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Narcissistic Leadership and Project Success: The Role of Knowledge Sharing and Collectivism in IT Firms

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Purpose: In the quest of exploring specific developments in contemporary management research, this study highlights the prevalence of narcissistic leadership in IT firms. We employed the upper-echelon framework to analyze the impact of narcissistic leadership on project success. This study considered the dark side of a leader's narcissism while analyzing how narcissistic leadership affects a project's success through knowledge sharing and collectivism.
Design/methodology/approach: Structural equation modeling is employed to investigate this proposition. Using convenience sampling, approximately 370 questionnaires were dispensed out of which 272 completed questionnaires were utilized for performing the analysis of IT firms.
Findings: Narcissistic leadership affects project's success through knowledge sharing and collectivism. The results indicate that narcissistic leadership negatively predicts project success. Moreover, knowledge sharing fully mediated the relationship between narcissistic leadership and project success. Whereas, collectivism moderates the relationship between knowledge-sharing and narcissistic leadership.
Originality: Our assumptions are based on the upper-echelon theory indicating that narcissistic leadership affects project success through knowledge-sharing and collectivism. This has been proved by the empirical analysis carried out in Pakistan's IT sector.

Keywords: *Narcissistic leadership, Project success, Knowledge sharing, Collectivism*

1 Introduction

'Narcissism' is a unique individual difference. This character trademark is also a leadership trait related to power, affectedness, exorbitant self-esteem, and inflated self-views (Campbell et al., 2011). A narcissist's behavior is highly focused on the self instead of focusing on the needs of others (Ames et al., 2006). Being a negative leadership trait, narcissistic leaders' values, strategies, and actions are intended to meet their own psychological needs (Foster et al., 2003). Additionally, it is characterized by differences among individuals such as conceit and personal opinion (Campbell et al., 2011). According to research, narcissists in executive positions might be grandiose narcissists; excessive in self-esteem, predominant, seekers of attention, resistant to accept criticism, lack empathy, aggressive, exploitative, and manipulative in relationships (Ham et al., 2018).

Researchers have shown a significant amount of interest in narcissistic leadership (Owens et al., 2015). Although recent advancements and rising trends in personality and management studies, there is a growing academic interest in narcissism, particularly in top leadership positions (Braun, 2017; Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006), However, the subject of whether narcissistic leadership is appropriate or not for working environment remains unanswered. (Padil-

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la et al., 2007)

Narcissistic leadership has both positive and negative aspects (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005a). Narcissistic personality traits are more likely to have negative implications for organizations as compared to positive implications as it is associated with psychological distress, anxiety, negative emotions, entitlement, interpersonal dominance, and a distrustful approach to interpersonal relations (Kaufman et al., 2020). Narcissistic leadership is perceived as a negative leadership trait that may be attributed to negative interpersonal behavior inside the working environment (Gauglitz, 2022; Neumann et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021). Therefore, this study intends to advance the extant knowledge regarding how narcissistic leadership affects project success.

Recently project success has been the central attention of project management literature (Prabhakar & Duda, 2009). Prior research focused on the project success with respect to completion of the task, customer satisfaction, end user and project team (Hughes et al., 2004) in addition to the standardization of important factors such as scheduling, cost and quality, performance efficiency, and working environment (Cheng et al., 2012). Similarly, the success of a project depends on employee commitment, creativity, innovation, good communication between leader and follower, and genuine effort to achieve goals. (Ramlall, 2008). Moreover, several research studies indicate that project managers' attributes, leadership overall performance, and management styles make contributions to the achievement of various kinds of projects at different phases (Lee-Kelley & Loong, 2003; Nixon et al., 2012). Research on leadership shows that leadership traits can either enhance or negatively affect project performance (Hu & Judge, 2017; Kaiser et al., 2008). Narcissistic leadership is a negative trait that leads to negative employee attitudes, increased intention to quit, undesirable behavior, and poor work performance (Labrague et al., 2020). Williams (2017) suggested that narcissism is like a disease that hinders performance which in return negatively influences the success of the project. Although the majority of previous studies employed institutional frameworks to examine the influence of narcissistic leadership on firm-level outcomes (Luo et al., 2017); in this study the upper echelon framework has been integrated by considering internal factors, such as knowledge sharing and collectivism to investigate how narcissistic leaders affect project success.

There is ample evidence in the prior literature that focuses on the significance of personality traits for leadership, leaders, and their followers, jointly determining the leadership process. Furthermore, both have the potential to influence the performance of the other. (Frieder et al., 2018). Previous project management research has further elaborated on how project success is related to the psychological factors of individuals who are in leading roles (Cooke-Davies, 2002; Hassan et al., 2017). The idea of leadership reflects individual abilities to impact the followers and to execute changes that will benefit the organization in return. Most of the prior studies on leadership consistently focused on the positive attributes of the leader (Hogan & Benson, 2009; Kellerman, 2004) and did not consider the negative attributes of the leadership; thus requiring further investigation to achieve a holistic view of leadership. Thus there is a need for future research to investigate the negative effects of narcissistic leadership (Braun, 2017). It is also emphasized to investigate the mechanisms through which a leader's narcissism affects project performance in numerous settings (Wisse et al., 2018). There is abundant literature that has investigated individual and organizational elements that promote knowledge sharing (Jiang & Gu, 2016). However, studies focusing on the barriers to knowledge sharing remain limited (Kim et al., 2015a; Wu & Lee, 2016). For instance, many studies have supported the impact of advantageous leadership styles in enhancing knowledge sharing (Le & Lei, 2018; Yadav et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2018), however few if none research studies have tried to investigate the effect of adverse leadership on knowledge sharing (Feng & Wang, 2019). The arguments above indicate a significant gap in research on project management and leadership that needs to be addressed.

