and employees' knowledge concealment. This means that when workers believe a leader is evading responsibility by being quiet, it makes them more likely to hide information to protect themselves.

Key words: Silent leadership, knowledge concealment in the workplace, College of Administration and Economics / University of Babylon.



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Introduction

Due to the rapid changes and growing difficulties that organisations face, there is a need for leaders who can create a safe and inclusive workplace without relying on traditional management techniques or imposing control. One suggested solution to this problem is silent leadership, which can help teams work together more effectively, enhance the quality of their interactions, and reduce the number of confrontations. The silent leader does not depend on clear directions or

constant orders. Instead, they lead by example, by listening deeply, and by offering subtle advice (Dyne et al., 2003, p. 1360).

In this style of leadership, the leader chooses to step back or simply observe without providing clear directions or feedback. This creates an unclear work atmosphere and confuses employees. Silent leadership can stem from personality attributes, such as reserve, or from the erroneous belief that silence affords employees greater autonomy in decision-making. Some silent leaders may have a clear vision or be exceptionally skilled in their field. Still, it's challenging to translate that vision into action when they fail to communicate or offer guidance actively. When things are tough, not having a leader's voice can leave the organisation feeling empty, which can confuse the team and lower morale. (Khalid et al., 2024:16)

In today's workplaces, knowledge is one of the most valuable assets an organisation possesses. The success of an organisation depends on how well it can create and transfer information among its employees. However, a significant difficulty arises from knowledge hiding behavior, characterized by employees' reluctance to share information or knowledge with colleagues or managers, whether deliberately or inadvertently (Abubakar et al., 2019:47). And hiding knowledge may not always be due to anger or selfishness; it could also be due to fear of losing a competitive edge, lack of trust, feeling undervalued, or a corporate culture that doesn't encourage collaboration. This behaviour is dangerous because it not only makes it harder for the organisation to learn and make informed decisions, but it also causes team members to doubt each other and creates friction, ultimately harming the organisation's overall performance (Dickins, 2024:5).

The primary premise of the research was the substantial influence of quiet leadership on the concealment of knowledge inside the workplace. The descriptive-analytical technique was employed, and the research was organised into four principal divisions. The first part discussed the methodology, the second part examined the literature related to the main research variables and their sub-dimensions, the third part presented the results of the research analysis, and the fourth part outlined the conclusions and recommendations derived from the statistical analysis process.

1- Literature Review

In this section, we talk about the theoretical foundation of the research variables. This includes a full explanation of the ideas of silent leadership and knowledge concealment behavior at work, which are as follows:

1-1- Silent Leadership:

1-1-1- The concept of silent leadership:

In the contemporary work environment, where personality types are diverse and interaction styles vary, it has become essential to adopt leadership styles that align with the demands of modern work and the psychological and professional needs of individuals. Among these methods, silent leadership stands out as a distinct approach characterised by calmness, active listening, and indirect influence. Silent leadership does not rely on commands or constant presence, but rather focuses on action over words, and on bringing about change through silent example and deliberate behaviour. The silence of the leader when facing critical problems is considered one of the behavioural aspects of passive leadership, also known as inactive leadership (Zill et al., 2020, p. 67).

Naz (2018:17) believes that silent leadership is neither a weakness nor an absence of a leadership role, but rather a conscious practice that demonstrates leadership maturity and a thoughtful delegation of authority, built on mutual trust and the ability to motivate others without the need for explicit orders or verbal dominance. This type of leadership is often practised in environments that require critical thinking, employee empowerment, and high sensitivity to interpersonal

relationships. By maintaining silence and absence in the face of challenges, leaders create a vacuum that allows subordinates to take the initiative themselves.

(Akuzum, 2014:97) Confirms that silent leadership demonstrates high efficiency in team management without the need to impose authority directly. He observes, supports, and guides when necessary, while giving employees the freedom to make their own decisions, which enhances their sense of confidence and independence. This type of leadership creates a work environment characterised by respect, self-responsibility, and innovation, where employees feel they are part of the decision-making process and not just executors. And true leadership is not measured by the loudness of the voice, but by the depth of the impact. Employees do not share confidential information belonging to individuals or the organisation; they maintain confidentiality and conceal it on their behalf. The idea of prioritising the interests of the organisation and other individuals comes first in this behaviour, which is performed selflessly.

Sydow et al. (2011:37) believe that Silent leadership may intentionally withhold relevant information for various reasons. Leaders can exhibit different forms of silence behaviour and categorise leadership silence into various forms by integrating leadership theories, particularly the leader-member exchange theory. From a performance perspective, silent leadership behaviour may hinder subordinates from achieving their full potential. From a relational perspective, the behaviour of leader silence may convey communicative signals between the leader and the subordinate, as well as how the leader perceives the subordinate. As a result, subordinates attribute causal traits to understand the reasons and expectations behind the leader's silence. In fact, the expectations regarding how communication occurs between the leader and the subordinate should shape the subsequent silence behaviour. Silent Leadership emerges as a distinct leadership style, characterised by strategic silence, reliance on indirect influence, effective listening, and providing space for others to express themselves and take initiative. (Tahir et al., 2025:2).

(Chan, 2014:5) defined leadership silence as a leadership style characterised by the absence of verbal guidance and direct communication with the team, where the leader chooses silence or minimal intervention, leading to weak interaction and role ambiguity within the work environment. Chang et al. (2018:3) also defined it as a gap in organisational leadership, where the leader does not exert the required influence, leaving employees without a clear direction, thereby creating an atmosphere of ambiguity and weak trust.

Zill et al. (2020:66) defined a leadership style in which the leader is absent from traditional leadership roles such as motivation, guidance, and feedback, and merely observes without actively participating in workflow or problem-solving. (Wang, 2021:846) defines silent leadership as the deliberate withholding by the leader of true expressions of behavioural, cognitive, or emotional evaluations of the subordinates' organisational conditions. (Tahir et al., 2025:2) Define it as the absence of the leader as an active and guiding voice within the team, resulting in a sense of neglect and a decline in morale and team belonging. It is defined as the absence of the leader as an active and guiding voice within the team, resulting in feelings of neglect, a decline in morale, and a sense of disconnection.

1-1-2- Dimensions of Silent Leadership: Dimensions of silent leadership:

Leaders distinguish between their subordinates and develop different types of exchange relationships with them. The relationships that leaders develop with their subordinates range from high exchange, characterised by greater mutual respect, admiration, and trust, to low exchange, which is marked by more formal supervision and less support. Leaders may intentionally withhold relevant information based on the quality of exchange relationships with their subordinates. (Chang et al., 2018:8) The separation of leadership behaviours may lead to strong emotional responses among affected employees, which could narrow the individual's repertoire of that and

action and result in more negative perceptions of the work context (Dickins, 2024:113). The following is an explanation of the dimensions of silent leadership:

1-1-2-1- Avoidance Silence:

Silence within organisations is considered one of the behavioural phenomena that carry deep psychological and organisational dimensions, as it can serve as a tool for reflection and decision-making, and it may also indicate hidden problems within the work environment. This leadership silence, despite its potentially positive intentions, has behavioural consequences. In the absence of clear and supportive communication, the leader's silence may be interpreted by some individuals as a sign of distance, lack of interest, or even an implicit rejection of interaction. This can lead to what is called "avoidant silence" here - people not speaking or sharing their opinions because they are afraid their opinion does not matter or they may be misunderstood. This kind of silence — the silence from those with avoidant tendencies to voice their opinions, comments, or feedback — is often labelled as one of the most dangerous types of silence. The link (albeit indirect) between silent leadership and avoidant silence is tenuous and fragile, depending on a multitude of moderators, such as the type of work context and the level of team maturity. Thus, it is essential to understand this relationship for leadership styles that balance exercising silence with the need to communicate, and empowerment with the need to maintain an open workplace (Hao et al., 2022:2-3).

