

UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA  
SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

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**KNOWLEDGE HIDING AND WORKPLACE INCLUSION OF MINORITY  
MEMBERS**

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Ljubljana, 2021

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## SUMMARY

Knowledge is a competitive advantage, especially for multinational companies and universities. These work settings strive to become more international and global in integrating individuals with different cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and age backgrounds. A culturally diverse workplace fosters knowledge sharing by generating more ideas, knowledge, and perspectives from different angles (DiTomaso et al., 2007). However, sometimes knowledge exchange is hindered, and knowledge is hidden among culturally diverse colleagues. Knowledge hiding is defined as the intentional hiding of requested information or knowledge (Connelly et al., 2012).

The literature on knowledge hiding behavior identifies its several predictors, including group culture (Bogilović et al. 2017), group task characteristics (Cerne et al., 2014), group trust (Connelly & Zweig, 2014), and negative interpersonal relationships (Nowlin et al., 2015). Moreover, employees' status differences within the organization affect knowledge hiding behavior (Rhee & Choi, 2017). However, little is known about how and why this negative behavior occurs among culturally diverse colleagues and superiors. Social Identity Theory proposes that culturally dominant employees tend to exclude cultural minority employees due to differences in shared knowledge (Shore et al., 2011), culture, nationality, language, or age (Tajfel & Turner, 1970). At the same time, perceived exclusion, mistreatment, ignoring, or rejection can intensify minority members' desire to belong and be included (Pless & Maak, 2004). Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (Brewer, 1991) states that to avoid perceived workplace exclusion, individuals tend to achieve a balance between perceived inclusion and distinction within the organization and among groups by finding an "optimal identity" (Sheldon & Bettencourt, 2002).

In this dissertation, I tackled the interplay between workplace exclusion-inclusion and knowledge hiding. I was particularly interested in the following questions: How do members of minorities behave regarding knowledge sharing and knowledge hiding at work, particularly in settings where they feel excluded due to their cultural or social status? Does workplace exclusion or attempts to increase inclusion affect knowledge hiding? What are the knowledge hiding strategies employed by young migrant workers, and are there additional knowledge hiding strategies specific to this population? Do these strategies differ for members of different social or cultural statuses, such as young migrant workers from other foreign and former Yugoslavia countries? How effective are current diversity and inclusion policies, and what can the management do to prevent young migrant workers' knowledge hiding behavior and foster their inclusion at work?

To answer these research questions, I conducted 40 semi-structured in-depth interviews with young migrant workers aged between 26-30 years old and employed for five years or less in multinational companies and the public university sector in Slovenia. The qualitative thematic deductive analysis results showed that minority members used knowledge hiding to avoid workplace exclusion and promote inclusion to Slovenian colleagues and superiors at work. Young migrant workers negatively reciprocated knowledge hiding to their Slovenian colleagues, managers, and supervisors at work, especially when Slovenian colleagues rejected their proposed ideas previously due to the perceived differences in their ethnic, national, language, and age backgrounds. Besides, the perceived cultural superiority of the Slovene colleagues affected young migrants' knowledge hiding.

Additionally, the research demonstrated that minority members engage in knowledge hiding behavior as a strategy to promote better inclusion and belonging to the culturally dominant group colleagues, superiors, workgroups, and organizations. As a consequence of their experiences of different forms of the perceived exclusion, young migrants engaged in knowledge hiding behavior. They frequently avoided a task, interpersonal relationship conflicts, or controversy with the Slovenian colleagues and managers to maintain relationships. Finally, minorities hid knowledge to secure their job positions.

This study makes a range of different contributions to the literature at the intersection of workplace exclusion-inclusion and knowledge hiding behavior. First, I contribute to the existing literature on knowledge hiding behavior (Cerne et al., 2014; Zhao et al., 2016; Bogilovic et al., 2017; Babič et al., 2018) by expanding its nomological net and investigating another antecedent of knowledge hiding, that is perceived workplace exclusion. I added other layers of possible exclusion sources related to knowledge hiding or withholding, cultural diversity, and subsequent workplace exclusion based on nationality, ethnic, linguistic, and age backgrounds. This way, I added to knowledge hiding studies that perceived workplace ostracism (Zhao et al., 2016), bullying (Yao et al., 2020a), negative gossiping (Yao et al., 2020b), incivility (Arshad & Ismail, 2018), and cynicism (Aljawarneh & Atan, 2018) as other forms of perceived workplace exclusion affect knowledge hiding behavior among mono-cultural work settings.

Secondly, the research proposes that young migrant workers engage in knowledge-hiding behavior due to their perceived workplace exclusion and as a means for improving their workplace inclusion. I, thus, examined perceived workplace inclusion as a predictor of knowledge-hiding behavior, which empirical studies have so far overlooked. Connelly et al. (2019) called for more research to examine the potential benefits of knowledge hiding behavior in organizations. In this sense, I brought out a positive outcome of knowledge hiding behavior. That is, minority members may employ knowledge hiding behavior to achieve better inclusion to the culturally dominant group colleagues and superiors at work.

Thirdly, I advance studies on the cultural elements of knowledge hiding that have up to this date focused only on cultural intelligence (Bogilovic et al., 2017), socio-cultural aspects (Babič et al., 2018), national cultural dimensions (Gaur et al., 2018; Dodokh, 2019), or specific cultural contexts (Issac & Baral, 2020). I particularly examined how perceived workplace exclusion-inclusion and knowledge hiding may operate differently for different cultural, social, and age groups in multinational companies and across the various faculties of the University of Ljubljana. I, thus, complemented studies referred to above that have investigated knowledge hiding in specific cultural settings.

Finally, I contribute to the inclusion framework elaborated by Shore et al. (2011) by enriching its theoretical and practical evidence on workplace exclusion-inclusion, expanding its nomological net, and introducing knowledge hiding to be a consequence of perceived workplace exclusion and a strategy to advance perceived workplace inclusion in the context of young migrant workers, including those from the former Yugoslavia, employed in multinational companies based in Ljubljana and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana.

Keywords: knowledge hiding, workplace exclusion-inclusion, young migrant workers, ethnic inequality, group identification

## POVZETEK

Znanje je konkurenčna prednost, zlasti za multinacionalna podjetja in univerze. Delovna okolja v le-teh si prizadevajo za čim večjo mednarodnost in multinacionalnost z vključevanjem posameznikov iz različnih kulturnih, etničnih, jezikovnih in starostnih ozadij. Kulturno raznoliko delovno okolje spodbuja izmenjavo znanja, saj se v njem tvorijo ideje, znanje in pogledi iz različnih zornih kotov (DiTomaso et. al., 2007). Včasih pa je izmenjava znanja ovirana in se znanje med kulturno raznolikimi kolegi skriva. *Skrivanje znanja* je definirano kot namerno skrivanje zahtevanih informacij ali znanja (Connelly et. al., 2012).

Literatura določa več dejavnikov, ki vplivajo na skrivanje znanja; organizacijsko kulturo (Bogilović et al. 2017), značilnosti skupinske naloge (Cerne et. al., 2014), skupinsko zaupanje (Connelly & Zweig, 2014) in negativne medsektorske odnose (Nowlin et. al., 2015). Na pojav skrivanja znanja vplivajo tudi razlike v statusu zaposlenih v organizaciji (Rhee & Choi, 2017). Po drugi strani je malo znanega o tem, kako in zakaj se to negativno vedenje pojavlja med kulturno raznolikimi kolegi in nadrejenimi. Teorija socialne identitete navaja, da kulturno prevladujoči zaposleni izključujejo kulturno manjšinske zaposlene zaradi razlik v splošnem znanju (Shore et al., 2011), kulturi, narodnosti, jeziku ali starosti (Tajfel & Turner, 1970). Občutki izključenosti, zlorabe, prezrtja ali zavrnitve stopnjujejo željo manjšin po vključenosti in sprejetosti (Pless & Maak, 2004). Teorija optimalne razlikovalnosti (Brewer, 1991) navaja, da posamezniki, v izogib zaznane izključenosti na delovnem mestu, z iskanjem "optimalne identitete" (Sheldon & Bettencourt, 2002) stremijo k ravnovesju med zaznano vključenostjo znotraj svoje skupine in potrebo po drugačnosti med različnimi skupinami znotraj organizacije. Zato predvidevam, da skrivanje znanja pri mladih delavcih migrantih zadovoljuje potrebo po razlikovanju med kulturno manjšino, ki ji pripadajo in večinsko kulturno skupino, kar jim pomaga pri zaznani izključenosti na delovnem mestu in povečuje zaznano vključenost na delovnem mestu.

Tema disertacije je prepletanje pojava vključenosti-izključenosti na delovnem mestu ter skrivanja znanja. Osrednja vprašanja, ki jih disertacija obravnava, so: Kako se obnašajo pripadniki manjšin v primerih delitve znanja in skrivanja znanja na delovnem mestu, posebej v okoljih, kjer se počutijo izključene zaradi svojega kulturnega ali socialnega statusa? Ali izključevanje na delovnem mestu oziroma poskusi vključevanja na drugi strani vplivajo na skrivanje znanja? Na kakšne načine mladi delavci migranti skrivajo znanje in ali so ti načini specifični za njih? Ali posamezniki iz različnih kulturnih in socialnih ozadij uporabljajo različne metode skivanja znanja, npr. ali obstajajo posebnosti v načinu skrivanja znanja pri mladih delavcih migrantih iz držav nekdanje Jugoslavije? Kako učinkovite so trenutne politike na področju raznolikosti in vključevanja, ter kaj še lahko storijo vodstva podjetij, da bi preprečila skrivanje znanja pri mladih delavcih migrantih in povečala vključenost le-teh na delovnem mestu.

V iskanju odgovorov na ta vprašanja so bili izvedeni pol strukturirani razgovori z mladimi delavci migranti, starimi od 26 do 30 let, zaposlenimi v multinacionalnih podjetjih in na različnih fakultetah Univerze v Ljubljani z delovno dobo 5 let ali manj. Kvalitativna tematska deduktivna analiza je potrdila raziskovalne hipoteze o skrivanju znanja zaradi občutkov izključenosti na delovnem mestu. Zlasti pri mladih delavcih migrantih je bilo zaznati skrivanje znanja pred slovenskimi kolegi in nadrejenimi, posebej v primerih, kadar je pred tem prišlo do zavrnitev

predlaganih idej predstavnikov kulturnih manjšin s strani večinskih kolegov, po njihovem mnenju zaradi razlik v etničnem, nacionalnem, jezikovnem in starostnem ozadju. Na skrivanje znanja mladih migrantov je vplivala tudi zaznana kulturna superiornost slovenskih kolegov.

Poleg tega raziskava kaže, da so pripadniki manjšin skrivali znanje na delovnem mestu z namenom vključevanja in pripadnosti večinskim kulturnim skupinam in nadrejenim. Zaradi različnih oblik zaznane izključenosti je prihajalo do skrivanja znanja zaradi ohranjanja dobrih odnosov, izogibanja delovnim nalogam ali konfliktom s slovenskimi kolegi in vodilnimi. Skrivanje znanja se torej uporablja kot orodje za ohranjanje delovnega mesta.

Ta disertacija na različne načine prispeva k literaturi na temo izključenosti na delovnem mestu skrivanja znanja. Ugotovitve razširijo literaturo o skrivanju znanja (Cerne et al., 2014; Zhao et al., 2016; Bogilovic et al., 2017; Babič et al., 2018) s širjenjem nomološke mreže in uvedbo novih predpostavk o skrivanju znanja, kot so zaznana izključenost in vključenost na delovnem mestu. Nadalje disertacija razširja nabor možnih vzrokov skrivanja znanja in izključevanja na delovnem mestu na podlagi kulturnih, nacionalnih, etničnih, jezikovnih in starostnih razlik. S tem razširja teorijo skrivanja znanja, ki je obravnavana v študijah o izobčenosti na delovnem mestu (Zhao et al., 2016), nadlegovanja Yao et al., 2020a), opravljanja (Yao et al., 2020b), nedostojnosti (Arshad & Ismail, 2018) in cinizma (Aljawarneh & Atan, 2018).

Nadaljna predpostavka disertacije je, da mladi delavci migranti skrivanje znanja uporabljajo kot strategijo za krepitev zaznane vključenosti v skupino kulturno dominantnim kolegov in nadrejenih. Zaznana vključenost na delovnem mestu je torej obravnavana kot vzrok za skrivanje znanja, česar v dosedanjih študijah ni zaslediti. Connelly et al. (2019) pozivajo k intenzivnejšim raziskavam o morebitnih pozitivnih učinkih skrivanja znanja. V tem smislu je osvetljena morebitna pozitivna lastnost skrivanja znanja, tj. povečana vključenost v kulturno dominantno skupino sodelavcev in nadrejenih na delovnem mestu.

Disertacija razširja študije kulturnih elementov skrivanja znanja, ki so se do sedaj osredotočale le na kulturno inteligenco (Bogilovic et al., 2017), socio-kulturne vidike (Babič et al., 2018), nacionalne kulturne razsežnosti (Gaur et al., 2018; Dodokh, 2019) ali posebne kulturne kontekste (Issac & Baral, 2020). Raziskovanje razlik med pojavi skrivanja znanja in zaznane vključenosti-izključenosti na delovnem mestu med različnimi kulturnimi, socialnimi in starostnimi skupinami je potekalo v multinacionalnih podjetjih in na različnih fakultetah Univerze v Ljubljani. S tem je podan doprinos k študijam le-teh.

Poleg navedenih raziskovalnih prispevkov k literaturi o vključenosti-izključenosti (Shore et al., 2011), to delo z razširitvijo nomologične mreže in raziskovanjem dodatnega vedenjskega pojava pri zaznavi izključenosti na delovnem mestu, tj. skrivanja znanja, vključuje nove teoretične in praktične dokaze o vključenosti-izključenosti na delovnem mestu v kontekstu mladih delavcev migrantov s področja nekdanje Jugoslavije, zaposlenih v multinacionalnih podjetjih in različnih fakultetah Univerze v Ljubljani.

Ključne besede: skrivanje znanja, vključenost-izključenost na delovnem mestu, mladi delavci migranti, etnična neenakost, skupinska identifikacija.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

**CEO** – A Chief executive officer

**CIPD** - Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

**EU** - European Union

**GDP** - Gross Domestic Product

**HRM** - Human Resource Management

**ILO** - United Nations International Labor Organization

**IMO** - The International Organization for Migration

**KH** – Knowledge hiding

**KS** - Knowledge sharing

**LMX** - Leader-member exchange

**MNC** – The multinational company

**ODT** – Optimal Distinctiveness Theory

**OFDI** - Outward Foreign Direct Investment

**Ph.D.** - Doctor of Philosophy

**SIT** – Social Identity Theory

**SI** – Slovenian

**UNICEF** - The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

## INTRODUCTION

The increased mobility of people has resulted in an increasingly culturally diverse workforce. A culturally diverse workplace fosters knowledge sharing by generating more ideas, knowledge, and perspectives from different angles (DiTomaso et al., 2007). Multinational companies strive to become more international, global, multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-lingual, ensuring that all employees, regardless of race, ethnic background, gender, age, and religion, are given fair, equitable, and equal treatment. This trend is observable in academic settings: each year, universities (within European Union member countries) host thousands of international students, exchange students, and international teaching professionals. They are incorporated and integrated into the study process and given temporal or permanent job positions. There are fellowship programs to encourage cooperation between visiting and host researchers and professors.

The management and leadership of multinational companies expect that young people, in particular, will be more receptive to new technologies and the demands of labor. Young migrant workers tend to be more resilient, active, ambitious, and adaptable (Schäffer, 2012; 2015) and open to new experiences, environments, people, and cultures compared to the older generation. That can enhance companies' competitive edge, innovativeness, creativity, team building, productivity, and overall success. Multinational companies prefer to invest in youth migrant employees eager to learn, build professional paths and apply skills and knowledge to the company (Krishnan et al., 2012; Schäffer, 2012).

Knowledge sharing refers to the process of generating, acquiring, synthesizing, learning, sharing, and using knowledge to achieve organizational goals most efficiently and innovatively (e.g., Hislop, 2013). Knowledge is a competitive advantage, especially for multinational companies and academia. Since in times of the knowledge-based economy, multinational companies and academia can only develop through constant growth in innovative and collaborative knowledge (Aliei et al., 2011) and technology-based organizations (Jung-Chi, 2006). In an increasingly fast-paced and technology-driven world economy, multinational companies experience high demand for being international, integrative, and locally responsive. Executives strive to achieve efficiency and success, encouraging workplaces that foster communication and active interaction, support growth and development, knowledge sharing, creativity, and innovativeness, and keep the workforce busy (Foss et al., 2013; Radaelli et al., 2014).

However, sometimes, knowledge sharing is resisted, and knowledge hiding takes place among employees. Knowledge hiding implies the intentional hiding of requested information or knowledge (Connelly et al., 2012). It can occur in three different ways: playing dumb, evasive, and rationalized hiding. Knowledge hiding is a negative workplace behavior that harms requester and organizations in most cases. Since most employees' primary responsibility in executing their jobs is to create knowledge, distribute, collaborate, and add value to the work creatively and innovatively. Intentionally hiding knowledge from a coworker or manager reflects the potential loss of own capital (knowledge).

Empirical studies have so far studied the cultural elements of knowledge hiding behavior in the context of national culture (Bogilovic et al., 2017), socio-cultural aspects (Babič et al., 2018), national culture dimensions (Zhang et al., 2017; Gaur et al., 2018; Dodokh, 2019), or specific cultural contexts (Issac & Baral, 2020). Other studies also examined group culture (Bogilović et al., 2017), group task characteristics (Cerne et al., 2014), group trust (Connelly & Zweig, 2014), and negative interpersonal relationships (Nowlin et al., 2015). Study shows that employees' status differences within the organization affect knowledge hiding behavior (Rhee & Choi, 2017). However, little is known about how and why this negative behavior occurs among culturally diverse colleagues and superiors. A deeper theoretical and empirical investigation is needed on knowledge hiding antecedents, particularly in global multi-cultural contexts.

When trying to explain knowledge hiding, generational (Stewart et al., 2017), and cultural (Hoever et al., 2012), differences may affect the desire with whom, what, how, and when to share knowledge and engage in collaboration. The culturally and nationally diverse workforce may struggle with expressing different thoughts, opinions, and ideas. To this end, the climate for engaging in knowledge hiding behavior should be higher in the context of a diverse workforce (Smith et al., 2001). Moreover, they may lack the motivation to share their knowledge with colleagues (Gilson & Shalley, 2004). Knowledge transfer among diverse employees requires integrating the different cultural or ethnic backgrounds and recognizing the co-existence and supplementation of different knowledge (Sefa Dei, 2002; Asmussen et al., 2011). Many young migrants, despite their capabilities, skills, proactivity, face severe exclusion and segregation from the culturally dominant group colleagues and superiors based on their migration status, ethnicity, or language (Zanoni et al., 2010; Mor Barak & Daya, 2014).

The literature on knowledge hiding has extensively documented the strategies - employees undertake to knowledge hide at work (Connelly et al., 2012) and the effects of knowledge hiding at work (e.g., decreased interpersonal relationships, trust, pro-sociality). However, theoretical and empirical studies lack understanding of how knowledge hiding behaviors differ depending on cultural or social contexts. Previous studies have not examined the impact of status differences on knowledge hiding behavior in diverse workforce settings, an absence in the literature was also identified by Rhee & Choi (2017). In today's increasingly culturally and demographically diverse workforce, a greater understanding of how knowledge hiding operates in the workplace is needed. How do members of minorities behave regarding knowledge sharing and knowledge hiding at work, particularly in settings where they feel excluded due to their cultural or social status? Does workplace exclusion or attempts to increase inclusion affect knowledge hiding? Do these strategies differ for members of different social or cultural classes, such as young migrant workers from other foreign and former Yugoslavia countries?

Perceived workplace exclusion is the rejection or ignorance of a team or individual by another individual or group that resists maintaining positive interpersonal relationships, interactions, work-related efficiency, or desired status at work (Hitlan et al., 2006). This circumstance affects the interpersonal, team, and organizational interactions among colleagues and managers. Studies have shown that perceived workplace ostracism (Zhao et al., 2016), bullying (Yao et al., 2020a), negative gossiping (Yao et al., 2020b), incivility (Arshad & Ismail, 2018), and cynicism

(Aljawarneh & Atan, 2018) as other forms of perceived workplace exclusion affect knowledge hiding behavior among mono-cultural work settings. Following those studies on the relationship between knowledge hiding and different forms of workplace exclusion, I attempt to add other layers of possible exclusion sources related to knowledge hiding or withholding, cultural diversity, and subsequent workplace exclusion based on national, ethnic, linguistic, and age backgrounds. I assumed that perceived workplace exclusion in the forms of different determinants would affect the knowledge hiding of young migrant workers.

Social dominance theories like social identity and social categorization theories are helpful to understand responses to exclusion in the workplace better. The majority of the team members may segregate and exclude minority group member(s) when a person differs from others in terms of social status, ethnicity, culture, nationality, language (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), ideas, propositions, work styles, or approaches (Shore et al., 2011). Moreover, majority members' in-group biases demonstrate ethnic inequality, superiority, prestige, and high status over minority group members (Hogg et al., 2004). Minority group members desire to belong and include in the culturally dominant group colleagues and superiors in response to social categorization and differentiation in an in-group and out-group membership.

Scholars also reported that a minority member could decide to hide his or her knowledge to achieve perceived workplace inclusion by "passing" as a member of the dominant group (Goffman, 1963) and gain higher status (Hogg et al., 2004). When faced with perceived workplace exclusion experienced through different forms, an excluded individual may choose to behave accordingly to the culturally dominant majority group norms and requirements (Turner, 1982) by adopting acceptable behavior for culturally dominant group members (Essers et al., 2013), and concealing specific characteristics including knowledge, experience, and perceptions (Shore et al., 2011). Appearing more similar to the majority group enhances the in-group's more positive perception, favoritism, acceptance, and connection (Brewer, 2003). Therefore, an experienced exclusion may trigger feelings of reciprocity and harmfully respond to the perceived exclusion by engaging in knowledge hiding behavior. On the contrary, a migrant can hide knowledge for positive self-interest to enhance inclusion and belonging.

Where young migrant workers are concerned, previous research has demonstrated that they may have different expectations regarding the nature of mentoring relationships at work due to their various work values (Hansen & Leuty, 2012) and cultural perceptions. Consequently, the hierarchical, professional (occupational) status, national, and age differences may intensify young migrants' knowledge hiding behavior towards their superiors at work to avoid controversy, disagreements with leaders and foster their sense of perceived inclusion (Jha & Varkkey, 2018). Based on these differences, I assume that young migrants will engage in different knowledge hiding strategies rather than what has been already conceptualized by Connelly et al. (2012). I expect that besides already conceptualized knowledge hiding facets, young migrant workers will engage in knowledge hiding behavior in non-traditional forms. The literature does not yet explore this relationship on knowledge hiding behavior and thus needs more comprehensive empirical and theoretical investigations.

Understanding how culturally and socially diverse workers respond to perceived exclusion in the workplace and how this, in turn, is related to knowledge hiding is relevant both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, I aim to examine deeper the determinants of perceived workplace inclusion related to knowledge hiding behavior. I aim to focus on young migrants' self-perception of workplace inclusion regarding workgroup and interpersonal involvement, identification, and participation (Shore et al., 2018) to culturally dominant colleagues and superiors. I will add other layers of possible inclusion determinants related to knowledge hiding. In particular, including examining this relationship in the context of young migrant workers, which empirical studies have so far overlooked.

Examining this interplay is also relevant in the business world. The management of multinational companies, as well as public institutions, has to face the challenges of a multicultural workforce and engage the local workforce to interact efficiently with the migrant workers, to accept them and their knowledge to their team, the organizational culture, and to make the collaboration productive (Elmore, 2014). The literature on knowledge hiding has so far recommended several strategies for achieving this. Promoting cultural intelligence (Bogilovic et al., 2017), mastery, and motivational climates (Cerne et al., 2014; 2017), and a culture of knowledge sharing that recognizes group identity significantly decreases knowledge hiding among employees (Serenko & Bontis, 2016). Human resource management (HRM) practices can reduce knowledge hiding in several international work contexts (Butt & Ahmad, 2019).

If organizations want to attract, keep, and motivate their employees with different cultures, ethnicities, nationalities, and ages, they will need to realize how inclusive and diverse their organizational structures are. That possibly impact the sense of the perceived inclusion, belonging, acceptance, knowledge sharing of those employees, and interest in how those employees function within those structures. In particular, how they adapt socially and professionally, including idea generation, collaboration, knowledge sharing, maintaining interpersonal and work-related relationships and interactions, etc. I aim to enhance recommendations for managers and suggest implementing inclusive practices and leadership will decrease the perceived exclusion and knowledge hiding among cultural minority and majority group colleagues. They will also increase the sense of young migrant workers' perceived inclusion to the Slovenian colleagues and superiors in multinational companies and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana.

## **Research purpose**

The dissertation's primary purpose is to understand the interplay between knowledge hiding and workplace exclusion-inclusion of young migrant workers (minority members) with their Slovenian colleagues and superiors at multinational companies and the university's different faculties in Ljubljana. In this study, I have chosen to focus on the individual (e.g., minority member - foreigner) within the group (e.g., majority members - Slovenians). Understanding this interplay will allow us to disentangle the antecedents of knowledge hiding better, understand how perceived workplace exclusion – or desire to be included – manifests in various knowledge hiding behaviors, and determine whether these knowledge hiding strategies differ already known in the literature. Specifically, I am interested in how young migrant workers perceive their workplace exclusion-



inclusion and whether the experience of exclusion and desire to belong affects their knowledge hiding behavior at the interpersonal level with colleagues and superiors and within teams.

In addition to this theoretical contribution, this research intends to help companies and managers develop inclusive competencies, practices, and policies for creating a more inclusive environment for young migrant workers [minority members] to feel belonging and included in the team and organization. The facilitation of an inclusive workplace can positively affect knowledge and information flow between minority and majority groups. The research aims to help managers and HRM reduce young migrant workers' engagement in knowledge hiding behavior. Developing an inclusive and diverse organizational climate is particularly important since young migrant workers' fresh minds, ideas, activity, energy, and modernity are essential for today's global multinational companies and universities. Those characteristics help stay competitive, innovative, and modern, and a collaborative, integrated environment where all employees' skills and competencies are accepted and treated equally and reasonably can support workplace efficiency.

### **Research objectives**

I ask whether young migrant workers have experienced exclusion from their Slovenian co-workers and/- or superiors at the multinational companies and the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana, what are the triggers of this exclusion, and how they deal with and cope with those existing challenges and barriers at the workplace? I examine how young migrants hide their knowledge and if exclusionary experiences and desire to be included in the organization lead to minority employees' decision to hide knowledge from the majority members (e.g., Slovenians) at work. Furthermore, I analyze whether young migrants (minority members) employed knowledge hiding as a strategy to avoid workplace exclusion and promote inclusion towards their Slovenian colleagues and superiors.

Next, I analyze the differences and similarities between groups of other young migrant workers and former Yugoslav young migrant workers and how cultural and social characteristics (like language and age) affect knowledge hiding behaviors. Lastly, I examine what kind of inclusive policies and practices are set in multinational companies and the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana and question whether inclusive policies and practices and inclusive leadership skills are well-developed in the organizations.

The research aims are, therefore:

1. To identify the possible determinants of the perceived workplace exclusion and the effects of perceived exclusion on young migrant workers' knowledge hiding behavior to their Slovenian colleagues and superiors at the workplace.
2. To identify the possible determinants of perceived workplace inclusion and how the desire to increase inclusion affects young migrants' knowledge hiding from their Slovenian colleagues and superiors in the multinational companies and the different faculties of Ljubljana University.

3. To determine the strategies that minority members employed to hide their knowledge from Slovenian colleagues and superiors and compare them to knowledge hiding strategies established in the literature.
4. To examine possible differences and similarities between groups of other young migrant workers and former Yugoslav young migrant workers' perceptions of exclusion-inclusion at work and thus determine the extent to which knowledge hiding strategies differ across different social and cultural backgrounds.
5. To examine how effective existing policies are to promote inclusion and diversity in multinational companies and the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, and provide recommendations based on the empirical study findings.

## **Research questions**

The main research problem relates to examining the relationship between young migrant workers' perceived workplace exclusion-inclusion and knowledge hiding behavior in multinational companies and the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. Therefore, the elaborated main research questions are:

RQ1: How does perceived exclusion affect knowledge hiding? What determinants of perceived exclusion affect young migrant workers' intention to engage in knowledge hiding behavior in Slovenian colleagues and superiors in Slovenian multinational companies and universities?

RQ2: How does perceived inclusion affect knowledge hiding? In particular, what determinants of perceived inclusion affect young migrant workers' intention to hide knowledge from Slovenian colleagues and superiors at the workplace?

RQ3: What are the knowledge hiding strategies employed by young migrant workers? Do they differ from those established in the literature, or are there additional knowledge hiding strategies specific to this population?

RQ4: How does cultural and social background affect perceived exclusion and inclusion and strategies for hiding knowledge? Are there differences and similarities in triggers of perceived exclusion and inclusion and strategies for hiding knowledge between workers on different social and cultural backgrounds (former Yugoslav and other foreign countries) in multinationals and across the different faculties of the university Ljubljana?

RQ5: How effective are current diversity and inclusion policies, and what can the management of the Slovenian multinational companies and universities prevent young migrant workers' knowledge hiding behavior and ensure their inclusion at the workplace?

## **Intended research contributions**

The doctoral dissertation attempts to make a range of different contributions. First, the research aims to enrich the existing literature on knowledge hiding behavior (Connelly et al., 2012; 2019; Cerne et al., 2014; Zhao et al., 2016; Bogilovic et al., 2017; Babič et al., 2018; Ruparel & Choubisa,

2020) by expanding its nomological net and investigating another antecedent of knowledge hiding, i.e., perceived workplace exclusion. I attempt to add other layers of possible exclusion sources related to knowledge hiding or withholding, cultural diversity, and subsequent workplace exclusion based on nationality, ethnic, linguistic, and age backgrounds. This way, I will complement other knowledge hiding studies examining the perceived workplace ostracism (Zhao et al., 2016), bullying (Yao et al., 2020a), negative gossiping (Yao et al., 2020b), incivility (Arshad & Ismail, 2018), and cynicism (Aljawarneh & Atan, 2018) as other forms of perceived workplace exclusion affect knowledge hiding behavior among mono-cultural work settings.

Secondly, the research proposes that young migrant workers engage in knowledge-hiding behavior due to their perceived exclusion at work and means for improving their workplace inclusion. I propose that perceived workplace inclusion triggered by team membership and group identification will drive the young migrant employees' knowledge hiding behavior at multinational companies and the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. I attempt to examine the perceived workplace inclusion as a predictor of knowledge-hiding behavior. The scholars of knowledge hiding behavior have not yet examined this concept. Connelly et al. (2019) called for more research to examine the potential benefits of knowledge hiding behavior in organizations. In this sense, this research aims to bring out a positive outcome of knowledge hiding behavior. That is, minority members may employ knowledge hiding behavior to better inclusion to the culturally dominant group colleagues and superiors at work.

Thirdly, I aim to advance studies on cultural elements of knowledge hiding focusing on cultural intelligence (Bogilovic et al., 2017), socio-cultural aspects (Babič et al., 2018), specific cultural contexts (Issac & Baral, 2020), national cultural dimensions (Issak & Baral, 2020) or specific professional cultures (Hernaus et al., 2019). I specifically focus on how perceived workplace exclusion-inclusion and knowledge hiding may be perceived differently for different cultural, social, and age groups in multinational companies and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. By making their sense of perceived workplace inclusion/- exclusion a central theme of this qualitative, deductive analysis, this research goes deep into subjective experiences of young migrant workers related to knowledge hiding behavior. I aim to complement studies referred to above that have investigated knowledge hiding in a specific cultural setting with quantitative, deductive approaches.

Finally, I aim to contribute to the inclusion framework by Shore et al. (2011) by enriching the theoretical and practical evidence on workplace exclusion-inclusion, expanding its nomological net, and introducing knowledge hiding as a consequence of perceived workplace exclusion and a strategy to advance perceived workplace inclusion by the young migrant workers, including those from the former Yugoslavia, in multinational companies based in Ljubljana and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. In the end, I come up with suggestions on how to manage the tension of the perceived exclusion (how to decrease the impact of the created numerical and cultural majority at work) and how to enhance (young) migrant workers' sense of the perceived inclusion in multinational companies in Ljubljana and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana.

## **Research methodology**

I conducted semi-structured and in-depth interviews. Open-ended questions were formulated to delve deeper into minority members' exclusion experiences, consequently overviewing inclusion processes and how strong they fostered intention for engaging in knowledge hiding behavior. The aim was to examine the minority-majority relationship in terms of differences in cultural, national, ethnic, and generational/ age backgrounds. I focus on young migrant workers aged between 26-30 years, employed in multinational companies and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana for five years or less.

The participants were recruited through a two-stage strategy, including purposive sampling and snowballing. In total, the sample includes 40 young migrant workers, including 20 males and 20 females. Participants came from Serbia, Macedonia, Turkey, Costa Rica, Canada, North Africa, India, France, Germany, Chile, Georgia, China, Ukraine, and Russia. I conducted the interviews by Skype and face-to-face. They lasted approximately 1 to 2 hours. The first study I conducted from the 27<sup>th</sup> of November to the 20<sup>th</sup> of December of 2019. The second study I conducted in the interval of 10<sup>th</sup> of May to 29<sup>th</sup> of December of 2020. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and checked for accuracy.