Project management sector in Pakistan is struggling consistently to create positive interpersonal relationships between project leaders and the associated workforce, in order to make successful project implementation possible. Prior studies in Pakistan were carried out to depict the effect of narcissistic leadership on workers' behavior in various sectors i.e. banking, service, hospital, and academic. Banking sector is one of the fastest-growing sectors of Pakistan (Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016); the literature suggests that mental anguish among banking professionals has increased dramatically over the previous decade (Stough et al., 2017), which had a negative impact on their performance and caused turnover. Unsupportive leadership is considered to be one of the main causes for this alarming change however there may be other contributing elements as well (Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016). Narcissism has long been studied, but its association with project success has received less attention, particularly in the Pakistani context (Fouzia & Khan, 2013). Fouzia et al. (2013) examined how narcissistic leadership affected employees' psychological contracts, including their motivation, commitment, ownership of their work, and behavior in Pakistan's public and private sector organizations. The results demonstrated that narcissistic employers lead to a decline in the psychological contracts of the employees. According to Turkalj & Fosic (2009) and Akehurst et al. (2009), many aspects within the organisation can influence employee satisfaction with their work. However, an employee's satisfaction with his work and the manager's leadership style are two key factors that distinctly affect an

organization's performance (Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016). The leadership style of the manager has influenced organizational performance through employees' behavior (Yassin Sheikh Ali et al., 2013). Although narcissism has long been examined in psychology, but in IT sector its research on narcissistic leadership and its impact on organizations has emerged recently (Al-Abrrow et al., 2019). Furthermore, very few studies have considered the role of narcissism on project success (Ali et al., 2021). In IT industry context, Brooker (2020) states that narcissistic leaders influence an organization's performance extremes, resulting in quick returns on assets. Similarly, Cragun et al. (2020) support the idea that narcissism can be related to firm performance only if it is controlled by many factors, such as organizational risks, organizational resilience, and so on, resulting in the successful completion of IT projects and thus increasing an organization's overall performance (Tupa et al., 2017). Personality traits associated with narcissistic leadership have been found to hinder project success, which increases the likelihood that projects will fail if not properly managed. Therefore, it is vital to assess and investigate narcissism's negative aspects and how these personality traits can be managed and used in favor of project success (Brooker, 2020).

As already stated, earlier research focused on good leadership patterns and their relationship with project achievement. However, this empirical research analyses the negative aspect of leadership i.e narcissism. This study attempts to achieve four objectives which are as follows; first is to investigate the relationship between narcissistic leadership and project success in IT sector in Pakistan. The second goal is to ascertain whether knowledge-sharing mediates the relationship between narcissistic leadership and project success. The third goal is to determine the moderated role that may be played by collectivism in the relationship between narcissistic leadership and knowledge sharing. The fourth goal is to investigate the impact of narcissistic leadership on project success through knowledge-sharing conditions on the level of employee's collectivistic orientation.

Theoretically, current study makes a valuable contribution to the limited literature on leadership and personality research; as it tries to identify the mechanism through which narcissistic leaders influence project success. The investigation of these mechanisms for leadership-project success is crucial and to counter narcissistic qualities among individuals in positions of authority, it is vital to manage them in fast-growing project-based organizations. This study attempts to explain the black box between narcissistic leadership and the detraction of project success. The present study pursues to fill the above-mentioned knowledge gap by investigating the interrelationship between narcissistic leadership, knowledge sharing, and project success in the IT sector of Pakistan.

2 Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

Upper Echelon theory suggests that leaders' psychological behavior affects their strategic choices. More precisely cognitive biases and personal choices of the leadership determines how they understand and evaluate the business situation and act subsequently influencing firm or project success (Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick & Mason, 1984). Thus, upper echelon theory proposes that personal traits of the leadership influence strategic choices and decisions (Campbell et al., 2019). Research evidence suggests the role of executive narcissism in firm-level outcomes by using upper echelon theory (Petrenko et al., 2016; Tang et al., 2018). Blank et al. (1990) postulated that there should be alignment between the follower's readiness and leadership task that determines the performance of the followers and leader. However, an appropriate match depends upon the situation in which leaders and followers are operating. In this perspective, recent work carried out by Yang et al. (2021) in China, drawing on the conservation of resource theory, highlighted that psychological resources could be utilized as a mediating factor between narcissistic leadership and employee resilience. Yang et al. (2020) unusually focused on the positive side of narcissism in a leadership role. The study proposed that knowledge sharing and collectivism are the factors that may mitigate the negative or dark side of narcissism which ultimately influences the project's success.

The way a leader heads a project can have a significant impact on the project, team behavior, operations, productivity, and new product development processes (Darawong, 2020). As the leader is the person who makes the most important decisions about how to plan the project from the beginning to the end; therefore, it is important to look at the behavior trait of leaders (Pinto & Patanakul, 2015). An organization can face serious consequences if a project fails. There is plenty of literature emphasizing the importance of connecting personality and leadership from a research perspective. Any project's leadership must take into consideration both followers and leaders role in the project; doing so can increase the likelihood that the project will be successful (Zaman et al., 2020).

Narcissistic leadership is one of the leadership styles that may cause projects to fail and needs the attention of employers, practitioners, and researchers despite the fact that numerous leadership styles and their association with success or failure of projects have been documented in the literature (Asad & Sadler-Smith, 2020; Germain, 2018). Narcissistic leader's only priority is to promote himself and has no empathy for the followers. These leaders exhibit traits like arrogance, dominance, aggressiveness, etc (Aboramadan et al., 2021). This behavior has negative effects on different segments of life including family, so-

ciety, and the working environment (Germain, 2018). Narcissistic leaders prioritize their own admiration and power over emotional concern for individuals and organizations they lead (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). In narcissistic leadership, leaders primarily behave in accordance with their own selfish needs and interest (Fatfouta, 2019).

According to literature, a leader's narcissism has both destructive and constructive sides (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005b). Currently, studies increasingly focus on the destructive side of narcissistic leadership (Spain et al., 2014). The destructive side of Narcissists leads to a lower-quality working environment and unethical behavior (Khoo & Burch, 2008). Narcissistic leaders display traits such as grandiosity, envy, dominance, aggression toward employees, lack of empathy, manipulative behavior, and a lack of concern for others in the organization (Pan & Yu, 2017). Additionally, such leadership can lead to self-centeredness, deceit, lack of empathy, and exploitation of others. These factors may create a negative impact on organizational culture by causing a competitive and unstable environment (Ong et al., 2016). In the end, this leadership has negative consequences such as hindering followers' professional growth and decreasing work performance (Ghislieri et al., 2019).

A project is a series of activities that work together towards achieving a specific goal, resulting in a unique product (Tonchia, 2008). Wang (2006) refers to the project as a collaborative effort by employees to discover innovative methods of setting and achieving goals within a specified timeframe and budget. The project's success is determined by three important elements: cost, quality, and time, all of which are critical to the project's effectiveness (Ika, 2009). According to Gallagher (2015) team members' performance, team motivation, good scheduling, and project dedication are all aspects that can contribute to project success. Project teams are the most important assets for success. It is quite difficult for the organization to locate individuals in managerial positions in project teams who are not aggressive (Richard et al., 2020). Projects need to be supervised properly as Ika (2015) identified some of the critical factors for project success that include supervision as one of the major factors. For the project success it is important and critical that it should be supervised properly so that the project's desired outcome can be achieved. Every project needs strong leadership since it is linked to a number of positive outcomes, such as high motivation levels, strong team and individual accomplishments, favorable attitudes of employees towards their work, and providing guidance for improving organizational practices (Fransen et al., 2018). Narcissistic leadership is regarded as an adverse or dark leadership in the context of the project (Saleh et al., 2018).