1-1-2-2- Justification of Aggressive Behaviour:

Aggressive behaviour in the workplace is one of the behavioural problems that can affect professional relationships, the quality of work, and the mental health of employees. This conduct can manifest in various ways, ranging from overt hostility, such as yelling and punishment, to more subtle forms, including ignoring, indirect negative criticism, or withdrawal from interaction. In some organisational contexts, this aggressive behaviour may be met with justification or overlooking, especially when it comes from leadership. From here, silent leadership emerges as a central factor in this phenomenon; when a leader adopts a silent approach in dealing with aggressive or tense situations, whether through intentional silence, avoidance, or ignoring negative behaviours within the team, this leadership silence in such situations may not be interpreted as neutrality or balance. Instead, it may lead to the reinforcement of a negative culture that tolerates aggression, weakens trust within teams, and prevents individuals from expressing their concerns or defending themselves (Coakley, 2021, p. 3).

1-1-2-3-The silence accompanying uncertainty:

The silence that accompanies uncertainty emerges as a pattern generated by the ambiguity of situations, the absence of guidance, and the lack of clarity in expectations, prompting individuals to remain silent out of caution or fear of making the wrong decision. This type of silence increases in environments that lack effective leadership communication, and silent leadership emerges as a managerial style that relies on reducing verbal interventions, instead depending on indirect influence, setting an example, and maintaining calm in dealing with events. And despite the maturity and balance that silent leadership may bring at times, practising it without clarity or effective communication can lead to a state of uncertainty within the team, causing individuals to avoid expressing their opinions or taking initiatives, out of fear of unexpected reactions or due to not understanding what is precisely expected of them (Krause et al., 2023:261).

1-1-2-4- Internal And External Influence Internal And External Influence:

In light of the diversity of leadership styles, the concept of silent leadership emerges as an approach that focuses on indirect, quiet influence, where the leader tends toward strategic silence, reduces verbal interventions, and relies on setting an example and demonstrating practical behaviour instead of issuing continuous verbal instructions. However, it encompasses both

internal and external influences that impact individuals and the organisation alike. Internally, leadership silence can impact employees' self-confidence, role clarity, and the setting of expectations, potentially leading to feelings of insecurity or confusion. Regarding the external aspect, this leadership style may impact the organisation's image, its relationships with stakeholders, and its ability to respond to environmental changes quickly and effectively (Binikos, 2008:50).

1-2- The behaviour of concealing knowledge in the workplace:

1-2-1- The concept of knowledge hiding behaviour in the workplace:

Knowledge is one of the most important strategic resources in contemporary organisations, as it plays a vital role in supporting innovation, enhancing performance, and improving competitiveness. With this increasing awareness of the value of knowledge, the need to enhance knowledge-sharing practices within work environments has emerged. However, the organisational reality reveals behaviour that contradicts this trend, and knowledge is considered one of the most important intangible assets in the contemporary work environment, as it forms a fundamental pillar for innovation, decision-making, and achieving a competitive advantage for institutions. With the increasing interest in knowledge management and its exchange among individuals, a behavioural phenomenon has emerged that is considered one of the most prominent organisational challenges, known as (Knowledge Hiding. It refers to individuals intentionally refraining from sharing information, despite being aware of others' need for it, whether out of caution, competition, or a lack of trust (Shah & Hashmi, 2019, p. 935).

Knowledge hiding is not a form of ignorance or an unintentional inability to contribute, but rather a behavioural choice influenced by various psychological or organisational factors, including weak relationships among colleagues, role ambiguity, or low organisational justice. Its threat is that it undermines the very basis of collaboration, minimises organisational learning, and fosters a work culture of closed doors and a lack of sense of belonging. As a result, it has become necessary to understand the motivations that underlie knowledge hiding behaviour, its detrimental consequences for individual and collective performance, and possible ways to combat it by promoting a culture of trust, openness, and sharing [3]. Curbing this conduct falls in line with a more holistic approach to transforming organisations to bolster intellectual capital (Bari et al, 2020:2-4).

As expressed in Alnaimi & Rjoub (2021:2), withholding knowledge decreases individual innovation and adversely affects the innovation capabilities of teams, thereby immobilising the organisation. It hinders the work efficiency of employees who possess hidden knowledge. That brings about unproductive work behaviour. Hiding what you know also impedes manager-employee relationships, employee satisfaction, and self-efficacy. The lack of experience sharing, however, is detrimental to workplace relationships.

The exchange of information and experience among employees is not only expected to be a natural behaviour in modern work environments, where many tasks rely on collaboration and knowledge sharing, but also contributes to a higher level of both individual and collective performance. Practical reality, however, shows that this expectation for information sharing is not always matched by behaviour, and so-called knowledge hiding behaviour occurs when some employees do not share their information or expertise, although they are aware that their colleagues will benefit from it (Yuan et al., 2020:1).

This is not a case of ignorance or incompetence, but rather a personal or organisational agenda, such as wishing to be in the top spot, distrust, and fear of losing power or job differentiation. Demirkasimoglu. (2016:130) The work environment itself may also play a role in cementing this behaviour, at least in environments we call hyper-competitive or unfair, or where there is a lack of a sharing culture.

Lee & Shin (2025:3) point out that the risk of knowledge hiding behaviour is not limited to daily communication, but it will also have a negative impact on innovation, the organisational learning process, and team spirit, which will be challenged. Consequently, exploring this behaviour is the first step toward establishing a good organisational climate, one that is supported by trust, transparency, and knowledge sharing. Knowledge hiding is a multifaceted organisational behaviour that is understood to be influenced by psychological and organisational aspects, such as low trust, fear of uniqueness loss, or organisational cultures that promote competition. This behaviour may not always be direct or obvious; at times, it becomes indirect, by either withholding partial information, acting forgetful, pretending to forget, or feigning ignorance. This hinders the efficiency of collective performance and the quality of decision-making.

A deliberate decision not to share knowledge or relevant information in the workplace with others, for personal or organisational reasons, and which harms mutual aid and organisational effectiveness (Aljawarneh & Atan, 2018:3). Nadeem et al also defined it as (2020:3) as an intentional act in which someone refrains from bringing attention to knowledge or information requested from them by someone else. In contrast, the individual has it at hand. This occurs due to intrinsic motives such as caution, fear, or the desire to maintain personal superiority. As defined by Usman et al. (2025:3), it is a defensive behaviour that appears when individuals feel that sharing knowledge may put them at risk or diminish their status in the work environment, and it is often practised as a reaction to an organisational environment characterised by distrust.

1-2-2- Dimensions of knowledge concealment behavior in the workplace:

The behaviours of concealing knowledge in the workplace are associated with three dimensions, which will be explained below (Lee & Shin, 2025:5):

1-2-2-1- Evasive Hiding

Evasive hiding behaviour refers to the conduct in which individuals deliberately conceal and provide misleading or inaccurate information to those seeking knowledge. Victims also begin to hide. They begin to avoid sharing important, complex, and creative information with others. As a result, employees lose their mutual trust, creating a silent atmosphere in the workplace. In other words, evasion in concealment drives the employee to silence (Bari et al., 2020:5). Ruparel & Choubisa (2020:6) believe that deceptive concealment involves providing misleading information or promising to share the required knowledge in the future.