To analyze data, I used deductive thematic analysis that questions missing information (Maxwell, 1996). The deductive thematic analysis or theoretically-driven coding is based on theory, and its main aim is to identify themes within the research literature and/- or theory (Boyatzis, 1998; Jones et al., 2018; Edwards, 2015). The focus of the interview protocol was to unfold workplace exclusion-inclusion as the potential antecedents of the knowledge hiding behavior based on social categorization, social identity, and social comparison theories (Turner, 1976; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In particular, in young migrant workers' context, and particularly, to understand how this works in young migrant workers context.

## **Structure of the doctoral dissertation**

Along with the introduction, the dissertation consists of six significant chapters as well as conclusions.

Chapter 1 overviews the existing literature on knowledge hiding behavior, a relatively new stream in organizational behavior research. I overview the origin and roots of knowledge hiding in the literature, followed by its definition and conceptualized facets/- dimensions. Furthermore, I present predictors and outcomes of engaging in knowledge hiding behavior at the interpersonal, team, and organizational levels. Moreover, I outline knowledge hiding within academic settings and potential differences in hiding strategies by professionals and academicians. In the end, I overview the cultural aspect of knowledge hiding behavior occurring within mono-cultural, multicultural, and national cultural contexts.

Following the first chapter, chapters 2 and 3 examine the theoretical frameworks for exclusion-inclusion literature. Chapters briefly describe what exclusion and inclusion stand for and the

motives behind each situation, specifically, whether young migrant workers (minority members) have ever experienced exclusionary situations and strategies and how they deal and cope with them. Besides, I present theoretical grounding, including social dominance theories (Social Identity, Social Categorization, and Social Comparison theories), Power Distance, the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory, and Inclusion framework. Those theories help understand why young migrant employees may have difficulties and struggles at the workplace and how migrant workers achieve their sense of belonging and inclusion to the culturally dominant group colleagues and managers at multinational companies and academia.

Chapter 4 discusses the methodological foundations of the empirical study, including the sample, research methods, and instruments. Since most research on knowledge hiding relies on quantitative methods, this qualitative study will thoroughly unfold the interplay between workplace exclusion – inclusion and knowledge hiding behavior. Likewise, it is worth admitting that only a few studies have explored knowledge hiding intentions qualitatively so far. Qualitative research can serve as a perfect method in understanding ethnic minority and migrant employees' intentions to hide their knowledge in depth.

Chapter 5 will present the findings of the study. In particular, sections 5.1 and 5.2 examined how young migrant workers employed knowledge hiding to avoid exclusion and enhance inclusion towards their Slovenian colleagues and representative managers in multinational companies and Ljubljana university's different faculties. Section 5.3 examines young migrant workers' strategies of hiding requested knowledge from the culturally dominant group members. Section 5.4 discusses the influence of the social and cultural backgrounds of the respondents, similarities, and differences in experiences of perceived exclusion and inclusion, and knowledge hiding behavior among groups of the "other" migrant workers and ones from the former Yugoslavia. Section 5.5 analyzes inclusive policies, practices, and leadership skills and competencies of the multinational companies based in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Chapter 6 discusses the main theoretical and empirical contributions, practical implications derived from the results and findings of the study. That could be helpful for HR management and organizational scholars and practically applicable to supervisors and managers in organizations since fostering an inclusive multicultural working environment can improve individuals' collaboration, job satisfaction, engagement, and organizational performance. Finally, I discuss future research directions, such as considering research on the different racial and ethnic groups in the context of a different country.

# 1 KNOWLEDGE HIDING BEHAVIOR IN ORGANIZATIONS

*"In post-capitalism, power comes from transmitting information to make it productive, not from hiding it" (Drucker, 1995).*

## 1.1 Knowledge hiding definition and facets

The dissertation topic area refers to a relatively new research stream – the literature on knowledge hiding behavior (KH), which is an intentional attempt to withhold or conceal knowledge that has been requested by another individual (Connelly et al., 2012). Knowledge comprises the information, ideas, and expertise relevant to employees' task performance (Bartol & Srivastava, 2002). Engaging in the knowledge hiding behavior implies when an employee hides know-how (Xiao et al., 2019; Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

Connelly et al. (2012) have distinguished between knowledge hiding and knowledge sharing behavior, as the reason behind those two can be different (Connelly et al., 2012; Ford & Staples, 2010). Connelly et al. (2012) clarified that knowledge hiding is not a lack of knowledge sharing. The motives of engaging in the knowledge hiding behavior can be of different characters, while the latter depends on the absence of knowledge. For instance, a person can decide to share his or her knowledge, however, does not own the knowledge that he or she intended to share. In this case, it seems that this person cannot engage in knowledge-sharing behavior but doesn't intentionally motive such behavior. In sum, knowledge hiding does not imply the situations when an individual hesitates to share knowledge by ignorance or accident.

Deception can take place when engaging in knowledge hiding behavior. According to literature, deception is misrepresenting the information during communication with a colleague, superior, etc. (Buller & Burgoon, 1996). But, as noted above, knowledge hiding may or may not be deceptive even though most research on deception has examined lie detection and falsification of the information during communication with a colleague, superior, etc. (Gordon & Miller, 2000; Seiter, Bruschke, & Bai, 2002). Connelly et al. (2012) define knowledge hiding behavior clarified that if requested knowledge is hidden because of confidential factors and knowledge will not be forthcoming, deception cannot occur. However, in the case of partial hiding of the information or knowledge, deception can take place. It is worth admitting that managers and practitioners do not see knowledge hiding as deceptive behavior (Takala & Urpilainen, 1999).

Examining knowledge hiding behavior, researchers have focused on situations when one employee has made a specific request for knowledge sharing to another. Knowledge hiding behavior requires a *specific request* from the co-worker in the organization. Since knowledge represents personal human capital, which is found within the individual and controlled at the individual level (Kelloway & Barling, 2000), the transfer usually requires direct communication between individuals (Hislop, 2002). Requests for sharing knowledge, information, expertise, ideas, etc., circulate among individuals, not among groups or organizations (Connelly et al., 2012). One example of engaging in knowledge hiding behavior can be the following situation - one employee

can ask another for a copy of a report if the provider doesn't reveal it and pretends that it is confidential. In this case, the requested knowledge is not forthcoming.

Another example of knowledge hiding behavior can be when the coworker provides partial information or knowledge that another individual requested (Lin & Huang, 2010). Another case can also be when s/he receives a request for knowledge sharing and engages in behavior designed to conceal the knowledge by pretending s/he does not own such knowledge (Connelly et al., 2012). Knowledge hiding behavior should be expressed in the way of evasive, rationalized hiding or playing dumb (Connelly et al., 2012; Pinder & Harlos, 2001). Therefore, Connelly et al. (2012) conceptualized three different facets/- dimensions of engaging in knowledge hiding behavior:

**Evasive hiding** is defined as offering the knowledge requestor some other information instead of what was needed or stalling for time and promising to help the knowledge requester later (Connelly et al., 2012). Moreover, evasive hiding involves misguiding behavior when a hider provides a requester with incorrect knowledge or information. This is conditioned with the intention of not giving the expertise or information that has been requested. For instance, when a person engages in the evasive knowledge hiding behavior that refers to a situation when he or she intends to change the requested information or expertise to a different topic, exaggerate some parts of requested or provided features, and skipping other sides. Besides, evasive hiding may include when a person even provides misleading or incorrect information to misguide the requester. Evasive knowledge hiding involves deception. Moreover, the evasive hiders intend to harm the requester (Ghani et al., 2020).

**Playing dumb** is defined as pretending that knowledge hiders don't know what the knowledge requester is talking about or stating that they are not very knowledgeable about the topic (Connelly et al., 2012). In other words, this behavior involves when the hider pretends that he or she is ignorant of the requested knowledge. An example of playing dumb can be a person who responds to the requested knowledge sharing by saying that he or she has no idea about the requested topic or pretends to be struggling with the requested information (e.g., pretending that the hider thinks about the question over for a long time). That makes the requester think the other side may be confused or not knowing the requested subject. Similar to evasive hiding, knowledge hiding in a playing dumb manner as well involves deception. However, it doesn't intend to harm the requester.

**Rationalized hiding** is the third type of knowledge hiding, which states that the knowledge was confidential and could not be shared or not permitted to share the requested knowledge (Connelly et al., 2012). Here a hider has a strong argumentation as if why he or she doesn't provide requested knowledge to the requester. Rationalized hiding involves situations when a person has a strong argument as if why he or she fails to provide requested information to the colleague. For instance, a hider claims that the requested information or expertise is confidential (e.g., personal or secret) and can't be shared. Another example is that the supervisor prohibited an employee from sharing information or knowledge. In contrast to playing dumb and evasive hiding, the rationalized hiding does not necessarily involve deception (Connelly & Zweig 2015). Neither is it harmful.

## **1.2 Antecedents of knowledge hiding behavior in organizations**

In their survey, The Globe and Mail found out that 76 percent of employees withhold knowledge from their peers at the workplace (The Globe & Mail, 2006). Studies have reported knowledge hiding as a negative phenomenon in the workplace (e.g., Cerne et al., 2014; Zhang & Zhang, 2017). However, Connelly et al. (2012) argued that knowledge hiding is not necessarily destructive because prosocial motivation drives it; for example, rationalized hiding can strengthen interpersonal relationships between hidiers and targets (Connelly & Zweig, 2015).

Although the adverse effects of knowledge hiding are more in the interest of the management and organizational behavior researchers, some authors could identify the positive intentions of knowledge hiding behavior. The positive intention mitigates the nature of the knowledge hiding. For example, scholars found that individuals hide their knowledge from their colleagues and superiors to protect their interests, feelings or maintain confidentiality (Connelly et al., 2012; von der Trenck, 2015).

The types of the possessed knowledge may trigger knowledge hiding. Implicit and explicit knowledge can predict the knowledge hiding behavior at work. Hernaus et al. (2018) found that scholars hide more tacit knowledge rather than explicit. Individuals know the cost of the time and effort invested in learning and understanding specific complex issues. Individuals will be more inclined to decline requests to share valuable information or knowledge (Huo et al. 2016) on what they have spent their time and energy.

From the individual perspective, solid psychological ownership over the knowledge and the perceived value of possessed knowledge are antecedents of knowledge hiding (Peng, 2013). In his paper, Peng (2013) questioned why and when employees hide knowledge. He found that solid psychological ownership feelings over knowledge affect one's engagement in knowledge hiding behavior. In addition to this, other scholars found that the feeling of territoriality (Huo et al., 2016; Cai et al., 2016; Singh, 2019) and ownership over knowledge becomes a source of resistance to knowledge transfer (Brown et al., 2005; Peng, 2013; Wang et al., 2018). That is when an individual highly values the knowledge he or she possesses, which affects his or her intention to hide knowledge.

Knowledge hiding predictors include as well job dissatisfaction, formalization, job insecurity, and work/managerial abuse (Khalid et al., 2018; Bock et al., 2005; Lin & Huang 2010; Wang et al., 2014; Zhao et al., 2016; Anand et al., 2019). For example, self-serving leadership (caring only about protecting power and position) decreases employees' psychological safety, therefore, encourages employees to engage in knowledge hiding behavior (Peng et al., 2018). On the contrary, Ladan et al. (2018) proposed that transformational leadership may keep employees from knowledge hiding behavior through psychological ownership. Tang et al. (2015) and Men et al. (2018) reported that ethical leadership decreases employees' knowledge hiding behavior through increasing psychological safety and mastery climate (work setting where efforts of employees are valued, self-development, learning, and collaboration are promoted).



At the group level, factors including group culture (Bogilović et al. 2017), group task characteristics (Cerne et al., 2014), group trust (Connelly & Zweig, 2014), relational capital (Gardiner, 2016), and negative co-worker relationships (Nowlin et al., 2015) affect knowledge hiding behavior of the individuals employed in the various sectors and departments within different work settings. Status differences (low and high status of employees within the organization) affect knowledge hiding behavior and significantly decrease the creativity of low-status employees (Rhee & Choi, 2017; Bogilovic et al., 2017). Other ranges of antecedents of knowledge hiding include knowledge self-efficacy, lack of recognition, fear of losing importance, and job insecurity (Kumar et al., 2018), job attitude, and empowerment (Offergelt et al., 2018).

At a unit level, workplace incivility (Arshad & Ismail, 2018), organizational climate (Cerne et al., 2017), poor organizational culture (Muqadas et al., 2017; Nugroho, 2018; Anand & Jain, 2014), and rewards (Nowlin et al., 2015; Milne, 2007) influence engagement in knowledge hiding behavior. Furthermore, organizational factors, including the organizational culture, policies, and knowledge management system, have been identified as strong predictors of employees' knowledge hiding behavior within different working settings. Those factors positively correlated with knowledge hiding behavior at work (Serenko & Bontis 2016). Scholars have confirmed the influence of organizational factors on knowledge hiding behavior. Scholars found that organizational structures and practices positively correlate with knowledge hiding intention (Cerne et al., 2014; Labafi, 2016; Hernaus et al., 2018). Besides, studies identified a knowledge-sharing climate (Connelly et al., 2012; Pan & Zhang, 2014; Peng, 2013) to influence knowledge hiding behavior negatively.

Personality types (Kamal, 2014) and personality traits (Pan et al., 2018; Demirkasimoglu, 2016) are related to the knowledge hiding behavior at work. Anand & Jain (2014) investigated the relationship between the big-five personality traits and knowledge hiding. They examined that extraverted, neurotic, and agreeable personality types engage in knowledge hiding behavior. While conscientious and open to experience, personalities did not affect knowledge hiding. Pan et al. (2018) examined the relationship between personality traits like Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy on knowledge hiding behaviors and found that those traits affected knowledge hiding behavior.

Another organizational level antecedent of knowledge hiding behavior is related to perceived workplace exclusion triggers/- factors. Highly competitive and poor knowledge-sharing organizational environments and workplace ostracism can lead to self-protection mechanisms, including knowledge hiding behaviors (Zhao et al., 2016). Zhao et al. (2016) investigated the relationship between workplace ostracism [e.g., interpersonal mistreatment and disengagement] and knowledge hiding at the interpersonal level. A time-lagged design demonstrated that workplace ostracism significantly influenced Chinese service employees' evasive knowledge hiding and playing dumb behaviors (Zhao et al., 2016). In line with Zhao et al.'s research, Kang (2016) declared that knowledge receivers discriminate against less professional individuals, are of a lower rank, or differ in their employment status when accepting knowledge.

Arshad & Ismail (2018) found that workplace incivility (disregard for others) significantly affects knowledge hiding in the workplace. Research shows that workplace bullying and negative gossips affect Chinese employees' interpersonal relationships and trust, and therefore, knowledge hiding behavior (Yao et al., 2020a; Yao et al., 2020b). Following a study by Zhao et al. (2016), Yao et al. hypothesized that workplace bullying, as an adverse event like workplace exclusion (Stagg et al., 2011), will likewise affect employees' knowledge hiding behaviors.

They hypothesized that organizational identification would play a mediating role between workplace bullying and knowledge hiding behavior. Once an employee has been bullied at work, he or she will have a strong sense of injustice and grievance (Magee et al., 2017). The lack of organizational identification can significantly damage the interpersonal relationship of employees and weaken their belongingness to the organization. The bullied individual will not be willing to share knowledge and skills with other organization members or obtain more resources. The findings of Zhao et al. (2016) confirmed the hypothesis of the relationship between workplace bullying as a passive negative interpersonal interaction experience and knowledge hiding as an active negative interpersonal interaction experience is correlated.

Cerne et al. (2014; 2017) found that knowledge hiding significantly minimizes within a perceived mastery and motivational climates (Bogilovic et al., 2017; Gagné et al., 2019). A knowledge-sharing culture that emphasizes group identity significantly decreases knowledge hiding among employees (Serenko & Bontis, 2016). Malik et al. (2018) proposed that perceived organizational policies serve as a strong predictor of knowledge hiding. Cui et al. (2016) found that organizational policies, low fairness sensitivity, and lack of pro-social motivation cause employees' knowledge hiding behavior. Fong et al. (2018) proposed that knowledge hiding in organizations with low task-interdependence environments is more likely to occur, decreasing team and individual creativity.

Research demonstrated that managers of the buying and supplying firms of the United Arab Emirates underpinned the influence of organizations' practices and policies on their decision to hide knowledge from suppliers. Specifically, managers lacked permission to transfer their knowledge and/- or information. Sometimes they feared providing information and knowledge that they possessed due to being responsible for it in the future. Managers claimed that they hide knowledge from buying and supplying firms due to its outcome for/- on partnering firms; concerning about adverse effect of the shared information/- knowledge (Butt, 2019).

To decrease knowledge hiding behavior, organizations must create a harmonious and healthy organizational culture and working environment (Bogilovic et al., 2017; Serenko & Bontis 2016; Ghani et al., 2020). That can promote long-term trust and mutual interdependence between employees, employees, and leadership. I attempt to add to the research on organizational level predictors of employees' knowledge hiding behavior by proposing that knowledge hiding behavior is significantly low in working environments that foster inclusive policies and practices. An inclusive organizational climate as a layer of other working climates may significantly reduce knowledge hiding among cultural minority and majority group co-workers and managers.

### **1.3 Consequences of knowledge hiding behavior**

Knowledge hiding behavior can crucially harm interpersonal relationships at work and trigger trust deficit among co-workers. Trust deficit can result in knowledge hiding and lower efficiency and performance at the individual or organizational level (Cerne et al., 2014; Fong et al., 2018). Knowledge hiding diminishes individual and team creativity (Bogilovic et al., 2017; Cerne et al. 2014), reduces individual innovative work behavior (Cerne et al., 2017), undermines interpersonal relationships (Connelly & Zweig, 2015), and increases voluntary turnover (Serenko & Bontis, 2016).

Lack of interrelationship can result in relatively low pro-social behavior related to knowledge hiding behavior (Connelly et al., 2012; Skerlavaj et al., 2018). Literature on knowledge hiding behavior identifies several adverse consequences of knowledge hiding behavior, such are the experience of personal loss, frustration, and stress (Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2003), interpersonal distrust (Cerne et al., 2014), prosociality (Babic et al., 2019), and laziness (Connelly et al., 2012; Labafi, 2016).

Khoreva & Wechtler (2020) empirically examined the additional consequences of knowledge hiding behavior at the individual level. Their study explored the relationship between knowledge hiding behavior facets and individual-level job performance. The findings demonstrated that evasive knowledge hiding was negatively correlated with in-role job performance and positively correlated with innovative job performance. Playing dumb knowledge hiding facet was positively correlated with in-role job performance, and rationalized knowledge hiding facet positively associated with innovative job performance. Zhang & Min (2019) found that knowledge hiding influences project team performance among Chinese employees. Additionally, a recent study has identified that engagement in knowledge hiding behavior can cause self-conscious moral emotions such as guilt and shame (Burmeister et al., 2019) and positively correlate with playing dumb and evasive knowledge hiding behavior.

Scholars found that knowledge hiding behavior tremendously decreases the creativity of managers and employees in various organizations (e.g., Bogilović et al., 2017; Fong et al., 2018). Cerne, Nersted, Dysvik, and Skerlavaj (2014) found that knowledge hiding decreases employees' creativity in organizations. Hameed et al. (2020) also found that knowledge hiding behavior facets such are, rationalized hiding, evasive hiding, and playing dumb can decrease managers' and employees' creativity in the organization. According to their findings, knowledge hiding behavior discourages creativity among employees and managers across developing countries.

Wang et al. (2018) found other consequences of knowledge hiding behavior among employees in organizations. The perceived knowledge hiding behavior can affect the performance of knowledge seekers and the viability of the work teams.

#### **1.4 Knowledge hiding behavior within academic settings**

Despite increasing attention to the antecedents of knowledge hiding behavior of employees in different workplace settings, little has been investigated regarding the academicians' knowledge hiding behaviors in academic settings. However, the literature on knowledge hiding found that this behavior mainly occurs in academic environments (Demirkasimoglu, 2016; Hernaus et al., 2018; Ghani et al., 2020).

Knowledge is a strategic advantage for organizations, especially for knowledge-intensive organizations. It is essential to study knowledge hiding behavior in academic settings as for academicians, so for the leadership of the academia. The universities are obligated to build a knowledge-based society with analytical and problem-solving skills (Kidwell et al., 2000; Mohayidin et al., 2007). In his research paper, Demirkasimoglu raises the problem of academicians' knowledge hiding. Academicians belong to the group of knowledge workers whose knowledge sharing, collaboration, and contribution to the field of interest must be higher than any other workers. The findings by Husted & Michailova (2002) assert that subordinates intentionally hoard knowledge since they perceive superiors dislike the subordinates who appear to be more knowledgeable than themselves.

Regarding that problem, Demirkasimoglu (2016) has found that personality traits affect academicians' engagement in different knowledge hiding facets. The paper examines that the Extraversion type of personality positively correlates with playing dumb hiding type, while neuroticism negatively correlates with knowledge hiding facets. The paper underpins that, most often, academics engage in rationalized hiding. However, they played dumb to their superiors and rationalized hide knowledge from their colleagues—the study was conducted on 386 research assistants and assistant professors from Turkish universities.

While knowledge hiding behavior in academic work settings is still an under-researched phenomenon, Hernaus, Cerne, Connelly, Vokic & Skerlavaj have deepened the understanding of an evasive knowledge hiding behavior within collaborative academic environments (Hernaus et al., 2018). They studied 210 scientists from public and private business schools in the European Union member states as a sample. A field study was conducted. Academicians typically have the competitive pressure for being timely published, keeping academic positions, and receiving funding. The literature identifies that pressure and competition lead to secrecy (Walsh & Hong, 2003). Secrecy itself has some conceptual similarities to knowledge hiding behavior (Campbell et al., 2002; Lee et al., 2010). Unfortunately, interpersonal trust deficit in academia is not an uncommon phenomenon (Feist & Gorman, 2013).

The main focus of the research paper was to understand whether the mistrusted interpersonal relationships (e.g., negative expectations, unfriendly exchanges, and a lack of confidence; Lewicki et al., 1998) predict scholars' engagement in knowledge hiding behavior. Besides, they have analyzed whether competitive personality traits can predict this behavior as well. The paper considers collaborative work (task interdependence; Kiggundu, 1981) and social support (the perception that one is valued, assisted, and cared for; Wills, 1991) might minimize engagement in

evasive knowledge hiding behavior. Finally, the authors distinguish between tacit and explicit knowledge types that an employee has hidden from the knowledge requester.

The findings by Hernaus et al. (2018) confirmed that academics hide more tacit knowledge (e.g., innovative and visionary research ideas, project proposals, new concepts, and work-in-progress) rather than explicit knowledge (e.g., information about the call for papers, research grants, scholarly events, and publications). Personal competitiveness predicted evasive knowledge hiding. Furthermore, the findings supported that when task interdependence or social support is high, engagement in knowledge hiding behavior due to personal competitiveness is less.

To further explore the knowledge hiding behavior within the academic work settings, Ghani et al. (2020) studied the relationship between students' beliefs about interactional justice and professional commitment and knowledge hiding behavior. The sample comprised 312 Chinese and international postgraduate students studying in Chinese universities. Knowledge hiding diminishes students' creativity, intellectual thinking, and shared learning and negatively influences the development of a collaborative environment, shared educational resources, and interpersonal relations (Cerne et al., 2014; Eid & Nuhu 2011; Littlejohn & Hood 2017). In this sense, Ghani et al. studied the driving mechanism between interactional justice and knowledge hiding, assessing the moderating effect of professional commitment.

Interactional justice presupposes fair and quality interpersonal treatment (Bies & Moag, 1986). Within the educational environment, it refers to whether the supervisor considers students' perspectives, listens to their concerns, and communicates with them (Chory-Assad & Paulsell, 2004a). A fair and harmonious climate can discourage the knowledge hiding behavior of the postgraduate students within academia (Correia & Dalbert 2007; Gouveia-Pereira et al., 2003). After that, the authors studied the relationship between knowledge hiding and interactional justice. Furthermore, the paper hypothesized that professional commitment might strengthen the relationship of perceived interactional justice and knowledge hiding behavior facets (e.g., playing dumb, evasive, and rationalized hiding).

The findings of Ghani et al., (2020) confirmed the first hypothesis that when postgraduate student perceives interactional justice, he or she is less likely engage in knowledge hiding behavior. However, the findings did not confirm the second set of hypotheses that professional commitment diminishes the relationship between interactional justice and knowledge hiding. On the opposite, the findings have demonstrated that professional commitment strengthened the relationship between those constructs. Significantly, it could affect evasive knowledge hiding.

According to a review of the findings on knowledge hiding within academic settings, there has not been a relationship between knowledge hiding and perceived exclusion-inclusion within academia to my best knowledge. Furthermore, existing research on knowledge hiding predictors does not study knowledge hiding in the context of the young migrant workers employed in the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana or the minority-majority group members.

Universities and multinational organizations that want to be innovative and efficient have to find a way to keep each employee that distributes knowledge (Mladkova et al., 2015).

Internationalization is more and more encouraged in the educational work environment. Each year universities host thousands of international students, exchange students, and international teaching personnel. There are fellowship programs to encourage cooperation between visiting and host researchers (ERC, 2016; ARRS, 2020). Universities rely on the advantages that international diversity brings with it. These are researchers, students, and professors worldwide, having different work experiences, knowledge, perspectives, and cultural insights.

Taken altogether, more comprehensive findings are necessary to enhance practitioners' and scholars' recognition that such harmful behavior as a knowledge hiding occurs in the universities (Hernaus et al., 2019; Connelly et al., 2019; Ruparel & Choubisa, 2020; Men et al., 2020). Primarily, it is needed to investigate that knowledge hiding can occur as a consequence of perceived exclusion. Besides, it can represent a strategy to advance perceived inclusion at work. Management and leadership of the academic settings will better understand how to manage the knowledge of young migrant researchers and foster their workplace inclusion in universities. Thus, knowledge hiding predictors such as perceived workplace exclusion and inclusion in the context of the young migrant researchers employed in the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana need more research.

## **1.5 Cultural elements of knowledge hiding behavior**

### **1.5.1 Knowledge hiding in multinational companies**

Gaur et al. found that linguistic and cultural differences can affect information flow (Gaur, Ma & Ge, 2018). The conceptual paper of Gaur et al. (2018) identified that knowledge flow within multinational companies depends on national contexts, particularly cultural and national differences, spatial geography, and country-specific factors, such as institutional conditions and differences.

Cultural differences and geographic separation affect communication (Malhotra & Gaur, 2014; Minbaeva et al., 2018), affecting knowledge flow. When individuals or teams work together within the exact location, it is easier to maintain formal and informal interaction that may stimulate knowledge sharing (Beugelsdijk et al., 2010; Mudambi, 2008). On the contrary, collaboration becomes challenging when teams or individuals work from different locations, times, and climate zones. This resists the smooth flow of knowledge among culturally different employees. Cultural and geographic differences affect knowledge flow (Najafi-Tavani et al., 2018). Therefore, cultural and national differences may likewise affect engagement in knowledge hiding.

A deeper understanding of this relationship can advance international HRM practices in helping to reduce knowledge hiding behavior in the organizations (Dodokh, 2019). The study of Dodokh analyzed the relationship between HRM practices and workplace knowledge hiding behavior in a developing country, Jordan (Dodokh, 2019). He found that HRM practices can reduce knowledge hiding behavior in recognition, competence development, fair rewards, and information-sharing practices. Well-developed HRM practices and policies can help minimize knowledge hiding

behavior if organizations create learning environments through diverse coaching programs, support systems, and effective communication channels.

### 1.5.2 Monocultural studies on knowledge hiding behavior

Most research on knowledge hiding is on homogenous cultures in organizations (Xiao & Cooke, 2018). Research identifies the influence of collectivistic cultures on knowledge hiding behavior, including China (Peng, 2013; Tang et al., 2015; Huo et al., 2016; Zhao et al., 2016; Fong et al., 2018; Men et al., 2018; Peng et al., 2018; Pan et al., 2018), Pakistan (Malik et al., 2018; Khalid et al., 2018), India (Jha & Varkkey, 2018), Iran (Labafi, 2017), South Korea (Rhee & Choi, 2017; Cui et al., 2018), Jordan (Aljawarneh & Atan, 2018; Dodokh, 2019), Malaysia (Arshad & Ismail, 2018), Myanmar (Wang et al., 2018), Turkey (Demirkasimoglu, 2015; Semerci, 2018), and United Arab Emirates (Butt, in press; Butt & Ahmad, 2019; Ali et al., in press). In contrast, other studies examined knowledge hiding in individualistic cultural settings, including the United States (Serenko & Bontis, 2016), Canada (Connelly et al., 2012), Slovenia (Europe) (Černe et al., 2014; Černe et al., 2017; Škerlavaj et al., 2018), and the United Kingdom (Hernaus et al., 2018).

A study conducted with engineers in the Iranian software industry identified several different reasons for knowledge hiding behavior (Labafi, 2016). Most interviewees examined such motives behind knowledge concealment as “jealousy towards others’ progress,” complexity of knowledge since one can become less eager to learn something new, lack the motivation to transfer knowledge due to weak organizational incentives, etc. (Labafi, 2016). Moreover, Demirkasimoglu (2015) examined the relationship between knowledge hiding and big-five personality traits in the context of academic professionals employed in Turkish universities. The study found that the phenomenon of knowledge hiding was less common among academic professionals and addressed those findings to a specific Turkish context as a representative of a collectivist country. Therefore, he suggested that the relationship has to be explored in other cultures as well.

Issac & Baral (2018) and Jha & Varkkey (2018) examined other significant knowledge hiding antecedents within mono-cultural organizations. They conducted in-depth interviews among R&D professionals in India. This research on collectivistic culture found its influence on knowledge hiding behavior. The scholars have contributed to knowledge hiding research by adding other significant antecedents. For example, perceived lack of personal trust, and lack of trust in others’ knowledge, lack of reciprocation, lack of recognition, and rewards for contribution, along with the organizational factors including competitive work environment, a threat to supremacy, and perceived career insecurity can trigger knowledge hiding behavior.

They found that Indian professionals hide knowledge by engaging in a different knowledge hiding strategy rather than establishing three types of knowledge hiding behaviors (Connelly et al., 2012). The scholars identified a counter-questioning strategy that means that an individual hides knowledge by probing or asking the requester for information (Issac & Baral, 2018; Jha & Varkkey, 2018). Issac & Baral (2018) called to examine the influence of the job insecurity factor on knowledge hiding behavior more deeply. I attempt to analyze whether young migrant workers intend to hide their knowledge from culturally dominant colleagues and superiors to secure their

jobs and enhances their sense of the perceived inclusion and belonging to the workgroup and organizations. By doing so, I attempt to contribute to the literature on the antecedents of knowledge hiding behavior and advance it by executing the research within culturally different group members. In particular, in terms of minority and majority group members.

Serenko & Bontis (2016) found that job insecurity causes engagement in knowledge hiding behavior within the individualistic cultural work settings like the above-described studies. They studied American employees and found that along with the job insecurity, employees reciprocate knowledge hiding behavior to their American colleagues. Furthermore, Semerci (2018) studied the relationship the tasks and relationship conflicts on knowledge hiding behaviors in the Indian software industries. He found that task and relationship conflict influences knowledge hiding behavior. He further assumed that personal values of collectivistic culture, particularly India, significantly influence conflict and knowledge hiding behavior. The author suggested investigating the relationship of task and relationship conflicts on knowledge hiding of employees with individualistic personal values.

In addition to the research on knowledge hiding and perceived workplace exclusion, Aljawarneh & Atan (2018) found that perceived cynicism as a determinant of workplace incivility affects employees' knowledge hiding in Jordan work environments. Wang et al. (2018) found that Myanmar employees with a high degree of social interaction engaged in knowledge hiding behavior less than those who struggled with a lack of social interaction at work. I aim to add other theoretical and empirical explanations on the relationship between perceived exclusion and knowledge hiding behavior in the context of young migrant workers. They come from Eastern Europe, North Africa, Asia, and member countries of the European Union to work at multinational companies and the different faculties in Ljubljana.

Regarding the determinants and causes of the perceived workplace exclusion, a study by Khalid et al. (2018) and Jahanzeb et al. (2019) advanced the organizational level factors of knowledge hiding behavior at work. The paper examined the relationship between abusive supervision and knowledge hiding behaviors in an Islamic work context. They found that abusive leadership triggers employees' knowledge hiding behavior through an interpersonal injustice. I expect that inclusive leadership (Javed et al., 2018), social support, equitable treatment, requested resources, individual and task independence will foster migrant employees' sense of perceived inclusion, belonging, knowledge sharing, creativity, collaboration, and overall contribution to the workgroups and organizations.

### 1.5.3 Multicultural studies on knowledge hiding behavior (specific cultural context)

Most of the research on knowledge hiding behavior addresses a single cultural context. Studies examined knowledge hiding behavior within two cultural contexts. For example, America and Germany (Burmeister et al., 2019) and North America and Canada (Connelly & Zweig, 2015)

Burmeister et al. (2019) found that knowledge hiding can decrease by evoking emotion for engaging in knowledge hiding behavior. The authors conducted two studies. Namely, the first



study was conducted on American employees to identify that general knowledge hiding correlates positively with guilt and shame. In a second study conducted on German employees, the authors found that playing dumb was used as a compensation strategy through guilt and the passive withdrawal strategy through shame. In contrast, rationalized hiding did not associate with negative emotional consequences (Burmeister et al., 2019). However, their study is limited to American and German cultures. They didn't seek to understand the influence of guilt and shame on knowledge hiding behavior from the perspective of American and German cultures. Consequently, the research on the antecedents of knowledge hiding in the different cultural contexts needs more investigation.