Knowledge sharing is a system in which individuals share their extraordinary skills, experiences, and expertise with people inside or outside a project team (Wang & Noe, 2010). The level of information exchanged across organizational boundaries is represented by knowledge sharing (Liao & Chuang, 2004). Knowledge sharing is an organized practice that involves the exchange of information and experiences among members of a community or organization working towards a common objective. Knowledge exchange is the process of discovering, transferring, and applying existing knowledge to address issues. An organization that values loyalty, tolerance, openness to share knowledge, support availability creates knowledge sharing culture (Swanson et al., 2020).

Leaders who are narcissistic and in positions of authority in the workplace frequently lack support and engage in socially damaging behavior (Smith & Webster, 2017), which is likely to demotivate staff because it limits their ability to share innovative ideas, opinions, and project-related information. Additionally, such leadership has a direct impact on employees' cognitive and emotional resources (Barling & Frone, 2017); which in turn affects project performance. Hence, when employees are mistreated by their leaders; internal resources of employees' are affected, thus preventing them from sharing knowledge with their leaders and coworkers. According to Kim et al. (2016), narcissistic leadership demoralizes employees from sharing knowledge. In conclusion; for a successful project, knowledge sharing is a key resource and lack of knowledge sharing will affect project performance negatively.

Anantatmula (2015) posited a project as an entity that has unique features and offers a solution to a problem that may only be temporary. This project is a team effort, and the team consists of individuals with diverse backgrounds. Culture is vital in achieving a unified aim within an organization. Each team member has unique talents and knowledge, but their beliefs and emotions are equally important. When someone joins an organization, they bring not only their knowledge but also their attitudes and beliefs. Brewer et al. (2012) revealed that in collectivist cultures, individuals tend to value loyalty and trust towards their peers. Within any given society, there are typically two types of people: those who prefer to work independently, and those who feel more at ease working within a group. Collectivists are those individuals who prioritize the benefits that can be gained through cooperation and mutual support (Smith, 1990). People in a collectivist culture prioritize community benefits over individual interests (Brewer & Chen, 2007). Existing research indicates that a supportive atmosphere in which individuals help one another improves goal achievement (Gelfand et al., 2011). Corbitt et al. (2000) concluded that collectivism in a employee community has a greater positive impact on projects than high power distance cultures or individualistic culture. People who belong to a collectivistic culture are more willing to share their information to apply additional endeavors to achieve organizational success and goals than those

whose behavior is not emphatically collectivistic (Triguero-Sánchez et al., 2022).

2.1 Narcissistic leadership and Project Success

Narcissistic leadership has attracted a lot of interest from researchers (Owens et al., 2015). From a workplace perspective, narcissists exhibit arrogance, self-importance, overconfidence, superficial power, a sense of pride, a feeling of superiority, a desire for attention, and a superior state of mind toward subordinates (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007). Narcissists act selfishly and are willing to take advantage of others to fulfill their objectives (Norouzinik et al., 2022)

According to Turner et al. (2005), project managers' leadership styles largely contribute to project achievement and the study observes that "the literature has largely ignored the impact of the project manager's leadership style and competence on project performance". The success of a project is based on the project leader's attributes, as the leadership traits rigorously affect the subordinate team (Hassan et al., 2017); which in turn affect the outcome of the project (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991).

Several factors affect employee performance, which is critical to project success (Frieder et al., 2018). Researchers have examined that employee performance is important to improve organizational flexibility, innovation ability, and acquiring helpful information (Detert & Burris, 2007), accomplishing job-related activities, employee sharing ideas or information competency, employee efficiency, meeting deadlines and effectiveness in executing work (Iqbal et al., 2015). The positive behavior of leaders improves the personal working relationship between employees fulfils their psychological needs resulting in satisfaction and thus enhancing employee performance and improving project success (Reb et al., 2014). Project performance is also enhanced when leaders give appraisals and support to their employees (Salanova et al., 2005). Thus narcissistic leadership is said to have a strong influence on project's failure or success (Tett et al., 1991).

According to research, narcissistic leaders' self-interest and controlling behavior lead to destructive and offensive conduct, characterized by verbal and nonverbal aggression toward others (Krasikova et al., 2013). Hence, the following hypothesis can be established.

H1: Narcissistic leadership has a negative impact on project success.

2.2 Narcissistic leadership and Knowledge sharing

Studies confirmed that narcissistic leaders possess self-centeredness and demand for higher admiration that may not leave a positive impact on employees (Carnevale et al., 2018; Gauglitz, 2022). While knowledge sharing in a team is not an automatic process, the team's leader has great capability to strongly influence knowledge sharing (Khalid et al., 2018)

Furthermore, literature shows the impact of destructive or dark leadership on various components like turnover intentions, job satisfaction, lifestyle dissatisfaction, and job performance (Tepper, 2000). Recently, few attempts have been made to investigate the effects of destructive leadership on knowledge-sharing behavior among employees (Kim et al., 2015b). Although knowledge sharing is a significant citizenship behavior shown by the willingness of an employee (Kim et al., 2016), there are also such situations when an employee may resist sharing knowledge. Such a situation occurs when leaders mistreat or abuse employees, which damages their commitment, morale, and willingness to share knowledge and make contributions to the organization (Wu & Lee, 2016). Recent studies reflect that narcissistic leadership largely impedes knowledge sharing (Feng, 2019). In the working environment employee's decisions about knowledge sharing largely depend on how they are treated by coworkers, and especially leaders (Karim, 2020). Hence, it can be concluded that narcissistic leadership may harm knowledge sharing because narcissistic leaders do not consider the needs and requirements of their employees, and belittle or abuse them (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). This behavior can destroy the interpersonal relationships between followers and leaders. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be established.

H2: Narcissistic leadership has a negative impact on employee knowledge-sharing behavior.

2.3 Knowledge sharing and project success

Knowledge sharing is the process by which individuals or organizations exchange knowledge, such as skills, experience, expertise, or information (Jiacheng et al., 2010). Knowledge sharing is considered an important resource for predicting team and project performance (Mesmer-Magnus & DeChurch, 2009) as well as generating new innovative capabilities within the organization (Darroch & Mcnaughton, 2002). Knowledge-sharing capacity is prerequisite to fulfill the objectives of the project, deal with unforeseen circumstances, and creating new information (Dietrich, 2007). Knowledge sharing can influence individuals within an organization by facilitating learning from external sources as well as from each other. Therefore, it causes employees to become more creative and more committed to the organization. (Ham, 2018). Thus, the following hypothesis can be established.

H3: Knowledge sharing is positively associated with project success.