1-2-2-2- Playing Dumb:

The concept of playing dumb refers to a behaviour in which a leader denies knowledge of a certain matter or pretends not to understand it, despite possessing the information clearly. This is done to avoid participation, evade responsibility, or maintain their competitive position within the team. Such behaviour is deliberately organised and falls under defensive manoeuvres to conceal awareness (Xie et al., 2022:4).

Because knowledge plays an important role in many organisations success, sharing experiences and information among employees has become vital to achieve collaboration. However, in practice, this transaction does not happen seamlessly; instead, it can be accompanied by behaviours indicative of a more indirect rejection of knowledge-sharing. One of the least obvious techniques of hiding things that people do at work is what is known as "playing dumb." And thus, it is necessary to consider the phenomenon of pretending to be ignorant as a practice that hampers the organisational flow of knowledge, studying its organisational and psychological underlying reasons for tidying up an organisational environment which is more transparent and trustworthy, thus ensuring the transfer, not the concealment, of knowledge (Chaudhry et al., 2023:12).

1-2-2-3-Rationalised Hiding:

Sharing knowledge with colleagues can sometimes expose the participant to a social dilemma or uncertainty. Although knowledge sharing is beneficial, employees are also aware of the detrimental impact of sharing, as it may threaten their position. As such, some employees prefer not to share their knowledge, leading to knowledge hiding behaviour, which is a situation where employees intentionally conceal knowledge from their colleagues (Alnaimi & Rjoub, 2021:3). Justified authorised knowledge hiding is positively correlated with organisational performance. In contrast, unauthorised justified knowledge hiding negatively affects employees. Furthermore, justified hiding is less associated with deception because the hider justifies the reason for not providing the knowledge. However, knowledge seekers usually perceive it as deceptive (Bari et al., 2020:5). Justified knowledge hiding is providing explanations for the failure to provide information, "either by implying an inability to provide knowledge or blaming another party (Nadeem et al., 2020:3)."

1-2-3- Reasons for knowledge hiding behaviour in the workplace:

The behaviour of concealing knowledge is the result of a complex interaction among individual personality, the organisational environment, and social conditions within the team. There are several reasons for knowledge hiding behaviour in the workplace, as follows: (Kumar Jha & Varkkey, 2018:5), (Ruparel & Choubisa, 2020:7), (Mohsin et al., 2022:443), and (Zulfiqar et al., 2025:3-4):

- A. Fear of losing control or influence: The leader may recognise that knowledge grants her authority within the team, and thus she avoids sharing it to prevent weakening her position or losing her ability to control.
- B. Everybody else is unqualified to comprehend or execute: The leader believes that her team will not understand the knowledge or use it properly, so she wants to keep it to herself. Thinking everyone else is incompetent to understand or execute: The leader believes team members will not grasp the knowledge or utilise it effectively, hence she is keeping it to herself.
- C. Fear that my personal competence is endangered: If the leader brings the knowledge and others contribute to its development or use, she may feel that her expertise or identity as an expert is jeopardised.
- D. Not trusting the team: A leader who does not trust their team to be competent and/or loyal will not share knowledge.
- E. Operating in a high-pressure or ambiguous environment: In organisations undergoing instability, the leader may exhibit a cautious and fearful behaviour to avoid leaking information that could be used against her. Pressure or environmental uncertainty: In the case of a highly regimented organisation, the leader may operate in an overly cautious mode and fear that leaked information would come back to haunt her.

1-3- The relationship between silent leadership and knowledge hiding behavior in the workplace:

Leadership is a fundamental element in shaping the behaviour of individuals in a work environment, as each leader's communication style and interaction style reflect some of the key variables influencing team climate and members' willingness to cooperate. One of the contemporary leadership paradigms is silent leadership, which operates through indirect influence, calmness, and reduces verbal orders and commands, instead following a behavioural model based on actions rather than words (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2019, p. 420). While this style can come across as mature and confident, a lack of direct communication inevitably creates behavioural consequences

within the team. Knowledge hiding behaviour is one of these outcomes, and is defined as 'an intentional effort by the leader not to share critical information or expertise with employees' (Anand et al. 2020:7).

The study of Knoll (2021:9) validates that in present-day workspaces, a high-quality knowledge exchange is now a necessary strategic part and no less required than physical resources, where the activity of organisations primarily relies on the exchange of information and experience among individuals (Knoll, 2021:9). This in turn, directly translates into employee behaviours and attitudes when it comes to participation. Although silent leadership exhibits positive characteristics, such as a calm, wise, and composed demeanour, if operating in an unclear environment or a constant non-interactive state, it can have the opposite effect. The phenomenon emerges in facilitating knowledge hiding behaviour, as individuals who are not guided or receive unclear signals may feel insecure or uncertain and will hesitate to share information, risking becoming cautious, losing trust, or even jeopardising their professional status (Al Hawamdeh, 2023:1704).

However, even if there are expected benefits, such as self-control and independence through silence, failure to direct and provide certainty and clarity may ultimately leave the leaderless team in a foggy zone of ambiguity and discord (Akhtar et al., 2022: 581). People may engage in knowledge-hiding behaviour, withholding information because they feel at risk or because clear signals from leaders are absent. Furthermore, the indirect effect of silent leadership on knowledge hiding behaviour is influenced by the organisational context. A leadership environment of silence can augment ever-blooming knowledge silence among members, and knowledge hiding can further reinforce leaders' perception of not needing to intervene, thereby creating a vicious loop of cognitive dissonance (Hina et al., 2025:16).

2- Methods of Research

It includes the problem, the goals, the importance, the study method, the methods used to collect the data, the analysis, and the statistical treatments.

2-1-Research problem

The global system of knowledge exchange is coming to a halt, which means that due to a decrease in employee knowledge exchange, a negative impact is being driven on the academic and administrative work performance of the academic institution. Hence, for the College of Administration and Economics at Babil University, it becomes a major challenge. The lack of communication regarding essential information, the lag time in expertise exchange between divisions, and the frequency of behaviours such as providing vague answers or denying knowledge in response to requests for help are all telltale signs of these problems. These behaviours not only inhibit creativity and organisational growth but also create a toxic and unsupportive environment in which employees feel uncomfortable working and are unsure about their contributions. Advocates suggest that the absence of explicit rules for collaboration and sharing is the main contributing factor to this phenomenon, and employees take to hiding knowledge as a defence mechanism to protect their standing in the workplace.

In theory, the problem is the ignorance of the low (traditional) leadership and knowledge-hiding behaviour in the context of knowledge management within Iraqi academic institutions. Although previous international research has linked quiet leadership to other dysfunctional human behaviours, including a lack of commitment, the relationship between quiet leadership and knowledge hiding has been little studied. This is especially true in academic environments where knowledge is the highest currency. Classifying and interpreting the various silent leadership behaviours—such as avoidant silence or silence associated with uncertainty—as well as how each aspect of them is connected to particular types of knowledge concealment—such as justified concealment or evasive concealment—represents the theoretical challenge. To better understand

how unfavourable leadership styles affect employee behaviours in higher education institutions, this study aims to extend the theoretical framework by proposing a model that clarifies this causal link and its various implications. To provide light on the issue, we ask the following questions:

1. How prevalent is silent leadership at the college under study? What does the studied college's silent leadership actually look like?
2. What are the most significant forms of information hiding in the studied college, and how prevalent is it in the workplace? What are the most significant sorts of information that are concealed in the workplace, according to the study college?
3. How do information hiding and quiet leadership relate to each other in the workplace? Specifically, how do knowledge hiding and silent leadership relate to each other at the sub-dimension and overall levels? What is the relationship between information concealment in the workplace and silent leadership, specifically the relationship between silent leadership at the macro and sub-dimension levels?