Issak & Baral have contributed to the literature on knowledge hiding behavior by extending its antecedents in the different cultural contexts. They set out to delve deeper into the role of culture in examining the intentions of knowledge-hiding in divergent cultural contexts. Their study aimed to understand the different strategic factors triggering knowledge hiding behavior in two different cultural contexts – occidental (western) and oriental (eastern). Thereby, two different cultural backgrounds were analyzed, in particular the collectivistic and the individualistic. The new antecedents of knowledge hiding were identified to fill the missing gap in the literature on knowledge hiding behavior on the relevance of culture on these antecedents (Issak & Baral, 2020).

American and Indian workers employed in engineering industries were analyzed to test the hypotheses. The findings demonstrated that knowledge hiding behavior occurs more explicitly in occidental (American) cultural settings than in oriental (Indian) cultures. Results revealed that specific driving factors of engaging in knowledge behavior for an American culture included interpersonal trust deficit, emotional intelligence, the task, organizational structure, and job profile based on the employees' personality traits. American engineers clarified that reciprocal behavior determines how one individual responds to a request and does affect knowledge-hiding tendencies.

Authors identified task complexity, task uncertainty, personality traits, interpersonal and cross-functional interactions as driving factors of knowledge hiding behavior in the Eastern work context. The personality trait was the only common driving factor identified in Western (Individualistic) and Eastern (Collectivistic) cultural orientations. The findings of Issak & Baral confirmed the assumption that employees in individualistic cultures tend to engage in knowledge hiding more than people in collectivistic cultures.

Arain et al. (2018) found that employees distrust the supervisor, their engagement in knowledge-hiding behavior towards their superiors. A supervisor-supervisee working in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabian multinational companies was examined. In particular, the diverse workforce consisted of many foreign employees of Middle East and Asian backgrounds. The Middle-East and Asian ethnic group members were regular employees, and Saudi Arabians were in leadership positions. The findings of the study demonstrated that foreign employees hid knowledge more from their local superiors. The research on knowledge hiding behavior between the supervisor-supervisee still needs more theoretical and empirical investigations, particularly in the diverse workgroup context. More potential theoretical and practical reasoning is needed to explore the relationship

between foreign employees and local superiors and knowledge hiding behavior within multinational companies and universities.

#### 1.5.4 National culture dimensions in studies on knowledge hiding behavior

Just a couple of studies thought to examine knowledge hiding behavior in the context of national culture (Bogilovic et al., 2017; Michailova & Husted, 2004). Differences between the eastern (collectivism) and western (individualism) cultures can be found (Zhao et al., 2016). Therefore, it is essential to examine knowledge hiding behavior from the perspective of the national cultures.

The behavior of the employees may differ according to the high-power distance cultures, and collectivist societies since different standards, norms, and traditions govern individuals in Western cultures. Servin & De Brun's (2005) findings confirm that employees are more prone to compete for better working conditions in Western cultures, including promotions, status, and salaries. Additionally, they believe more in individual effort and appreciate their own time, energy, and skills spent learning and solving a task or problem.

The paper further clarifies that European people's mindset is trained to perceive knowledge as power, never have extra time, and constantly experience a deficit of trust towards others. Moreover, the individualistic character of the Western tradition implies belief and perception that something is not their job. One uses the other's ideas and takes the credit. The way they manage things is different. They typically don't like to ask for help, considering this as bothering others. They prefer to work it out by themselves. They believe that others should already know everything. Those factors determined a typical mindset of the employees in individualistic Western culture. This typology is related to the perception that people in the Western tradition are more likely to hide their knowledge from colleagues.

Most of the knowledge hiding research is on Western culture employees and organizations (Xiao & Cooke, 2018). Thus, research suggests paying more attention to cultural elements of knowledge hiding behavior in non-Western culture context and within the diverse workforce (Connelly et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2017; Xiao & Cooke, 2018; Dodokh, 2019). For example, employees in collectivist cultures have better capacities to recover quicker from the abuse of the managers (Lian et al., 2012). Besides, they are more tolerant towards the manager's knowledge hiding practices. Moreover, in some countries where professional stability is low, employees are more likely to hide their knowledge, perspectives, and information to keep their job positions (Xiao & Cooke, 2018). In contrast, engagement in knowledge hiding behavior is higher in individualistic and competitive work settings (Zhang et al., 2017).

Moreover, individuals in collectivist societies are more prone to have a high feeling towards organizational commitment. Such people are less likely prone to behave in a way that will damage the organization. That includes hiding their knowledge (Zhang et al., 2017; Davison et al., 2018). The dyadic relational cooperation influences individuals' knowledge behaviors (Wu et al., 2007). In different cultural settings, cooperation and knowledge sharing may occur in different forms

(Zhang et al., 2017). Therefore, knowledge hiding behavior should be interesting to study concerning the cultural context (Xiao & Cooke, 2018).

Taken altogether, besides the reciprocal, collaborative, and prosocial behaviors characterized by the collectivist cultures, scholars identified knowledge hiding behavior in these cultures. The lack of research on knowledge hiding in a cross-cultural context needs more theoretical and empirical investigation better to understand the construct of knowledge hiding behavior in organizations.

#### 1.5.5 Cultural intelligence in studies on knowledge hiding behavior

Researchers have investigated the employees' knowledge hiding behavior and its consequences at the workplace (Connelly et al., 2012; Cerne et al., 2017). Specific situations still are under-researched. Specifically, yet there is no research examining knowledge hiding among individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

The only study of Bogilovic et al. (2017) examined knowledge hiding within a culturally mixed group. They have studied 621 employees in 70 teams and 104 international students in 24 teams in Slovenia. The main aim of the research by Bogilovic et al. (2017) was to study the relationship between knowledge hiding and creativity at individual and team levels in the context of a culturally diverse sample. Culturally different employees may have difficulties understanding each other, therefore, fail to share ideas or expertise where requested. Scholars assumed that likelihood that culturally different individuals will most likely engage in knowledge hiding behavior would be high (Gilson et al., 2013). Cultural misunderstandings and differences represent predictors of knowledge hiding behavior at work.

The paper further predicted that a culturally diverse workforce would most likely hide the knowledge based on social categorization that proposes favoritism of in-group members over out-group members (Turner, 1985; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Bogilovic et al. have conducted two studies on a culturally diverse sample from different industries in Slovenia. A first field study consisted of 621 employees allocated within 70 teams. The findings of the first study showed that knowledge hiding affects creativity at the individual level negatively. Cultural intelligence moderates the relationship between knowledge hiding and creativity. A second study was quasi-experimental, conducted on one hundred four international students grouped in 24 teams. The second study extended the first study's findings by identifying that individual knowledge hiding also negatively affects team creativity (Bogilovic et al., 2017).

Scholars found that national background could affect the relationship between knowledge hiding and creativity on both the individual and team levels (Bogilovic, Cerne & Skerlavaj, 2017). The paper suggested that moderating factors of cultural intelligence can minimize knowledge hiding behavior in culturally diverse workplaces, increase employees' creativity at both individual and team levels. Bogilovic et al. (2017) suggested that to increase cultural intelligence. Employees have to gain more intercultural training and international and overseas work-related experiences (Ng et al., 2009; Erez et al., 2013; Li et al., 2013). On the contrary, a high degree of cultural intelligence supports knowledge-sharing and generating creative ideas within a culturally diverse

environment. Cultural intelligence can significantly decrease negative social categorization processes in culturally diverse work settings.

More theoretical and practical investigations are needed to enhance understanding of knowledge hiding behavior among the culturally different workforce, being that at an individual or team level. I aim to contribute to knowledge hiding literature by examining it in the context of young migrant workers employed in multinational companies and the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana for five years or less. I attempt to examine if minority members (e.g., young migrant workers) intend to hide their knowledge from culturally majority group colleagues and superiors to avoid perceived workplace exclusion and promote their sense of perceived workplace inclusion. Thus, in this way, I will complement Bogilovic et al. (2017).

#### 1.5.6 Socio-cultural aspects of knowledge hiding behavior

Researchers have extended the literature on knowledge hiding behavior by examining socio-cultural aspects of knowledge hiding in Slovenian and Chinese employees' contexts (Babic et al., 2018). They have studied how prosocial motivation (Bolino & Grant, 2016; Grant, 2007) and national cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 1983) shape knowledge hiding. The three-way interaction term of cultural tightness/ looseness and uncertainty avoidance (Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007; Tsui, Nifadkar, & Ou, 2007) were studied to predict knowledge hiding behavior in the organizations from the individual to the micro-level (Babic et al., 2018; Brewer & Venaik, 2014; Taras, Steel, & Kirkman, 2016; Tsui et al., 2007).

Since organizations are becoming more international and multinational-oriented, leaders and executives must be acknowledgeable with cultural sensitivity. The central construct of the paper - prosocial motivation represents a situation when an employee is willing to cooperate, integrate and contribute with/ to others (Grant, 2007; Bolino & Grant, 2016; Hu & Liden, 2015). It follows that an individual lacking prosocial motivation is more tangible to engage in knowledge hiding behavior (Cerne et al., 2015; Cui, Park, & Paik, 2016).

Besides, cultural tightness refers to a strong social norm, values, and discipline (Chua et al., 2015; Gelfand et al., 2006; Shin, Hasse, & Schotter, 2015). The last construct is related to uncertainty avoidance that explains an individuals' rational behavior (Doney, Cannon, & Mullen, 1998; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov 1991; Litvin, Crotts, & Hefner, 2004). So, scholars have proposed that employees with a high desire to help and collaborate with others will more appreciate the values and norms of others (Ardila et al., 2012; Schwartz, 2007; Skerlavaj et al., 2018). Regarding this, Babic et al. (2018) have found that employees engage in knowledge hiding behavior when they have low prosocial motivation, low cultural tightness, and low uncertainty avoidance (Babic et al., 2018). Thus, when employees do not express willingness to care about others' well-being, cultural norms, rules, and values, they most likely engage in knowledge hiding behavior.

Yet, research has done little to explore knowledge hiding behavior during cross-cultural interactions and/- or among culturally diverse teams. As in-group vs. out-group relationship and its impact on knowledge hiding behavior remains still unexplored. No research has been conducted

to explore knowledge hiding behavior in the context of young migrant employees. It remains still unexplored by the extant literature on knowledge hiding whether engaging in knowledge hiding behavior can avoid minority members' perceived workplace exclusion and facilitate perceived workplace inclusion and feelings of belonging to culturally dominant group colleagues and superiors.

I aim to enlarge the nomological framework of knowledge-hiding behavior and its antecedents in the cultural context. I do so by explicitly examining this behavior in the context of young migrant employees – minority members (Connelly et al., 2019; Xiao & Cooke, 2019). I aim to advance studies on cultural elements of knowledge hiding. The studies have up to this date focused on cultural intelligence (Bogilovic et al., 2017), socio-cultural aspects (Babič et al., 2018), national culture dimensions (Lian et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2017; Gaur et al., 2018; Dodokh, 2019), or specific cultural contexts (Issac & Baral, 2020). Knowledge hiding research on cultural elements needs a more comprehensive empirical and theoretical investigation (Connelly et al., 2012; 2019; Ruparel & Choubisa, 2020; Issac et al., 2021) to enhance our understanding of how to manage the knowledge of minority members and foster their workplace inclusion in the context of a culturally diverse workforce.

## **2 MINORITY MEMBERS' EXCLUSION AT THE WORKPLACE**

### **2.1 Perceived workplace exclusion-inclusion and knowledge hiding in multinational companies and different academic settings**

#### **2.1.1 Youth and labor migration**

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines labor migration as migrating people from their home country to another country for employment (IOM, 2008). Primarily, the lack of opportunities pushes youth to migrate. International migration offers many opportunities to young women and men. This is obtaining higher education, getting a productive job, improving the socio-economic status, learning new skills and competencies, gaining professional and personal development, and improving human and financial capital (UNICEF, 2014).

In transition countries, such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia, emigration has increased due to political and historical conflict and economic crises (ILO, 2011). The young generation intensively migrates to the nearest European countries and societies (e.g., Slovenia, Austria, Germany). They tend to avoid further economic and social problems. They believe that European Union members state countries can provide them more opportunities, higher salaries to succeed and overcome the economic, political, and historical circumstances that their countries face.

### 2.1.2 Benefits of recruiting young employees

As executives strive to achieve efficiency and success in an increasingly fast-paced and technology-driven world economy, a global race for the talented young generation continues. Labor demands are constant, structural, and growing. The mobility of skills, technological changes, emerging markets, and spreading demographic transitions increasingly drive Companies, including different academic settings. Multinational companies ensure a technology-oriented workplace and support high-technology tools. Management and leadership of the companies expect that younger generations will be more receptive to new technologies. The New York Times published an article where they argued that [multinational] companies (e.g., Alibaba, Starbucks, the Gap, etc.) prefer to invest in young people because they are talented and “better equipped” to possess technical fluency and innovativeness (The New York Times, 2014; Ge Report, 2015). Older workers have trouble adapting to new technologies.

Multinational, international companies and different academic settings encourage workplaces that foster communication and active interaction, support growth and development, knowledge sharing, creativity, and innovativeness, and keep the workforce active (Foss et al., 2013; Radaelli et al., 2014). Recruiting young migrants with different age, cultural, ethnic, national, and linguistic backgrounds can advance companies' competitive edge, innovativeness, creativity, and success. Young migrant workers tend to be more resilient, active, ambitious, and adaptable than the older generation (Schäffer, 2012, 2015). They are more open to new experiences, environments, people, and cultures. Multinational companies fostering growth and innovativeness prefer to invest in youth employees rather than encourage an aging local workforce lacking development potential (Krishnan et al., 2012; Schäffer, 2012) and international work-related training and experiences. The young generation's enthusiasm is excellent for team building and productivity, learning, building professional paths, and applying skills and knowledge to the company.

Forbes Magazine interviewed forty-nine thousand young workers in North and South America, Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East (Dill, 2015). Findings demonstrated important characteristics of young employees that help them to perform at work. They have a more participative approach to work than older generations. They are pretty goal-oriented. As well, young employees are more technology-oriented and skilled at multitasking (Haynes, 2011). Therefore, employers take advantage of the characteristics of the young migrants and prefer hiring them.

The literature emphasizes that young people get trained more readily as compared to the older generation. The aging workforce has a considerable amount of previous experience and expertise (Gursoy et al., 2008; Haynes, 2011). That makes it challenging to obtain new skills and competencies, change their approaches, twist, and refresh their knowledge. The older generation tends to be less active and energetic (Perry & Parlamis, 2006), less flexible (Weiss & Maurer, 2004), less creative (Wood & Roberts, 2006), and more reluctant to accept new ideas (Kite et al., 2005; Morgeson et al., 2013). Knowledge sharing becomes difficult in diverse workgroups (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004) due to differences in the group and ethnic status (Hoever et al., 2012)

when young migrants are essentially full of fresh perspectives, ideas and can bring a different way of thinking to multinational companies and universities.

Besides, young employees represent a valuable and productive workforce within different academic settings since they can contribute fresh ideas and approaches by engaging in different research projects. Along with the multinationals, universities also become more international in their personnel, projects, publication, and collaboration. Academic work settings age by time. Therefore, highly passionate and motivated young people can bring great potential and resources (Slovenian Research Agency, 2019). Senior teaching staff may have a bit old-fashioned mindset, education, skills, and knowledge. Therefore, young people can contribute by thinking broadly and outside the box, being more eager to maintain relationships, collaborate, and brainstorm ideas.

Therefore, as Slovenian Research Agency (2019) has identified, youth employment contributes to social development in enhancing social integration, intergenerational interactions, and relationships in multinational companies within different academic settings. Besides, young labor contributes to economic development to encourage young skilled workers to increase creativity, productivity, and competitiveness in multinational companies in different academic settings. Moreover, for example, a culturally diverse young workforce can ensure internationalization, and diversification of the workforce, likewise, organizations.

### 2.1.3 Young migrant workers' knowledge sharing and hiding

Besides all advantages that young workers' skills, competencies, proactivity, and knowledge bring to organizations, sometimes companies fail to ensure knowledge sharing among employees belonging to different generations, national, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds. Since the generational (Lyons & Kuron, 2014; Stewart et al., 2017) and cultural (Dahlin et al., 2005) differences may affect the desire with whom, how, what, and when to share knowledge and engage in collaboration. Therefore, management must challenge pushing the older generation to interact with the young migrants, accept them into their team, organizational culture, and make them productive and efficient coworkers (Elmore, 2014). Age and mindset differences may affect young workers' knowledge sharing with elder colleagues and the workgroups and colleagues. I expect that age, mindset differences, cultural, national, and linguistic differences may affect the belonging and inclusion of young migrants and their knowledge distribution. I assume that young migrants will most likely engage in knowledge hiding behavior due to differences in those factors.

Indeed, the literature points out that knowledge sharing between different generations is essential for efficient organizational performance, success, and innovativeness (Alavi & Leinder, 2001; van Wijk et al., 2008). However, age differences (Aker, 2009) may lead to conflicts, disagreements, disengagement, and knowledge-sharing resistance. The research identified that cross-generational biases negatively affect tacit knowledge transfer (Liebowitz et al., 2007). It is essential to understand the drives of knowledge hiding behavior in the context of young migrants to the majority group members at work. Especially when age difference may be an additional influential factor affecting knowledge hiding behavior of youth migrants.

In support of these findings, a study by Brcic & Mihelic (2015) on Slovenian younger and older workers found that managers and employees of different generations faced significant problems in effectively sharing knowledge. Specifically, the findings demonstrated that the older generation was reluctant to accept different competencies shared by the younger generation. They just ignored the youth's knowledge, preferred to use their prior knowledge, ways of working, and not complicate themselves with the newly acquired knowledge. Even though new skills could enhance older workers' competitiveness, efficiency, and knowledge, they preferred to use standard techniques over newly shared skills (Brcic & Mihelic, 2015). However, they haven't studied the impact of other factors such as cultural, national, ethnic, and linguistic differences among colleagues and superiors.

Barriers to knowledge sharing may occur as well in the relationship between the mentor and mentee. Since typically learning happens from older to younger employees, managers are usually reluctant to accept the knowledge of younger generations (Marcinkus Murphy, 2012). Specifically, acquiring technology-related skills. Supervisors are not used to being subordinate to younger employees. That may affect young migrants' engagement in knowledge hiding behavior since they may desire to keep a good relationship with the superior and secure the job position. I expect differences in nationality, language, and minority status may affect young migrants' intention to hide knowledge from their culturally dominant superiors. The perceived differences in age, hierarchical, and professional status may intensify young migrants' knowledge hiding behavior with their culturally dominant superiors.

Young generations' knowledge sharing and hiding behavior in the academic work settings is still an under-researched phenomenon. Even though scholars have examined academicians' and international students' knowledge hiding within different academic settings (Demirkasimoglu, 2016; Hernaus et al., 2019; Ghani et al., 2020), no research has examined young individuals' knowledge hiding; especially, in the young migrant workers context.

#### 2.1.4 Youth migration and perceived workplace exclusion-inclusion

Cultural diversity refers to a workforce with people of different nationalities working together (Hambrick et al., 1998). The increased mobility of people has resulted in an increasingly culturally diverse workforce. Organizations try to become more international, multinational, multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-lingual. They ensure that all employees, despite the race, ethnic background, gender, age, and religion, are given fair, equitable, and equal treatment, especially during the selection process, learning/- training, and performance appraisal. More attention is given to non-exclusionary and anti-discriminatory policies and processes within the scope of diversity management (Nkomo & Cox, 1996; Mor Barak, 2014; Shore, 2011; etc.). However, these ideal treatments are sometimes disconnected from reality.

Migration provides an opportunity for young people, leading to their development and growth, or on the contrary, it can cause many challenges and difficulties. Research identifies that immigrants perceived being discriminated against throughout Europe (Bruß, 2008). Western Europeans usually tend to behave stereotypically and prejudiced towards their colleagues from different



cultures, ethnicities, ages, social classes (Bouma et al., 2003). Studies demonstrate that migrant workers are also discriminated against and excluded by the culturally dominant group members at work in Netherlands (Berger et al., 2017).

Managers invest in young workers. A European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia identified that “28% of (non-European Union) foreigners between the ages of 25 and 49 experience workplace discrimination, the rates being as high as 35% for Turks and Pakistanis and 60% for recent immigrant groups such as the Somalis” (European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, 1999). Though, a lot of leaders discriminate against workers with a foreign background. Becker (1957) proposed a taste-based discrimination theory that describes employers’ and employees’ racial or ethnic preferences and includes xenophobia and racism (Becker, 1957). A study by United Nations International Labor Organization (ILO) found that migrants and minority members, including youth, experience discrimination and exclusion as during the job interview – asking for more qualifications and offering a low salary, so at the workplace – excluding migrants from formal or informal meetings and gatherings (Zegers de Beijl, 1999; Mor Barak, 2005).

The literature further highlights the economic situation, policies, and media reporting (Klingeren et al., 2014; Van der Brug et al., 2015) that affect perceived workplace exclusion of migrant workers, including youth. Furthermore, studies have shown that due to stereotypical, prejudiced, and biased perceptions and attitudes, one can feel uncomfortable and peaceful with someone different from him/- her (Vonk & Van Knippenberg, 1995) be caused because of ethnic and racial differentiation. Often, individuals with different national/- ethnic descent, obviously or not, are excluded from job opportunities, group membership, organizational settings, and so on.

More studies confirm the perceived exclusion and discrimination of migrant workers, including youth based on race, ethnicity, nationality, and religion (Adida et al., 2010; Oreopoulos, 2011; Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2014; Kang et al., 2016; Deros & Ryan, 2019). The main reason for direct discrimination is employers' prejudiced and stereotyped attitudes towards migrants and ethnic minority groups. Due to cultural differences, they are seen as dissimilar to natives and incapable of being part of the team. Additionally, they are seen as irresponsible and lazy to native employers (Zegers de Beijl, 1990). Indirect discrimination is based on possession of the Dutch language, also on the fact that most employers prefer to work with people they know, that are, in most cases, Dutch citizens.

Lack of experience and qualifications, proficiency in the majority language (Blom & Henriksen, 2009), ignorance of the organizational culture, system, and policies, and low self-confidence (Rogstad, 2000; Brekke, 2008), lack of cultural and linguistic knowledge (Bourdieu, 2002) create barriers to engage in work-related responsibilities with local colleagues fully, be perceived positively, accepted, and included in the organizations, colleagues, and leadership. Kang (2016) asserted that knowledge receivers discriminate against less professional individuals, lower ranks, or differ in their employment status.

Mor Barak (2005) has indicated that employers and employees do not see diverse employees as an integral part of the organizations and often exclude them from group meetings and events. She

explored the exclusion experience of African American women, saying that she was “the last to know” what is going on in the organization. Studies show that women representing racial and ethnic minority groups do not have enough access to the organizational power structure and organizational resources from among disfavored groups (Kossek & Zonia, 1993; Mor Barak, Cherin, & Berkman, 1998). They are paid less and have lower job positions than other workers, especially those of majority groups (McNeely, Sapp, & Daly, 1998).

Van Laer & Janssens (2011) have studied Turkish and Maghrebi ethnic minority employees in Flanders to identify subtle discrimination in the organizations (van Laer & Janssens, 2011). Furthermore, younger migrant workers also experience perceived exclusion from information networks and decision-making processes in organizations (Mor Barak et al., 2006). Fangen (2010) found that young African, Somali and Iraqi immigrants experience a higher degree of workplace exclusion than other immigrant groups in Norway (Fangen, 2010). They lack the necessary skills to execute the jobs. So, most likely, those groups of young immigrant workers are at higher risk of being excluded and discriminated against at the workplace. This consequently hardens their chances to belong and include to the organizations and majority group members.

Workplace exclusion can arise due to limited language skills. The language barrier can cause feelings of disconnectedness, standoffishness, and exclusion (Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999a, 1999b). Major et al. (2014) have proved that workplace discrimination and exclusion can be caused by language insufficiency in their work. They further continued that migrant employees have difficulties fully participate and engage in working processes due to the language barrier (Major et al., 2014). The language barrier triggers exclusion from tasks, projects by their leaders and managers, and social gatherings and meetings by their colleagues (Coupland, 2003; Holmes, 2000; Major et al., 2014).

The literature identifies that limited language skills and cultural differences can affect relationships and communication among culturally and ethnically different members (Asheghian & Ebrahimi, 1990; Hays et al., 1972; Terpstra, 1972). When communication goes on in a different language, people around them cannot understand linguistic ostracism (Dotan-Eliaz et al., 2009). Moreover, Goffman (1967) proposed that the higher the ethnic status, the more distanced and choosier the interaction becomes. This implies a behavior when a person of higher social and ethnic status behaves so that lower social and ethnic status was not there. One study found how young Canadian immigrants perceived being excluded by Norwegian colleagues due to their unwillingness to speak the English language (Fangen, 2010).

Yet, it is little known what the potential determinants of the perceived workplace exclusion that young employees experience from their colleagues and superiors in the organizations are. It is interesting to study the determinants of the perceived exclusion at work in the context of young migrant workers.

### 2.1.5 The relationship between young migrant workers' knowledge hiding and the perceived workplace exclusion-inclusion

Experiences of exclusion and inclusion and their impact on young migrant workers' knowledge hiding behavior are an under-researched area in the literature on organizational behavior. The perceived workplace bullying (Yao et al., 2020a), negative gossips (Yao et al., 2020b), and workplace ostracism (e.g., interpersonal disengagement) (Zhao et al., 2016), like other forms of perceived workplace exclusion, affected Chinese employees' interpersonal relationships and trust and, therefore, knowledge-hiding behavior. Although, the relationship between knowledge hiding and perceived workplace exclusion in young migrant workers is not well investigated.

I assume that generational (age) differences and the national and ethnic differences may affect the knowledge hiding behavior of the young migrant workers to their culturally dominant colleagues and superiors. The literature points out that the ideas and perspectives of migrants and minority groups are not perceived earnestly, accepted, and included in decision-making by the majority group representatives and managers (Nishii, 2013; Mor Barak & Daya, 2014, Sabharwal, 2014). Theories of social dominance point out that natives are usually ranked higher than immigrants (Andriessen et al., 2010).

Individuals differ in their status characteristics related to culture, age, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation (Turner et al., 2006). Status differences within intercultural workgroups occur. High-status group members influence low-status group members. As an outcome of the categorized high and low-status group members, minorities most likely conceal their ideas and conform to high-status members' decisions and vision (Earley, 1999; Johnson et al., 1998; Shore et al., 2011). The created majority within minority and majority members may intensify the minorities' intention to hide requested knowledge from the superior culture group members intentionally. However, perceived inclusion could help to remove perceived status differences between culturally different employees at the interpersonal level and within teams.

Studies have demonstrated that linguistic and cultural dissimilarities can threaten information flow (Luostarinen, 1979; Johanson & Vahlne, 1977). In their work, Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999a; 1999b) has found that even in multinational companies based in Finland, the Finnish language played an essential role in the organizations. That implies that Finnish employees felt more substantial and more powerful than the non-Finnish group, who experienced disconnection and exclusion from information exchanges, participation in work-related activities, and decision-making processes (Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1999a, 1999b). Language distance (including language capabilities) is a significant facilitator towards information flow in and across diverse workforce (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999a, 1999b). I assume that the language barrier as a predictor of perceived workplace exclusion may affect the knowledge hiding behavior of young migrant workers.

Scholars have proposed the concept of "thin communication," when communication flow decreases because of the existing language barrier (Tange & Luring, 2009). Non-native speakers usually found themselves excluded from formal and/or informal meetings and gatherings and often avoided information and knowledge sharing with the dominant majority group (Welch et al.,

2005). I expect that an English language barrier may trigger disconnection and even unconscious exclusion among minority and majority employees in a way that will constrain minorities' ability to share knowledge or information. Linguistic and cultural differences can indeed affect information flow (Gaur, Ma & Ge, 2018). I assume that the language barrier represents a pivotal barrier to maintaining connection and interaction among minority and majority employees, potentially resulting in knowledge hiding behavior.

Taken altogether, differences in age, race, ethnicity, social status, religion, language, and culture can significantly affect migrant employees' work-related experiences and knowledge sharing at work. Moreover, those factors significantly predict the perception of young migrants' exclusion from high-status group members at work. As stated above, even if young migrant employees have the same qualifications, education, work experiences, and activities with high-status group members, they anyway experience exclusion, segregation, and isolation by (culturally and ethnically) dominant majority group representatives. Furthermore, lack of social connection in terms of poor interpersonal identification and relationships, the language barrier can increase minority members' feelings of perceived exclusion at the workplace towards their culturally dominant group members and superiors. Those factors potentially may trigger young migrant employees' intentional engagement in knowledge-hiding behavior at work.

## **2.2 Power dynamics and ethnic inequality**

Research on ethnic and racial inequality within organizations mainly focuses on the following themes: Why do ethnic and cultural migrant employees struggle at the workplace? What are their struggles at the workplace? What are their relationship with the culturally dominant work-group colleagues and superiors? Why can't they have full access to organizational resources or decision-making? Why are they less rewarded for their contributions? What is the knowledge-sharing level among cultural minority and majority group colleagues? What factors trigger categorization, distinction, and exclusion among cultural minority and majority group employees and superiors?

The literature on discrimination gives enormous scope for an explanation of the workplace mistreatment among employees, employees, and superiors, employees and customers, etc., enlarging it by workplace incivility as an antisocial employee behavior based on racial biases in the organizational and social context (Giacolone & Greenberg, 1997; Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Klein & Kozlowski, 2000; Cortina, 2004). Scholars emphasized that individuals tend to categorize others based on their racial, ethnic, cultural, national, linguistic, and gender features, which fosters stereotypes, prejudices, biases, aversion, and fear towards out-group members at work (Allport, 1954; Dovidio et al., 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002; Fiske et al., 2002; Fiske, 1993, 2001, 2002).

Unequal power among minority and majority group members explains, on the one hand, oppression and exclusion of the minority groups, and on the other hand, majority group's superiority over minority one, high self-image, full, open access to resources, etc. (Dovidio et al., 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Jones, 2002; Fiske, 2002). Organizational context requires minority members' adjustment to social and organizational norms (Dipboye & Halverson, 2004). For example, conformity to majority team rules and structure can reduce negative

perception and attitude and increase the inclusion and integration of the minority members (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Fiske, 2000).

To understand the dynamics of a diverse workforce, we must look at the power relations among racially and ethnically different groups that may cause inequality. Power dynamics play a central role in interactions and collaboration. Alderfer et al. (1980) examined race/ethnic relations in organizations and found that power differences in groups, organizations, and societies exist. For example, Hofstede (1980) has investigated the concept of the power distance index and described it as a source of human inequality (Hofstede, 1980), mainly he has explored power dynamics between supervisors' (human resource managers and leaders) and employees' relationship (Hofstede, 2001). As Mead claimed, when power distance is comparably tiny, managers and/or supervisors ask more for consultation with their employees. Thus, cooperation is higher. On the contrary, when power distance is high, employees tend not to contradict their supervisors, subordinates and perform according to their directions (Mead, 1998; Hofstede et al., 2010).

Khatri (2009) has investigated the relationship among supervisors and employees in high-power distanced cultures such as India. His primary investigation involved the idea that employees in a high-power distance culture are unwilling to participate in the decision-making process, prefer supervisors to decide instead of them, and follow the leaders' rules, instructions, and directions. Therefore, supervisors have complete power over their employees (Khatri, 2009). As Negandhi & Prasad (1971) has claimed, "to favor the supervisor is more important. That is achieved by agreeing on everything. To oppose him is to search for another job" (Negandhi & Prasad, 1971, pp. 128). According to those findings, employees in a high-power distance culture are more likely to approach their supervisors (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Culture has a significant impact on shaping the behaviors of people (Erez, 1994). In their cross-cultural comparison, Budhwar & Sparrow (2002) have found that British managers relate high power distance to the different positions of senior managers in the human resource management department. They also proposed that high power distance is misused in Indian managers since, due to cultural differences, their thinking about HRM practices, management, and leadership may differ (Budhwar & Sparrow, 2002).

Hofstede (1991; 2001) linked power distance to team-related processes. For example, productive participation in an independent project-based working group may be more difficult for students from high power distance cultures. Groups' or their members' power distance index can affect decision-making and conflict solving processes. Members of teams with a low power distance index engage in negotiation and cooperative techniques when solving conflicts or a problem. The person who has power manages a conflict (Deutsch, 1973). Paulus et al. (2005) have explored the influence of power distance on intra and intergroup relationships. They have explored decision-making processes, interaction, the achievement of goals, presentation of roles, tasks, and self-performance. Their results have emphasized that a low power index helps to overcome potential conflicts due to miscommunication.

The limited language skills can affect relationships and communication among culturally and ethnically different members (Hays et al., 1972). Goffman (1967) proposed that the higher the

ethnic status of an individual, the more distanced he or she becomes to maintain connection and interaction. Fangen (2010) found that Norwegian employees, unwilling to speak the English language, discriminated against young Canadian immigrant workers and excluded them from social gatherings. Language barrier or Norwegians' unwillingness to communicate in English with immigrants triggered hostile workplace and social outcomes for the young Canadian immigrants, that is, perceived exclusion and discrimination from the culturally dominant group members at the workplace.