2.4 The mediating role of Knowledge Sharing

Past management literature has long recognized the value of positive interpersonal relations and knowledge sharing between employees and leaders to achieve desired goals (Ritala et al., 2015). It is found that there are different ways through which destructive leadership can negatively impact employees' knowledge sharing (Feng & Wang, 2019). As knowledge sharing is an essential requirement for project success (Zhu & Chen, 2015), therefore lack of sharing knowledge will limit the performance of the project. Narcissistic leadership hinders employees' ability to share knowledge, restricts them from establishing good interpersonal relationships, and limits their ability to meet goals related to project performance (Zhu & Chen, 2015) thus negatively affecting project performance. Thus, the following hypothesis can be established.

H4: Knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between narcissistic leadership and project success.

2.5 The Moderating Role of Collectivism

There is limited research on the relationship between leadership and knowledge sharing while taking into consideration workers' collectivistic orientation. This study enhances the body of knowledge by taking into consideration the supporting role of collectivism between narcissistic leadership and employee knowledge sharing. When individuals join a workforce, organization, or project they bring in their own beliefs, values, and culture (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). According to a study, individuals who belong to a collectivistic culture mostly prefer to maintain interpersonal group relations and like to remain harmonious within the group (Schwartz, 1990). Thus, these workers are more enthusiastic to share their information to apply additional endeavors and achieve organizational success as compared to those workers whose behavior isn't emphatically collectivistic. However, it has been found that workers with strong collectivism when subjected to job stress due to narcissistic leadership share their knowledge and experiences with coworkers to boost collective achievements. On the contrary employees with individualistic orientation under narcissistic leadership are more focused on their own needs and wants (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Thus the following hypothesis can be established:

H5: Collectivism mitigates the relationship between narcissistic leadership and knowledge sharing.

On the other hand, knowledge sharing is fundamental to project success because it helps people gain knowledge, make them more creative, and also helps them to contribute to enhancing the performance of the organization (Wang & Noe, 2010). Narcissistic leadership damages employees' knowledge-sharing behavior as narcissistic executives have no concern about their employees' wants or needs (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). As a result of this leadership behavior, social exchange phenomenon between workers and leaders is greatly affected because workers do not want to repay their leaders with the additional role of knowledge-sharing.

People with collectivistic behavior are willing to work as a team which facilitates loyalty and compliance. In a collectivistic culture, employees are more inclined to accomplish group objectives, and this encompasses a positive effect on knowledge sharing (Pangil & Chan, 2014). Under narcissistic leadership, employees having strong collectivism share their skills and abilities to enhance overall organizational performance. Thus, the following hypothesis can be established.

H6: Collectivism moderates the mediation effect of knowledge sharing on the relationship between narcissistic leadership and project success.

The current study conceptualizes the effect of narcissistic leadership on project success through knowledge sharing. Negative organizational environments have a negative effect on an individual's performance (Padilla et al., 2007). Due to this adverse environment, personal social exchanges at organizational level are negatively impacted resulting in cover up of all kinds of data from leadership by employees of organizations (Riaz et al., 2019); which further reduces organizational performance (Karabati, 2021). Based on the previously mentioned hypotheses, the proposed model of this research is shown in figure 1:

Figure- I

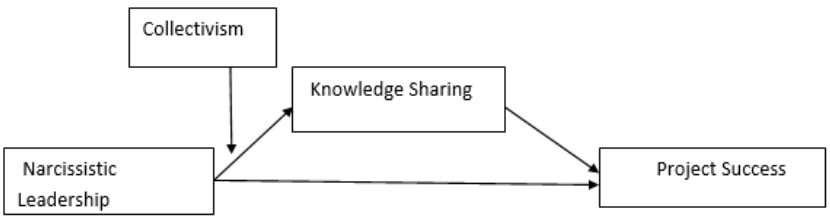


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Impact of narcissistic leadership on project success with mediating role of knowledge sharing and moderating role of collectivism

3 Methodology

3.1 Sample and Data collection procedure

This study employs a quantitative research approach to the empirical data collected from employees and managers working on different IT sector projects in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. 10 project-based organizations working in Rawalpindi and Islamabad provided the data for the current study. The employees for the study were chosen based upon convenience sampling.

The research team obtained a list of employee contacts from each company's human resources department. We sent an email to 370 employees with a URL survey link and a letter assuring confidentiality. Each organization's HR department also sent an email encouraging staff to participate in the survey. The survey was divided into four sections (details in the appendix). The first section discussed narcissistic leadership, the second, project success; the third, knowledge sharing and the final part addressed collectivism. Respondents for narcissistic leadership, knowledge sharing, collectivism were project team members working on projects. Respondents for project success were project managers. Out of 370 questionnaires, 272 complete responses were received. Response rate turned out to be 73% percent. A total of 272 respondents 204 (75.0%) were male and 68 (25.0%) were female. In terms of education, 64.3% had a bachelor's degree, while 32% had a master's degree. The details of the respondents are given in the Table -I below.

3.2 Research Instruments

All the measures in the study were adapted from previous research. The present study used a five-point Likert scale: 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

Narcissistic Leadership

In terms of narcissistic leadership, measures were adapted from Burns (2017). For this construct, 16 items were used. The scale's reliability was 0.90. Examples of the items are: 'My current supervisor has a sense of personal entitlement', 'My current supervisor thinks that he/she is more capable than others', and 'My current supervisor believes that he/she is an extraordinary person'.

Table 1: Demographics

Questions	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	204	75
	Female	68	25
Age	20-29 ages	167	61.4
	30-39 ages	104	38.2
	40-49 ages	1	.4
	50-59 ages		
Education	Intermediate	2	7
	Bachelors	175	64.3
	Master	87	32.0
	Doctoral	5	1.8
	Others	3	1.1
Experience	<1 year	63	23.2
	1-3 years	160	58.8
	4-6 years	42	15.4
	7-10 years	5	1.8
	>10 years	2	.7

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Narcissistic Leadership	3.5588	.88158
Project success	3.1131	.79694
Knowledge sharing	3.3597	.76559
Collectivism	4.1342	.64737

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

Variables	Narcissistic leadership	Project success	Knowledge sharing	Collectivism
Narcissistic leadership	1			
Project success	-.311**	1		
Knowledge sharing	-.193**	.613**	1	
Collectivism	.279**	.129*	.226**	1

CA: Cronbach Alpha

Project Success

We used 8 items to measure project success with a scale designed by Cao et al., (2020). The following are examples of the items: 'The progress of the project is on schedule', 'The project is within budget', and 'The project passed the acceptance check and was successfully delivered'. The reliability coefficient was 0.94.