2-2- Goals

The following is how the goals are expressed:

1. Recognising the significance and actuality of silent leadership in the college under study. Assessing the significance and actuality of silent leadership in the college under study
2. Identifying the most significant forms of information concealment in the studied college and confirming its existence in the workplace. Identifying the most significant forms of information concealment in the studied college and confirming its existence in the workplace.
3. Confirming the degree to which quiet leadership affects the sub-dimensions of knowledge concealment in the workplace, as well as the overall level. Confirming the degree to which silent leadership affects knowledge concealment in the workplace on both a general and a sub-level.

2-3- Importance:

Its significance can be explained as follows:

- 1- Practical significance for leadership: This study offers a profound understanding of the negative effects of silent leadership on employee behaviour, particularly in fostering the phenomenon of knowledge concealment. These findings can help the College of Administration and Economics at the University of Babylon design training programs for leaders that focus on promoting effective communication and transparency, and encourage the development of an organisational culture based on trust and participation.
- 2- Practical implications for employees: The study provides insight into why employees choose to hide knowledge, enabling them to understand their motivations and how the work environment can either seduce or encourage them to exhibit this behaviour. Even such awareness can drive a particular group to demand somewhat more supportive and safe work environments, thereby improving their psychological and professional well-being.
- 3- Theoretical contribution: This study aims to fill the gap in the literature related to Arabic literature by examining silent leadership and knowledge hiding. Theoretical contribution: The study provides an important addition to Arabic literature regarding the relationship between silent leadership and knowledge hiding. It proposes a conceptual model that connects the different types of silent leadership to types of knowledge hiding, thus contributing to the theory and, hopefully, providing directions for future research in this area.
- 4- A same significance at the level of the institution: The current study raise an alarm for the management of the University of Babylon and the management and academic institutions in

common to reconsider and review the current ongoing style of leading it current strategies So, here is the institutional implication: This study sounds an alarm for the administration of Babylon University (and academic institutions more broadly) to rethink the dominant styles of leadership. The findings may provide insights for the establishment of policies that make knowledge a strategic resource for the institution, rather than an instrument of competition or self-protection.

2-4- Hypothetical Model

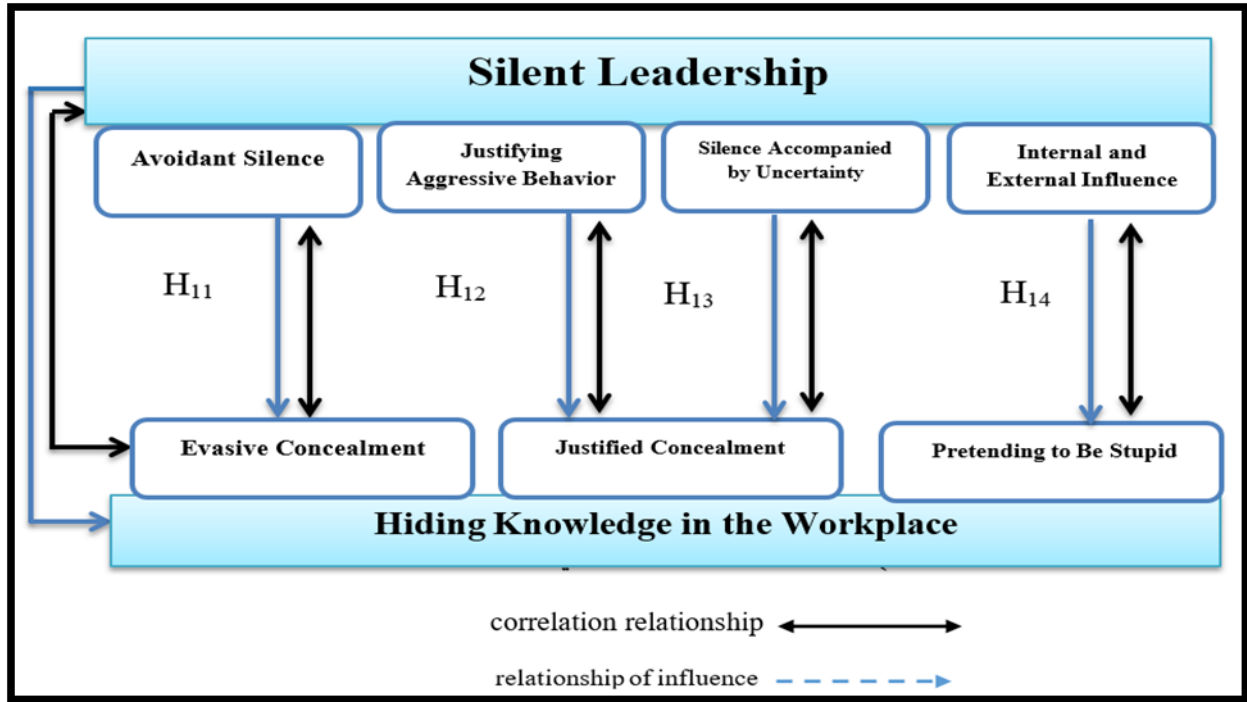


Figure 1: Hypothetical Model for the Study

*Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the mentioned sources

2-5- Research hypotheses

Through the title, we can formulate the hypotheses as follows:

The first main hypothesis: (There is no significant impact of silent leadership on concealing knowledge in the workplace). And from it, the following sub-hypotheses branch out:

- 1- There is no significant effect of avoidance of silence on concealing knowledge in the workplace.
- 2- There is no effect of justifying aggressive behaviour on concealing knowledge in the workplace.
- 3- There is no significant effect of silence associated with uncertainty on knowledge hiding in the workplace.
- 4- There is no significant effect of internal and external influences on concealing knowledge in the workplace.

2-6- Research Methodology

A descriptive/analytical approach was adopted in framing the theoretical aspect, as well as in studying and analysing the correlation relationships and influence trends between the research variables.

2-7- Research Boundaries:

- 1- Temporal boundaries: The study and field data collection were conducted over the period of 2025, which encompassed the year in which the questionnaires were distributed and analysed.
- 2- Spatial boundaries: The study was limited to the geographical boundaries of the College of Administration and Economics at the University of Babylon, where research tools were applied only to a sample of employees within this institution.
- 3- Human boundaries: The study included a sample of employees from the College of Administration and Economics at the University of Babylon, numbering 112 respondents. Therefore, the results and generalisations of this study are limited to the opinions of the sample and do not apply to other communities.
- 4- Objective boundaries: The study was limited to analyzing the relationship between two main variables: the independent variable "silent leadership" with its four dimensions (avoidant silence, justifying aggressive behavior, silence accompanying uncertainty, internal and external influence), and the dependent variable "knowledge hiding in the workplace" with its three dimensions (evasive hiding, justified hiding performance, performance pretending ignorance).

2-8- The Population and Sample.

To achieve the research objectives and enrich the practical aspect, the College of Administration and Economics / University of Babylon was chosen as the study community. The college employs more than 144 staff members.

The sample size was determined to be at least 105 respondents, based on the approved statistical tables (Krejcie, 1970: 608). A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed, and the number of valid questionnaires for statistical analysis reached 112, which meets the required sample size, with an excellent response rate of 93%. Below is a description of the study sample in the table below:

Table No. (1): Distribution of sample members according to classification variables

Classification Variables	Category	Repetitions	%
Human Species	Male	69	61.6%
	Female	43	38.4%
	Total	112	100.0%
Length of Service	Under 5 years	16	14.3%
	5-9 years	29	25.9%
	10-14 years	37	33.0%
	15-19 years	19	17.0%
	20 years and older	11	9.8%
	Total	112	100.0%
Age	20-30 years	26	23.2%
	31-40 years	39	34.8%
	41-50 years	33	29.5%
	51 years and older	14	12.5%
	Total	112	100.0%

Source: Demographic characteristics analysis on SPSS

It is clear from the table above that the demographic composition of a sample of employees from the College of Business and Economics at the University of Babylon, focusing on the main categorical variables.