The created social hierarchies underpin different outcomes of the created inequalities among racially and ethnically different groups at work. That is differentiation in social and economic class, racial, ethnic, and cultural status among the minority and majority group members. Social hierarchies usually are identified across the work-groups and refer to in-group and out-group differentiation (Tajfel, 1981). Since belonging to a particular group triggers social and workplace exclusion and unequal treatment of a disfavored ethnic group member. The cultural majority group members' preferences and in-group favoritism typically are created due to perceived stereotyping (Gamble & Gamble, 2002) and perceived prejudices (Allport, 1954).

The created social hierarchies negatively affect the skills and competence development of the minority group members (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). An experiment showed that African American students' English language skills stereotyping lowered their skill and competence development in the English language compare to European Americans (Steele, 1997). Moreover, ethnocentrism, a biased and robust sense of nationality, is related to social hierarchies among ethnic or cultural minority and majority groups at work. Cultural majority group members believe in their ethnic superiority over cultural minority group members, segregating and labeling cultural minorities as out-group members (Sumner, 1906). Besides, higher status group members can suggest, get positive feedback, and affect members with lower status (Berger et al., 1965). High-status group members are more privileged than minority colleagues at work.

Social hierarchies can affect social and work-related relationships, so knowledge sharing among cultural minority and majority group members. Wang et al. (2018) found that Myanmar employees who engage in social interaction are more engaged in knowledge hiding behavior more minor than those who lack social interactions at work. Cerne et al. (2014) found that poor relationships among Slovenian colleagues trigger knowledge hiding. However, they have not examined the relationship between knowledge hiding and poor relationship based on the cultural, national, linguistic, and age differences among the cultural minority-majority group members. Rhee & Choi (2017) found that low-status group members engage in knowledge hiding behavior to high-status group members in South Korean organizations. Their study does not examine the impact of ethnic status differences on knowledge hiding; whether perceived group(s) members' cultural status and superiority affect minorities' knowledge hiding behavior at work.

Social dominance theories discuss three other main types of hierarchies: age, gender, and arbitrary (e.g., cultural belief about others' cultural group status or class) (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). For example, culturally dominant colleagues and superiors exclude young employees from decision-making in a multi-generational workforce (Mor Barak et al., 2006). Research shows that

supervisors and older workers usually resist the knowledge that young employees desire to share and teach (Marcinkus Murphy, 2012). Age and generational differences and the perceived lack of experiences, skills, and knowledge of youth lead to perceived segregation, differentiation, and difficulties to share knowledge among employees who belong to different generational cohorts, gender, and professional (occupational) status. I expect that perceived hierarchical, generational, professional, and ethnic status differences among young migrant workers and superiors may affect young migrants' knowledge hiding to their superiors in organizations.

Taken altogether, racial, ethnic, minority, cultural status, and language matters and significantly affect the perceived unequal treatment, team exclusion, and discrimination among cultural minority and majority group members. Social and ethnic hierarchies exist, shaping relationships and interaction among high and low-status group co-workers, supervisors, and subordinates. Besides, affecting knowledge sharing and leading to knowledge hiding behavior at work. The following sub-section provides deeper insights into in-group and out-group differentiation and relationships. The high and low-status group members communicate with each other, share knowledge and potentially hide it. Therefore, sub-section 2.3 aims to provide more comprehensive explanations and argumentations on how the perceived ethnic hierarchies and culturally dominant group members' superiority over cultural minority group members affect the relationship and knowledge hiding behavior at the workplace.

### **2.3 Optimal distinctiveness theory**

The conditions and reasons why diverse groups feel and perceive inclusion have gained increased attention by diversity scholars (e.g., Lirio et al., 2008; Roberson, 2006). Workplace integration and inclusion of ethnic minorities are complex and new concepts for organizational studies and need further investigations (Shore, 2011; Mor Barak, 2015; Roberson, 2006; Brewer, 1991; Parks-Stamm, 2008). The novelty of the concept allows scholars of the various research fields to define inclusion differently. Derived from the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (Brewer, 1991), Shore et al. (2011) has defined inclusion as the situation when an employee feels self-worth, belonged, and unique to his or her working company and team (Shore et al., 2011).

Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (ODT) explains how individuals achieve inclusiveness within the organizations (e.g., with co-workers, teams, and superiors, HRM departments) (Brewer, 1991). Individuals wish to be unique, different from all other members of society or working team and organization, keep individuality, even though this can cause them feelings of exclusion, mistreatment, and stereotyping (Pelled et al., 1999). In this stance, they may strive to achieve positive perceptions, attitudes, and acceptance by the dominant groups. Theory of Optimal Distinctiveness explains this balance that a person tries to maintain good relationships and connections within his or her working settings. One may want to appear more similar, familiar, and local in most members' eyes to feel more included in the organization.

ODT assumes that if a person experiences more connection to another, then he or she feels less distinct and unique (Brewer, 1991; Sheldon & Bettencourt, 2002). ODT states that ingroup distinctiveness is balanced through assimilation (Brewer, 1991, 1999, 2003). When person

experiences high self-uniqueness, thus, feels distinct from others, he or she may experience exclusion from the dominant majority group. This theory proposes that one has to seek optimal balance to maintain self-satisfactory group membership since belongingness to the group is very important to survive. Once “optimal identity” is created, one experiences inclusion or simply satisfies his or her needs for ingroup inclusion (Brewer, 1991; Sheldon & Bettencourt, 2002).

In this sense, based on the above-described theory, Shore et al. (2011) have provided an inclusion framework explaining levels of belongingness and uniqueness and their directions. Inclusion is defined as a situation when an individual is treated and accepted by the majority group and accepts his or her unique characteristics (Shore et al., 2011). Scholars distinguish three essential components and aspects from this definition of inclusion. Firstly, inclusion refers to one’s sense of belongingness within and the group. Secondly, two features of inclusion are described: a sense of belongingness and uniqueness. Lastly, it is essential to admit that a group includes and accepts an individual, rather than individual tries to connect to the group (Shore et al., 2011; Jansen et al., 2014).

*Table 1: Inclusion Framework*

	Low Belongingness	High Belongingness
Low Value in Uniqueness	<p><b>Exclusion</b></p> <p>The individual is not treated as an organizational insider with a unique value in the workgroup, but some other employees or groups are insiders.</p>	<p><b>Assimilation</b></p> <p>Individuals are treated as insiders in the workgroup when they conform to organizational/ dominant culture norms and downplay uniqueness.</p>
High Values in Uniqueness	<p><b>Differentiation</b></p> <p>The individual is not treated as an organizational insider in the workgroup, but their unique characteristics are valuable and required for group/ organization success.</p>	<p><b>Inclusion</b></p> <p>The individual is treated as an insider and also allowed/ encouraged to retain uniqueness within the workgroup.</p>

*Source: Shore et al., (2011).*

Table 1 explains how one’s high sense of belongingness and uniqueness makes her or him feel more accepted and valued member of the team, thus *included*. Particularly, feeling this way, one has more possibilities for better group performance. For instance, if not define an employee in age as an out-sider (out-grouper) who possesses a deep knowledge of the company, group performance will be increased so the older employee will feel included and belong to the team and organization. On the contrary, low belongingness and low uniqueness relate to perceived *exclusion*. This is an example of being treated unfairly and unequally and not being considered as in-grouper. Shore et al. argued that employees whose unique traits are knowledge, information, perspective is not viewed as necessary consequently, they will feel more excluded (Shore et al., 2011).



Further, the framework describes *assimilation* – a situation when an individual may experience high belongingness and low uniqueness; this is that an individual is perceived as in-group member when he or she conforms to the majority groups. For instance, some circumstances, surroundings, and/or groups may trigger changing and/or hiding a less powerful person's authentic and unique self to fit in (i.e., to assimilate). Sometimes, a person or group pays too much attention to reaching a consensus. Therefore, they may fail to argue their ideas and opinions to fear being excluded and lose group cohesion (Janis, 1972).

Therefore, engagement in knowledge hiding behavior will be inevitable in such situations. An example of such a situation could be soldiers who may perceive that they belong to the military battalion. However, they do not feel that they can act authentically (Jansen et al., 2014). An individual chooses to hide specific characteristics, knowledge, experience, perceptions, etc. (Goffman, 1963). Individuals can simultaneously experience a sense of belonging and uniqueness by adopting a specific role within the group (Bettencourt et al., 2006). The last cell explains *differentiation*; when a person has a high sense of self, uniqueness is less likely to belong to a particular group. For example, Ely & Thomas (2001) found that employees may have unique competencies and skills. Still, majority group members do not accept them and are subject to isolation, especially in a racially diverse workforce (Ely & Thomas, 2001).

## **2.4 Group identification and belongingness**

### **2.4.1 Knowledge hiding as a behavioral outcome of the perceived exclusion in the workplace**

More social dominance theories will be overviewed for a deeper explanation of the perceived discrimination, exclusion, and unequal treatment based on race, ethnicity, nationality, language, and culture. According to Social Identity Theory (SIT), individuals strive to include themselves and others into different social categories. In particular, organizational and team members are different in ethnicity, religion, gender, and age (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Therefore, such categorization represents one's sense of belongingness to some particular group. For instance, belong to some specific nationality (e.g., being Georgian), gender (e.g., being a woman), religion (e.g., being Orthodox), etc.

Furthermore, social identity theories can explain discriminating actions towards ethnic and racial minority and migrant members as a consequence of classification into groups for minimizing the complexity of the social interactions among culturally and ethnically different groups and better prediction of social behavior at work (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987). The main idea behind the theory is that individuals strive to be included in a particular group of people to avoid perceived exclusion. For example, a person of ethnic minority origin can be willing to belong to the group of the majority nation. Perceived biased perceptions and preferences, strong differentiation by an in-group and out-group member by the majority members make it hard to include, belong, and integrate into the cultural majority group members at work. Self-categorization is composed of:

- Intergroup (In-group and out-group) categorization – The strong differentiation between the in-group member and out-group one. So that distinction between “we” and “them” (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2010).
- In-group (in-group only) categorization – A situation when an individual defines him/ herself as more similar to another individual; that can be caused by the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, and age, or simply due to having some interest in this particular person. Consequently, he/- she does not perceive one more likely dissimilar to him/- her. As for an example of Dovidio & Gaertner (2010), one may have a strong sense of “us” rather than “them.”
- Out-group (out-group only) categorization – Similar to in-group categorization, one may distinguish between “we” and “them” and prefer “them,” likewise, based on more similarities with a particular group of people, such can be caused by race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, religion, etc.

Based on social identity, social comparison, and self-categorization theories, literature considers that in-group favoritism can lead to out-group discrimination (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987). Scholars have found that individuals are more likely to discriminate against and exclude a person they do not consider similar to them or do not identify themselves to him or her and categorize as an out-group member (Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994). Typically, intergroup dynamics are caused by ethnocentrism, prejudice, and in-group bias (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Research showed that majority group members’ biased perception of between in-group and out-group members signals racial and ethnic inequality among groups (e.g., Osbeck & Moghaddam, 1997). One such example will be a work-group composed of three older white males (majority members) and one younger Hispanic female (minority member) with different values and goals for the research project. Task and relationship conflicts may occur if the majority group members, e.g., men, will categorize a young minority woman regarding her gender, age, origin, education, etc.

Social identity theory proposes in-group members’ similarities and out-group members’ differentiation (Hogg, 2000). The theory explains majority groups’ superiority, prestige, high status over minority group members (Tajfel, 1981; Hogg et al., 2004). Individuals may be cautious about establishing a relationship with another who belongs to a different race and ethnicity, social class, low status, a different religion, etc. (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The theory explains in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, nationality. A person or group with perceived low status will be less likely included in the group of majorities (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987). The self-categorization theory explains how significant influence in-group vs. out-group categorization affects one’s self-perception (Turner, 1985; Turner et al., 1987; Kang & Bodenhausen, 2015).

Categorization involves decreased social and group cohesion, organizational commitment, miscommunication, task and interpersonal conflict (Fiske, 1998; Milliken & Martins, 1996; Pelled et al., 1999; Leonardelli et al., 2010). Along with the decreased knowledge sharing, creativity,

collaboration, and contribution. Research on social identity and self-categorization theories (Turner 1985; Tajfel & Turner 1986) emphasized that individuals in a diverse workgroup tend to distinguish others regarding their demographic attributes and cultural characteristics and label them “out-group members.” That leads to negative diverse work group processes and outcomes (Hogg & Terry, 2000), including difficulties to share knowledge (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007).

Different “thought worlds” (Dougherty, 1992), different communication styles (Gibson, 1996), different ideas (Goodman et al., 1990), and different working styles (Gibson & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2001) can also mediate threats of belonging to the culturally dominant group members at work. Social categorization processes do not support the elaboration of diverse team members’ knowledge, skills, perspectives, abilities, and experiences (Hoever et al., 2012; Dahlin et al., 2005). I expect that due to national, cultural, linguistic, and age differences, migrant employees will more likely engage in knowledge hiding behavior from their culturally dominant group members and superiors.

When individuals' belonging is decreased, they tend to react in response to the perceived workplace exclusion. Based on the principle of reciprocity (Aquino & Bommer, 2003), employees reciprocate caring and positivity when they are treated positively and feel support at work. And on the contrary, they tend to engage in harmful behaviors in the forms of being more aggressive towards dominant group member (Twenge et al., 2001), less prosocial (Twenge et al., 2005), and less engagement-oriented, along with the other antisocial behaviors (Robinson et al., 2013). Perceived exclusionary experiences discourage employees from engaging in prosocial or positive behaviors that might increase their desire for belonging. It is interesting to examine the behavioral consequence perceived workplace exclusion brings in the context of young migrant workers employed in multinational companies and the faculties of the University of Ljubljana.

Regarding this, scholars of knowledge hiding behavior argued that low prosocial motivation, low cultural tightness, and low uncertainty avoidance trigger knowledge-hiding behavior in the context of the Slovenian and Chinese work professionals (Cerne et al., 2015; Babic et al., 2018). Self-limiting behavior (Ilgen & Youtz, 1986) explains that long-term workplace discrimination holds people back from career development and the advancement of their workplace skills. Individuals quit and withdraw from their job positions (Schneider et al., 2000; Pavalko et al., 2003). I assume that one form of similar self-limiting behavior will represent knowledge hiding behavior.

Adding to those negative behaviors triggered by exclusionary experiences at work, I expect that one of the other adverse behavioral outcomes of the perceived workplace exclusion in the context of young migrant workers will be knowledge hiding from their Slovenian colleagues. To reciprocate negatively on perceived exclusion by culturally dominant group colleagues and decline the requests of the cultural majority group members to share some knowledge or perspectives. The minorities may stop caring about creative ways to solve the task or interpersonal relationships and project development from different perspectives. Stop arguing when conflicts due to different points will arise and simply hold back their ideas.

Individuals differ in their status characteristics related to culture, age, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation (Turner et al., 2006). Status differences within intercultural workgroups occur. High-status group members influence low-status group members. Low-status group members conceal their ideas and knowledge, conform to the decision and vision of high-status group members, and limit their behaviors since their membership in the group is never fully realized by the culturally dominant group members (Earley, 1999; Johnson et al., 1998; Shore et al., 2011). I assume that *the created majority* within teams as one of the determinants of perceived workplace exclusion may intensify the minorities' intention to intentionally hide requested knowledge from the superior culture group members.

Semerici (2018) found that task and relationship conflicts influence knowledge hiding behavior among employees in the Indian software industry. Semerici observed that personal values moderate the relationship between task conflict and knowledge hiding. Rhee & Choi (2017) found that status differences (low and high status of employees within the organization) affect knowledge hiding behavior and significantly decrease creativity and goal orientation of low-status employees (Rhee & Choi, 2017). Adding to these findings, I propose that cultural, national, linguistic, and age differences may affect task and relationship conflict in the context of minority-majority group members. Therefore, the likelihood that minority members will engage in knowledge hiding behavior will be high due to perceived low-status group membership and the perceived superiority of local colleagues.

Shore et al. (2011) argued that employees whose unique traits are not viewed as necessary by co-workers and superiors feel more excluded, not connected to co-workers and supervisors, and not contribute to the organization. Kim et al. (1999) explored that experienced denial or judgment of the ideas, knowledge, and/- or expertise can trigger the sense of perceived inclusion to the team and/- or organization in the context of Asian Americans working in a “white” organization. An African American manager, if he or she prefers to behave in a majority society manner to appear more similar to all other managers and superiors from the dominant culture, most likely will experience higher belongingness in the team and organization. Still, on the other hand, this will cause concession of his or her unique characteristics, such as mainly his or her knowledge and expertise in a particular field of work (Vignoles et al., 2002; Shore et al., 2011; Mor Barak, 2014).

I assume that exclusion and disregard towards one's ideas can fuel intention to engage in knowledge hiding behavior at the workplace. The experience of idea has been rejected may affect young migrants' engagement in the knowledge hiding behavior towards their majority colleagues and superiors. For example, idea rejection based on perceived historical and political difficulties among migrants from the former Yugoslavia and Slovenians may intensify being like a minority group representative and out-group member. Similar distinctions may result in the sense of perceived exclusion and isolation from the culturally dominant group members. I assume that *idea rejection* as another determinant of perceived workplace exclusion may intensify young migrants' knowledge hiding behavior based on ethnic status differences.

Goffman (1967) proposed that the higher the ethnic status, the more distanced and choosier the interaction becomes. The perceived social and ethnic status differences can affect communication

and cause language barriers within a culturally diverse workforce. Studies have demonstrated that linguistic and cultural dissimilarities can threaten information flow (Luostarinen, 1979; Johanson & Vahlne, 1977). In their work, Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999a; 1999b) has found that even in multinational companies based in Finland, the Finnish language played an essential role in the organizations. That implies that Finnish employees felt more substantial and more powerful than the non-Finnish group, who experienced disconnection and exclusion from information exchanges, participation in work-related activities, and decision-making processes (Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1999a, 1999b).

Language distance (including language capabilities) is a significant facilitator towards information flow across diverse workforce (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999a, 1999b). I assume that the *language barrier* as a predictor of perceived workplace exclusion may affect the knowledge hiding behavior of young migrant workers to their culturally dominant group colleagues at multinationals and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana.

The perceived distinction that often is resulted in the task and interpersonal conflicts may negatively affect knowledge sharing (Woerkom & Engen, 2009). A poor interpersonal relationship is often related to adverse outcomes at work. That creates tension, distrust, anger, demotivation (Dreu & Weingart, 2003), decreases interaction, collaboration, and knowledge sharing between team members (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003), triggers exclusion, isolation, and mistreatment (Wall & Callister, 1995). Conflict often influences both positive and negative workplace outcomes. It may trigger a sense of exclusion. Or, on the contrary, to intensify a solid desire to belong and include.

Relationships, interactions, and communication affect engagement, inclusion, the cohesion of the individuals and work teams. Based on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), high-status group members exclude low-status group members due to perceived differences in ethnicity, language, nationality, age, ideas, and perspectives. Besides, Cerne et al. (2014; 2017) found that poor interpersonal relationship affects knowledge hiding behavior among Slovenian employees. I assume that the poor established relationships among migrants and cultural majority group colleagues due to cultural, national, ethnic, linguistic, and age differences may affect young migrants' knowledge hiding behavior as another determinant of perceived exclusion. Cultural minorities may negatively reciprocate and engage in knowledge hiding behavior to their culturally dominant group members due to the established poor relationship.

Research demonstrates that people learn how to deal and cope with workplace exclusion over time, including becoming less sensitive to the appeared social or work-related rejection, ignore or exclusion (Twenge et al., 2001; Twenge et al., 2002; DeWall & Baumeister, 2006). I assume that time will decrease young migrants' reactions to the perceived exclusion from the Slovenian colleagues and superiors.

By the time young migrants may hold themselves back from proposing new ideas, sharing work-related information and knowledge. In response to the perceived exclusionary experiences, isolation, and segregation, minorities may most likely hide their knowledge from culturally dominant group members. Consequently, by employing a knowledge hiding strategy to respond to the perceived exclusion and segregation, minorities may intentionally harm themselves by hiding,

decreasing their creativity, idea generation, sharing, contribution, collaboration, interpersonal and task engagement to the culturally dominant group members.

There are theoretical reasons to link workplace perceived exclusionary experiences to migrants' intention to hide knowledge from their culturally dominant group colleagues and superiors at the workplace. I expect that experiences of the idea have been rejected, the poor relationship with culturally dominant group members, the created majority role, and the limited language skills will result in a self-protective strategy to hide the requested knowledge in the future at work. The first proposition relates to young migrants' knowledge hiding behavior and perceived workplace exclusion:

*Proposition 1: As a consequence of the perceived workplace exclusion, young migrant workers may engage in knowledge hiding behavior.*

#### 2.4.2 Knowledge hiding behavior, another self-defense strategy to achieve perceived inclusion in the workplace

Perceived workplace exclusion mistreatment, and/- or rejection by the colleague or manager at work based on group status differentiation, ethnicity, age, gender, nationality, language, etc. intensifies the need to belong (Twenge et al., 2001; Pless & Maak, 2004; Jansen et al., 2014). The perceived inclusion could help remove perceived status differences between culturally different employees at the interpersonal and team levels. Since respect to different competencies and perspectives among group members can promote feelings of freedom and knowledge sharing.

The desire to achieve inclusion and belonging at work strengthens the intention to bond with high-status group members, who seem to provide more opportunities for social connection at work (Navarrete et al., 2004; Maner et al., 2007). To fulfill belonging needs, one may decide to give more attention to those (e.g., in-groups) who most likely can provide affiliation (Sacco et al., 2011; Van Bavel et al., 2012). Through attachment and group membership, individuals can fulfill their belonging needs. However, race, nationality, or social status can influence one's sense of belonging as well (Brewer, 1991). Since the level of differentiation is higher within a culturally diverse workforce, this hardens the inclusion process.

People tend to behave more following the high-status dominant group members (Turner, 1985, 1991). Since sometimes, inclusion involves fitting into the dominant group since feelings of inclusion are easier achieved when group members are more similar to each other (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Jansen et al., 2014). One of the well-known self-deafening behavioral strategies that ethnic migrants engage in to avoid perceived exclusion or rejection in the workplace is "passing" as a dominant group member (Goffman, 1963). That leads to conformity to majority group norms, rules, and points (Turner, 1982; Hogg & Turner, 1987), separation from own ethnic group, and social status to appear more similar to the majority group.

The desire to belong and be included facilitates engagement in different behaviors and strategies to create new social bonds (Gardner et al., 2000, 2005; Maner et al., 2007; Lakin et al., 2008) and

potentially enhance chances be more included. To achieve belonging and inclusion, people tend to behave more according to the majority group members' (Turner, 1985, 1991) socio-cultural norms. An individual may feel belonging to the group once they appear more similar, familiar, and local in the eyes of majority members (Brewer, 1991). Achieving similarity with the majority group can help to reduce out-group differentiation (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980; Brewer, 1991, 1999; Jetten et al., 2002, 2004). When acceptance is high, inclusion is most likely achieved (Brewer, 1991; Shore et al., 2011).

The desire towards inclusion at work involves engagement in different behaviors, which the most possibly provides the opportunity for achieving higher inclusion. I assume that knowledge hiding behavior may represent another behavior that helps to achieve workplace inclusion. Social dominance theories emphasize that knowledge sharing is low in culturally different workgroups. I assume that most likely young migrant workers will hide their knowledge to achieve workplace inclusion or hide requested knowledge and reply to the requester so that shared information would be perceived more positively and accepted. I expect that young migrants will attempt to hide their knowledge that has been rejected, excluded, and unaccepted by the dominant culture group members due to culturally different perspectives, perceptions, and knowledge. They will attempt to achieve perceived belonging and inclusion to the high-status group members.

In support of this view, Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (Brewer, 1991) states that individuals strive to balance inclusion and distinction within the organization and groups (Brewer, 1991, 2003). When a person experiences high self-uniqueness (e.g., feels distinct from others regarding his ideas, knowledge, or perspectives), he or she may experience exclusion from and threats to belonging to the dominant majority group. For example, when an individual perceives that he or she is different from other group members regarding his or her cultural understanding, education, training, work history, viewpoints, strategies to identify or solve task-related problems. She or he may feel distinct from other group members. Therefore, a person or group paying too much attention to reaching consensus may fail to argue their ideas and opinions for fear of being excluded and losing group cohesion (Janis, 1972).

To achieve belonging, which means becoming an insider within a group, or the organization (Bradley, 2009), an excluded individual seeks to obtain optimal balance to maintain self-satisfactory group membership. Once "optimal identity" is created, the inclusion is achieved, or simply, the needs for ingroup inclusion are satisfied (Brewer, 1991, 2003; Sheldon & Bettencourt, 2002). On one side, I assume that distinct individual may label self like a minority representative due to emerged difference in proposed ideas from culturally dominant group members. On the other hand, I assume that knowledge hiding behavior may help avoid a task or interpersonal conflicts. Therefore, young migrant workers will most likely achieve optimal identity. That will foster the relationship, group membership or promote better inclusion and cohesion to the cultural majority group members. For self-protection, minorities will hide their basic ideas, knowledge, or perspectives to look less distinct from cultural majority group members and achieve work-group cohesion.

Drawn on this, Shore et al. (2011) identified that an employee might prefer to hide his or her unique characteristics (knowledge, information) to achieve acceptance and inclusion to the team and/- or organization. Therefore, engagement in knowledge hiding behavior, that is, to hide the requested knowledge made by another individual, will be inevitable in such situations. I assume that knowledge hiding behavior will be employed as a strategy by young migrant workers to enhance their chances of belonging and inclusion. I believe that hiding specific ideas, perspectives, and knowledge when a person is requested to share some will be inevitable in situations when a distinct person tries to achieve inclusion to colleagues, team, or organization. Once “optimal identity” (Brewer, 1991; Sheldon & Bettencourt, 2002) through knowledge hiding is created, young migrant workers may most likely experience inclusion or satisfy his or her needs for ingroup inclusion.

Need to belong means that employees have a fundamental need to establish high-quality relationships with other colleagues (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Mor Barak, 2005), be a part of work-groups and organization. Therefore, I assume that minorities may engage in knowledge hiding behavior to *maintain the established relationship* with cultural majority group colleagues. That will foster the chances to feel more included and belonged to the majority group since it requires a lot of effort from ethnic minority group members to maintain relationships and healthy interaction with majority culture group members (Turner, 1987).

Brcic & Mihelic (2015) found that the teaching and shared knowledge of youth workers, their propositions, and ideas were not perceived earnestly by senior managers in Slovenian companies. Younger workers might get irritated under the hierarchical direction of their superiors (Aker, 2009), that hold higher positions and are elder. On the one hand, hierarchical, occupational, and ethnic status differences may trigger the knowledge hiding behavior of young migrant workers. The young migrant employee may have remarkably different communication, collaboration, and knowledge sharing styles than the cultural majority employees and managers. On the other hand, knowledge hiding behavior towards majority culture colleagues and superior due to the perceived hierarchical, professional, and nationality status differences may represent a strategy to keep a job position and enhance the likelihood of perceived inclusion at work. That needs further theoretical and practical investigations.

I intend to add another variable: culture and minority group membership status to examine young migrant workers' knowledge hiding behavior from their superiors and colleagues. The age and generational differences, hierarchical, professional (occupational), and ethnic status differences may affect minority members' knowledge hiding behavior. They may hold back themselves from intense discussions, arguments, or simply pushing their points strongly on to superiors. Moreover, young migrants may decide to hide knowledge to hide their inexperience and non-acquaintance from the executives (CEO). I expect that the young migrants will employ knowledge hiding to achieve perceived workplace inclusion through job security intention.

Scholars found that job security/- insecurity causes engagement in knowledge hiding behavior among employees and managers at work. Moreover, employees reciprocate knowledge hiding behavior (Serenko & Bontis, 2016; Issac & Baral, 2018). Those studies emphasized that perceived career insecurity predicts knowledge hiding behavior among mono-cultural employees in different



work settings. Perceived insecurity towards career progress, fear of losing job position, and anxiety towards others' growth in the organization (Jha & Varkkey, 2018) triggered intentionally hiding requested knowledge from the colleagues and superiors. Since employees feared to pass on knowledge to colleagues and managers, what could threaten their jobs (Butt & Ahmad, 2019).

Those studies are conducted in mono-cultural organizational contexts. I expect that the perceived job insecurity/ security may be a strong predictor of cultural minorities' knowledge hiding behavior towards their culturally dominant group colleagues and superiors. Since age, hierarchical, professional (occupational), and the ethnic status differences among young migrant workers and their Slovenian superiors may affect young migrant workers' knowledge hiding behavior at work.

Pelled et al. (1999) found that job security represents another indicator of perceived inclusion in work settings, as a probability that a person will keep his or her job position. An intention to stay is attached to the sense of the perceived workplace inclusion (More Barak et al., 2006; Acquavita et al., 2009). The opportunities, high salary, the better quality of life, and intercultural environment in Ljubljana, Slovenia, may intensify young migrant workers' intention to stay and secure their job positions and relationships with superiors.

The second proposition is related to young migrants' knowledge hiding and perceived workplace inclusion. I propose that young migrant workers employ knowledge hiding towards their culturally dominant colleagues and superiors to enhance their chances to be more included and belonged. I expect that knowledge hiding will be employed to maintain the relationship, and secure the job to feel more attached, belonged, accepted, and included to the culturally dominant group members. The second proposition is:

*Proposition 2: Knowledge hiding behavior may be employed as a strategy by young migrant workers to advance their perceived workplace inclusion.*

Social categorization decreases knowledge sharing, collaboration, contribution, creativity, and innovativeness. Based on the social dominance, optimal distinctiveness, and knowledge hiding theories, I elaborated research propositions illustrating the potential research gaps in examining the relationship between young migrants' knowledge hiding and perceived workplace exclusion-inclusion.

### **3 INCLUSION AT THE WORKPLACE**

#### **3.1 Different definitions of perceived workplace inclusion**

Scholars from different organizational and social studies made a significant contribution to diversity management literature to raise and examine the concept of perceived inclusion in organizational settings and diverse workforce (e.g., Shore et al., 2018; Brimhall & Mor Barak, 2018). This section explains how cultural minority groups achieve perceived inclusion and what the potential relationship between their knowledge hiding behavior and perceived inclusion at work is.

Being included, accepted, and perceived as an in-group member plays a significant role in people's lives and work-related experiences (Correll & Park, 2005). The literature on perceived organizational inclusion offers various definitions for inclusion. For instance, inclusion refers to a circumstance when an employee is accepted and fairly treated by others (Pelled et al., 1999). It can also refer to one's full participation, engagement, contribution within the organization (Nishi, 2013; Avery et al., 2008; Roberson, 2006; Miller, 1998, 2009), appreciation of one's skills, knowledge, and competencies (Lirio et al., 2008), equal treatment towards any social group (Wasserman et al., 2008) and good diversity climate (Holvino et al., 2004).

Inclusion implies using the diverse workforce distinction in the background, characteristics, skills, thinking way, experiences, and perspectives to benefit the organization (ENEI, 2017; Diversity Best Practices, 2009). Moreover, inclusion includes individuals and/or different groups' acceptance, valuation, and equal treatment (Wallace & Pillans, 2016). We can find numerous examples of exclusion and discrimination based on the rejection of different views, opinions, knowledge, information, etc.

Mor Barak (2000; 2005) identified additional themes of inclusion in the context of a diverse workforce. The relationship between employee and employer, employees, employees and customers, customers and superiors, to have full access to organizational resources and information, free participation in the decision-making process, job satisfaction, well-being, good performance, productivity (Mor Barak, 2000; 2005). In line with her contribution to inclusion literature, Janssens & Zanoni (2007) have proposed equal treatment, acceptance of racial and ethnic differences; for example, in the context of hiring, to make a decision based on their capabilities rather than on their ethnic status, also, to create an environment for good performance and communication among ethnically different groups (Janssens & Zanoni, 2007).

Inspired by Mor Barak's studies of perceived workplace inclusion, Pelled and colleagues also contributed empirical evidence to workplace inclusion research. Pelled et al. (1999) found that job security, ability to participate in decision-making, and having access to work information represent other indicators of perceived inclusion in work settings. They tested those indicators on gender and ethnic difference samples. The results showed that dissimilarity in race and gender positively correlate with represented indications of perceived workplace inclusion - job security, participation in decision-making, and having access to work information. I expect that age, hierarchical, professional (occupational), and ethnic status differences may affect young migrant workers' knowledge hiding behavior at work to their culturally dominant colleagues and managers. Young migrant workers may engage in knowledge hiding behavior as a strategy to secure job positions and relationships with superiors.

Shore et al. (2018) expand Ferdman's (2014) understanding of perceived inclusion within organizations. As a first theme, they referred to feelings of safety, including psychological and physical safety, to share different ideas and perspectives among culturally diverse team members (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Carmeli et al., 2010; Hirak et al., 2012). For example, an African-American in a White-dominated working team has to feel secure sharing his unique opinions and expertise that are different from other dominant members within a team.