Knowledge sharing

For knowledge sharing, measures were adapted from Park & Lee (2014). This scale contains six elements that assess the role of Knowledge Sharing in improving project creativity. Examples of the items include: 'We shared the minutes of meetings and discussion records in an effective way' and 'We always provided technical documents, including manuals, books, training materials to each other'. The reliability for this scale was 0.89.

Collectivism

We used 6 items to measure collectivism with a scale developed by Culpepper & Watts (1999). Examples of the items are: 'Group welfare is more important than individual's rewards' and 'Group success is more important than individual's success'. The scale's reliability was 0.91.

4 Results and Data Analysis

To analyse the data, a two-step procedure was used. The first is measurement model analysis, which examined the validity and reliability of each measure. The second step is structural model analysis, which involves examining the research model using a structural equation model (SEM) approach. Further information on these steps is provided below. To generate descriptive statistics, SPSS software was employed. To assess the measurement and structural model, the partial least squares (PLS) technique was applied.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics include the mean and standard deviation of the variables which are given in Table II.

Analysis of correlation was used to assess whether there is a relationship between the study's variables. The relationship between the constructs was determined by Pearson's correlation analysis. The linear dependency of the two variables is shown by the correlation analysis. Correlation ranges from -1 to +1, with +1 indicating complete positive correlation, -1 indicating complete negative correlation, and 0 indicating no connection between the variables. The correlation between the variables is given in Table III.

The values stated above show that there is a relationship between the independent, dependent, mediating, and moderating variables. The results show that narcissistic leadership and project success has a negative relationship with a correlation value of -.311**. Moreover, narcissistic leadership has an unfavorable relationship with knowledge sharing i.e., -.193**. In addition, a positive association exists between project success and knowledge sharing i.e., .613**. A positively significant relationship exists between project success and collectivism i.e., .129*. Furthermore, there is a positive significant relationship between knowledge sharing and collectivism i.e., .226**.

4.1 Measurement Model

Validity and Reliability

To confirm the validity and reliability of all measures (dimensions, indicators, and variables), the measurement model was examined. This research employed standardized factor loading as a validity threshold, with a good validity being larger than 0.6 (Barclay, 1995).

Table 4: Factor Loadings

Variables	Item	Factor loadings
Narcissistic leadership	1. My current supervisor has a sense of personal entitlement.	0.870
	2. My current supervisor thinks that he/she is more capable than others.	0.934
	3. My current supervisor believes that he/she is an extraordinary person.	0.939
Project success	1.The progress of the project is on schedule	0.865
	2.The project is within budget	0.867
	3.The project passed the acceptance check and was successfully delivered	0.864
	4. Most problems encountered in the implementation of the project can be addressed.	0.820
	5. The project process is satisfactory.	0.856
	6. The owner is satisfied with the project results.	0.864
	7. The project meets the special requirements of client.	0.799
	8. We look forward to cooperating with the other party again in the future.	0.798
Knowledge sharing	1. We shared the minutes of meetings and discussion records in an effective way.	0.710
	2. We always provided technical documents, including manuals, books, training materials to each other.	0.756
	3. We shared project plans and the project status in an effective way	0.826
	4. We always provided know-where or know-whom information to each other in an effective way	0.853
	5. We tried to share expertise from education or training in an effective way.	0.854
	6.We always shared experience or know-how from work in a responsive and effective way	0.819
Knowledge sharing	1. We shared the minutes of meetings and discussion records in an effective way.	0.710
	2. We always provided technical documents, including manuals, books, training materials to each other.	0.756
	3. We shared project plans and the project status in an effective way	0.826
	4. We always provided know-where or know-whom information to each other in an effective way	0.853
	5. We tried to share expertise from education or training in an effective way.	0.854
	6.We always shared experience or know-how from work in a responsive and effective way	0.819
Collectivism	1. Group welfare is more important than individual rewards.	0.862
	2. Group success is more important than individual success.	0.783
	3. Being accepted by the members of your work group is very important.	0.842
	4. Employees should only pursue their goals after considering the welfare of the group.	0.868
	5. Managers should encourage group loyalty even if individual goals suffer.	0.776
	6. Individuals may be expected to give up their goals in order to benefit group success.	0.834

Table 5: Validity and Reliability

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Narcissistic leadership	0.905	0.939	0.837
Project success	0.941	0.951	0.709
Knowledge sharing	0.890	0.917	0.648
Collectivism	0.910	0.929	0.686

Table 6: Fornell Larcker analysis

	AVE	C	KS	NL	PS
C	0.686	**0.828***			
KS	0.648	0.231	**0.805***		
NL	0.837	0.267	-0.208	**0.915***	
PS	0.709	0.135	0.615	-0.318	**0.842***

Table 7: Cross Loadings analysis

	C	KS	NL	PS
C1	0.826	0.222	0.164	0.141
C2	0.783	0.117	0.230	0.070
C3	0.842	0.185	0.294	0.127
C4	0.868	0.223	0.167	0.128
C5	0.776	0.186	0.230	0.047
C6	0.834	0.179	0.278	0.137
KS1	0.266	0.710	-0.073	0.423
KS2	0.203	0.756	-0.109	0.456
KS3	0.179	0.826	-0.162	0.542
KS4	0.139	0.853	-0.195	0.549
KS5	0.169	0.854	-0.243	0.504
KS6	0.177	0.819	-0.203	0.482
NL1	0.297	-0.086	0.870	-0.252
NL2	0.254	-0.178	0.934	-0.266
NL3	0.208	-0.265	0.939	-0.336
PS1	0.120	0.541	-0.292	0.865
PS2	0.089	0.517	-0.285	0.867
PS3	0.099	0.488	-0.264	0.864
PS4	0.071	0.530	-0.322	0.820
PS5	0.100	0.521	-0.278	0.856
PS6	0.082	0.481	-0.291	0.864
PS7	0.178	0.540	-0.245	0.799
PS8	-0.480	0.515	-0.152	0.798

* Questionnaire items are presented in the Appendix

This study used composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) to ensure measurement reliability. Reliability is termed as good when CR ≥ 0.70 and AVE ≥ 0.50. The factor coefficients presented in Table IV and V indicated homogeneity within scales.

The values of Average variance extracted (AVE) for each latent variable are shown above. Each construct should have an AVE greater than 0.5 to demonstrate acceptable validity (Chin, 1998). Additionally, Cronbach's Alpha (α) was used to assess all constructs' internal consistency. Cronbach's Alpha for all constructs is above 0.7 as shown in Table V, indicating that they are internally consistent. In conclusion, all the standards of Cronbach's alpha, Average variance extract and Composite reliability were found to be in acceptable range.

Discriminant Validity:

The extent to which a construct differs from other constructs according to empirical standards is known as discriminant validity. Researchers have often used two criteria for discriminant validity that is Fornell Larcker criterion and cross-loadings.