1. Gender variable: The distribution shows that the percentage of males (61.6%) is higher than the percentage of females (38.4%) among the study sample. This distribution reflects the reality in many academic or administrative institutions, where male participation in job positions may be higher. This disparity may affect the study's results, as gender differences in attitudes toward silent leadership and knowledge hiding could be a significant factor worth analysing in the later stages of the research.
2. Variable of years of service: The data shows that the majority of the sample members have experience ranging between 10-14 years (33.0%) and 5-9 years (25.9%). Variable of years of service: The data shows that the majority of the sample members have experience ranging between 10-14 years (33.0%) and 5-9 years (25.9%). This distribution is considered positive for the study, as it provides depth and diversity in experiences. The presence of employees with moderate experience (more than 5 years) means they have gone through sufficient experiences to understand the behaviours of silent leadership and how it affects the process of knowledge hiding in the workplace, which adds greater credibility to their responses.
3. Age variable: The age distribution indicates that the most represented age group in the sample is 31-40 years (34.8%), followed by the 41-50 years group (29.5%). This age distribution is largely consistent with the distribution of years of service. The presence of a sample representing various age groups allows the researcher to explore whether age affects employees' attitudes toward silent leadership and knowledge hiding, as older employees may have more experience dealing with different types of leadership.

2-9- The validity of the research tool, the questionnaire.

The validity of the tool means that it measures what it was intended to measure and achieves the objectives set for it before its preparation (Hair et al., 2010). To determine the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher applied it to a random sample of 112 employees from the College of Administration and Economics at the University of Babylon, representing both genders.

2-9-1- Construct validity.

Construct validity aims to verify the questionnaire's ability to accurately measure the concepts for which it was designed. This type of validity reflects the extent to which each domain of the questionnaire is related to the overall score of its items. In the following table, the correlation coefficients show the extent to which this validity is achieved.

Table (2): Correlation of each domain with the total score of the questionnaire items

Fields	Correlation coefficient	significance level
Avoid silence	0.886**	0.0000
Justification of aggressive behaviour	0.855**	0.0000
The silence accompanying uncertainty	0.904**	0.0000
The internal and external impact	0.866**	0.0000
Silent leadership	0.877**	0.0000
The elusive concealment	0.893**	0.0000
justified concealment	0.872**	0.0000
Feigning ignorance	0.847**	0.0000
Hiding knowledge in the workplace	0.871**	0.0000
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**		

“Source: Compiled by the researcher with the outputs from SPSS.29 software.”

It is clear from the previous table that all correlation coefficients between the domain scores and the overall questionnaire score are high and statistically significant at the 0.01 significance level. This indicates that all domains are strongly correlated with the main variables to which they belong, confirming that the questionnaire has a high degree of construct validity. This means that the tool actually measures what it was designed to measure, making it reliable for use in this research.

2-9-2- The reliability of the research tool (the questionnaire) and the normal distribution.

Reliability means that if a scale is applied to a group of individuals and each individual's scores on this scale are recorded. Then the same scale is re-administered to the same group and each individual's scores are recorded again, the relative ranking of the individuals in the first instance will be close to their relative ranking in the second instance (Hair et al., 2010). The researcher calculated the reliability of the tool (the questionnaire) using the Cronbach's alpha method. Verifying the normal distribution of the data is also a fundamental step before applying many parametric statistical analyses, as most of these tests assume that the data follows a normal distribution. Therefore, the researcher examined the normal distribution of all study dimensions using the skewness and kurtosis coefficients to ensure the validity of the results.

Table No. (3): Reliability of the Research Tool (Questionnaire) and Normal Distribution

Fields	Number of items	Alpha coefficient	(Skewness)	(Kurtosis)
Avoid silence	5	0.886	-0.451	-0.211
Justification of aggressive behaviour	5	0.863	-0.611	0.181
The silence accompanying uncertainty	5	0.909	-0.526	-0.116
The internal and external impact	5	0.878	-0.681	0.296
Silent leadership	20	0.896	-0.586	0.141
The elusive concealment	5	0.899	-0.566	-0.066
justified concealment	5	0.871	-0.626	0.176
Feigning ignorance	5	0.856	-0.531	-0.251
Hiding knowledge in the workplace	15	0.884	-0.576	0.096
The overall score of the questionnaire	35	0.953	-0.591	0.106

Source: Compiled by the researcher with the outputs from SPSS.29 software.”“

The table above shows that all the alpha coefficient values are high, which means that the subscales are quite stable. The Cronbach's alpha value for the total score of the questionnaire was 0.952, indicating a very high value that demonstrates the tool's reliability and stability.

The skewness and kurtosis values for all dimensions and variables in the table also demonstrate that they are all within the acceptable range of (-1.96) to (+1.96). This indicates that the data is normally distributed, allowing the researcher to use parametric statistical tests to analyse the data and proceed with the research with confidence. The results indicate that the research instrument demonstrates a significant level of validity and reliability, rendering it entirely appropriate for use on the research sample.

3- Results and Discussion

3-1- Descriptive Analysis

In this section of the analysis, we aim to understand the reality of the variable "silent leadership" by studying its four dimensions through the opinions of a sample of employees from the College of Administration and Economics at the University of Babylon. The sample consists of (112) respondents. The level of response for the sample's opinions will be determined based on their

answers to the questionnaire, using a five-point Likert scale. The table below illustrates the results and provides a framework for interpreting the arithmetic means:

Table (4): Weighted Average and Response Level

weighted average	Response Scale	Answer Direction
4.21 - 5.00	Very Good	Strongly Agree
3.41 - 4.20	Good	Agree
2.61 - 3.40	Average	Neutral
1.81 - 2.60	Weak	Disagree
1.00 - 1.80	Very Weak	Strongly Disagree

Akadiri O. P. (2011), Development of Multi-Criteria Approach for the Selection of Wolver Hampton, U.K.

The dimensions were compared based on obtaining the lowest coefficient of variation and the highest arithmetic mean, indicating high consistency and a positive response. The analysis also helps identify the level of availability, practice, interest, and consistency of the main dimensions and variables by the College of Business and Economics.

3-1-1- Silent Leadership

The table above shows that the variable of silent leadership has an arithmetic mean of 4.129, which means that it is relatively important (82.6%). This indicates that the dimensions are concentrated around agreement, suggesting that College of Management and Economics employees are well aware of this leadership style. The college should continue learning about and examining these practices and their impact on the people who work there.