The second theme is related to workgroup involvement. That is when an individual is perceived as an insider and has critical information and resource accessibility. A third theme is related to feel respected and appreciated by the members of the group. Specifically, those factors involve perceptions of migrant employees or ethnic groups. The other dominant culture team members' feelings of respect and being valued are the essential factors of perceived inclusion (Nishii, 2013; Sabharwal, 2014; Tang et al., 2015). A fourth essential component of inclusion refers to having the ability to influence decision-making. This perception is based on employees' belief that their ideas have to be influential and listened to by the cultural majority group (Nishii, 2013; Mor Barak & Daya, 2014, Sabharwal, 2014). Authenticity appeared to be the fifth theme of perceived inclusion that refers sharing of valued identities without fear. Identities may differ from dominant culture group members. For example, a Latina should not be afraid to demonstrate her cultural or linguistic differences.

Recognizing, honoring, and advancing diversity at work is also essential when discussing perceived workplace inclusion. Fair treatment, sharing differences of employees to enhance mutual learning and growth, and management appreciation of diversity (Sabharwal, 2014) are fundamental conditions for the perceived inclusion sixth theme. When designing an inclusive workplace environment, leaders and managers foster the cultural differences at work, demonstrating appreciation towards them. Similar behavior reinforces an organizational culture that respects and values the demographic differences among co-workers. An inclusive organization refers to implementing inclusive practices and policies that enhance inclusive climate, inclusion practices, perceived organizational inclusion, leader inclusion, and workgroup inclusion. This and other contextual factors that promote perceived organizational inclusion will be discussed in the next section.

Mor Barak and her colleagues provide theoretical and empirical evidence on perceived organizational inclusion. Mor Barak & Cherin (1998) proposed that organizational exclusion-inclusion includes involvement in working teams, access to information and resources, and participation in the decision-making process. Building on these measurements of perceived organizational exclusion-inclusion, scholars have added theoretical and empirical evidence and proposed that perceived organizational inclusion can trigger a sense of job satisfaction, organizational engagement, individual psychological and physical well-being, and task effectiveness (Mor Barak, 2000; Cho & Mor Barak, 2008; Acquavita et al., 2009).

Younger migrant workers also experience perceived exclusion from information networks and decision-making processes in organizations (Mor Barak et al., 2006). Waters & Bortree (2012) found that social group inclusion and general participation in organizational issues intensify caring, sharing, and participating in future organizational events. Avery et al. (2008) found that a sense of perceived inclusion positively affects the intention to stay. Furthermore, the authors reported that organizational identification, attachment, and intention to stay are affected by employees' perceived social integration at work.

Perceived workplace inclusion can foster innovation and boost new ideas on the interpersonal and team level (Anderson & West, 1998; Gardiner & Whiting, 1997). Research suggests that

individuals who are more welcomed, empowered, and respected due to their individuality share ideas, knowledge, and expertise more readily among co-workers, teams, and organization (Dekoulou & Trivellas, 2015; Pantouvakis & Mpogiatzidis, 2013; Downey et al., 2015; Page, 2014). Increased trust and feeling of uniqueness can help generate new ideas and improve the quality of relationships (Lee & Hong, 2014; Sankowska, 2013; Duarte et al., 2014). Consequently, when individuals are appreciated for who they are, they show more desire to share their knowledge and engage in collaboration (Mor Barak et al., 2016).

Social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and self-categorization theories (Turner et al., 1987) describe one's connectedness and relatedness to the group (Postmes et al., 2013; Leach et al., 2008). It is essential to admit that the foundation of those theories is that the degree of belongingness and connectedness to the majority group is defined by a person, not by the group (Ellemers & Jetten, 2013; Leach et al., 2008; Postmes et al., 2013). However, the concept of inclusion refers to the group's willingness and readiness to include and accept the particular individual (Ellemers & Jetten, 2013).

The cultural minority employees might hide their actual ideas or knowledge for self-defense and self-interest to belong and be included more in the cultural majority group. They might perceive that if they hide their actual ideas and knowledge that were potentially perceived differently and rejected by the Slovenian colleagues, they might promote better inclusion. Since hiding the required knowledge or information that differs from the perceptions, preferences, or understandings of the culturally dominant group colleagues, young migrant workers could be perceived more positively, appear more similar and familiar to majority members (Brewer, 1991). Therefore, they could advance their inclusion at work. The group defines that as its desire to provide a position within the group to another person (Leary & Baumeister, 2000).

A strong desire to be included and integrated at the workplace with a colleague might decide to start acting in a favorable behavior (Williams, 2007; Williams & Govan, 2005), observe and imitate dominant groups' behavior and perceptions (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). This is when an individual can simultaneously experience a sense of belonging and uniqueness by adopting a specific role within the group (Bettencourt et al., 2006). I assume that young migrant workers may hide their present ideas or knowledge by adjusting them to the culturally dominant group members' perceptions, preferences, and understandings. To hide actual ideas and respond to the request to sound more familiar and perceived better by the (culturally) dominant group members. Observations and learnings of the culturally dominant groups' culture, social norms, perceptions, and thinking ways may help minority members decide how to present ideas to be more accepted.

Knowledge hiding is considered to be a destructive phenomenon, intending to harm the other party. In this dissertation, knowledge hiding may have a positive intention. To give expertise or information requested to avoid potential future offensive or negative perceptions by the culturally dominant group colleagues and promote better self-inclusion at work. In this way, adopting a specific role (Bettencourt et al., 2006) within the group (e.g., present or share ideas or knowledge to be perceived more familiar to cultural majority group colleagues) may help cultural minorities achieve a sense of the perceived belonging and inclusion. That may involve hiding the requested

knowledge or ideas through a different facet, apart from what has been already conceptualized in the literature on knowledge hiding behavior (Connelly et al., 2012). The third proposition is:

*Proposition 3: Besides the established knowledge hiding strategies in traditional workplace settings, workers in multicultural and university work settings may use additional knowledge hiding strategies specific to the multicultural context.*

For example, Slovenia became a member state of the European Union in 2004. That encouraged the increasing mobility of non-EU nationals into Slovenia. In particular, immigrants coming from the Russian Federation, Ukraine, China, and the Middle East (IOM, 2020). EU migrants represent only 1% of the total population (STAT, 2018). Empirical and theoretical evidence and media discourses report that migrants are typically categorized as “the others due to the different identities.” Threats, created based on differences in ethnic, social, and cultural status, are the main factors of social exclusion, preventing Slovenians' coexistence with foreigners, labeled as people of different identities (e.g., Zavratnik, 2012).

In her empirical research on Slovenian people's attitude towards incoming immigrants, Zavratnik asked which behavior is perceived as a desirable behavior of immigrants in Slovenia, particularly how immigrants who reside within Slovenia permanently behave? The public opinion was that immigrants have to learn the Slovene language, customs, behaviors, adapt to the Slovene culture and life, and keep their language, cultural and social behaviors in their home countries, work here temporarily, and then return home (Zavratnik, 2012). The general perceptions towards the incoming flow of the immigrants were negative. I expect that the migrant workers from foreign countries (e.g., Russia, Chile) will most likely have zero or little knowledge and experience of Slovenian people's social and cultural norms. Including their mindset, understanding, communication, working styles, behaviors, perceptions, preferences, inter-cultural intelligence level, etc. They may face social and work-related difficulties due to cultural differences, social norms, languages, behavior, and knowledge.

On the contrary, migrants from the neighboring countries (e.g., Serbians and Macedonians) who share history and people who know the culture, language, and social norms of Slovenians may experience fewer social, cultural, cultural, or work-related problems. Since Slovenia's independence in 1991, the country became a top destination country for immigrants from the former Yugoslavian territories. For example, Serbs represent the largest ethnic group in Slovenia. They consist of 2.0% of the total population (STAT, 2002). The similarity in languages, cultures, and social structures attracts the migrants from the former Yugoslavia, facilitating their integration into Slovenia. At the same time, they face a particular type of discrimination because of their origin from the previous common state (see Bajt, 2008; Lobnikar et al., 2002).

They have similarities in terms of geographical disposition and language and understand the Slovenian culture, but at the same time, they encounter historical, social-economic, and political discrimination against them (e.g., Kralj, 2008; Zavratnik, 2012). Studies examined that immigrants from the former Yugoslavia are perceived as the „Others “ (Bajt, 2005), treated intolerantly, experience prejudices and negative stereotypes (e.g., Kuhar, 2007). Therefore, immigrants from the former Yugoslavia also experience exclusion by the Slovenian employees. I expect migrants

from the former Yugoslavia to respond more sensitively to the perceived triggers of the exclusion-inclusion and negatively reciprocate knowledge hiding due to the geographic, historical, linguistic, and cultural proximity. The fourth research proposition is:

*Proposition 4: The experiences of exclusion-inclusion and strategies for hiding knowledge may differ between migrant workers from the former Yugoslav and other foreign countries in multinationals and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana.*

It is equally important to analyze the contextual predictors of inclusion to prevent cultural minorities adaptation, knowledge hiding, exclusion, and promote actual inclusion since inclusion refers to one's belongingness to the team and feelings of uniqueness. (Shore et al., 2011). On the one hand, the perceived workplace inclusion is defined differently by the scholars (e.g., Shore et al., 2011; 2018), including a personal perception of an employee's inclusion to his or her colleagues, superior, within the team and/- or organization (Avery et al., 2008; Pearce & Randel, 2004; Pelled et al., 1999).

I have assumed the desire to achieve self-perceived inclusion may involve knowledge hiding from the culturally dominant group colleagues and superiors. Knowledge hiding harms knowledge requesters and hides themselves (Burmeister et al., 2019), so knowledge hider. Cultural minorities may desire to hide their ideas or knowledge to promote a better sense of self-perceived inclusion. They intend to lose their human capital resource, that is, knowledge. Knowledge represents a competitive edge for individuals, so for organizations. Therefore, it is essential to promote inclusive work environments where all employees, despite their race, ethnicity, culture, language, ideas, will be appreciated, respected, valued. At the same time, they have to feel included, welcomed, belonged, and recognized as culturally dominant workgroup members. Understanding of inclusive climate, practices, and leadership is needed.

### **3.2 Contextual antecedents of the inclusive organizations**

#### **3.2.1 Inclusive leadership skills**

One of the contemporary challenges that organizations face is ensuring a successful transfer of knowledge among employees of different generations, cultures, nationalities, and language groups. Knowledge sharing between employees of different ages, cultures, nationalities, and languages is essential for high organizational performance, competitiveness, and innovativeness (van Wijk, Jansen, & Lyles, 2008; Wang & Noe, 2010; Kessel et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2014). However, the age (generational) differences (Liebowitz et al., 2007; Aker, 2009) and cultural differences (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004; Asmussen, Foss & Pedersen, 2011; Hoever et al., 2012) may lead to conflicts, disagreements, and in the end, prevent the knowledge sharing.

Knowledge sharing requires dynamic interaction, including reciprocal exchange and integration of the knowledge and development of new knowledge (Bart van den Hooff & de Ridder, 2004) and cooperative relationships between co-workers and managers. It is essential to understand what drives the process of knowledge hiding and fosters knowledge sharing between migrant and local

employees and superiors. Knowledge sharing requires healthy and collaborative interpersonal interactions between employees and management. Knowledge sharing among co-workers and management depends on their working relationships. Communication and collaboration have to be reinforced to ensure a high knowledge-sharing environment. Close relationships can foster knowledge sharing among colleagues.

Organizational and managerial practices that ensure equal participation, access, resources, and opportunities for employees who belong to social identity groups that experience more significant discrimination can foster inclusion at work (Roberson, 2006; Bell et al., 2011). Management and leadership, with their supportive behaviors, can influence the knowledge-sharing process among colleagues. According to Carmeli et al. (2013), supportive leadership behavior is directly and indirectly related to knowledge sharing. Organizations need to understand who holds essential knowledge and strive to create conditions that enable employees to share knowledge (Kovačić et al., 2006).

Scholars have paid little attention to inclusive leadership traits and styles (Nishii & Mayer, 2009; Avery et al., 2007; Wasserman et al., 2008; Booysen, 2014; Henderson, 2014; Boekhorst, 2015). Diverse and inclusive organizations 'leadership and management have to create all the opportunities and accessibility of the diversity, ethnic and religious minorities, migrants, respect towards the ethnic and religious differences, and support their unique characteristics (Gallegos, 2014; Cottrill et al., 2014). Empirical studies found that leader inclusiveness helps inter-cultural teams to reduce perceived status differences (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Zheng et al., 2017). Studies identified that leadership affects the psychological safety of minority employees (Hirak et al., 2012), increased team involvement (Carmeli et al., 2010), increased engagement (Choi et al., 2015), and job performance (Hirak et al., 2012).

Other studies examined the influence of inclusive leadership on psychological diversity climate among whites and race-ethnic groups (Randel et al., 2016). Research showed that inclusive leaders could positively affect their relationship and team performance through positive helping behavior toward both ethnic groups. The research came up with a solid recommendation to implement support through a positive diversity climate and inclusive leadership for racial minorities and whites (Mitchell et al., 2015; Randel et al., 2016). Brimhall et al. (2017) added theoretical and empirical evidence on the research on inclusive leadership. They examined that when leader-member exchange relations between the supervisor and employee are of high quality, this can enhance inclusion. Good exchange relations with the leaders, managers and supervisors are crucial for homogenous or heterogeneous cultures to experience perceived organizational inclusion.

In earlier years, scholars qualitatively identified inclusion practices that leaders should follow to create an inclusive and diverse workforce (Roberson, 2006; Tang et al., 2015). Leaders must establish conflict resolution practices to allow marginalized identity groups to participate in decision-making processes and group discussions. Organizations have to implement team-building activities, including encouraging knowledge sharing, diverse thinking, intercultural interaction and collaboration, fair and equal treatment. They also have to provide care and support through the management, emphasize social harmony and minority groups 'adaptation towards their

organizations at an interpersonal and team level (Leung et al., 2002; Janssens & Zanon, 2008; Tang et al., 2017).

Sabharwal (2014) and Daya (2014) concluded that the leader's ability to engage in inclusionary behaviors defines organizational inclusiveness. Inclusive leadership is a key to creating an inclusive work environment. Den Hartog et al. (2007) found that charismatic leadership behaviors were essential to ensure a sense of perceived inclusion in work settings, particularly for employees who felt more isolated, excluded, and less connected to the group. Further, Ryan & Kossek (2008) stated that poor supervisory support could trigger barriers to minority members' total contribution and engagement and feelings of exclusion.

Scholars recommend building behavior that supports and encourages different ethnicities, genders, and thought worlds (Volpone et al., 2012; Nishii, 2013; Gallegos, 2014). Besides, Gotsis & Grimani (2016) suggested increasing ways to encourage and support historically marginalized social identity groups and treat them as insiders. Shortly, leadership has model fair treatments, behaviors, and practices to encourage all employees and not just privileged, dominant groups. Such organizational environments tend to be inclusive. The research on organizational inclusion practices emphasizes the importance of management in building and supporting an environment where all social identity groups will be treated fairly and respected besides their social status. The most important is that organizational leaders address discrimination and exclusionary challenges in the organization.

The leader plays a critical role in creating experiences of perceived workplace inclusion, especially regarding employees who belong to different social, ethnic, linguistic, religious class and most likely are excluded or even discriminated against due to those demographic differences (Nishii & Mayer, 2009; Bilimoria et al., 2008; Randel et al., 2016). More research is needed to define better inclusive leaders' characteristics and inclusive behaviors towards their diverse workforce. Particularly to identify positive influences on perceived teamwork and organizational inclusion of racial-ethnic and immigrant employees to their cultural majority superiors. Team-building and inclusive leadership can positively influence the collaboration and relationships of minority and majority group members and increase knowledge-sharing climate within inter-cultural (e.g., minority-majority) teams, organizations, and between supervisor-subordinate relationships.

### 3.2.2 Inclusive policies and practices within organizations

Inclusive leadership and management of the organizations have to establish and encourage practices to advance inclusion among the diverse workforce in organizations. Offerman & Basford (2014) identified several inclusive organizational practices:

- Leaders have to strive to keep diverse talents by providing support, encouraging, and admitting achievements.
- Leadership has to fight subtle exclusion and discrimination, including “microinequities” (Rowe, 1990) and “microaggressions” (Sue, 2010). These behaviors can encourage a devaluation of an individual's contributions.



- They should create resource groups (ERGs) that will enhance networking opportunities and the socialization of minority members.
- They should develop liability systems for inclusion that will be integrated within the organization's performance management system.
- They should provide training and workshops for employees and managers to develop the necessary intercultural inclusive skills.

It is essential to implement inclusive HRM practices to enhance organizational inclusion. That are minority members' accessibility to information and resources, and the full participation in decision making (Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998; Nishii, 2010), communication facilitation (Janssens & Zanoni, 2007), conflict resolution procedures (Roberson, 2006), and freedom from stereotyping (Bilimoria et al., 2008). Shore and her colleagues provided an example of how to relate to those practices and promote group cohesion. They proposed that complex tasks enclosed to the workgroup and autonomy increase team belonging and inclusion (Man & Lam, 2003; Beal et al., 2003). Besides, they specified that high task complexity supportive supervisors and coworkers could foster knowledge sharing and creativity within the team members (Tierney & Farmer, 2002; Shalley et al., 2004).

Organizations must strive to create an organizational culture that supports the knowledge flow informally and through formal channels (Suppiah & Sandhu, 2011). They encourage employees to discuss their experiences, share information, and provide incentives (Wang & Noe, 2010; Wang et al., 2014). Especially in the inter-cultural workforce.

Scholars investigated that organizations must first minimize societal and ethnic biases, prejudices, exclusion, and discrimination based on minority-majority status differentiations related to one group and not to another when creating an inclusive climate. Secondly, organizations must implement a strategy to achieve integration. Those strategies include easy adaptation stages for all groups, including lower and higher status groups. Achieving integration within the organization and culturally different teams may save the cultural identities of the employees. Ashburn-Nardo et al. (2008) suggested that an inclusive and integrated organizational culture can only be achieved when the organizations tackle exclusion and discrimination.

They further reported that when organizations do not have implemented inclusive and integrative strategies and practices that include zero-tolerance policy, challenges address discrimination and exclusion within the teams and organizations. Furthermore, it is needed to detect and apply the methods that foster inclusive decision-making processes in organizations. That means all employees, despite social and ethnic class, will be allowed to participate in the decision-making process like those of privileged groups (Pless & Maak, 2004; Holvino et al., 2004; Nishii & Rich, 2014; Guillaume et al., 2014).

Another study by Nishii & Langevin (2009) found other contextual factors affecting employees 'perceived inclusion at work. More specifically, age similarity, inclusiveness climate, and relationship (e.g., attachment and inclusion) with the manager affect the sense of perceived inclusion to the colleagues, work teams, and management. I expect that generational, professional,

and ethnic status differences will hold young migrant workers from engaging in conflict or disagreements with their superiors. To keep the job position and healthy relationship with a supervisor, young migrants will engage in knowledge-hiding behavior to enhance the sense of perceived inclusion at work.

Downey et al. (2014) tested the relationship among inclusion practices (i.e., been heard, participating in decision-making), diversity practices, trust climate, and engagement at work. They found that when a climate of trust is well developed in organizations, it is easier to implement organizational inclusion practices. Research on knowledge hiding behavior has found that engagement in knowledge hiding behavior is higher in organizations that lack interpersonal, team, and organizational trust (Cerne et al., 2014). Knowledge hiding behavior decreases when trust climate is fostered more by the leadership and management of the organizations.

Studies on leader-members exchange (LMX) found that leadership affects the knowledge-hiding behavior of employees (Zhao et al., 2018; Zhao et al., 2019; Jahanzeb et al., 2019). Yet, little is known about the influences of LMX on employees' knowledge hiding behaviors. Unethical leadership styles and approaches may cause dysfunctional behavior by the subordinates (Martin et al., 2016), including knowledge-hiding behavior (Ladan & Nordin, 2017; Zhao et al., 2019). Jahanzeb et al. (2019) found that abusive supervision reduces employees' creativity. In turn, employees reciprocate and engage in knowledge-hiding behavior. Therefore, leadership has to ensure a trustful, respectful, and caring environment for his employees. As well, treatment of all employees under the same supervisory styles and approaches. Then, employees may reciprocate to their supervisors by engaging in pro-social organizational behaviors (Harris et al., 2014), including knowledge sharing.

To create an inclusive organizational culture, employees from different backgrounds must learn how to respect, understand, and work to achieve mutual goals and understanding (Maak, 1999). It is essential to stimulate relationships between the diverse culture members to tolerate marginalized identities and sincere and active support, encouragement of their ideas, and perspectives. It is crucial to share others' knowledge, listen to them, and accept different ideas and information. That may also decrease the negative effect of knowledge hiding behavior caused by the perceived different national, ethnic, linguistic backgrounds, different ideas and perspectives, and being a minority within the work team. Since culturally dominant group members usually fail to recognize others' ideas, identities, experiences, and knowledge, to communicate and maintain an interaction with them.

### 3.2.3 Inclusive work-groups

Workgroup inclusion also reasonably determines how inclusive organizations are. Research on workgroup inclusion refers to the employee 's perception of his or her sense of inclusion and belonging to the work team (Shore et al., 2011; Jansen et al., 2014). Shore et al. (2011) defined inclusive groups as when one belongs to the team, is viewed as an insider, participates in decision-making, shares information freely with team members, is welcomed and respected due to different approaches and cultural backgrounds (Shore et al., 2011).

Research on Social Identity and Social Categorization theories emphasizes that a person with different race-ethnic, linguistic, or other demographic backgrounds often is perceived as an out-group member and is excluded by the superior group members (Tajfel, 1986). Based on typical experiences of exclusion, segregation, and differentiation, a person perceives him or herself as a minority representative and voluntarily excludes and isolates him or herself from the privileged team members. Representatives of the culturally dominant members create the majority in most cases. A minority group member refers to an individual based on his or her age, gender, ethnicity, race, and language in the numerical minority in the workgroup (Ehrhart et al., 2014).

The created majority or privileged group most often affects minority member's knowledge-sharing, collaboration, idea generation and distribution, inclusion, and sense of belonging. The behavioral differences between minority-majority group members may lead to consequential conflicts and disengagement (Aker, 2009). Those outcomes can create room for knowledge hiding behavior from colleagues and superiors within teams and departments. The demographic characteristics of employees themselves may stimulate knowledge hiding. In particular, employees who belong to different age categories and cultural, national, and linguistic backgrounds (e.g., minority members) may more likely engage in knowledge hiding behavior with his or her dominant culture colleagues and superiors at work.

Li et al. (2015) found that a high inclusion climate increases team information sharing and employee information elaboration. In culturally diverse teams where conflicts and misunderstandings may arise, perceived vital inclusion may enhance knowledge sharing between different ethnic group members. Engagement in integrative and collaborative behavior is low when the inclusion climate is low within multicultural teams. Thus, the study of Li et al. (2015) identified that team and individual knowledge sharing in culturally diverse teams affects team creativity at individual and team levels. The strong perceived inclusion climate can moderate that within culturally diverse team settings. Suppose the inclusive climate, including the well-implemented inclusive practices, and policies are vital in multinational companies in Ljubljana and the University of Ljubljana. In that case, knowledge hiding behavior will be decreased because knowledge sharing will be reinforced more at the interpersonal and within teams. In particular, in minority-majority group members' context.

Another research identified that ethnic minorities' inclusionary experiences are strongly related to sharing ideas, feeling valued and encouraged by other team members (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Sessler et al., 2013). Nishii (2013) found that the climate for inclusion had a significant moderating influence on the relationship and task conflict. Unsuccessfully regulated conflicts harm relationships, resist learning and leads to distrust which significantly reduces knowledge sharing among employees. On the contrary, successful regulation of the emerged interpersonal, task, or team conflicts strengthen the mutual trust, relationships and create a high knowledge-sharing work environment (Pantelia & Sockalingam, 2004).

It is essential to establish the strategies that will support the smooth generation and development of the new and different ideas within work teams or organizations. That consequently will decrease the task or interpersonal conflicts and knowledge hiding among cultural minority and majority

group colleagues at work. I expect that in a highly inclusive and diverse organizational environment, interpersonal and task conflicts will be managed, and mutual trust and appreciation will be achieved easier. On the contrary, conflicts will be poorly managed and solved in a low inclusive and diverse organizational climate and culture.

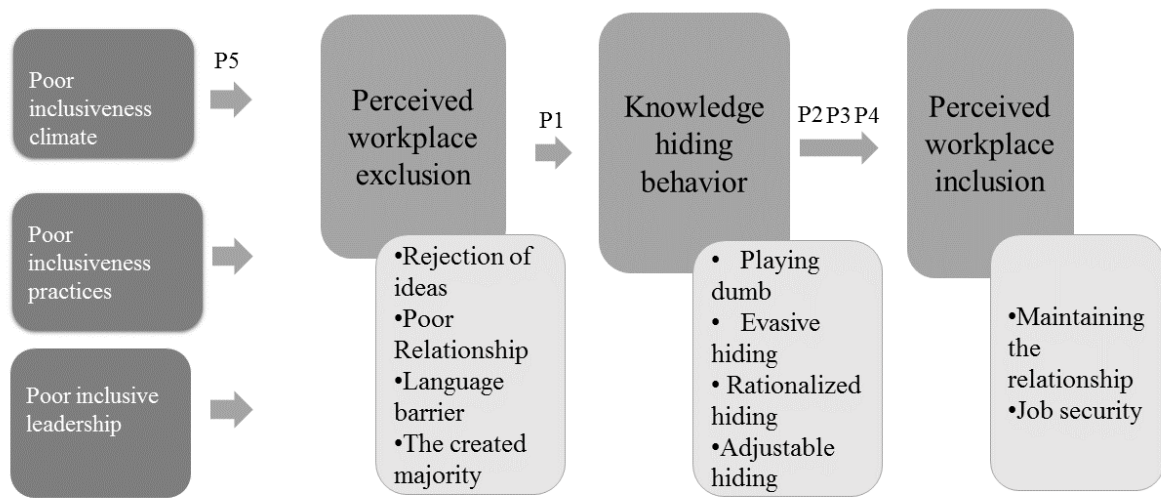
Multinational companies and universities must realize the importance of the work-groups for their success, innovativeness, creativity, and efficiency. For instance, Motorola changed its traditional hierarchical organizational structure to a team-based organizational structure (Robinson, 1997) to be more innovative, competitive, and efficient in this global business world. Since knowledge sharing is the most fostered by people-oriented leaders (Choi et al., 2008), that encourages inclusive, diverse, active, and participative work-groups (Bernroider, 2013), as well as encourages employee's independence, individual and cultural characteristics (Janz & Prasarnphanich, 2003). I assume that knowledge sharing, inclusion, and belonging will be high in a team-based organization under team-building leadership practices.

In organizations where inclusive practices and policies, including work-group inclusion, are not fostered by the leadership and management, migrant employees will most likely engage in knowledge hiding behavior. Those organizations that cannot ensure an open-minded and [highly] culturally intelligent workforce, perceived tense between minority-majority group members may intensify migrant workers' knowledge hiding behavior. Therefore, it's vital that an organization has employed an inclusive leadership style, has fostered inclusive diversity culture, and inclusive HRM practices and policies. I also attempt to analyze managerial perspectives on inclusiveness, diversity practices, and policies. I will see whether multinational companies' organizational culture and climate and the University of Ljubljana affect young migrants' perceptions of exclusion-inclusion and knowledge hiding behavior to their Slovenian colleagues and superiors.

Taken altogether, ensuring workgroup inclusion, leader inclusion, perceived organizational inclusion, inclusive climate, and inclusive practices is critical for organizations in creating a work environment where cultural minority members can contribute fully. Fostering those factors of perceived inclusion is crucial for organizations to keep efficiency and success in this global business world. Otherwise, organizations will lose valuable input of diverse employees (Catalyst, 2002; Hom et al., 2008; Mor Barak, 2015) that can ensure the range of different perspectives, experiences, ideas, and knowledge that can advance organizations' competitiveness and innovativeness in a nowadays world of complexity and growing changes. Proposition 5 relates to inclusive, diverse organizational climate, policies, and leadership that may reduce young migrant workers' perceived exclusion and knowledge hiding and may increase their sense of the perceived inclusion at multinationals and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana.

*Proposition 5: Well-implemented inclusive policies and leadership may decrease young migrant workers' sense of the perceived exclusion and knowledge hiding and increase their sense of the perceived inclusion.*

*Figure 1: Conceptual model illustrating the relationship between young migrant workers' knowledge hiding and perceived workplace exclusion-inclusion*



*Source: Own work*

## 4 METHODOLOGY

This chapter will introduce the methodology used, the study's research strategy and approach, data collection techniques, information regarding participants, and ethical issues. I begin with an explanation of the research setting: the socio-cultural characteristics of the Slovenian setting and the two selected sites: multinational companies (MNCs) and a large public institution (University of Ljubljana). I continue with the data collection procedure, including choosing a qualitative approach for this research study and then proceeding with an overview of the research process, including the pilot study, sample determination, and identification of key concepts to explore knowledge hiding behavior at the workplace further.

### 4.1 Research setting

Slovenia is particular because it tends to become more international and multinational in terms of business and labor, establishing more multinational companies and ensuring the diversification of the academicians since its membership in the European Union in 2004 (UL, 2013; STAT, 2018). The country can be comparable to other European Union member countries larger in size, population, number of established multinational companies, and incoming temporal or permanent migrants. European Social Survey (ESS) (2019) reported that many incoming immigrants fear migrants, ethnic or national minority groups less. According to this survey, the larger countries are more prepared to work in cultural, age, and gender diverse workforces. Since integration policies,

laws, anti-discrimination acts and regulations, recognition of the immigrants, ethnic and national minority groups, institutional trust, legislative protection, constitution, economy, social cohesion, and inclusion of migrants are more stable.

Slovenia is a small country, with more than 2 million inhabitants, facing vast waves of immigrants and several large ethnic and national groups, consisting of 34,2% of the total population in Slovenia (SPO 2002/02). Slovenia is a multiethnic social country where one nation (the Slovenians) is predominant. Scholars reported that the attitude of the majority population towards the immigrants is generally negative, particularly towards immigrants from the former Yugoslavia, who represent the most significant number of the incoming immigrants in Slovenia (see Zavratnik, 2012). Therefore, I was interested in examining the incoming young migrant workers' experiences and their working relationship with the Slovenian colleagues and superiors, which is overlooked by the scholars, mainly focusing on immigrants, ethnic and national minority groups in Slovenia.

I chose to examine the young migrants' work-related relationships, causes of the perceived exclusion-inclusion, knowledge hiding to Slovenians. Since 2016 I study in this country. My observations are that Slovenians tend to be kind, polite, friendly, informative, and receptive to foreigners than other European people I studied and worked with. However, I heard several stereotypical and prejudiced discussions about several groups of foreigners. I review empirical and theoretical evidence of those stereotypes and biases in section 2.4.5 below. Overall, Slovenia is open to different cultures, nationalities, ethnicities, ensuring few acts, regulations, and legislation protecting the rights of the immigrants and migrants. However, the social and ethnic distance between the Slovenian people and incoming immigrants remains high (e.g., Kralj, 2008).

Mainly, I examine social exclusion and discrimination of the immigrants, including national and ethnic minority members residing within Slovenia. With that, scholars predicted that immigrants would be mistreated, excluded, and discriminated against in other areas, to a different degree, and with different intensity (see Kralj, 2008). The scholars in the literature overlook the attitudes of the Slovenian people towards migrants coming from different foreign countries and those migrating from the former Yugoslavian territories at the workplace. The experiences of perceived exclusion of blue-collar employees are examined (see Kržišnik-Bukić, 2003).

Therefore, I was interested in examining this relation: how open and welcoming Slovenians are in the working process with culturally, socially, and ethnically different individuals at work? Do they treat migrants from other countries and the former Yugoslavia similarly? How they work together? How they collaborate during the tasks or project solving discussions? Are migrants excluded also at work from the Slovenian colleagues or superiors? On which basis? What does, apart from the frustration and demotivation, the perceived exclusion bring with it for migrants? I provide a further description of the Slovenian cultural, social, and work contexts in the sections from 4.2.1 to 4.2.5. I discuss the Slovenian cultural context based on Hofstede Insights (2021). I overview the stance of established multinational companies and universities and provide insights into the ethnic, cultural, and social relations among the Slovenian nation and immigrants from different foreign countries, including those from the former Yugoslavian territories, and acts protecting their rights.

#### 4.1.1 The Slovenian cultural context

According to Hofstede Insights (2021), Slovenia scores 71 on the Power Distance dimension. That implies that hierarchies are accepted and present. Hierarchies reflect inherent inequalities within an organizational setting, and employees expect to be told what to do. The ideal leader is an autocrat (Hofstede Insights, 2021), showing dominance and power (Hofstede, 1980). Slovenia scores 88 on the Uncertainty Avoidance dimension. People from countries high on Uncertainty Avoidance tend to be intolerant of unorthodox behavior and ideas (Hofstede Insights, 2021). Therefore, high uncertainty avoidance displays intolerance for the unknown and different, connected with traditionalism and nationalism, and even xenophobia (Podrug, Pavicic, & Bratic, 2006).

A high score on the Masculine dimension refers to the fact that the main focus is on assertiveness, competitiveness, success, acknowledgment, achievements, challenges, and less on collaboration, the quality of life, and the care for others. High masculine countries value the importance of tradition, conservatism, and religion (Hofstede, 1980). Slovenia, with a score of 27, is considered a collectivistic society. The needs and goals of the group are more important than the desires of an individual. Collectivistic cultures indicate that interrelationship and interconnectedness play a significant role (Kito et al., 2017). It is an essential close long-term dedication to the employees' in-group members. Thus, maintaining relationships and trust is generally more complex. Lastly, with a medium score of 49 on the dimension on the long and short term, it is hard to say the country is long or short-term oriented.