Fornell Larcker criterion

Fornell Larcker compares the correlations between the latent variable and the square root of the AVE values. To ensure discriminant validity, the square root of each construct's AVE should be greater than the construct's highest correlation. Table VI values indicate that discriminant validity has been established.

Cross Loadings

An indicator's outer loading on the related construct should be greater than any of its cross-loadings on other constructs when assessing discriminant validity. Cross-loadings values are mentioned in Table VII.

4.2 Structural Model and Hypotheses testing

The PLS-SEM technique was used to test various hypotheses through SmartPLS software package. PLS-SEM relies on bootstrapping for testing the significance of their coefficients. The process involves a great number of bootstrap samples that are drawn with replacements from the original sample. The PLS path model is estimated through bootstrap samples. It is also used for statistical hypothesis testing. T-values and p-values are also estimated for determining the significance of path co-efficient. P-value should be less than 0.05 for being significant. In this study, six hypotheses were tested. The outcomes of the bootstrapping are shown in Figure 2 given below.

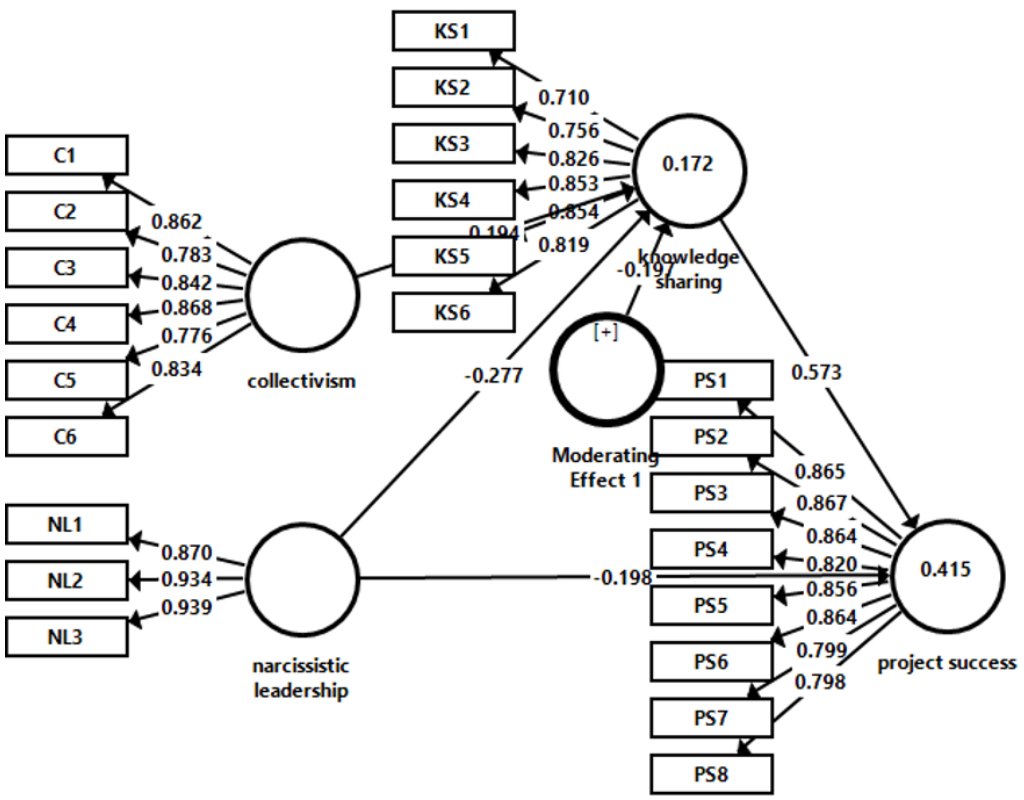


Figure 2: Structural Model

Table 8: Results of Structural Model and Hypothesis testing

	B value	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P value	Result
NL->PS	-0.198	-0.203	0.051	3.901	0.000	supported
NL->KS	-0.277	-0.281	0.058	4.768	0.000	supported
KS->PS	0.573	0.572	0.057	10.096	0.000	supported
NL->KS->PS	-0.159	-0.163	0.033	4.826	0.000	supported
C->KS->PS	0.111	0.123	0.046	2.399	0.017	supported
C x NL->KS->PS	-0.113	-0.106	0.040	2.852	0.004	supported

NL= Narcissistic leadership; PS= Project success; KS= knowledge sharing; C= collectivism

Table 9: Mediation Analysis

Direct effect of IV on DV		Indirect effect of IV on DV via knowledge sharing			
B	M	B	M	LL95%CL	UL95%CL
-0.198	-0.203	-0.159	-0.163	-0.233	-0.108

First hypothesis, which states that there is a negative relation between narcissistic leadership and project success is supported (B = -0.198, P = 0.000). The p-value for the test is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 which means it is significant. The negative sign depicts the negative relationship between narcissistic leadership and project success. Similarly, the second hypothesis, that narcissistic leadership can have a negative impact on employee knowledge-sharing behavior is also supported (B = -0.277, P = 0.000). The negative sign depicts the adverse connection between narcissistic leadership and knowledge sharing. Findings of structural model are given in Table VIII.

Furthermore, third hypothesis which states that knowledge sharing is positively associated with project success is also accepted (B = 0.573, P = 0.000).

Indirect effect

To test the hypothesis related to mediating role of knowledge sharing, the approach suggested by Baron & Kenny (1986) was adopted. As per this approach, there are few steps involved to determine the mediation effect. Firstly, dependent and independent variables are required to be significantly related. Secondly, the mediator must be strongly related to the independent variable. Lastly, dependent and the mediator variables are also required to be significantly related in the proposed relationship. If these conditions are satisfied, then partial mediation is concluded. Results suggested that first hypothesis of the study provides support for the first condition of mediation. Furthermore, the association between narcissist leadership and information sharing also provides support for the second criterion for mediating effects (B = - 0.277, P = 0.000). Furthermore, the relationship between dependent variable and mediator is also found significantly related and provides support for third criterion of mediation test. The bootstrap results indicate that narcissistic leadership has a total indirect influence on project success through knowledge sharing (B = -0.159. M = -0.163, -0.233, -0.108). The results demonstrate that the bootstrapped 95% confidence interval for the effect of narcissistic leadership on project success through knowledge sharing does not contain zero because it has an upper limit of -0.233 and a lower limit of -0.108. As a result, the findings show that knowledge sharing acts as a mediator between narcissistic leadership and project success. Mediation analysis are given in Table IX.