The findings indicated the following for the dimensions:

- The dimension of (avoidant quiet) had the highest arithmetic mean of (4.322) and a relative importance of (86.4%). It also had the lowest coefficient of variation (13.74%), indicating that the respondents' opinions were very similar. It was the most important thing. This means that employees think the leader is avoiding talking to them and getting into arguments with them. This could be because the leader wants to avoid bad behaviour or possible confrontations at work. This understanding suggests that the leader may opt to remain quiet to avoid unpleasant circumstances, which can make communication less clear.
- The dimension of "justifying aggressive behaviour" had a mean score of (4.206), a relative relevance of (84.1%), and a coefficient of variance of (15.55%). It was the second most important thing. This suggests that employees are aware that their boss may excuse or tolerate hostile behaviour from some coworkers or even himself. Employees may view the leader's silence or lack of intervention as a sign that these activities are acceptable or even necessary at work.
- The dimension of (quiet followed by uncertainty) attained a mean of (4.030) with a relative importance of (80.6%), exhibiting a coefficient of variation of (17.82%). In terms of importance, it came in third. This shows that employees think that when the boss is quiet, it means they are unsure about what to do or what to decide. This silence may create a condition of confusion, making it hard for employees to know exactly what is expected of them. As a result, they may stay mute because they are afraid of making the wrong choice.
- The dimension of (internal and external impact) got the lowest mean score of (3.956) and the highest coefficient of variance of (20.17%). It came in last in terms of importance. This dimension is still at a "good" level, but the low mean and high coefficient of variance indicate that employees have differing perspectives on it. This could mean that the effect of the silent

leader varies for each employee, depending on factors such as their own self-confidence or support from higher-ups. This could be why there is no clear agreement on this point.

Table No. (5): Descriptive Indicators for the Dimensions of the Silent Leadership Variable

Dimensions and Variables	arithmetic mean	standard deviation	Coefficient of variation (%)	Relative importance (%)	Rank
Justifying Aggressive Behaviour	4.206	0.654	15.55%	84.1%	2
Avoidant Silence	4.322	0.594	13.74%	86.4%	1
Internal and External Influence	3.956	0.798	20.17%	79.1%	4
Silence Associated with Uncertainty	4.030	0.718	17.82%	80.6%	3
Silent Leadership (Total Score)	4.129	0.691	16.74%	82.6%	-
“Source: Compiled by the researcher with the outputs from SPSS 29 software.”					

3-1-2- Analysis of knowledge hiding paragraphs in the workplace.

Overall, the table below summarises the results for the variable of knowledge hiding in the workplace, where it achieved an overall arithmetic mean of (3.757), representing a relative importance of (75.1%). This indicates that employees' opinions on this variable tend toward agreement, reflecting the presence of this phenomenon in the work environment, with a clear variation among its different dimensions.

As for the dimensions, the results showed the following:

- 1- The dimension of (justified concealment performance) achieved the highest arithmetic mean of (4.121) with a relative importance of (82.4%), recording the lowest coefficient of variation of (16.48%). It ranked first in terms of importance. This significant agreement among employees' opinions reflects that they find strong justifications for concealing knowledge, which aligns with the concept of "justified concealment." This concept suggests that employees may refrain from sharing knowledge to avoid problems or protect themselves from negative situations, particularly in a silent leadership environment.
- 2- The dimension of "evasive concealment" achieved a mean score of (3.808) with a relative importance of (76.2%), recording a coefficient of variation of (20.40%). It ranked second in terms of importance. This indicates that employees engage in evasive behaviours to conceal knowledge, such as providing misleading information or making false promises of participation. This behaviour arises as a reaction to the lack of trust in the work environment, where the employee sees providing false information as better than not responding at all.
- 3- The dimension of "performance pretending to be stupid" achieved the lowest mean score of (3.343) with a relative importance of (66.9%), recording the highest coefficient of variation at (26.47%). It ranked (last) in terms of importance. Although this dimension falls within the range of agreement, its low average and high coefficient of variation indicate a divergence in employe' opinions. This may reflect that employees might engage in feigning ignorance as a defensive mechanism to avoid responsibility or interact with the silent leader, but this behaviour is not as common or agreed upon as other behaviours to conceal knowledge.

Table No. (6): Descriptive indicators for the dimensions of the variable "knowledge hiding in the workplace"

Dimensions and Variables	arithmet ic mean	standard deviation	Coefficient of variation (%)	Relative importan ce (%)	Ran k
Evasive concealment	3.808	0.777	20.40%	76.2%	2
Explicit concealment performance	4.121	0.679	16.48%	82.4%	1
Performance feigning stupidity	3.343	0.885	26.47%	66.9%	3
Hiding knowledge in the workplace (overall score)	3.757	0.780	20.77%	75.1%	-
Source: Compiled by the researcher with the outputs from SPSS 29 software.”“					

3-2- Testing research hypotheses and discussing the results

Testing hypotheses about the relationship between two of the research variables, and there are two types of hypotheses.

- Null hypothesis: There is no statistically significant relationship between the two variables in the research.
- The alternative hypothesis Is That There is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables in the research.

If the (Sig.) A p-value greater than the significance level of 0.05 means that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, and thus, there is no statistically significant relationship between the two research variables. However, if (Sig. If the P-value is less than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, indicating that there is a statistically significant relationship between the two research variables.

3-2-1- Factor analysis of the research variables

The researcher employed the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) method to verify the construct validity of the scales, utilising Amos V.24 software. The goal was to verify that the collected data fit the proposed structural model. To evaluate the quality of the model, several indicators were relied upon: the parameter estimates (weights) should exceed 0.40, and the critical ratio (CR) should be higher than 1.96 for statistical significance at the 0.05 level. Fit indices were also used, with the Chi-Square test being the most prominent, to evaluate the overall validity of the model. (Holtzman & Sailesh, 2011:13).

Fit indices serve as criteria for evaluating the level of fit and the validity of the obtained structural model. The Chi-Square (2) index carries the highest level of significance among its peers. And suppose the value of the fit index relative to the degrees of freedom falls within the specified range. In that case, the majority of the other fit index values also fall within the ideal range, as shown below in Table 7:

Table 7: Fit Quality Indicators According to the Structural Equation Modelling

Index	Rule:
Ratio between the value of χ^2 and the degrees of freedom (GIMN/df)	Less than (0.05) is good, less than (0.02) is acceptable, greater than (0.05) is rejected
Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)	Value range between (0) and (1), acceptance rule greater than (0.90) and (0.95) match
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	
Tucker Lewis Index (TLI)	
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	Less than (0.05) is suitable, values between (0.05 -0.08) are good, values between (0.10 - 0.08) are average, values greater than (0.10) are rejected.
Item Saturation Ratio	greater than 0.40

The source is prepared by the researcher based on Hair et al. (2010)

Based on these indicators, the proposed data model is either accepted or rejected, as it is observed that all the calculated indicators match the benchmark indicators, indicating that the proposed model aligns with the real-world model in its application.

Table (8) Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Silent Leadership and Knowledge Hiding in the Workplace

Items	path	Dimensions	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
X11	<---	Avoid silence	.906	.059	18.496	***
X12	<---		.929			
X13	<---		.883	.055	17.251	***
X14	<---		.690	.066	10.448	***
X15	<---		.563	.071	7.735	***
X21	<---	Justification of aggressive behaviour	.648	.310	5.650	***
X22	<---		.528			
X23	<---		.735	.259	6.052	***
X24	<---		.630	.242	5.554	***
X25	<---		.675	.267	5.783	***
X31	<---	The silence accompanying uncertainty	.672	.125	7.254	***
X32	<---		.666			
X33	<---		.759	.132	8.038	***
X34	<---		.739	.131	7.866	***
X35	<---		.797	.162	8.370	***
X41	<---	The internal and external impact	.484	.184	4.851	***
X42	<---		.528			
X43	<---		.414	.157	4.314	***
X44	<---		.880	.328	6.898	***
X45	<---		.880	.312	6.898	***
Y11	<---	The elusive concealment	.866			
Y12	<---		.832	.071	13.233	***
Y13	<---		.797	.075	12.298	***
Y14	<---		.691	.078	9.837	***
Y15	<---		.764	.076	11.467	***
Y21	<---	justified concealment	.865			
Y22	<---		.874	.074	14.218	***
Y23	<---		.860	.073	13.782	***

Y24	<---	Feigning ignorance	.594	.092	7.922	***
Y25	<---		.713	.082	10.168	***
Y31	<---		.887			
Y32	<---		.935	.059	17.909	***
Y33	<---		.933	.061	17.831	***
Y34	<---		.914	.069	4.956	***
Y35	<---		.414	.064	5.237	***

“Source: Compiled by the researcher with the outputs from the AMOS.29 software.”