#### 4.1.2 Migration in Slovenia

Slovenia is located in Europe at the crossroads of main European cultural and trade routes. The country was one of the prosperous states of the former Yugoslavia. Now Slovenia is a parliamentary republic and member nation of the European Union. The capital - Ljubljana, is the most substantial region regarding economic development and the country's administrative, economic, cultural, and scientific center. A third of all Slovenian companies are located in Ljubljana.

Since Slovenia's independence in 1991, Slovenia became a destination country for immigrants from other ex-Yugoslavian territories. The country consists of 83.06% of Slovenes, 2.0% of Serbs, 1.8% of Croats, 1.1% of Bosnians, 0.3% of Hungarians, 0.3% of Albanians, 0.2% of Macedonians, 0.2% of Romani, 0.2% of Montenegrins, and 0.2% of Italians (Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 2002). Becoming a member of the European Union in 2004 has facilitated an increasing number of other non-EU nationals into the country. Specifically, immigrants coming from the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and China. As of June 2019, almost 160,000 non-EU nationals had temporary or permanent residency status in Slovenia. Slovenia is also a destination country for irregular seasonal migration and a transit country for asylum seekers and migrants in an irregular situation (IOM, 2020) coming from the Middle East. EU migrants represent only 1% of the total population when third-country nationals represent 94% of the total population (STAT, 2018).

Often, (im)migrants, including those from the former Yugoslavia, are discriminated against, marginalized, segregated by the locals, Slovenians, based on their ethnic, cultural, and social status. Ethnic and national backgrounds affect (im) migrants' social cohesion. They are disregarded or rejected. Studies show that immigrants, including migrants, national, and ethnic minority groups experience exclusion and discrimination during the job selection stage or actual employment (e.g., Zavratnik, 2012).

Employment is perceived to be one of the most critical driving factors to achieve integration, particularly for the immigrants from the former Yugoslavia since Slovenia is more developed than other countries of the former Yugoslavia. Sometimes, immigrants from other foreign countries and the former Yugoslavian territories do not fulfill the required qualifications to execute the particular job. In contrast, sometimes, their skills, knowledge, and qualifications are not recognized in Slovenia's new social, cultural, and work environment. Besides ethnic, cultural, and social class, the immigrants also face professional and educational exclusion and discrimination by the Slovenian people (STAT, 2002). Also, Kralj (2008) found that immigrants believe that exclusion and discrimination based on ethnic, cultural, and social status occur during employment.

In Slovenia, the Protection against Discrimination Act protects individuals. It requires equal treatment of all individuals based on gender, age, sexual orientation, education, financial status or social status, nationality, race, ethnicity, origin, language, religion, and beliefs. Regulations and policies enable equal opportunities for all individuals about employment, education, working conditions, social protection and social benefits, access to goods and services (MDDSZ, 2019). Despite their gender, age, nationality, etc., people's intellectual capital is no longer lost. It promotes new knowledge and, consequently supports creating a better quality of life (Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport, 2020).

The Health and Safety at Work Act regulates the entire health and safety aspect at work, including psychosocial risks. The employer is responsible for preventing cases of violence, harassment, and other causes of psychosocial risks at the workplace that can threaten a workers' health (Eurofound, 2019; Mrcela & Luzar, 2019). However, government policies give much less attention to promoting human rights, integration policies, acts protecting international (im)migrants (e.g., Zavratnik, 2012). There is (dis)agreement on policies of multiculturalism, exclusion, and inclusion of incoming (im)migrants to their experiences in everyday life (e.g., Pajnik, 2014).

#### 4.1.3 Ethnic, social, and cultural relations in Slovenia

The research project results on Perceptions of Slovenian Integration Policies (PSIP 2007) illustrate those first reactions to incoming immigrants from different EU, Non-EU, and former Yugoslavian countries were adverse. Immigrants were perceived as a group of "the others," "ones with different identities," and associated with the possible "threats because of their high numbers." Perceived threats resulted in Slovenians' ethnic and social distance, xenophobia, and intolerance towards immigrants. They feared living and working with foreigners that represent people of different identities. Differences in ethnicity, culture, language, and social class were the major driving factors of exclusion (Zavratnik, 2012).



The increasing number of economic migrants intensified Slovenians' fears and negative perceptions of the immigrants. They represented the potential threats for Slovenians, considering that immigrants occupy jobs that potentially the dominant population also could execute or that they are perceived as being unfair competitors to the native labor force (Zavratnik, 2012; Kralj, 2008; Bajt, 2008). Those circumstances were perceived as the significant barriers for immigrants in achieving inclusion in the labor market or society. This attitude is explained to be caused by the economic situation in Slovenia. Immigrants are related to the potential threat to the Slovenian economy, culture, and country, national identity manifested by politicians and media sources (e.g., Bajt, 2008; Kralj, 2008).

Besides, the difference in immigrants' social statuses is an essential factor in evaluating them. The factors like education, occupation, the social and ethnic class were identified as the most critical factors to perceive immigrants better and accept them. Since immigrants' social or labor exclusion often was affected by perceived low social, economic, and political position, low educational achievements, professional skills, and those perceived factors affected achieving promotion at work (Kalčič, 2007). Even though ethnically and culturally "equal," immigrants are perceived positively, accepted, and included. Those are immigrants who are highly qualified ethnic Slovenes. These foreign entrepreneurs would potentially invest in the Slovene economy. Surprisingly, the young immigrants, aged between 18-28 years, were described as the most favored immigrant group, who would potentially invest in the Slovene economy (Zavratnik, 2012).

So, the extent of immigrants' social or labor inclusion depends on the Slovenians attitude toward the incoming immigrants. The Slovenian respondents in the empirical research on Integration Policies (2007) reported that knowledge of the Slovenian language, high-quality education, employment, and social status, Slovene citizenship, coming from a similar cultural background, having friends of Slovenian nationality, Catholic religion, race, to be white identified as the major driving factors for successful inclusion in the Slovenian society. Empirical evidence of this study suggests that the Slovenians suggest immigrants adapt culturally and socially to their culture, life, and work styles, accepting how Slovenians live, ensuring knowledge and skills needed and required, and learning the official language of Slovenia (Hafner-Fink, 2004). That potentially means that immigrants should adopt the Slovenian behaviors, culture, communication styles, language, social norms and hide their language and culture. The requirements of the Slovenian people towards immigrants are such that immigrants have to intentionally or unintentionally assimilate or self-assimilate into the culturally dominant society to achieve inclusion or at least perceived inclusion.

#### 4.1.4 Multinational companies in Ljubljana

Slovenia is a country where it is worth investing in due to its favorable business environment. Slovenia has an excellent base for business development and growth. Since the country is rich with well-developed ICT and physical infrastructure, there can be centers of excellence and high-level innovation activity and technological networks and platforms. A great business environment is supported by a high-performance education system, which hosts thousands of international and

local students in advanced research, business, and international projects. Slovenia is open to foreign investments, with a high-quality workforce and infrastructure.

The economy of Slovenia is small, open, and export-oriented and has been strongly influenced by international conditions. The collapse of its Yugoslav markets made Slovenia reoriented its trade towards the West, mainly Germany, Austria, Italy, and France. Slovenia's economy is highly dependent on foreign trade. About two-thirds of Slovenia's trade is with other EU members. The country's geographical position helps to foster economic links with its neighbors – Austria, Hungary, and Croatia. The interest of the international companies rises to establish their regional hubs in Slovenia. This is supported by the local managers and their in-depth knowledge of the regional markets. Since they speak the language and understand the culture, they have established good personal and business contacts (AJPES, 2020).

The “Top Twenty-five Slovene MNCs” (CIR- CPII, 2008) demonstrates that Slovenian MNCs have 286 foreign branches across 53 countries. In 2004 and 2006, Transnationality Index has grown from 36% to 45%, reflecting the rapid growth of international operations. These statistics show that Slovenian MNCs are more multinational compare to firms from other transition economies. MNCs in Slovenia is much smaller compared to other international competitors. Slovenian MNCs are called nano MNEs. Slovene MNEs are generally regional market-oriented, with trade and production branches, in the Western Balkan countries. More than 70% of OFDI stock is located in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina. Recently, Slovene MNCs have shown an increasing interest in Russia and China (Jaklic & Svetlicic, 2008).

However, the internationalization of management is relatively low. With few exceptions, CEOs are Slovenes. Slovenian is the official language and other foreign languages, including English, German, Russian, and Croatian (Jaklic & Svetlicic, 2008). Jaklic & Svetlicic (2008) have argued that Slovenian MNEs are too small, CEO too young, and lack internationalization of managers, joint ventures, and cooperation with foreign partners to grow more global networks (Jaklic & Svetlicic, 2008). These characteristics are weaknesses and difficulties in Slovenian MNC's future development.

The perceived exclusion is rooted in migrants' ethnic, cultural, linguistic, national, age backgrounds. I argue that young migrants', including those from the former Yugoslavia, the perceived exclusion is most likely rooted in the lack of diversity and inclusiveness in organizational policies, practices, and leadership.

#### 4.1.5 University of Ljubljana

University of Ljubljana (UL) was established in 1919 and consisted of 23 faculties and three arts academies. The UL has been the most prominent and highest quality Slovenian scientific and research organization – consistently recognized by the international scientific community (UL, 2013). Internationalization is encouraged. Each year universities host thousands of international students, exchange students, and international teaching personnel. There are fellowship programs to encourage cooperation between visiting and host researchers (ERC, 2016; ARRS, 2020).

Mentoring programs are formalized, and students/ researchers have assigned mentors. Research projects are supervisor-based. Therefore, a researcher (e.g., Ph.D. student, post-doctorate, young researcher, etc.) works under the supervision of a mentor as part of a larger research group. They conduct research, either on a pre-specified project or one of their design and publish that research later (UL, 2013).

The researcher's work requires a combination of convergent and divergent thinking. Their main goal is to handle and distribute information and knowledge, add value to the research field, produce a new capability, and contribute in a creative way (UL, 2013). The researcher's work can be individual or team-based. Individual-level researchers are given autonomy and flexibility throughout the research process or chosen methods to accomplish their goals. They have a principal supervisor and entirely depend on their advice and guidance (UL, 2013).

Slovenia ensures programs and funding for the postgraduate students to enable young researchers to participate in research work during their postgraduate studies based on fixed-term employment contracts. The contract lasts up to a maximum of 4 years for a Ph.D. program. This program aims to rejuvenate research groups and enable the inflow of fresh ideas and approaches. It is highly qualified and motivated by an excellent potential for the Slovenian economy and other socially relevant areas (Slovenian Research Agency, 2019). On the other hand, teamwork and team projects are formed by an interdependent group of individuals who share everyday responsibilities and work together to achieve a common goal. The research groups are formed within one research organization (e.g., university, institute) or researchers from different research organizations (Slovenian Research Agency, 2019).

Teamwork requires the ability to collaborate and cooperate with an idea, to brainstorm, and to think broadly. To avoid communal tension and achieve the groups successfully depends on the high cooperation, relationship building, recognition, and acceptance of different knowledge and skills of each other. In total, 15.327 researchers work in 989 research organizations (Slovenian Current Research Information System, 2020), and approximately 300 research groups are launched (ARRS, 2020).

## **4.2 Data collection**

In this research, data were obtained through semi-structured and in-depth interviews conducted on young migrant workers, aged between 26-30 years, employed in Slovenian multinational companies and the University in Ljubljana. I have used four sources during the data collection, including interviews, external documentation, field notes, and informal conversation.

### **4.2.1 Interviews**

Interviews allow obtaining information needed regarding participants' life and/- or work experiences, attitudes toward the subject studied, and beliefs (Herbert & Rubin, 2005). Compared to a conversation (Skopec, 1986), an interview is more organized and planned. Both - the interviewer and interviewee have to be familiar with the purpose of the interview. They have to

intend to fulfill it through communication. The interviewer proposed the conversation for a particular purpose (e.g., to obtain research-relevant information) (Millar et al., 1992). Interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. Structured interviews are typically very controlled, with fixed, pre-planned questions, similar to surveys (Robson, 2002). Semi-structured interviews include already determined questions (Robson, 2002). Unstructured interviews don't involve preplanning (Bryman, 2001).

This dissertation relied on semi-structured interviews. Further information on the interview questions and structure is given in section 4.3.3. below.

#### 4.2.2 Fieldnotes

Field notes involve researchers' observations during the interview process. He or she cannot audio record and make notes to memorize the observation regarding the interviewee and/- or even he or she is a story (Wolfinger, 2002). Mainly, it is research-based, where he or she decides what to write down and what to focus on, which is worthy of being further announced and/- or mentioned (Emerson et al., 1995). Two strategies are identified for conducting field notes: the salience hierarchy – when a researcher decides to make remarks on the most interesting, topic-relevant, and appropriate aspects of the story that the participant tells; and comprehensive note-taking – when a researcher decides to write down all information regarding participant, accident, environment, activity, feelings, purpose and time (Lofland & Lofland, 1984).

In my study, all participants were asked if I can make field notes to highlight key points of the conversation. Additional to the audio recording, I made additional notes regarding participants' feelings and incidents. Due to the time pressure during the interviews, some observations and information could be lost or forgotten. In this case, field notes allowed me to make the order of the incidents/- stories that the respondents have narrated. Additionally, notes helped me find the gaps between researched constructs. Typically, field notes helped memorize the main themes and critical points of the incidents during informal meetings and conversations.

#### 4.2.3 Questionnaire matrix

Because the study relied on deductive thematic analysis, questions in the study questionnaire must base on the research propositions. The interview protocol for this research helped validate the conceptual model. Semi-structured interviews created an excellent opportunity to gain a complete understanding. They helped collect the data on young migrants' subjective reflections on their experiences, behaviors, causes, and outcomes. Respondents [young migrant workers] were asked about their perceived exclusion-inclusion to the culturally dominant group colleagues and superiors [Slovenians] and how they perceived it impacts their knowledge hiding behavior.

The interview questions, provided in Table 2 below, are based on the theories on Social Identity, Social Categorization, Optimal Distinctiveness, and knowledge hiding, reviewed in chapters 2 and 3. The interview questions answer the research questions and achieve the research goal. Interview

questions include adaptations of questions from Connelly et al. (2012). Appendix 3 represents the complete questionnaire used throughout the data collection process.

Table 2: Overview of in-depth interview questions for migrant workers

Topic	Interview Questions	Research Question
<b>Workgroup identification and belonging; Participants' cultural and social background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How strongly do you feel/- think you belong in your working company?</li> <li>What difficulties have you ever faced during the <i>working process</i> with Slovenian colleagues and managers at work?</li> <li>Was there any situation when you felt <i>disengaged</i> or <i>mistreated</i> by a Slovenian colleague? What was the basis for that?</li> <li>How would you evaluate your workplace performance, activity, participation? What about your <i>work motivation</i>?</li> <li>How much do you identify with Slovenian colleagues and superiors?</li> <li>How <i>similar</i> do you feel with Slovenian colleagues?</li> <li>How <i>distinct</i> do you feel with Slovenian colleagues?</li> <li>Have you felt the need to belong more?</li> </ul>	RQ4
<b>Participants' perception of workplace exclusion-inclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have perceived similarities or differences between you and the Slovenian colleague <i>affected</i> your sense of <i>exclusion-inclusion</i> towards your Slovenian colleagues?</li> <li>What is the <i>relationship</i> with your Slovenian colleagues? Does it affect your sense of perceived exclusion-inclusion?</li> <li>How do you think has the perceived exclusion affected you?</li> </ul>	RQ1, RQ2
<b>Consequences of perceived exclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What was the eventual outcome of the perceived exclusion at work?</li> <li>Has it happened that your <i>knowledge sharing, involvement, and participation in problem-solving or decision-making was perceived negatively, poorly judged, ignored, or considered ignorantly, declined</i> by Slovenian colleague or superior? On which basis?</li> <li>Have you ever had trouble communicating with your Slovenian colleagues? What about the <i>English language barrier</i>? Has it affected knowledge hiding? The sense of perceived exclusion from the Slovenian colleagues, team, or managers at work?</li> <li>Are discussions/meetings <i>dominated/ led</i> by Slovenians? How do you feel about it? In the case of the created majority by Slovenians, has it affected how you interact with Slovenian colleagues and managers for the future?</li> </ul>	RQ1, RQ2
<b>Potential reasons for knowledge hiding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do you do to be more engaged, belonged, or included at the workplace?</li> <li>Has it ever happened that colleagues asked you for some information or knowledge, and you hid it for being more included?</li> <li>How <i>important</i> is this job for you? Has it happened that you reserved some information to <i>secure the job position</i>?</li> <li>Have you ever hidden requested knowledge to ensure <i>better relationship</i> or opposite, to avoid some conflicts with the Slovenian colleagues and managers?</li> <li>Has it happened that Slovenian colleagues asked you for some information or knowledge and hid it because you wanted to <i>be more included</i>? Can you describe how you have done that?</li> </ul>	RQ1, RQ2

<b><i>Knowledge hiding dimensions and strategies</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you remember any situation when you have not shown a specific co-worker how to do something? Gave only a part of the information needed, declined to tell something s/he needed to know, or did not help him/her learn something important?</li> <li>• For example, did you ever... Agreed to help him/her but never really intended to... Agreed to help him/her but instead gave him/her information different from what s/he wanted... Told him/her that I would help him/her out later but stalled as much as possible... Offered him/her some other information instead of what he/she wanted... Pretended that I did not know the information... Said that I did not know, even though I did... Pretended I did not know what s/he was talking about... Said that I was not very knowledgeable about the topic... Explained that I would like to tell him/her, but was not supposed to... Explained that the information is confidential and only available to people on a particular project... Told him/her that my boss would not let anyone share this knowledge... Said that I would not answer his/her questions...</li> </ul>	RQ3
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*Source: Own work*

The interview questions for managers, provided in Table 3 below, are based on the theoretical and practical evidence on inclusive climate, practices, and leadership, overviewed in Chapter 3. I interviewed middle-level managers employed in multinational companies in Ljubljana. The interview questions were elaborated to answer research question 5, such as managerial and intercultural competencies, implemented inclusive and diverse practices and tools, organizational structure, leadership, competencies, role, and working style preferences.

The qualitative method of semi-structured interviews helped gain maximum insights into the current situation of the implemented inclusiveness policies, leadership, influence, and consequences on migrants' sense of the perceived exclusion-inclusion, knowledge hiding behavior. They provided an excellent opportunity to collect the data on managers' insights and thoughts on the inclusiveness and internationalization of their work settings. The questionnaire included questions on organizational inclusiveness policies, leadership, and HRM practices. In-depth interviews with managers helped obtain insights into the contextual predictors of cultural minority employees' potential sense of the perceived workplace exclusion and inclusion and their knowledge hiding.

Table 3: Overview of in-depth interview questions for managers

<b><i>Inclusive practices, policies, and leadership (for managers)</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you consider the company culturally competent? Culturally inclusive?</li> <li>• How culturally diverse is your workforce?</li> <li>• How often do you have diversity training, workshops, seminars, etc.? Do you think they work?</li> <li>• Which knowledge management tools and practices are implemented and used to reinforce an inclusive environment?</li> <li>• Are cooperation and teamwork promoted in your organization? How?</li> <li>• How would you describe leadership style in your work environment?</li> <li>• What are the two most important things that the organization's leaders must do to create an inclusive climate?</li> </ul>	RQ5
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Source: Own work

### 4.3 Data analysis

Qualitative thematic data analysis involves two stages. In the first stage, a codebook helps analyze the data. Besides already created codebooks, scholars suggest adding themes to already “confirmed themes” (Yukhymenko et al., 2014). The next step involves the identification of the themes. Deductive thematic analysis overviews the cases when themes have already arisen through the literature review (Boyatzis, 1998). I was interested in matching the data to the codes and themes that existed in the codebook. I could answer research questions and provide empirical evidence of the research propositions and conceptual model. As a first step of the collected data analysis, I created the codebook described in detail in the following section.

#### 4.3.1 Codebook

After developing research propositions, the next step is to create a codebook that collects the codes from the raw data (Boyatzis, 1998; Crabtree & Miller, 1992; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The codebook consists of attribute and analytic codes and is available in full in Appendix 4. Attribute codes include the personal and demographic characteristics of the respondents: their age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, and employment length in multinational companies in Ljubljana and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. The analytic codes refer to the ideas from previous theoretical and practical evidence on the research topic and the themes and concepts that arose from respondents' narratives (Deterding & Waters, 2020).

Index codes are provided in Table 4. In addition to these codes, I also developed analytical codes to examine the relationship between inclusion-exclusion and knowledge hiding. Six themes arose in this analysis: Six themes related to the potential causes of knowledge hiding behavior are identified and described. Four themes where knowledge hiding occurred as a consequence of exclusion, I determined four themes. Rejection of the ideas, the poor relationships, the language barrier, and the created majority), and an additional two themes arose when examining knowledge hiding as a strategy to promote inclusion. These fine-grained themes are provided in the Findings chapter, in sections 5.1. and 5.2. In addition to these codes, I also developed codes for knowledge

hiding strategies, partly based on the literature (e.g., evasive hiding, playing dumb, rationalized hiding). Still, I added one more adjustable knowledge hiding facet. The codes for knowledge hiding strategies are provided in section 5.3. below.

Table 4 below summarizes the index codes generated from research questions and propositions relating to. The table includes index codes on the perceived exclusion, perceived inclusion, and strategies to increase inclusion. The fine-grained analytical themes for knowledge hiding/sharing strategies, which focus on the findings, are provided, and the analysis findings in sections 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3.

*Table 4: Summary of the index and analytical codes*

<b>Index code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Code description</b>
Perceived exclusion		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feeling excluded due to ethnicity, language, migrant (minority) status, cultural difference</li> <li>- Feeling lack of trust and respect towards newcomers (e.g., minorities)</li> <li>- Feeling lack of trust and respect towards minorities ideas and expertise</li> <li>- Feeling excluded due to barriers to communication – poor English; language and ignorance of Slovenian language</li> <li>- Feeling excluded from working team and work environment</li> <li>- Feeling excluded from/ during social or work-related gatherings</li> <li>- Feeling excluded once experienced idea rejection during discussions, team meetings, and group work</li> <li>- Feeling of being a minority during the group gathering and discussions (the idea being in the minority, dominance of the Slovenians decision, being in a minority position against group decision)</li> </ul>
	Lack of belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feeling low group identification and belonging at work</li> <li>- Not feeling part of the group</li> <li>- Feeling not comfortable working with Slovenian colleagues due to ethnic status difference</li> <li>- Having (experiencing) poor relationship with the majority group</li> </ul>
	Self-labeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feeling like an out-grouper</li> <li>- Feeling like a foreigner</li> <li>- Feeling like a minority</li> <li>- Feeling excluded due to being of non-Slovenian descent</li> </ul>
	Experiences of exclusion (barriers to collaboration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experiences of the idea being judged, non-appreciated, non-respected, criticized</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experiences of the idea being ignored, disengaged, mistreated, negatively perceived</li> <li>- Feeling low self-esteem, feeling demotivated, low confidence in own expertise and ideas</li> <li>- Having a fear of being misunderstood and excluded from the dominant culture group</li> <li>- Frequent comparison to others and analysis of own ideas, actions, communication style</li> <li>- No information flow – miscommunication.</li> <li>- Having no social support</li> <li>- Lack of social connection, interaction</li> </ul>
Perceived inclusion		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Things that make people feel included</li> </ul>
	Sense of belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Belonging and being noticeable, accepted</li> <li>- Belonging and being representative</li> <li>- Belonging and have a good image</li> <li>- Feelings of being familiar to the Slovenian colleagues and superiors</li> <li>- Feelings of being more similar to the Slovenian colleagues</li> </ul>
	Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The experience that ideas are perceived better</li> <li>- Ideas are understood</li> <li>- Ideas are accepted</li> </ul>
Strategies to increase inclusion		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Places to inclusion (meet with majority representatives during social gatherings, making unofficial meetings, talks, discussions with Slovenian co-workers)</li> <li>- Learning mindset of the cultural majority group (e.g., Slovenians) members</li> <li>- Learning working style</li> <li>- Testing and observing surrounding, their behavior, thinking way, culture, social and cultural norms</li> <li>- Decision to adjust knowledge and ideas to the Slovenian colleagues and superiors' perceptions, understanding, preferences, socio-cultural norms</li> </ul>

*Source: Own work*

#### 4.3.2 Data reporting

Reporting the data refers to a process when the researcher has to provide evidence whether data confirms or opposes the relied theory and literature. Using deductive thematic analysis, the researcher must identify and show whether different theories can work together and provide some new explanations and evidence for the collected data. Additionally, the researcher has to provide insights into which theories would work better in the context of the collected data (Riege, 2003).

Based on social dominance theories, including social identity, social categorization, and social comparison theories, along with the theoretical and empirical evidence on perceived workplace

inclusion, I have examined the relationship between young migrants' sense of perceived workplace exclusion-inclusion and knowledge hiding behavior. Based on those theories, I have proposed that knowledge hiding behavior is a consequence of the perceived workplace exclusion. It is employed as a strategy to promote perceived workplace inclusion.

I attempt to advance the perceived workplace exclusion-inclusion research nomological net since I can identify other factors that can increase perceived inclusion among employees at work. By combining different theories on the perceived workplace exclusion-inclusion and knowledge hiding behavior, I attempt to bring out new theoretical and empirical evidence for another *negative behavioral outcome* of workplace exclusion, i.e., knowledge hiding behavior, along with its positive outcome, i.e., perceived workplace inclusion.

By incorporating the literature on workplace exclusion-inclusion to the knowledge hiding behavior, I propose two new knowledge-hiding predictors. I propose that perceived workplace exclusion in the forms of idea rejection, the language barrier, poor relationship, and majority role due to nationality, ethnicity, age, and group status backgrounds perceived differences represent other adverse outcomes of knowledge hiding in organizations. For example, by examining the language barrier as one of the determinants of the perceived exclusion and its potential influence on young migrants' knowledge hiding behavior, this research will represent first narrative evidence of the role of language in knowledge-hiding processes in the context of young migrant workers. I attempt to examine the potential benefits of knowledge hiding behavior, that is, young migrants' perceived workplace inclusion through job security, keeping relationships, and controversy avoidance.

## **4.4 Sampling**

### **4.4.1 Sampling frame**

The leading target group for this dissertation represents the young migrant workers aged between 26-30 years old. They have moved and worked in multinational companies and the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana for five years or less. Accordingly, the main criterion in the selection of the sample was as follows: being a migrant, not of Slovenian descent, aged 26-30 years old, currently working, for five years or less, in a multi-national company or the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia, and to speak English.

The English-speaking migrants helped conduct the interviews in the English language. I do not speak other languages rather than this. I considered migrants to have to speak in English since they migrated to Ljubljana, Slovenia, to work in multinational companies. The official work language is English, besides work on international projects held in English. Besides, a sampling includes migrants who were new to the country. They moved and are working in Ljubljana for 1 to 5 years. I assumed that they would not be assimilated or marginalized, still authentic and full of their national, cultural, ethnic, or social identity. They would not have previous exclusionary

experiences affecting their present behaviors or narratives, particularly their sense of the perceived exclusion, inclusion, and knowledge hiding behavior at work.

The choice of the analyzed target group was influenced by the research problem and the scholars of knowledge hiding behavior to examine knowledge hiding behavior in the diverse work context (Connelly et al., 2019). Knowledge hiding behavior can differ according to different cultural and national contexts (Zhang et al., 2017). Additionally, scholars have proposed that knowledge hiding behavior can differ according to group status (Rhee & Choi, 2017; Xiao & Cooke, 2019). Minority members in this dissertation refer to the small number of individuals with different cultural backgrounds. Young migrant workers represent the minority group to their culturally dominant group colleagues and managers [Slovenians].

#### 4.4.2 Sampling technique

I employed a combination of stratified purposive sampling (quota sampling), snowball sampling, criterion-based, and maximum variation sampling strategies to recruit potential participants (Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 2002). I targeted potential individuals from two work settings: multinational companies and the faculties of the University of Ljubljana. My supervisors provided me with a list of the participants from each work setting. By using this list, I selected participants through the purposive sampling technique. I initially planned to interview at least 40 persons coming from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Supervisors sent an invitation e-mail to all potential participants. They asked participants to contact the principal researcher for more information. Based on the snowball sampling strategy, I asked participants to share a similar target group (e.g., working migrants in Ljubljana). I also followed criterion-based purposive sampling to ensure that participants were eligible (inclusion criteria are provided above).

I also used maximum variation sampling to ensure that the sample reflects a diverse group regarding work position, responsibilities, skill level, professional experience, and ethnicity (Patton, 2002). The interviews were conducted with two groups – G1 (migrants not from ex-Yugoslavia) and G2 – (ex-Yugoslavs) to analyze if geographic, cultural, and linguistic proximity influence migrants' experiences of exclusion and inclusion and their knowledge hiding behavior. Furthermore, participants were employed in multinationals and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana and performing within different professional fields and departments. Finally, HR managers were interviewed to obtain more profound insight into the causes of the cultural minority workers' exclusion, inclusion, and their impact on knowledge hiding at work.

#### 4.4.3 Sample description

Interviewees were divided into two groups. G1 (e.g., other migrants) who have zero knowledge and experience of Slovenes' culture and social norms when coming for working. G2 (e.g., ex-Yugoslav group) consists of neighboring countries (e.g., Serbians and Macedonians) who share the history and people who know Slovenes' culture, language, and social norms. Those factors may affect the more accessible inclusion of the migrant from the former Yugoslavia into Slovenians.

That could help determine whether geographic, historical, linguistic, and cultural proximity prevents migrant employees' perceived exclusion and engagement in knowledge hiding behavior. Both groups of participants count the precisely equal number of informants.

In table 5, the total number of the interviewed participants is provided. It was interviewed 40 young migrants, 18 young migrants from the former Yugoslavia, and 22 young migrants from other foreign countries. Group I is named "other migrants" and includes participants from different national and ethnic backgrounds, including Canada, India, Turkey, Costa Rica, North Africa, Ukraine, Russia, Chile, France, and China. Group 2 includes participants coming from Serbia and Macedonia (Representatives of Croatia and Bosnia & Herzegovina refused to take part in the research).

*Table 5: Descriptive information of the sample*

	<b>Total participants:</b>	<b>Working in MNC</b>	<b>Working across the faculties of the University</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Average age</b>
<b>G1 – "other" Migrants</b>	3 from EU countries	3	0	2 females 1 male	27 years
	19 from other countries	12	6	9 females 10 males	28 years
<b>G2 – Ex-Yugoslavs</b>	13 Serbs	4	9	7 females 6 males	27 years
	5 Macedonians	0	5	2 females 2 males	28 years

*Source: Own work*

The data collection took place in two waves. The first attempt at data collection was made from the 27<sup>th</sup> of November to the 20<sup>th</sup> of December of 2019 year. The second attempt took part from May to December of the 2020 year. The descriptive information on the informants' profiles is presented in Table 6. All informants were named "M" by order of the interview. Participants from M1 to M19 were part of the first wave, and participants from M20 to M40 were part of the second wave. Table 6 presents participants of two groups of migrants described above.

The sample was gender and age-balanced in the first attempt of interview gathering. I interviewed 19 persons, among who were 11 males and ten females. The participants were aged between 26 and 30 years, with an average year of 27 years old. Their working length counts from 1 to 5 years. I interviewed participants working at the University of Ljubljana and multinational companies based in Ljubljana, Slovenia. In total, in the first attempt at collecting data, I could interview 13 other migrants and 6 Balkans. Participants currently work in marketing, research, design (game, team), architecture, politics, engineering, and IT. In study 2, it was interviewed 21 migrants, among who were ten males and 11 females. The participants were aged between 26 and 30 years, with an average year of 27 years old. Their working period counts from 1 to 5 years. Group II consisted of

9 general migrants and 12 Balkans. Participants currently work in the field of marketing, research, architecture, game, and team design. The participants' descriptive information on their social and cultural background is illustrated in table 7 below.