For moderation (B = 0.111, M = 0.123, T = 2.399), the statistical significance of this finding is supported by p-value of 0.017, which is below the threshold 0.05. The results show that collectivism plays a significant role in moderating the relationship between narcissistic leadership and knowledge sharing. It is also depicted in results that when an employee has high levels of collectivism, the negative effect of narcissistic leadership on knowledge sharing is weakened. To establish the direction of this moderation effect, slope analysis (see Figure 3) was performed at one standard deviation above and below the mean of the employee's collectivistic behavior. The slope of the association between narcissistic leadership and sharing knowledge was strong for employees who evaluated low on collectivism, as expected. whereas the slope was weak for employees who assessed high collectivism.

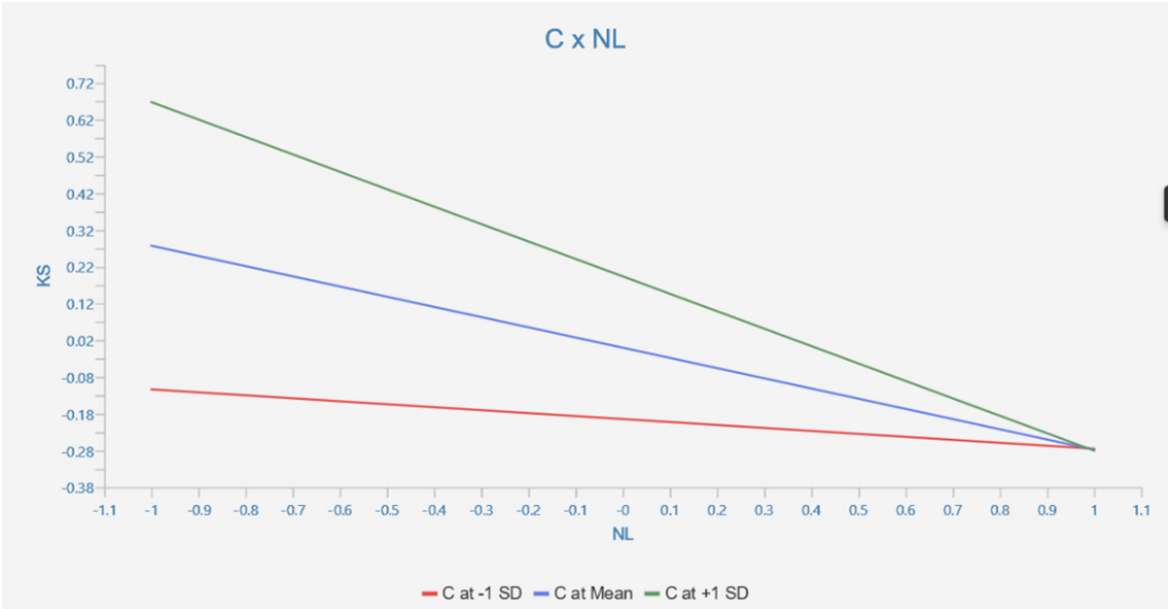


Figure 3: Interaction of narcissistic leadership and collectivism on knowledge sharing

For moderated mediation (B = -0.113, M = -0.106, p = 0.004), the p-value is 0.004 which is less than 0.05 thus indicating its significance. This states that collectivism moderates the mediation effect of knowledge sharing on the relationship between narcissistic leadership and project success. The higher the collectivism is, the weaker the indirect effect of narcissistic leadership on project success through knowledge sharing will be observed.

5 Discussion

The aim of this research was to comprehend how narcissistic leadership influences project success. It also investigated the role of "knowledge sharing" in mediating this relationship, and explored how "collectivism" moderates the association between narcissist leadership and knowledge sharing. For this purpose, an upper-echelon theoretical framework was proposed to explain the research hypotheses. According to the findings of this study, narcissistic leadership is negatively associated with project success, implicating that narcissistic leadership restricts employee performance and limits the smooth functioning of the project. Strong evidence from the literature indicates that narcissists in positions of authority are particularly harmful to workers as their inappropriate and potentially unstable attitude limits the project's success (Whetten, 2006). This research confirms that narcissistic leadership has a negative impact on project success. Few researchers have previously examined the 'productive' side of narcissistic leaders, which includes their charismatic and attractive personality which may attract employees (Maccoby, 2004; Tepper, 2007). However, literature indicate that even narcissists' positive traits are only advantageous to organizations in regard to their capacity to persuade employees to collaborate towards common objectives; but it remains toxic for employee knowledge-sharing behavior (Martinko et al., 2013). According to the literature, narcissistic leadership has a long-term negative influence on employees' psychological health as well as their ability to grow personally and creatively. This is because narcissistic leaders frequently use coercion and power to undermine their employees' performance (Campbell et al., 2011). This study focuses on the negative characteristics of narcissistic project leaders, and it has been demonstrated that the results are damaging. Narcissistic leaders are arrogant and highly dependent on their intelligence in decision-making. The findings of this study are in line with Al-Abrrow et al., (2019) and O'Reilly et al., (2018) that narcissistic leaders negatively influence the organizational outcome as they do not consider negative aspects of their decisions while making a strategic organizational decision.

According to the findings of this study, narcissistic management has a negative impact on sharing knowledge. This relationship aligns with the findings of Xiao et al. (2018). Organizations are working in an interconnected environment where social skills, communication, and information sharing are crucial for winning performance. This elaborates on how teamwork, knowledge sharing, and the convenience of feedback are integral for organizations. It has been found that narcissistic leaders are not compassionate in their dealings with subordinate management

which subsequently create an obnoxious attitude among the employees that leads to less effective and efficient project outcome (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Dark characteristics of narcissistic leaders include openness to criticism, a lack of empathy, a need for power and the ability to manipulate others, as well as an unwillingness to accept failure. These are the characteristics that hinder an employee's capacity to confidently share knowledge, hence lowering their productivity. (Martinko et al., 2013; Schyns & Schilling, 2013). Because of their inappropriate behavior and perhaps unstable attitudes, narcissists often cause stress and pressure in their employees, which limits their ability to succeed. (Sleep et al., 2017; Wisse et al., 2018). Yet, another study proposes that negative aspects of narcissistic leadership may be mitigated by enhancing knowledge sharing and employee collectivism (Salanova et al., 2005).