3-2-2- Testing the first hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between silent leadership and knowledge concealment in the workplace at the college under study.

To test this hypothesis, the researcher used structural equation modelling, as illustrated in the figure below:

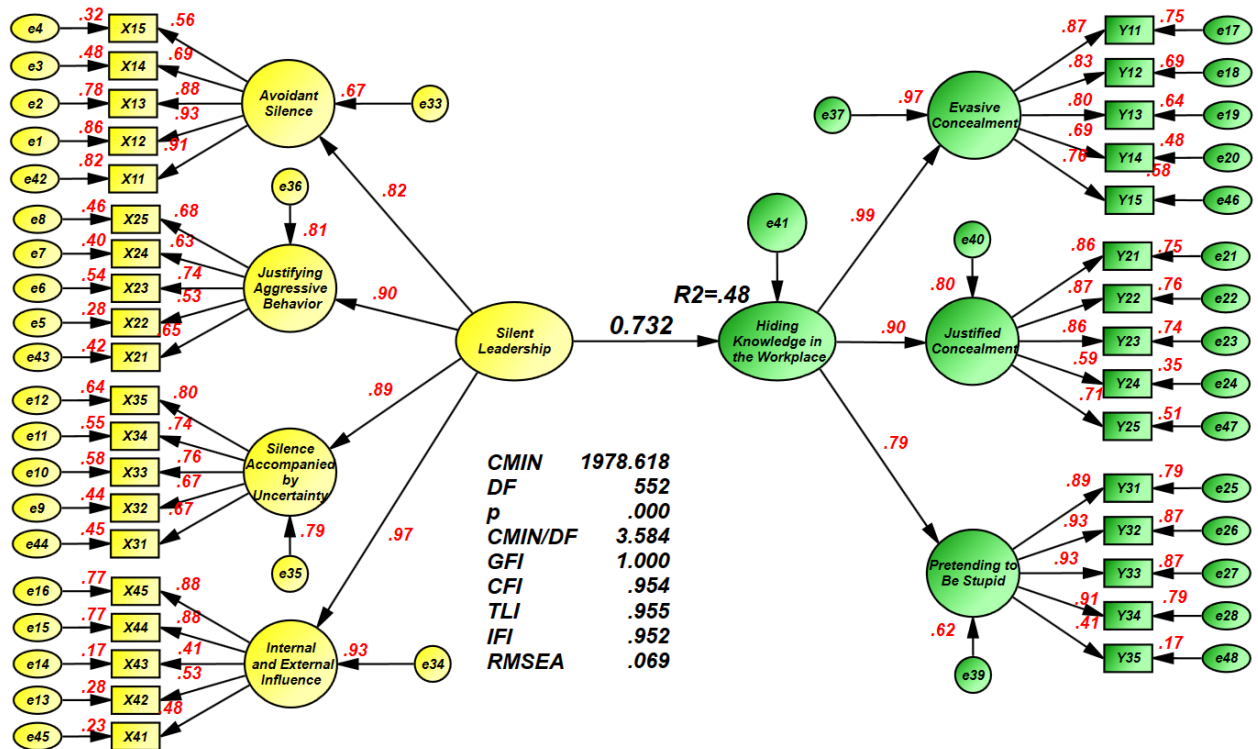


Figure No. (2): The relationship between silent leadership and knowledge concealment in the workplace

Table No. (9): The relationship between silent leadership and knowledge concealment in the workplace

Independent Variable	Tracks	Dependent Variable	Standardised regression weights	standard error	critical value	R2	Sig	Label
Silent Leadership	<---	Knowledge Hiding in the Workplace	0.732	0.060	9.654	0.48	0.009	Accept the hypothesis

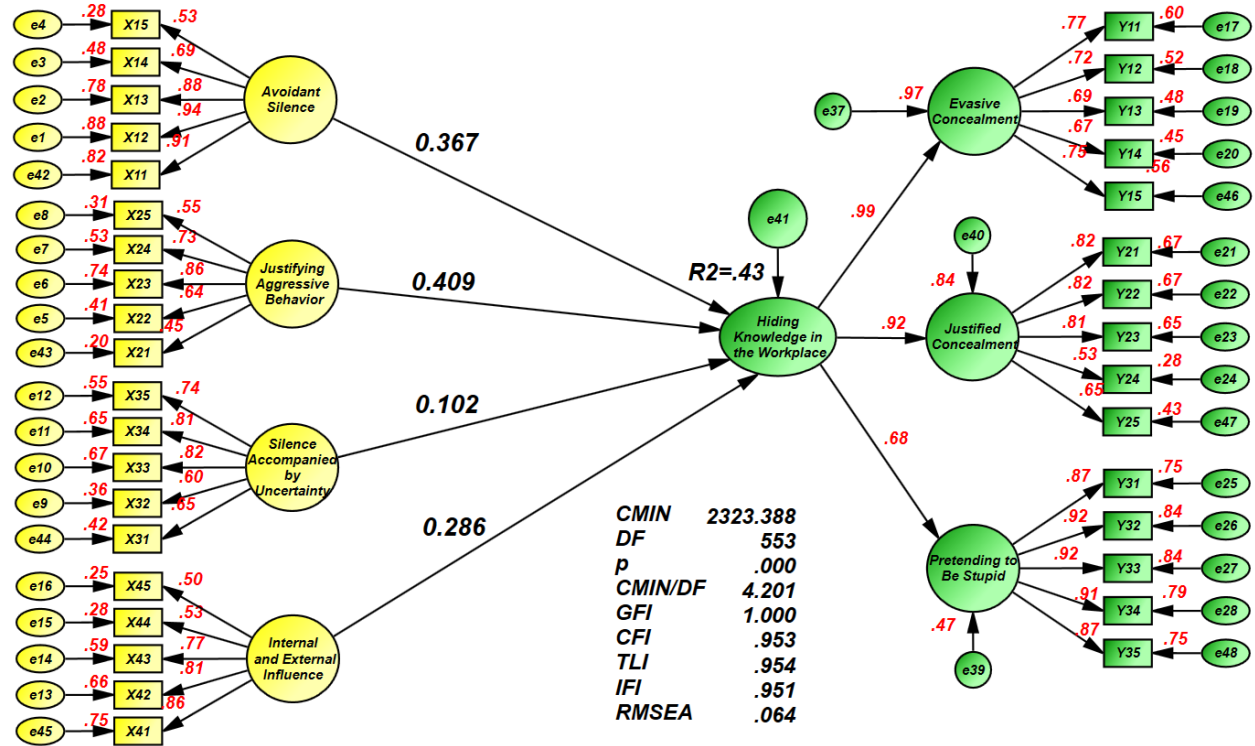
“Source: Compiled by the researcher with the outputs from the AMOS.29 software.”

The statistical research indicates that silent leadership has a significant and positive impact on concealing information at work. The table shows that the standardised regression weights (effect

parameter) were (0.732). This means that for every one-unit rise in silent leadership, knowledge concealment in the workplace goes up by (0.732) units.