*Table 6: Study 1 - Descriptive information about interviewees' background*

Group of migrant	Participants	Gender	Country	Occupation	Org type	Working period	Age
<b>G1 – 1 attempt</b>	M1	MALE	TURKEY	MARKETING	MNC	2YEAR	27
	M2	FEMALE	UKRAINE	RESEARCH	UNIVERSITY	4YEAR	30
	M3	MALE	CANADA	GAME DESIGNER	MNC	3.5 YEARS	30
	M4	FEMALE	GERMANY	IT	MNC	4.5 YEARS	28
	M5	MALE	INDIA	GAME DESIGNER	MNC	2.5 YEARS	30
	M6	FEMALE	FRANCE	POLITICS	MNC	2YEAR	27
	M7	MALE	COSTA RICA	GAME DESIGNER	MNC	3YEAR	28
	M8	MALE	TURKEY	ENGINEERING	MNC	2YEAR	29
	M9	FEMALE	UKRAINE	ARCHITECT	MNC	2YEAR	29
	M10	FEMALE	CHINA	TEAM DESIGNER	MNC	3YEAR	30
	M11	MALE	NORTH AFRICA	RESEARCH	UNIVERSITY	4YEAR	28
	M12	FEMALE	RUSSIA	ARCHITECT	MNC	5YEAR	29
	M13	MALE	CHILE	RESEARCH	UNIVERSITY	2YEAR	30
<b>G1 – 2 attempt</b>	M14	FEMALE	CHINA	RESEARCH	UNIVERSITY	3YEARS	30
	M15	FEMALE	CHINA	MARKETING	MNC	5YEARS	27
	M16	MALE	TURKEY	RESEARCHER	UNIVERSITY	2YEAR	28
	M17	FEMALE	INDIA	RESEARCHER	UNIVERSITY	2YEAR	28
	M18	MALE	COSTA RICA	MARKETING	MNC	4YEARS	26
	M19	FEMALE	CHILE	RESEARCHER	UNIVERSITY	2YEARS	30

	M20	FEMALE	RUSSIA	ARCHITECT	MNC	4YEARS	27
	M21	MALE	GEORGIA	ARCHITECT	MNC	4YEARS	30
	M22	MALE	FRANCE	MARKETING	MNC	3YEARS	30
<b>G2 – 1 attempt</b>	M23	MALE	MACEDONIA	RESEARCH	MNC	3YEAR	30
	M24	FEMALE	SERBIA	RESEARCH	UNIVERSITY	2 YEAR	28
	M25	FEMALE	SERBIA	RESEARCH	UNIVERSITY	3 YEAR	28
	M26	FEMALE	SERBIA	POLITICS	MNC	3YEAR	29
	M27	MALE	SERBIA	RESEARCH	UNIVERSIT	3YEAR	30
	M28	FEMALE	MACEDONIA	RESEARCH	UNIVERSIT	5YEAR	30
<b>G2 – 2 attempt</b>	M29	FEMALE	MACEDONIA	RESEARCHER	UNIVERSITY	2YEAR	29
	M30	MALE	MACEDONIA	RESEARCHER	UNIVERSITY	4YEAR	29
	M31	FEMALE	SERBIA	RESEARCHER	UNIVERSITY	3YEAR	30
	M32	MALE	SERBIA	RESEARCHER	UNIVERSITY	5YEAR	30
	M33	MALE	SERBIA	GAME DESIGNER	MNC	1 YEAR	26
	M34	MALE	SERBIA	GAME DESIGNER	MNC	1YEAR	26
	M35	FEMALE	SERBIA	RESEARCHER	UNIVERSITY	2YEAR	28
	M36	MALE	MACEDONIA	RESEARCHER	UNIVERSITY	2YEAR	27
	M37	FEMALE	SERBIA	RESEARCHER	UNIVERSITY	3YEAR	28
	M38	FEMALE	SERBIA	MARKETING	MNC	3YEAR	27
	M39	MALE	SERBIA	RESEARCHER	UNIVERSITY	2YEAR	27
	M40	MALE	SERBIA	RESEARCHER	UNIVERSITY	3YEAR	30

Source: Own work

Finally, I conducted interviews with middle-level managers regarding managerial and intercultural competencies, implemented inclusive practices and tools, working style preferences to obtain more profound insight into the relationship between minority workers' knowledge hiding and workplace inclusion. It was interviewed middle-level managers of multinational companies. Managers were grouped in Group 3 and labeled as "P1, P2, P3". Group 3 consisted of 3 middle-level managers, 2 of them were females and one male. Table 7 below provides information on managers' backgrounds.

*Table 7: Descriptive information about managers' background*

Group of Interviewees	Participant	Tenure (year)	Current position	Org. type	Origin	Gender
G3	P1	3	Middle-level manager	MNC	Slovenia	Female
	P2	2	Middle-level manager	MNC	Slovenia	Male
	P3	15	Middle-level manager	MNC	Slovenia	Female

*Source: Own work*

## 4.5 Quality of the research design

Qualitative research follows various standards to ensure its quality. Such are validity, credibility, and trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Erikson & Kovalainen, 2008; Koch & Harrington, 1998). Lincoln & Guba (1985) have explored different types of trustworthiness in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The four principles of Guba & Lincoln (1985) were followed throughout the data collection period.

### 4.5.1 Credibility

Credibility ensures that given information by a unit of analysis is provided accurately, is true, credible, and believable. Lincoln & Guba (1985) refer to different techniques to ensure credibility

#### Prolonged Engagement

Lincoln & Guba (1985) describe the stage of prolonged engagement as spending sufficient time in the field to learn or understand the culture, social setting, or phenomenon of interest (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Participants received a consent form by e-mail along with the interview protocol a few weeks before an actual interview has been conducted. Informal meetings and conversations have been made to ensure some causality and familiarity between the participants and the researcher. Likewise, a short introductory and idea exchange phase has been made before the actual interview date. This process ensured the researcher's familiarity with the study context and the familiarity of the participants with the carried-out research. Moreover, prior familiarity with the participants could help to maintain trust between the researcher and participants.

#### Interviewing technique and process

To ensure the credibility of the data and knowledge of the research interview protocol, I have conducted pilot interviews to improve the overall process using the interview protocol, time management, and the overall running of the interviews. Also, to ensure focus on central themes.

I have developed the codebook and questionnaire matrix that allowed me to ensure traceability of the research process. Any external observer could observe and check the progress or quality of the research over a while.

I made a draft of the interview outcomes and have sent it to participants. Afterward, we discussed whether they adopt and agree with the outcomes of the research. More attention was paid to the themes that needed further investigation and verification. Likewise, participants have rejected certain conclusions and themes. For instance, the theme “social inequality,” as one reason for experienced and perceived workplace exclusion among migrant and Slovenian employees, could not be considered and explored further. Participants have rejected answering interview questions regarding social inequalities and their influence on knowledge hiding intention. Consequently, I had to move this theme in future research directions.

#### Collection of the referential adequacy materials

Guba (1981) suggests collecting any additional relevant resources to enhance the credibility of the data (Guba, 1981).

I obtained additional materials, including secondary data analysis and field notes. Those documents could provide additional information regarding the research context, findings, and interpretation of results. These materials were collected and used during the different levels of data analysis.

#### Member checks

When data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions are tested with those groups from whom the data were initially obtained (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The transcripts were sent to the participants to overview, check, and provide feedback on any misunderstandings. It was asked to assess the adequacy of the data. Additionally, further discussions and follow-up questions with additional thoughts were discussed via e-mail and Skype.



#### 4.5.2 Transferability

Transferability implies that findings can be generalized and applied in a different empirical setting. Furthermore, research can achieve transferability when findings provide deep and rich enough information and describe the studied area and research problem (Riege, 2003).

##### Purposive sampling to form a representative sample

As outlined in section 4.5.2 on the sampling technique, I used a combination of four purposive sampling techniques to ensure that the selected respondents reflect the diversity in terms of the variety in the type of job occupation, their responsibilities, and organizational types. I employed a combination of stratified purposive sampling (quota sampling), snowball sampling, criterion-based, and maximum variation sampling strategies to recruit potential participants (Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 2002).

I targeted potential individuals from two work settings: multinational companies and the faculties of the University of Ljubljana. Based on the snowball sampling strategy, participants were asked to share a similar target group (e.g., working migrants in Ljubljana). In addition to purposive sampling, I also followed criterion-based purposive sampling to ensure that participants were eligible. The primary condition of the inclusion criteria was that young migrants had to be aged between 26-30 years old, employed in multinational companies, and the faculties of the University of Ljubljana for five years or less. I used maximum variation sampling to ensure that the sample reflects a diverse group regarding work position, responsibilities, skill level, professional experience, and ethnicity (Patton, 2002). Additionally, this study provides all information, including the number of participants, the type of organization, data collection procedure, and interview period. It was conducted to studies in different periods (see section 4.5).

#### 4.5.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to guarantee that the findings are repeatable if the inquiry occurred within the same cohort of participants, coders, and context. Therefore, the codes developed were reviewed and checked by my supervisors during discussions and meetings. Additionally, the findings were supported by quotes and a regular review of data.

#### 4.5.4 Conformability

Conformability refers to the objective evaluation of the provided information.

##### Triangulation

The following two triangulation methods were employed to ensure the confirmability and credibility of the findings: triangulation of the sources and theoretical triangulation.

Triangulation of the sources examines the consistency of different data sources from within the same method. I used four sources (interviews, external documentation, field notes, and informal

conversation). The interviews were conducted with two groups of employees (G1 and G2) and managers (G3). In this way, I ensured data triangulation.

Theoretical triangulation was achieved by exploring different theoretical perspectives, such as the inclusion framework and social dominance theories (Shore et al., 2011, 2018; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Theories were applied in the study to generate a questionnaire matrix, conceptual model, propositions, and theory-driven codes and themes.

### Reflexivity

A single researcher conducted the analysis. I am aware that a single investigator is a limitation of research since the study could not ensure investigator triangulation, which is considered good practice (Mathison, 1988). To assess the interpretation of the findings, I have developed a reflexive journal to write down the concerns about appeared sensitive themes or any potential ethical considerations that could affect the data analysis. These were discussed with my supervisors throughout the meetings. Reflections and feedbacks were given in both written and verbal format.

## 4.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical consideration refers to ensuring informed consent and protecting participants' anonymity (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Erikson & Kovalainen, 2008), but also refer to the entire research process, including the formulation and design of the research topic, access to the chosen sample, gaining data, analysis, and writing it morally and responsibly (Saunders et al., 2009).

Where participants are concerned, there are several main concerns regarding their protection: they refer to informed consent, voluntary participation, and confidentiality (Erikson & Kovalainen, 2008).

1. **Informed consent:** According to the Framework for Research Ethics of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), updated in 2015, research subjects must be informed fully about the purpose, methods, and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails, and what risks, if any, are involved.
2. **Voluntary participation:** Also, according to the ESRC, research participants must participate voluntarily, free from any coercion. In addition, respondents must have the right to withdraw participation at any point or to leave some questions without an answer (The British Psychologist Society, 2009).
3. **Confidentiality:** To ensure participants' confidentiality is an obligation for the researcher. Savin-Baden & Major (2010) stated that confidentiality involves autonomy, privacy, and keeping a commitment, as well researcher's honesty and respect towards his or her respondents during the research process. A researcher behaves on his or her participant's behalf; therefore, a researcher has to demonstrate autonomous respect to the participants' given information, their needs and secure the respondents' trust towards the researcher. Therefore, to ensure confidentiality, the researcher must maintain an honest reciprocal relationship with his or her respondents, ensure participants' privacy, and provide informed consent (Petrova et. al., 2014).

This research followed the above-described principles of research ethics to ensure the participants' confidentiality. Thus, according to Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008) research ethics, I claim that:

- **Voluntary participation:** I ensure that all participants have taken part in this study voluntarily. Participants were invited individually to take part in the research by sending them an invitation letter. I have sent an invitation for participation by e-mail (see appendix 2) to young migrants aged between 26-30 years and employed in multinational companies and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. Fortunately, all of them have agreed to take part in the research within the days. I have provided a detailed explanation of the research aim to all of the participants. I clarified their voluntary participation in the interview; likewise, their right to stop the interview process in the case of inconvenience. I also asked for permission to make an audio recording along with the field notes.
- **Informed consent:** Between researcher and interviewees was established agreement, which considered the respectful relationship between them. Additionally, I ensured the trustfulness of the interpreted data. The informed consent form was interpreted and confirmed orally by the participants (see Appendix 3). I have clarified to the participants their rights to stop the interview anytime in case of inconvenience and not understanding the purpose of the question. We, with respondents, also have maintained an agreement to allow me to make an audio recording of the interviews. I explained to participants that the interview or provided information will cause no harm to them. Even though I explained that I understand that the shared information or stories may cause emotional reactions when narrating them.
- **Anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality:** The participants were treated equally, despite their gender, age, culture, and origin. Anonymity and confidentiality of participants were guaranteed. Confidentiality was strictly enforced throughout the whole research process in compliance with the research ethics standards described above. Anonymity is hard to achieve when conducting qualitative research since the researcher knows his or her respondents. Therefore, I could only guarantee my participants' confidentiality and ensure that their identities, including their names, and working organization names will be protected in front of their managers, supervisors, and the public.

I have done the coding of the participants to ensure their anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality of the responses. For example, the young migrant workers were labeled as M1, M2, M3, etc. The managers were labeled as P1, P2, P3. I only coded their names and working organizations' names to ensure confidentiality. The alphabetic and numeric codes for the participants were given following the order of the conducted interviews with them. The decision to name participants using those numeric and alphabetic codes was made by the researcher. Even though participants participated in the discussion on this issue.

## 5 RESEARCH RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the research. Essential topics to explore were related to young migrant workers' perception of workgroup and workplace exclusion and inclusion. Their impact on their knowledge hiding behavior at work, the social and cultural differences and similarities between groups of other young migrant workers and former Yugoslav young migrant workers,

potentially affected the experiences of the perceived workplace exclusion-inclusion and their impact on knowledge hiding behavior, and its facets. It also presents findings on the current inclusive organizational climate, including inclusive HRM practices, diversity, and inclusive leadership.

Section 5.1 demonstrates the triggers of the experienced perceived workplace exclusion of young migrant workers, including those from the former Yugoslavia from their Slovenian co-workers and/- or superiors at the multinational companies Ljubljana and across the different faculties University of Ljubljana. The sections present four triggers of the perceived workplace exclusion that affected young migrant workers' knowledge hiding from the Slovenian colleagues and superiors.

Next, section 5.2 presents findings on young migrant workers, including those from the former Yugoslavia, to hide work, project, and task-related information, knowledge, or expertise to avoid workplace exclusion and promote inclusion of Slovenian colleagues and superiors. The sections represent two triggers of the perceived workplace inclusion that affected their intention to hide knowledge from the Slovenian colleagues and superiors at work.

Section 5.3 presents findings on the examined differences and similarities between groups of other young migrant workers and former Yugoslav young migrant workers. It also discusses how cultural and social characteristics (like culture, nationality, language, and age) affected young migrant workers' knowledge hiding behaviors from the Slovenian colleagues and superiors in multinational companies based in Ljubljana and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana.

Section 5.4 presents how young migrant workers, including those from the former Yugoslavia, deal with and cope with those existing challenges and barriers at the workplace. Findings indicate perceived experienced exclusion and desire to inclusion influenced youth migrant workers, including former Yugoslavia knowledge hiding behavior. Young migrant workers have hidden the requested knowledge differently than those (e.g., playing dumb, rationalized, and evasive hiding) emphasized in the literature on knowledge hiding.

Finally, section 5.5 introduces current inclusive policies and practices implemented in multinational companies based in Ljubljana and across the different faculties of Ljubljana. The section analyzes inclusive HRM policies and practices and inclusive leadership skills that are not well-developed by the examined organizations.

## **5.1 Workplace exclusion and knowledge hiding**

Findings in section 5.1 demonstrate the relationship between young migrant employees, including former Yugoslavia knowledge hiding and perceived workplace exclusion. Knowledge hiding was found to occur as a consequence of perceived workplace exclusion. Four themes related to the perceived workplace exclusion were examined that caused young migrant workers' knowledge hiding behavior to their Slovenian colleagues and superiors at multinational companies in

Ljubljana and across the university's different faculties Ljubljana. Rejection of the ideas, the poor relationship, the language barrier, and the created majority were identified to influence knowledge hiding behavior.

The analysis shows that young migrants engage in knowledge hiding behavior since the Slovene colleagues rejected their ideas. They hid knowledge due to a lack of personal ties with Slovenian colleagues. The language barrier could cause difficulties in establishing a relationship, distinct and segregate from the colleagues. Therefore, young migrant workers, including those of the former Yugoslavia, hide the requested knowledge from the Slovenian colleagues. The created majority resisted exchanging the knowledge among cultural minority and majority group members.

Consequently, the young migrant workers engaged in knowledge hiding behavior to their Slovenian colleagues and respective superiors. Table 8 below represents fine-grained themes for causes of knowledge hiding. In particular, the relationship between knowledge hiding and perceived workplace exclusion was examined.

*Table 8: Fine-grained themes for knowledge hiding as a consequence of perceived workplace exclusion*

Theme	Theme description	Exemplary interview quote
<b>Rejection of the ideas</b>  [A situation when a person experiences that his or her idea is not accepted]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to experienced criticism</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to feeling disengaged</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to Negative perception</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to experienced rejection of the idea</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to perceived ignore when sharing idea/ knowledge</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to perceived lack of respect towards minorities ideas</li> </ul>	<p>"When unacceptance or judgment of my ideas had happened, even when I thought the idea is worth to heed. That has affected me. After that, I don't collaborate with them on an idea anymore. Consequently, whenever I am asked to share some work-related idea, I refuse it."</p> <p>"My suggestions have been rejected. Afterward, I am very cautious about expressing my opinion. That has been resulted in hiding my future ideas or prospects whenever I was asked to share some."</p>
<b>Poor relationship</b>  [Lacking connection, identification, personal sympathy, and empathy towards a colleague or senior]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to personal dislike, having personal grudges, personal disidentification, and disconnection with majority members</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to experienced lack of appreciation and rewards for own (e.g., minorities) work</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to experienced conflict with majority member/ group</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to experienced/ feeling personal and social tension</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to feeling lack of attachment</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to feeling discrepancies</li> </ul>	<p>"The main reason for hiding my knowledge and experience was a poor relationship with colleagues."</p> <p>"It's mostly personal reasons behind knowledge hiding behavior."</p> <p>"You feel there are some tensions. When there is no personal attraction between a colleague and me, I naturally do not give</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to feeling judgmental attitude towards minorities ideas</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to perceived lack of social connection with the majority group</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to perceived lack of engagement</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to perceived disbelief and distrust towards minorities ideas</li> </ul>	him the requested explanation or information."
<b>The language barrier</b>  [A situation when the language barrier creates difficulties in communication]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to poor English language</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to feeling disengaged, disconnected, and miscommunicated due to the English barrier</li> </ul>	"English has been a problematic fact with my colleagues. I don't share some technical or hard-to-explain information with them."  "If I am unable to effectively articulate my thoughts in a language that I'm not comfortable with, I will be hesitant to share knowledge."
<b>The created majority</b>  [The most significant part of the members of the working group. The number representing more than half of the total group members]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to being in minority/ idea being in the minority, dominance of the Slovenians decision, being in a minority position against group decision</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to arising incoordination</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to arising segregation</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding decision due to difficulties to impose an idea</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to experienced lack of participation in decision making</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding intention due to task interdependence and task relatedness</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding triggered by conformity to the majority's decision</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to accomplish the task/ project</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to the importance of reaching the common goal</li> </ul>	"At the beginning, I was frustrated as all work was group-based, so it is challenging to make individual steps, especially when you are the only foreigner in the group of Slovenians. You have to reserve yourself from the expression of some points and ideas. That's intentional. Because the result depends not only on you but also on the other team members, you can't control this."  "I want the best for the group. If I know that four other my Slovenian group members won't agree with me, with my ideas. Then I won't present them."

*Source: Own work*

### 5.1.1 Theme I: Rejection of ideas

More interviews with participants revealed idea rejection as the first determinant of perceived workplace exclusion that has affected minority members' engagement in knowledge-hiding behavior to their Slovenian colleagues and respective managers at multinational companies and across the university's different faculties in Ljubljana. Interestingly, minorities argued that they had difficulties sharing their knowledge with Slovenian colleagues. Once shared ideas and

knowledge were rejected by Slovenian colleagues, the national and linguistic background difference was due to slight acquaintance. Some fascinating stories emerged throughout the interviews.

Turkish engineer working at the Slovenian MNCs for already a year (M8), Ukrainian architect working at the Slovenian multinational company for a year (M9), and Russian architect working at the Slovenian multinational company for four years (M12) narrated that it is challenging to be cooperative and helpful to the Slovenian colleagues. Slovenian colleagues did not appreciate, respect, perceive positively, and, in the end, reject their shared ideas or knowledge. Respondents explained that they felt offended by their Slovenian colleagues.

The 28 years old Turkish engineer, the 28 years old Ukrainian, and the 30 years old Russian architects shared that their job is concerned with working artfully on creating something new. Their responsibilities are related to construction and design. Furthermore, they explained that engineering requires teamwork, interpersonal and communication skills, creativity, and innovativeness. They found it hard to collaborate an idea with the Slovenian colleagues. They have clarified that it is challenging to work in a team of Slovenians to come up with some fresh creative ideas. They have regretted that experiences of idea rejection could determine their engagement in knowledge hiding behavior for the future. Creativity is a vital skill in the engineering and architectural profession. They have to design awe-inspiring buildings.

Mainly, they have noticed that it is challenging to bring something new if this idea or suggestion hasn't corresponded with Slovenian colleagues' perception and thinking way. In addition to this, they perceived that it would be easier to collaborate and provide help if they would be of Slovenian origin. They clarified that they have never heard some stereotypical or discriminatory attitude towards them due to their national or ethnic backgrounds. However, they believed that one of the resistances of their idea or expertise had not been accepted by the Slovenian colleagues: the difference in national background and perception of different knowledge and ideas. They furthered that, in general, it would be easier to maintain relationships and communication if both representatives came from similar national and linguistic backgrounds.

They believed that factors like the difference in national background and perception of knowledge affected diverse ideas. Moreover, those factors could trigger *unacceptance and rejection of the ideas* provided by Turkish engineers [M8], Ukrainian [M9], and Russian architects [M12]. That being a reason, respondents M8, M9, and M12 reported that their ideas have *been rejected, not accepted, and respected* during the working process by the Slovenian team members influenced their future actions. Young migrants engaged in knowledge hiding behavior since they thought their ideas would be rejected in the future by the representatives of the majority group members. They have shared that they regretted the typical behavior of hiding knowledge. Since they believed that if the proposed prospect was heard, it could add value to the working project they were engaged in. M8, M9, and M12 stated this as follows,

*«I have noticed that it is difficult for Slovenians to accept different perspectives or ideas. That is not that easy or quick for the Slovenians to accept you and your opinion when you are a foreigner. There was disengagement due to the difference in our perspectives. For example, suppose I do not*

*have such positive expectations about the project outcome. In that case, I will point to this directly and present a different angle on how the project can develop further. However, a team member from Slovenia has criticized me for being more positive regarding the project outcome. So, my suggestions have been rejected. Afterward, I am very cautious about expressing my opinion. That has been resulted in hiding my future ideas or prospects whenever I was asked to share some» (M8, M9, M12).*

An in-depth interview with the 29 years old Serbian political analyst working at the Slovenian MNCs for almost two years also revealed that an experience of idea rejection could affect a migrant's future decisions and trigger engagement in knowledge hiding behavior to her Slovenian colleagues. She has stated that it is challenging to be collaborative with Slovenian colleagues. She described a situation when she worked on the development of the project with a Slovenian colleague.

A Slovenian colleague showed a judgmental attitude, disrespect, depreciation, ignore, and unacceptance towards the proposed ideas or perspectives of a young Serbian migrant colleague throughout the working process. In the end, the minority's proposed ideas have been rejected by her Slovenian team member. Idea rejection has stimulated the barrier between her and the majority group member - to cooperate less actively in the future and intentionally hide any knowledge or information requested from her.

Young Serbian policy analyst has explained that her job responsibilities are related to strong interpersonal and communication skills, comfortable speaking, and confidence when providing presentations and reports on the findings. Working as part of a team is crucial and essential when she works as a political analyst. She deals with producing or carrying out duties by two or more members working together. Moreover, you have to research different kinds of political topics, collect and analyze data. Ultimately, you should be able to predict political, social, and economic trends, assess cultures, political ideologies, and values, and in the end, present unbiased reports. In this regard, she clarified that her profession must be collaborative and provide mutual assistance for achieving a common project goal. In a word, a Serbian migrant explained that her profession required a lot of teamwork. That means striving for development and ensuring a competitive advantage. According to her words, there was no room for knowledge hiding since both group members realized that integrating the different ideas could result in something great.

However, her working experience with a Slovenian colleague [idea rejection and unacceptance] could affect her engagement in knowledge hiding behavior. She clarified that Serbia and Slovenia are two representative countries of the former Yugoslavia. She said that besides many similarities in culture and language with the Slovenian nation, Slovenian people perceived Serbians as aggressive, attacking, proactive, and loud compared to Slovenians. She assumed that those perceived differences by both representative group members could affect a Slovenian colleague's expressed relationship with her. M26 believed that it would be much easier to maintain relationships and communication if both representatives came from similar national and linguistic backgrounds.



As a consequence, ideas have been rejected. That could determine a Serbian migrant's engagement in an intentional knowledge hiding behavior for the future whenever she would be asked to share any kind of information, idea, or expertise. The following quotation proves this,

*«If I see that my co-worker doesn't have respect for me or my ideas, that affects my willingness to share my knowledge with him. When I am in a kind of situation, my mood goes down. Next time when they come to me for help, I can't help them how I was helping them in the past» (M26).*

Related to the above-given stories, other participants – the 28 years old Costa Rican game designer and the 30 years old Chinese team designer working at the same Slovenian MNCs for more than two years, have described their experiences of knowledge hiding due to misperception and rejection of their ideas and prospects by the Slovenian colleagues. Costa Rican and Chinese respondents reported that collaboration with Slovenian colleagues is challenging. The young game and team designers described a situation when she developed the project with a Slovenian colleague. Their propositions got criticized and not accepted by most group members (e.g., Slovenians). Eventually, the young migrant designers proposed ideas got rejected. The experienced rejection could cause less knowledge sharing for the future. M7 and M10 started to cooperate less actively with Slovenians and intentionally hide their ideas or skills when asked to share one.

They narrated that they were criticized for *proactively imposing their ideas* on Slovenian members. They perceived that their Slovenian colleagues got offended by their proactivity, which affected migrants' ideas to be rejected by the Slovenian colleagues. M7 and M10 hesitated to contribute and share any idea that the Slovenes had once not accepted. The proposition was worth paying attention to. Young designers have explained that their profession must be collaborative and creative. Moreover, the Chinese team designer added that mutual respect and assistance for achieving a common project goal are essential. To this end, it is essential to realize that integrating different ideas could result in something great.

Related to the above-given narratives, experienced idea rejection, and unacceptance could affect young migrant workers' engagement in knowledge hiding behavior to their Slovenian team members. As a consequence, young migrants' ideas have been rejected. They clarified that they probably had to follow the Slovenians suggestions to filter out ideas before presenting them to the group. However, this suggestion could not do much. Immigrants did tend to hide any kind of requested knowledge for the future. Since they remembered that they got criticized and rejected once. The following quotation by M7 and M10 justifies that,

*«When unacceptance or judgment of my ideas had happened, even when I thought the idea is worth to heed. That has affected me. For example, once I have proposed my ideas for the project, general ideas. I would say what I think or something that we can try or improve. Even though I thought the idea and general point is great, my Slovenian colleagues got a negative perception. Sometimes it may seem that I am going too much into others' business. That is not only the different approach we have. That affected me. After that, I became more careful what the amount of information I give them. I mean, I won't actively push my ideas into Slovenians in the future. After that, I don't*

*collaborate with them on an idea anymore. Consequently, whenever I am asked to share some work-related idea, I refuse it» (M7, M10).*

Like the migrants working at the Slovenian multinational companies, young researchers M2 and M14 have faced knowledge hiding due to experienced idea rejection. The 30 years old Ukrainian and the young Chinese researchers working at the faculty for three years explained that when they tried to express their perspectives regarding the project, they were directly told that they got a false vision of the project's incorrect way of resolving it. Such directness, criticism, and rejection of their ideas were perceived negatively by the young researchers.

They explained that the researcher's job is related to problem-solving, critical thinking, exploring new issues, rapidly transfer knowledge and skills to the community. Thus, a researcher must be a cooperative, open-minded, and creative person. They got frustrated by the experience of their ideas being rejected since it was the beginning of their profession. They furthered that they could not understand how to work as a researcher if they would not fully express their ideas and propose a different vision of the project developed. The key to a great joint project is integrating different ideas that could have an excellent result.

Experienced rejection and perceived criticism affected young migrant researchers' engagement in knowledge hiding behavior to their Slovenian team members. They made it clear that they intended to hide the requested knowledge or perspectives for the future in the working process with the Slovenian team members. Since they thought they didn't deserve to be criticized and rejected, especially at the beginning of their career. When everything was so new and exciting, they got stressed and tensioned by that experience of idea rejection. That involved knowledge was hidden in the subsequent team discussions. The following quotation by the M2 and M14 testifies to that,

*«I had an issue. I had my vision of doing things. My colleague tried to listen. But she directly told me she doesn't see a point in my idea. It was the wrong way of doing things. I perceived it as she was ignoring my ideas. It just affected the expression of my ideas and thoughts in the next meetings. That's when I became more reserved about them. It was very evolutionary – first I got criticized, that was the falling of my ego, and next time I was very reserved, very stressed to bringing up my ideas again» (M2, M14).*

More interviews with the researchers from the university faculty, but at this moment with the representatives of the former Yugoslavia have unveiled that disrespect and idea rejection have influenced minority members' decision to engage in knowledge-hiding behavior. The 28 years old Serbians (M24) and (M35), and the 27 years old Macedonian (M36) researchers working in Ljubljana for three years have narrated that they hesitated to contribute and share the ideas that once were not accepted and included in the decision by the Slovenian team members.

Young migrants have related that they always returned what they received from other members. Therefore, they reciprocated with knowledge hiding in response to the perceived exclusion due to idea rejection. The respondents described a situation when they have hidden requested knowledge from a Slovenian colleague due to their previous experiences of being rejected at the workplace by a Slovenian colleague. They narrated that many discrepancies and disagreements between their

and Slovenians' points, ideas, opinions, perspectives have intensified their feelings of being a foreigner, migrant working in the Slovenian company where Slovenians predominated in the workforce. Mainly, Serbian and Macedonian researchers referred to the factor that they were from the Balkan countries. They explained that the former Yugoslavia member countries have a tense historical and political background. And sometimes Balkan people are not perceived positively by the Slovene people. Therefore, they have related the ideas got rejected because young migrants were not of Slovenian descent.

They discontinued cooperation and shared ideas and prospects with the Slovenian colleagues since their propositions got rejected once. They concluded that they declined the request the next time they were asked for help or sharing some work or task-related information. Consequently, they have confirmed that they hid knowledge from the Slovenian team members; afterward, they were judged and rejected. Most likely, perceived negatively and rejected due to national and ethnic background. The following quote justifies that,

*«Discrepancies and judgmental attitude that I have experienced towards my ideas and points of view by Slovenian colleague(s), often made me think, “is it because I am not Slovenian?” I saw that my ideas were not included in the decision or even rejected. Subsequently, I reserve my points of view when I am asked to share some. I am afraid that I can't tell them that and find the right words. Ideas are hidden, as before they were rejected. That leads to exclusion at the workplace, of course» (M24, M35, M36).*

An in-depth interview with the North African researcher from the university faculty has unveiled how difficulties in reaching Slovenians out and put forward his ideas in the working process with Slovenians have resulted in apathy towards his colleagues and workplace. As a result of that indifference, a 28 years old North African migrant engaged in knowledge-hiding behavior to his Slovenian colleagues. He has emphasized that he just gave up on sharing his ideas. That has resulted in holding back his insights whenever he was asked to share them. He has furthered that he somehow separated himself from making input related to the academic projects.

M11 working in Ljubljana for four years, has narrated that he became apathetic and demotivated towards his workplace and colleagues. During his working years, he realized that his contribution and ideas were not taken seriously, accepted, and included in the decision by the Slovenian team members. He clarified that he is the only foreigner in his department. All other researchers and his colleagues were Slovenians. M11 didn't feel like a part of the group, a group of Slovenes. The respondent described his attitude towards his workplace, where Slovenians predominated. He referred to suppressing emotions such as concern, interest, excitement, motivation, or passion. Those feelings led to the perceived exclusion and isolation of the M11. He has continued that he did not care one way or another if the project wouldn't be developed from another perspective. As a consequence, North African researchers stopped sharing their ideas. After that, he rejected delivering an idea to a Slovenian colleague whenever he was asked to share his point or idea.

He furthered that it was easier to propose ideas to the Slovenian colleagues at the beginning of his working history. It was a new opportunity for him to work, study, and research in the European Union country, Slovenia. That sounded very exciting and promising a lot of opportunities. As well,

he made clear that he was very eager to maintain relationships with the Slovenes. Since he loved to learn new cultures, languages, habits, social norms, and behaviors that were different from his culture. However, similar to other migrants' narratives, M11 also appeared difficulties, opposition, rejection, and ignoring his ideas to the difference in nationality, ethnicity, and language.

The discrepancies and disagreements between him and Slovenians during the work-related project discussions have intensified his perception of a foreign group representative. He referred to be perceived as an out-grouper, foreigner, non-Slovenian speaker, non-Slovenian origin. Slovenians preferred to communicate with each other Slovenian. He continued that his apathy and demotivation increased because he was the only foreigner working in the Slovenian predominated workforce. Therefore, he assumed that his ideas got rejected by the Slovene colleagues because the young migrant was not of Slovenian descent.