Our results further suggest that knowledge sharing positively affects the project's success. Transfer of knowledge among the employees is the key to success. This fosters the creation of novel information that ultimately leads to project success. New knowledge is created by project managers when they encourage team members to work together. Validating the claims of this study, results have revealed that knowledge sharing has a positive effect on project success. Besides, this study adds to the literature by addressing the mediating role of sharing knowledge between narcissistic leadership and project success. It states that when leaders are narcissistic, they negatively influence employees' knowledge-sharing intention, thus damaging project success. Nevertheless, if an organization has collective culture, more employees will engage in knowledge-sharing behavior.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

There is limited research that has investigated the effect of narcissistic leadership on project success. Subsequently, this study provides important implications that tend to be effective for project-based organization in numerous ways. Theoretically, this study enhances the extant literature on leadership and personality traits research in the field of project management. This leads to new path and measurements in project management. In the context of upper echelon theory, this study highlights the personality characteristics such as knowledge sharing and collectivism that may influence narcissistic leadership to execute a successful project. The findings of the research are effectively significant and applicable because it has been demonstrated in this study that knowledge sharing play a mediating role between narcissistic leadership and project success. There has been little empirical research on negative leadership styles, with prior researchers focusing on the relationships between effective leadership and sharing knowledge (Wu & Lee, 2016). However, it is also critical to identify the factors that encourage or inhibit employee information sharing. Furthermore, the majority of previous study has concentrated on how narcissism affects the relationship between a leader and a follower instead of how a narcissistic style of leadership influences connections within and across employee teams. The outcome variables of narcissistic leadership have been extended and diversified in the current study by proving that it negatively impacts project success. Research has been carried out on narcissistic leadership for a long time but due to the complex nature of the phenomenon, critical questions related to this leadership are by no means truly answered. This study's findings confirmed that narcissistic leadership can impede employee's knowledge-sharing behavior, which negatively predicts project success. Besides, this study looked into a little-studied topic of the moderating function of collectivistic orientation between narcissistic leadership and knowledge sharing. Furthermore, researching the dynamics of narcissistic leadership and sharing knowledge will contribute to revamping and enhancing current project management practices, along with helping and training project leaders for appropriate workplace behavior. This can be accomplished by outlining policies for the effective implementation of projects in Pakistan.

5.2 Practical Implications and Conclusion

The findings of the study will be applicable in IT Project Management. Narcissistic leaders may restrict the subordinates from exhibiting their potential which negatively influences the project success. Organizations can opt for knowledge-sharing and collectivist approaches to mitigate the negative aspects of narcissist leadership. However, it may appear to be a viable option for avoiding narcissistic individuals in positions of leadership. The current study's findings are consistent with those of Belschak et al. (2018) and Xiao et al. (2018), that narcissistic leadership negatively impacts employee outcomes resulting in low knowledge-sharing behavior, high turnover intention and workplace silence. The results highlight the characteristics of narcissistic leadership that harm project outcomes. Individuals with high narcissistic personalities are more inclined to exploit others and act unethically (Belschak et al., 2018). These findings highlight the necessity of both leader selection and establishing an ethical context in terms of implications for organizations; Particularly, to prevent narcissistic leaders from flourishing in organizations. It is critical to keep an ethical framework in place. Behaviors are likely to be more silent and to be perceived adversely by coworkers in an unethical or interpersonally ineffective situation (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2018). Project-based settings can also utilize narcissists for their positive characteristics that could be beneficial for projects. Training employees

to manage such difficult situations can lower the risk of project failure. This research indicated that high collectivism mitigates the negative impact of narcissistic leadership on sharing knowledge. Managers ought to pay closer attention to employees who exhibit low collective behavior and workplace silence. According to this study, managers should create a workplace where employees and their managers may collaborate to establish common values; especially, if their organization's top priorities are to promote knowledge sharing and reduce silence. The presence of a highly collectivistic culture provides an ideal environment for increasing employee engagement. Additionally, organizational managers should also hire and promote people who have a strong collectivist orientation. Organizations should promote collective consciousness among staff members and place a high value on helping them acquire values that will lead them to put the interests of the group before their own. Organizations should provide support systems for employees, such as emotional support and communication channels that reassure employees who choose to expose their narcissistic leader's behavior, given the difficulty in solving the situation (Lipman-Blumen, 2010). Also, training programs can be designed to foster the development of abilities that help employees manage pressure from their superiors. On a broader scale, senior management should encourage their workers to shift away from considering their personal ambitions in terms of hierarchical status. Instead, they should encourage employees to see their managers as "partners" with whom they share a set of common goals and interests, with the ultimate objective of assisting the organization in meeting its goals.

5.3 Research Limitations

Despite extensive literature on narcissistic leadership, this field of study is still in its early beginnings. Because this study was undertaken with restricted time and resources, a medium sample size was chosen. The data gathering technique utilized was convenience sampling, which limits the generalization potential of the findings to some extent. Due to time and resource constraints, this study is conducted in Rawalpindi and Islamabad cities of Pakistan only. The results cannot be generalized for the whole IT sector of Pakistan. Another limitation of the current study is that this research study looked at the adverse aspects of narcissistic leadership, however, the positive sides can also be considered.

5.4 Future Research

The findings open fresh avenues for future research in a new dimension. This can entail investigating narcissists for their positive traits such as captivating personalities and establishing appealing visions in certain contexts that could be valued in the corporate sector (Anninos, 2018). According to researchers, these characteristics enable narcissistic leaders to hold steady in the face of failure and manage crisis in the best possible way. As a result, the beneficial aspects of a narcissistic leader should be considered for future research in project-based contexts. This research is based on cross-sectional data analysis which allows researchers to collect data at a single point in time, but it is possible to conduct longitudinal research in the future as it allows data to be collected at different intervals of time. Furthermore, it is proposed to analyse the phenomena with the support of 'organizational commitment'. Employees with a strong organizational commitment may be able to minimize the negative consequences of narcissistic leadership.

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Appendix: List of Measurement Items

Narcissistic leadership

NL1: My current supervisor has a sense of personal entitlement.
NL2: My current supervisor thinks that he/she is more capable than others.
NL3: My current supervisor believes that he/she is an extraordinary person.

Project success

PS1: The progress of the project is on schedule.
PS2: The project is within budget.
PS3: The project passed the acceptance check and was successfully delivered.
PS4: Most problems encountered in the implementation of the project can be addressed.
PS5: The project process is satisfactory.
PS6: The owner is satisfied with the project results.
PS7: The project meets the special requirements of client.
PS8: We look forward to cooperating with the other party again in the future.

Knowledge sharing

KS1: We shared the minutes of meetings and discussion records in an effective way.
KS2: We always provided technical documents, including manuals, books, training materials to each other.
KS3: We shared project plans and the project status in an effective way.
KS4: We always provided know- where or know-whom information to each other in an effective way.
KS5: We tried to share expertise from education or training in an effective way.
KS6: We always shared experience or know-how from work in a responsive and effective way.

Collectivism

C1: Group welfare is more important than individuals rewards.
C2: Group success is more important than individuals success.
C3: Being accepted by the members of your work group is very important
C4: Employees should only pursue their goals after considering the welfare of the group
C5: Managers should encourage group loyalty even if individual goals suffer.
C6: Individuals may be expected to give up their goals in order to benefit group success.