The coefficient of determination (R²) value of (0.48) supports this impact. This means that silent leadership accounts for (48%) of the differences in knowledge concealment at work, whereas the other (52%) is due to other characteristics that this study did not look at. The statistical significance of these results was validated, with a critical value of (9.654) and a significance level of (0.009), both of which strongly indicate the effect's significance and the hypothesis's acceptance.

To comprehend the influence of silent leadership dimensions on information concealment in the workplace, the researcher administered the subsequent tests:



Source: Compiled by the researcher with the outputs from the AMOS.29 software.”

Figure No. (3): The relationship between the dimensions of silent leadership and knowledge concealment in the workplace

Table No. (10): The relationship between the dimensions of silent leadership and knowledge concealment in the workplace

Dimensions	Tracks	Dependent Variable	Standardised regression weights	standard error	critical value	R ²	SI G	Label
Avoidant Silence	<---	Knowledge Hiding in the Workplace	0.367	0.075	6.654	0.43	.008	Accept the hypothesis
Justifying Aggressive Behaviour	<---		0.409	0.056	9.743		.000	Accept the hypothesis
Silence	<---		0.102	0.210	1.612		.11	Reject

Accompanied by Uncertainty							0	the hypothesis
Internal and External Influence	<---		0.286	0.87	8.654		.032	Accept the hypothesis

Source: Compiled by the researcher with the outputs from the AMOS.29 software.”“

The table and picture above show that the four hypotheses are true:

The analytical findings indicate a substantial and affirmative effect of each aspect of silent leadership (avoidance of silence, justification of aggressive action, uncertainty quiet, and both internal and external influence) on knowledge concealment in the workplace at the examined college.

➤ **Testing the initial sub-hypothesis (The effect of avoidance silence on knowledge concealment in the workplace)**

A positive and strong correlation exists between avoidance of silence and knowledge concealment in the workplace. The effect parameter (standardised regression weights) was (0.367), which suggests that for every one unit rise in avoidance quiet, knowledge concealment in the workplace goes up by (0.367) units. The significance level reached (0.008) is lower than the normal significance threshold (0.05), which means that this effect is statistically significant. This study suggests that employees may see the avoidant leader's silence as disinterest or neglect, leading them to withhold knowledge as a defensive strategy.

➤ **Testing the second sub-hypothesis (The effect of rationalising aggressive behaviour on knowledge concealment in the workplace)**

Justifying aggressive behaviour has a significant and favourable impact on concealing information in the workplace. The effect parameter (standardised regression weights) was 0.409, which means that for every one-unit increase in justifying violent conduct, knowledge concealment in the workplace goes up by 0.409 units. The achieved significance level (0.000) is less than the conventional significance level (0.05), indicating that this impact is highly statistically significant. This finding corroborates that a leader's tolerance or quietness regarding violent conduct in the workplace fosters an environment of insecurity, leading employees to withhold information as a means of self-preservation.

➤ **Testing the third sub-hypothesis (The effect of quiet coupled with uncertainty on knowledge hiding in the workplace)**

The analysis indicates that silence related to uncertainty does not significantly influence knowledge concealment in the workplace. The effect parameter (standardised regression weights) was 0.102, although the level of significance attained (0.110) was higher than the standard level of significance (0.05). This finding suggests that the leader's silence about uncertainty is not a significant influence on information hiding behaviour; therefore, the hypothesis regarding this dimension is not supported.

➤ **Testing the fourth sub-hypothesis (The effect of internal and external influences on knowledge concealment in the workplace)**

Internal and external influences have a significant and positive impact on knowledge concealment in the workplace. The effect parameter (standardised regression weights) was (0.286), which means that for every one-unit rise in internal and external influence, knowledge concealing in the workplace rises by (0.286) units. The significance level of this effect (0.032) is less than the

conventional significance threshold (0.05), which means that it is statistically significant. This study demonstrates that the silent leader's effect on individuals (internally) and on the organisation's image (externally) may be distinct. This difference in effect makes knowledge-hiding behaviour more likely, as employees may not see the value of working in an uncertain atmosphere.

➤ **The entire understanding of the effects of the aspects of quiet leadership**

In total, the four aspects of quiet leadership account for 43% of the rise in knowledge concealment in the workplace ($R^2 = 0.43$). This suggests that the use of these factors can elucidate the majority of the variation in knowledge concealment in the workplace. The remaining 57% is attributed to factors not included in the research model. These findings validate that silent leadership has a significant influence on information concealment behaviour within the College of Business and Economics.

4- Final Thoughts

1. In this study, silent leadership is considered a real phenomenon at the workplace by the employees. The worst aspect of this behaviour — simply put, silence avoidance — is that employees believe this lack of communication from their supervisors is a deliberate means of avoiding confrontation or accountability. That silence breeds uncertainty, so people withhold information as a form of self-preservation from imagined adverse outcomes and miscommunication.
2. A common approach to information hiding in this context is the justified concealment, where employees do not conceal information maliciously but rather because they feel justified in doing so. This is a reflexive behaviour that is usually rooted in a lack of trust and the notion that they must protect their position and avoid getting into trouble. The silent leadership style appears to exacerbate these arguments, leading employees to believe that that knowledge hiding is a necessary survival strategy.
3. It highlighted a significant and positive effect of leader avoidance silence on employee knowledge hiding.. This suggests that when employees see the leader's silence as evasion of accountability, it directly motivates them to withhold information as a means of self-preservation.
4. Justifying aggressive behaviour has a favourable and significant impact on concealing knowledge. This indicates that the leader's acceptance or defence of violent behaviour makes the workplace unsafe for employees, who therefore feel they have to hide information to protect themselves.
5. The investigation revealed no substantial correlation between silence linked to uncertainty and knowledge concealment. Consequently, the hypothesis about this dimension was dismissed, indicating that the leader's silence, stemming from ambiguity, does not appear to be a primary factor in shaping employees' conduct regarding knowledge concealment.
6. A positive and ethical correlation was identified between internal and external influence and the concealment of knowledge. This indicates that the quiet leader's impact on people (internally) and on the organisation's image (externally) can lead employees to perceive no advantage in sharing knowledge, which in turn motivates them to keep it to themselves.

5- Suggestions and advice.

1. Leaders should make it easier for employees to understand what they are saying and doing, especially when things are going wrong. To develop trust and reduce the perception that silence implies avoidance of responsibilities, leaders should provide clear instructions and regular feedback.

2. Management should strive to create a culture in the workplace that is founded on psychological safety and trust among employees. This can be done by encouraging and valuing knowledge sharing and making it clear that sharing information does not put the employee's job at risk; in fact, it makes them more valuable to the company.
3. Leaders need to know that their silence has a direct impact on how employees act. To make the workplace more participatory rather than defensive, leaders should be more open and honest, allowing employees to ask questions and share their thoughts without fear of punishment.
4. Leaders should be very clear and strong about not tolerating any hostile behaviour at work. If you don't intervene or ignore these practices, employees will assume they are acceptable and will conceal information to protect themselves. The suggestion is to ensure there are clear rules about who is responsible and to act promptly when any unacceptable behaviour occurs.
5. Although the data indicate that this is not the primary reason for hiding knowledge, it remains a problem nonetheless. To clear up any confusion, the suggestion is to offer different and specific ways to communicate, such as having regular meetings to review goals and provide accurate information regarding strategic decisions. This helps reduce employee stress.
6. Senior management should examine how leaders not speaking up affects how people perceive the company from the inside and how well work teams function together. It is suggested that executives be taught how to use effective communication to bring employees together and demonstrate that their contributions to sharing information enhance the organisation's reputation and overall performance.

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