So, M11 concluded that he became more oriented on developing his professional skills, obtaining more knowledge and experience in his field of research interest, gaining as much as possible from having an opportunity to work in a European Union country. Accordingly, he started to pay less attention to the colleagues and that his ideas were not accepted and integrated into the project development process. That involved engagement in knowledge hiding behavior. He immediately denied responding to all Slovenians requests to share any kind of idea, prospect, or expertise. M11 justified it,

*«At someday, when you start to figure out differences and you realize that my suggestions or ideas are not taken seriously. When you don't feel like a part of the group, you just stop caring about it. I mean, I don't care anymore if the project does not develop from a different perspective. In the beginning, maybe I was more into it, but after three years, I don't feel so welcomed. I became more selfish towards my goal. Therefore, I have distanced myself from the colleagues, as well as contributing to them or projects. I hid requested idea or expertise from them even though my profession requires a lot of collaboration and contribution» (M11).*

Similarly, Macedonian researchers working at the faculty for about two years described that they felt demotivated when their ideas got rejected by the Slovenian colleagues. Experience of idea rejection has affected their intention to engage in knowledge hiding behavior to their Slovenian colleagues. Working as researchers at the faculty, Macedonian respondents have clarified that their primary duties are to collaborate on an idea for better project development. However, they have narrated that teamwork appeared to be the most challenging experience for them.

The 29 years old Macedonian respondents [M29 and M30] narrated that they got rejected by the Slovenian team members since their *ideas were not accepted and integrated into the project development*. They believed that their ideas were worth to listen, analyze and integrate into the project development. As they described, their ideas were rejected, and more simplistic propositions were accepted. This experience led to perceived exclusion and, afterward, to knowledge hiding behavior to Slovenian colleagues.

M29 and M30 have narrated that they became apathetic towards contributing and collaborating with a workgroup since they perceived that the existing environment couldn't respond to their

professional demands. That was an opposite claim to M11's expectations when he decided to apply for a researcher job in Ljubljana for better opportunities than North African universities. According to their experience of rejected ideas, Macedonian researchers concluded that team members lacked essential skills, competencies, and knowledge to understand their propositions and perspectives. M29 and M30 shared that afterward. They hid the requested knowledge from the Slovenian colleagues. Since they perceived that the requestor wouldn't be able to appreciate their ideas or shared information. The following quotation testifies to that,

*«Definitely, yes, I have hidden my knowledge. At my workplace, it happened quite often that I had to hide the requested knowledge. Especially at the beginning of my career when I got rejected by my Slovenian team members. There made me apathetic towards contributing to work that had to be done. I thought the proposed idea worth accepting and analyze. It feels that well-thought-out ideas are swept under a rag in some instances in favor of a simplistic and more straightforward approach. As a result, I hid requested idea or perspective from a person that I perceived lacked important competency needed to understand and execute the advice I have given» (M29, M30).*

The 30 years old Canadian participant (M3) described that he felt very optimistic in regards to his new job and colleagues at the beginning. He was well-disposed, dynamic, and eager to make new contacts, originate new ideas, learn new things, improve his game designer skills, and share all the ideas and knowledge with the Slovenian colleagues. Working with different nationalities and temperaments, people have influenced his contribution and reciprocity to Slovenian colleagues. Canadian respondent narrated that several experiences of his rejected ideas affected his motivation and initiation to cooperate and generate new ideas with Slovenian colleagues.

His work is associated with creating the core features of a video game, designing the characters in the game, and assisting with the storyline. The game designer has to be collaborative, creative, and innovative. He has to have efficient communication skills and critical thinking. M3 has explained that besides, the team meetings and discussions had to seek to find something more creative and impressive actively. The meetings usually went slowly, adynamic, and unproductive. Whenever he tried to develop something new, fresh, and creative, he and his ideas got rejected, not accepted, not appreciated, and evaluated negatively. He expected that the new propositions would be evaluated and accepted. By that time, typical team meetings and gatherings started to look like a routine. He continued that perceived routine led to the loss of his interest and motivation to be active, participative, creative. Slowly, he just faded away.

The routine and Slovenian social norms triggered his passivity, disengagement and led to perceived exclusion and isolation from the team members. Like all respondents, who migrated from regions of the EU, Asia, Eastern Europe, North Africa, or the former Yugoslavia, young Canadian respondents engaged in knowledge hiding behavior due to idea rejection, demotivation, perceived exclusion, and isolation from the Slovenian team members. He hid the requested propositions and ideas for the following meetings since he believed they would be rejected and not appropriately appreciated. He decided to accept and adapt to the environment, working team, instead of questioning, bringing new ideas, and improving things.

*«When I started here, it was new and exciting, and I suddenly started to think about all the things I wanted to change, giving ideas left and right. And then I got a bit obstacle - my ideas have not been accepted and appreciated by my Slovenian colleagues. Consequently, I stopped sharing them as much as I was when they were fresh and new. I did engage in knowledge hiding behavior to my Slovenian colleagues since I realized that I had to stop questioning them, bringing the ideas, and changing things. I quickly just had to accept and adapt as supposed to try to improve or change that routine» (M3).*

The 26 years old Serbian colleagues of M3, two male game designers working at the Slovenian multinational company for a year, have reported a similar experience of engaging in knowledge hiding behavior due to their ideas have been rejected by the Slovenian colleagues. They have explained how the difference in personal characteristics, presenting and proposing ideas could affect their engagement in knowledge hiding behavior. The Serbian respondents have reported that they got judged due to their attacking approach. They clarified that they were too pushy and active when proposing the idea. Since they just got too excited about the ideas they just came up with.

They got a warning from the Slovenian colleagues. In the end, their ideas got rejected. Consequently, that experience has affected them and triggered engagement in knowledge hiding behavior in the future. They referred that it is not easy to disengage from the team, work, and make individual steps. However, whenever they were asked to share some ideas or perspectives, Serbian game designers just stated they were not knowledgeable. The following quotation testifies that,

*«My Slovenian colleagues have rejected few experiences of my ideas led being less initiative and less attached to them at my workplace. As a result, I always decline requests to share some knowledge or information with Slovenian colleagues» (M33, M34).*

Other participants are from an Eastern Europe region. The 27 years old Russian and the 30 years old Georgian architects migrated to Ljubljana about four years ago due to working perspective. They narrated the difference in mindset between them and Slovenian colleagues affected knowledge hiding behavior. Young migrants clarified that the old-fashioned vision of the Slovenian colleagues could influence their intention to hide knowledge and perspectives from them in the future. Young architects related that their profession requires a lot of creativity, modernity, innovativeness regarding design and create something valuable and contemporary. The ideas have to be innovative, fresh, modern to respond to today's architectural design requirements. The proposed perspectives have to address new architectural standards and requirements.

The young respondents found it challenging to deliver an idea to the Slovenian colleagues. They have narrated that the ideas diverged, were not accepted, and were recognized as a potential for project design. They pointed out that they are young expatriates who migrated to Slovenia since this country, as a representative of the European Union region, provides more opportunities and higher quality of life than their home countries. The vision and architectural design-related knowledge of the Slovenian colleagues are a bit old-fashioned. Their vision has outdated from current architectural design standards.

They had furthered that when discrepancies arose in the team, someone has to accommodate. They thought that those had to be them since they were migrants [foreigners] in Ljubljana. Consequently, M20 and M21 have engaged in knowledge hiding behavior to their Slovenian colleagues. They refused to provide any requested perspective, insight, or idea by the Slovenian colleague. Since they realized that the proposed ideas again would get rejected, they didn't want to experience the same. They were not able to change the way how Slovenians perceived the object. M20 and M21 testified to this,

*«Well, I can say that I have stopped sharing my knowledge and ideas because my colleagues are way too old-fashioned. I found it difficult to deliver my ideas to them since they were not perceived positively. When you see that person argues and opposes your ideas, especially when both of us have different points of view, then someone has to accommodate. That, someone, was me. Lately, we have not had a good atmosphere in there, so I do not communicate with them at all» (M20, M21).*

#### 5.1.2 Theme II: Poor relationship

Another reason minority members deliberately hid knowledge from their subordinates is a lack of personal relationships and interaction among minority and majority groups. Lack of social connection has strengthened minority members' feelings of exclusion and disengagement and affected their intentions to engage in knowledge-hiding behavior. Migrants admitted that poor relationships with Slovenian colleagues and superiors could trigger engagement in knowledge-hiding behavior. Therefore, they engaged in knowledge-hiding behavior to their Slovenian colleagues and executives. Furthermore, interviewees closely related their knowledge hiding intentions been caused due to personal dislikes and lack of personal identification with majority group representatives.

Costa Rican respondent (M7) works as a game designer in Slovenian MNC for more than three years. He shared that he was very cautious about sharing knowledge with a Slovenian colleague. He felt challenged or even threatened when a colleague, who is not in a very close work relationship with him, asked to share any information. This respondent narrated that he is usually reluctant to provide colleagues with the requested information when he does not know those colleagues at a deeper personal level. Moreover, he added that he doesn't want to bond so strongly with Slovenian colleagues since he perceived they categorize others regarding their ethnicity, nationality, or language. He continued to feel very distinct in communicating, behaving, and proposing ideas as a Costa Rican. He remembered that once he got judged by a Slovenian colleague that he is too active and pushy when proposing an idea. Furthermore, he has to filter his ideas and mitigate his behavior before engaging in work-group-based collaboration with Slovenians.

Costa Rican employee claimed that he hid knowledge from the Slovenian colleague since he doesn't feel comfortable sharing knowledge with her. He reciprocated with the knowledge hiding due to being criticized because of his behavior, communication, etc. That may be perceived differently due to different mentality, country, culture, nationality, and temperament. Furthermore, he admitted that he felt fear that a colleague would use that knowledge to improve her skills and

perform better quickly. Since he believed that his ideas were worth it to be listened to and recognized, M7 furthered that he would find it easier to pass on requested knowledge when there is a sense of support towards each other during the work-related interaction. He is encouraged to engage in an open and friendly discussion. As the following quote explains,

*«It's mostly personal reasons behind knowledge hiding behavior. Mostly because I don't particularly appreciate that person, so then I do hesitate sharing this requested knowledge because of the personal grudges» (M7).*

Similarly, an interview with a university researcher (M2) revealed that she was very reluctant to share knowledge with a Slovenian co-worker since she does not demonstrate sympathy and empathy towards the colleague during their academic interaction. When some personal barriers have occurred, she tends to hide requested knowledge. She further has proceeded that personal relationship has an impact on her attitude towards colleagues. When she has experienced some dislike towards her made her very reluctant to give requested knowledge and/- or information to show support or help the colleague. Additional discussion with that Ukrainian participant has demonstrated that a colleague to whom she hid request knowledge once didn't provide help to her too. She simply reciprocated. She explained that she just didn't feel comfortable providing help or support to her Slovenian colleague since she couldn't get help. She further argued that she doesn't feel comfortable sharing knowledge with a person. She doesn't feel connected and identified. This is stated as follows,

*«If I am not in a good relationship with a colleague, of course, I won't be so eager to help or explain things him or her if I don't engage and identify with a person» (M2).*

Serbian participant (M31) works as a researcher at the faculty of the University of Ljubljana, Similar to the story of the Costa Rican respondent (M7), she mentioned that she finds it easy to hide requested knowledge or information when there is no support towards each other during the work-related or informal gatherings and interactions. She felt it is not encouraged to engage in open and friendly discussions and relationships with Slovenian colleagues. Further in-depth interviews with Serbian migrants unveiled that a person eventually becomes uncomfortable giving help when he or she doesn't know colleagues or managers at a profoundly personal level. Likewise, when there is a poor personal relationship between minority and majority colleagues, it is easy to decline requested queries when colleagues or superiors approach with a question in mind. The following quote by M31 testifies to this,

*«At the beginning, we all had experienced exclusion at the workplace. The main reason for hiding my knowledge and experience was a poor relationship with colleagues because, for me, relations at work are the most important to feel comfortable and free» (M31).*

Another factor making knowledge hiding as an impact of workplace exclusion and segregation of the minority members is Slovenians' *lack of trust towards newcomers or foreigners*. Turkish informant, working as an engineer in a multinational company, mentioned that Slovenians tend to distance and close themselves regarding newcomers, especially those of different nationalities. M8 has furthered that he had difficulties expressing himself since he didn't know how that would be



perceived by the Slovenian colleagues in the different socio-cultural contexts and surroundings. Huge barriers and distance were created due to perceived distrust and fear by the Slovenian colleagues towards a newcomer, being an out-group member. This respondent further argued that as a new employee and a non-Slovenian working with the Slovenians, he was unsure what sort of expertise and skills they expect from him since Slovenians did not develop better personal and business relationships with each other. Consequently, he was shy to express himself, pretending he doesn't know what his colleague is talking about and hiding knowledge from them. To this end, informant M8 has stated that

*«At the beginning, people ask you things, and at the beginning, you have a problem expressing yourself. I was shy to say what I think, because I was new to the country, at the job. To some extent, you just feel distrust or disbelief towards you» (M8).*

Interestingly, the respondent M25 narratives revealed that he was not happy to share a piece of important and valuable knowledge with his colleague since he didn't identify with a colleague. He could politely evade the requested query and hid the requested knowledge and expertise due to *personal dislike* towards that particular Slovenian colleague. Serbian participant has furthered that social tension among colleagues has resulted in an established poor personal and working relationship. Therefore, that triggered engagement in knowledge hiding behavior. In situations when he has not had working or personal experiences and interactions with a colleague, in the end, he will be reluctant to pass on knowledge to them when they request it. This respondent argued that it is a lack of emotional attraction that person experiences when sharing knowledge with colleagues you do not know personally. The following statement clarifies that,

*«You just feel there are some tensions. When there is no personal attraction between a colleague and me, I naturally do not give him the requested explanation or information. However, I refer to him kindly, like: “Hey, look at this wiki page or look at this document, can you please go read and then come back and then we will discuss” » (M25).*

Similar to the narrative of respondent M25, a Turkish informant working in the Marketing department in the MNC has shared his story on engaging in knowledge hiding behavior towards Slovenian colleagues due to *personal dislike* at the first time. The in-depth discussions with him revealed that he experienced a personal dislike for his colleague, saying that he did not have any feelings to help and answer the requested query. This respondent furthered that he did not have an opportunity to know this colleague at a personal level. He constantly interacted with him strictly regarding work-related issues. He never thought to engage in a closer relationship with a colleague what could support the build-up of the relationship with each other as persons.

He has complained that his colleague blamed him in front of the CEO, which fuels much more tension. Therefore, the Serbian employee narrated that he won't be willing to share any information or knowledge with him in the future. The following quotation is justification for that,

*«There was a case when my colleague was working, he asked some questions to me, and I dodged away saying that I wasn't working at that time. There was some personal tension between us. Later, as he didn't know how to proceed, he made a mistake and blamed me in front of management*

*that he asked for and didn't reply. He could have asked anybody else in our workgroups, right? It's just an example that you get to know people well with who you work. Consequently, if he asks for help or knowledge next time, I will readily decline it» (M1).*

### 5.1.3 Theme III: The language barrier

More interviews with minority employees have revealed the English language as another determinant of perceived workplace exclusion that affects minority members' engagement in knowledge-hiding behavior to their Slovenian colleagues and respective superiors. All of the minority employees work at MNCs in Slovenia, Ljubljana. The English language is used as the official working language in organizations. The English barrier between minority and majority colleagues emerged to be the most challenging issue when communicating about tasks or projects or, simply, during social gatherings. Poor English language as the primary communication tool has involved a range of problems and barriers for both sides of representative groups, as for minority members, so for majority members. Besides, minority members have explained that the language barrier could cause exclusion and differentiation to Slovenian colleagues.

An interview with the Costa Rican employee working as a game designer has revealed that difficulties in communicating well in the English language could minimize relationships and communication of the minority-majority colleagues. An interviewee had admitted that when he noticed language struggles by a Slovenian colleague, he became reluctant to share knowledge or ideas. He explained that since a colleague struggles to communicate in English, it would be difficult to explain some technical information that would be difficult to deliver to him. He stated this as follows,

*«English has been a problematic fact with my colleagues. I don't share some technical or hard to explain information to them» (M7).*

Like respondent M7, another participant (M35) working as a researcher has justified the above-narrated story. She had argued that she intended to hide requested knowledge or information many times when she was asked to share some since she did not feel comfortable sharing explain thoughts and information with a colleague. The following quotation justifies that,

*«If I am unable to effectively articulate my thoughts in a language that I'm not comfortable with, I will be hesitant to share knowledge» (M35).*

Compared to the knowledge hiding of the previous respondent, another minority employee has documented that he struggled to express himself in the English language. Serbian respondent working as a researcher simply declined all requests to share information or explain some work-related issues since he was not confident enough that his English was sufficient enough to share all his expertise. Consequently, that being a case, he simply evaded all requests by stating that the requested information is not under his expertise. The following quota testifies to this,

*«Yes, I have hidden my knowledge due to poor English knowledge. I knew I could not explain requested information fully, so I preferred to say that I am not expert in this» (M32).*

Moreover, one of the participants, working as a researcher, has mentioned that when they see that requested information or knowledge will be hard to share in English, they just do not participate. They have experienced struggles and difficulties explaining and expressing their thoughts and similarly have experienced difficulties getting information from Slovenian colleagues. Consequently, that has led to reservation of the idea, information, knowledge, thoughts that they, minority members, have considered hard to transmit, explain, or be understood and interpreted. Therefore, when participants knew that sharing and giving some ideas or information will be difficult due to their English skills, they hold themselves. The following statements testify this,

*«Yes, of course, it has happened that I hid requested information from a colleague. I am not a good English speaker, so it's not easy to say all I want to, what I am thinking of, and all the things I want to do. So, I don't have the tools (enough language skills) to express myself fully. Sometimes I want to say something, and I can't find a way to say it, can't find words for it. When I was thinking of an idea, I had difficulties expressing it in English» (M24).*

Ukrainian researcher working at the research center has maintained that ideas remain unshared and unspoken due to poor English knowledge. Often, she had a situation that she was asked to cooperate during group meetings and gatherings and share some ideas and insights. She was unable to provide them since she felt not confident speaking English. Consequently, until she was thinking and trying to formulate her thoughts and idea in English, discussions were going on, and her ideas and thought stayed unshared. She has stated this as follows,

*«For example, I often have an idea, but the language barrier makes it difficult to express it. It takes some time to formulate my idea in English. By that time, the discussion continues, and I am late with my expression. So, in the end, the idea stays unshared» (M2).*

Participants have described that the English barrier has affected their intention to hide knowledge or information from the Slovenian colleagues. Moreover, difficulties in expressing themselves in English hardened to make and be in a cozy relationship with majority dominant group members. The interviews with M17 showed that young Indian researchers felt not confident, weird, and opinionated talking or explaining herself in English. Moreover, the English barrier could influence her intention to hide knowledge or information from the Slovenian colleague. Often, she felt that she was asked to give some help or share some information when a colleague was late for the group meetings and gatherings. She had to decline the request since she could not provide all the necessary information in English. The following quotes justified this,

*«Yes, I had to hide the knowledge because of language barriers. I was not able to explain my ideas. And couldn't maintain the good relationship with my colleagues and felt like the odd one out» (M17).*

The 30 years old Chilean respondent, working as a researcher at the university, has stated that she has hidden her knowledge due to differences in language, culture, and mentality. Linguistic and cultural differences have created barriers and difficulties in maintaining a relationship with Slovenian colleagues. She narrated that once, she was asked to help in solving some task in English. She had to decline this request since she could not provide all the needed information in

English. Besides, M19 has argued that the language barrier also hardens the communication process with a person who shares different cultures, languages, and mentalities. She has stated this as follows,

*«Difference in culture, mentality, and language create various difficulties in maintaining a relationship. Those difficulties and differences made me hide my viewpoint regarding some issues. Besides, poor language knowledge has served as a real barrier to maintain a relationship with Slovenian colleagues. Likewise, the language barrier could affect the expression of myself» (M19).*

Another participant of Chinese descent working as a marketer for five years has described how the language barrier has influenced her engagement and communication with Slovenian colleagues. *Lack of English language skills* has affected her intention to hide requested information. The respondent M15 narrated that majority of her colleagues are Slovenians and Balkans. She furthered that she feels slightly distanced and disconnected from her colleagues since Slovenians and Balkans can understand each other more accessible and better than her. Likewise, the language barrier makes her be segregated from the working group. Moreover, additional interviews with M15 revealed that she found it challenging to share the requested knowledge or information since it is challenging to communicate in English. She stated this as follows,

*«Majority of the employees are either Slovenians or from Balkan area. They all speak the Slovenian language. From the beginning of my employment, there was a language barrier between us. That made me feel a bit distanced and segregated from the majority group members. Additionally, even though the working language is English, I found it difficult to communicate. Sometimes, language barriers appeared triggered by hiding some knowledge or information. Since I know, it will be hard to explain it and to understand» (M15).*

#### 5.1.4 Theme IV: The created majority

The final component of the young migrants' perceived workplace exclusion is the created majority role. That determinant of perceived workplace exclusion could affect minority members' engagement in knowledge-hiding behavior to their Slovenian colleagues and respective superiors. Respondents have specified that the workforce in their operating companies mainly consists of Slovenian employees. For instance, M3 has shared that the multinational company he works for consists of 300 employees, I guess, where 250 are Slovenians, and the rest are foreigners. That's more than 75% of the workplace that consists of Slovenian employees. All of the respondents have clarified that their work is very much team-based. In contrast, Slovenians dominated (e.g., the working team consists of 6 persons, where 4-5 of the members are Slovenians, rest of the group migrants). That made it difficult for the young migrant workers to feel included and integrated into the Slovenian team.

Incoordination that teamwork involved was converted into the perceived exclusion and segregation of minority members from their Slovenian colleagues at the workplace. Minorities have emphasized that the dominancy of the Slovenians in the working team stood out from the team. They have furthered that it was difficult to impose their ideas or opinions regarding the

working projects. That has resulted in the *lack of coordination* and *inconsistency* due to different views and ideas among minority and majority groups—specifically, the inability to use different kinds of ideas and expertise together smoothly and efficiently.

Often, minorities had to conform to the decision taken by the majority of the team - Slovenians. As a consequence, conformity and incoordination avoidance involved young migrants' engagement in knowledge hiding behavior. Whenever they were asked to share an idea or opinion, they preferred to hide them since they understood that Slovenian team members would decide. By the time, they could not see the point to argue their ideas on. Slovenian colleagues are not used to working in a diverse workforce and prefer to communicate with each other. That, of course, affected migrants' exclusionary experiences and their intention to hide knowledge from the majority group members.

The created majority in the working group can have a strong influence over minority members and his or her points and insights, especially if the majority of the group are Slovenian team members. M2, a young Ukrainian researcher, working at the faculty for four years, has narrated that it was tough for her to adapt to the new environment and job at the beginning. Since she is the only foreigner in her department, most of her work consists of group projects. So, she has to deal with young Slovenian researchers who represent the majority of the working group. She explained that she doesn't like to participate in group projects since it's challenging to make individual steps, develop an idea, design, or analyze the project. She would do if she worked individually, according to her desire. She added that her perception and understanding of the topics are different compare to her Slovenian colleagues.

She furthered that she wants the best for her team. When she knew that three other of her team members wouldn't agree with her, with her ideas, then she wouldn't present the ideas that she is requested to share. They are a group. They work as a group. She clarified that the results depend not only on her but on the whole team. They agree on one idea and then work on it. She wouldn't present an idea when she knew Slovenian team members wouldn't accept it. In this regard, she perceived hiding an idea equaled losing this idea. That's how she saw it. The majority of the Slovenian colleagues came up with one idea, and we stick to it. She preferred to follow the team's decision since she perceived herself as an out-grouper in the group of Slovenians.

She typically chose to follow and conform to most of the group norms, culture, and mindset. Experiences of hiding her ideas and not contributing fully to the project's development disturb the Ukrainian respondent. She complained that the researcher's main aim is to process and disseminate information and knowledge, add value to the field of study, create new opportunities, and foster creativity. She has a problem with that. Since she can't contribute to the discussion, the project thoroughly as other her colleagues lead the discussion and the project. She explained that she doesn't feel comfortable hiding the ideas from the team members. However, it is challenging to argue her points and go into controversy.

According to the narration of M2, she hid her knowledge and ideas regarding the project and agreed on with the majority's ideas and decisions since *ideas diverged*. Perceived created majority could lead to the knowledge hiding and decreased contribution to the team. Besides the factor that

she works as a young researcher and is obligated to distribute the information and expertise, the superiority of Slovenians could trigger minority member's hiding her ideas from the team. M2 has stated this as follows,

*«At the beginning, I was frustrated as all work was group-based, so it is challenging to make individual steps, to act selfishly, especially when you are the only foreigner in the group of Slovenians. You have to reserve yourself from the expression of some points and ideas. That's intentional. Because the result depends not only on you but also on the other team members, you can't control this. If the group fails, you fail. You have to try to adjust to each other, to understand each other, try and learn how to work with each other» (M2).*

Relatively, other young researchers of Serbian descent, working at university faculty for two years, have pointed out that they hid knowledge due to the created majority in their working groups. They have admitted that as representatives of Balkan culture, they can find many similarities to Slovenian culture and people. They have related to the shared history, language, socio-cultural norms, and people. However, they further proceeded that when they came to Ljubljana three years ago, they had a period [phase] when they had to adapt to a new country, culturally different colleagues, and researcher work Ljubljana. Slovenians are similar to Serbians, so it's a different country, and Slovenians have different habits, different cultures than Serbians that have to be learned. Besides socio-cultural similarities, Slovenians are different from other Balkan people and communicate and work with other people. Respondents narrated that Slovenians are nice, but they do not come that close to a foreigner. All those external and internal factors created some tension for young Serbian researchers to communicate and express their ideas and knowledge when asked to share an idea or expertise during the team meetings and discussions.

More interviews with young Serbian researchers have revealed that they applied for the young researcher position since Slovenia is more advanced than Serbia. Ljubljana is more culturally diverse. That means a migrant can quickly improve his or her intercultural competencies, communication skills. He or she can grow faster professionally and personally. Additionally, salaries are much higher than back in their home country - Serbia. Young migrants disclosed that they came to Ljubljana to improve their professional qualifications and skills to obtain more knowledge in their research interests. However, more and more interviews have unveiled that it is hard to work with Slovenian colleagues for young Serbian migrants.

They have narrated that they work primarily on group projects. They gave an example of it – the group consists of 5 members, where 4 of the members are Slovenians and the 5<sup>th</sup> one. They continued that they perceived being a minority in the working group. First of all, due to their originality. Since they are only representatives of Serbian descent in their working groups, they don't speak the Slovenian language. They perceived being separated from the group due to those factors. Moreover, the created majority by local colleagues made it harder to communicate and contact Slovenians since they prefer to talk to each other in the Slovenian language.

Other narratives revealed that Slovenians are dominating, pushy, and competing in the group. That makes it hard to communicate an idea or knowledge. Minorities had difficulties contributing to the discussion, to the project. They claimed that they couldn't contribute as many ideas as a person

leading the discussion and the project. That's a problem for them since they applied for this position to obtain better knowledge and skills. They complained that they must learn teamwork, cooperation, and collaboration and integrate diverse ideas and knowledge as young researchers.

The respondents clarified even if they didn't get along with someone, they had a project to work on with him or her. Sometimes, the Serbian young migrant workers just want to finish the project and don't want to complicate things. They explained that they had to go over all the barriers that exist. They wanted the best for the group. They wanted the project to be accomplished before they present it to their supervisors. And when they knew that there would be a lot of communication, collaboration, different idea acceptance, and appreciation barriers, they preferred not to present my ideas in the next group meetings.

M27, M35, M39 proceeded that when they knew that four other group members would not agree, they would not accept it with their ideas. Then, young Serbians lost the motivation to develop new, creative, novel ideas to share their cultural or linguistic perspectives. Besides that, they hid an idea or perspective on the project from the Slovenian group members. They perceived this group barrier as losing an idea that may give a different angle of vision to the project. The following citation testifies to that,

*«I want the best for the group. If I know that four other my Slovenian group members won't agree with me, with my ideas. Then I won't present them. I mean, yeah, you can present an idea, but there is no point when you know that your group members won't accept it. Needless to say, that I am a minority in the group. First of all, because I am the only representative of Serbian descent in the group, secondly, I don't speak the Slovenian language.*

*Consequently, Slovenians are dominant, pushy, competing in the group. I mean, that makes it hard to contribute to that discussion, to the project. I can't contribute as many ideas as a person who is leading the discussion and the project. Therefore, I tend to hide my ideas or expertise, even though I think it would give a different angle of vision or perspective to our project» (M27, M35, M39).*

Like young Serbian researchers, Macedonian researcher, working in Ljubljana at the faculty already for five years, has shared her experience of knowledge hiding as conformity to the created majority by the Slovenian colleagues the discussion of the work project. M28 has narrated that she is the only foreigner in her department. She knew that despite perceived similarities between Macedonian and Slovenian cultures as the representatives of the former Yugoslavia, she would have to handle some communication and work barriers. Since she was more used to individual work, she has never learned how to work in a team on team projects in her previous researcher job in Macedonia. She applied to that researcher position in Ljubljana since she thought to obtain better skills and competencies, work in the team, cooperate, and collaborate with other team members. Additional to that, she thought she would get the advantage of global networking opportunities and working internationally.

As she assumed, working with Slovenians looked hard. She clarified that at the beginning, it was challenging to communicate and work with Slovenian colleagues. Lacking experience in teamwork and, specifically, in an intercultural team has affected her experiences of maintaining

contact and working with Slovenians in the early stages of her new job in Ljubljana. She started to feel stressed and tense during the working process with other Slovenian researchers. She shared that she had to adjust herself to the Slovenian communication and working manner. She explained that she had to adapt to the new environment, new colleagues, new culture, job obligations, and new requirements. All those external factors affected collaboration with team members.

She explained that being only one foreigner in the working team resulted in her perceived segregation and isolation from the majority of the team members – Slovenians. She became less confident in her ideas, knowledge, skills. She had difficulties following the rhythm of the Slovenian debates and project development. Created majority by the Slovenian colleagues put tension and pressure on her. She became less opinionated in her capabilities.

Consequently, she decided to conform to the Slovenians' thinking way and perception of how to do things. That involved intentional hiding of M28's ideas and expertise. She stopped collaborating with Slovenian colleagues an idea. Therefore, the superiority of Slovenians and the difference in professional development could affect Macedonian young migrant's engagement in knowledge hiding behavior. The following statement emphasizes that,

*«In Macedonia, I was not so used to teamwork. Additionally, I have never worked with an international group. In the beginning, it was challenging to work with Slovenians. It was breaking all my internal structures. I needed to fit myself in their working and communication manner. Plus, to learn how to work in a group, in a new environment. That's not that I was resisting knowledge, but it was a different way of thinking that I don't have. It was difficult. I became less confident in my ideas and skills. So, I never communicated an idea to the Slovenian team members when I was asked to share them. I obeyed the decisions they made» (M28).*

Identically to all stories of young migrants working as researchers at university faculty described above, two other participants (M14 and M16) have shared the similar story that they had to hide knowledge and idea from the Slovenian team members of the created majority by them. Like other young researchers' experiences, the 30 years old Chinese and 28 years old Turkish researchers also tended to hide knowledge because they perceived themselves to be in the minority in a group of Slovenians. They explained that they could not go against the decision of the majority. Since they are working in Slovenia, they thought that makes more perspectives for Slovenian employees rather than for migrants.

Like the story of respondent M2, the young migrant researchers (M14 and M16) specified that the researcher's primary duty is to distribute information and knowledge, add value to the field of study, and foster creativity. They emphasized that the *superiority of the Slovenians* hardens young migrants' knowledge transfer and idea creation process. Since they realized that they are temporal workers who have to *collaborate with locals*, that made it harder to argue an idea and go against the decision taken by the majority of the group – Slovenians. They explained that they couldn't get as much as needed from team projects or contribute as fully as their Slovenian colleagues. Since Slovenians are locals, feeling more comfortable and familiar in that working environment. Besides, they are numerically more, leading the discussion and the project. Consequently, M14 and M16 likewise confirmed that despite their duties at work, they hide requested knowledge or



idea during the teamwork due to the superiority of the Slovenians. The following statement justifies this,

*«Yes, I hid my knowledge since during teamwork I could not stand out in the group. I was the minority in the group of Slovenians. I could not go against the decision of the majority» (M14, M16).*

Like young researchers' narratives, multinational company migrant workers likewise tended to hide their knowledge due to the created majority by the Slovenian colleagues in the working team. M7, M9, and M18 have shared that they already feel like a minority since they come from a different national, cultural, and ethnic background, besides speaking a different language. The created majority by the Slovenian colleagues was perceived as a motive for separation, segregation, detachment, and exclusion of the young migrant workers. Additionally, that disengaged and detached minorities from sharing and coming up with new creative ideas.

More interviews with Ukrainian, Chinese, and Costa Rican employees (M7, M9, M18) have revealed that the created majority has triggered minority members' engagement in knowledge hiding behavior. Expatriates migrated to Ljubljana for a better quality of life, more opportunities, and higher salaries than their home countries. They narrated how difficult it is for them to go through work-related discussions with Slovenians from different cultures, especially when local colleagues create a majority in the group. That affected migrants' knowledge sharing and idea generation. Slovenians preferred to discuss each other projects in Slovenian. That made migrants feel segregated and excluded from the group.

Moreover, the superiority of Slovenians influenced young migrant workers to share the idea of expertise. Therefore, it stemmed that the created majority by the Slovenian colleagues triggered minority members' engagement in knowledge-hiding behavior for the subsequent team discussions. The following quote explains this,

*«Hiding knowledge occurred more often when there is a lot of people in the group. Specifically, I always work with a group full of Slovenian colleagues. When many people are included in the project, it gets hard to impose your point of view. Moreover, slowly you start to feel separated and detached from the group since you realize that you are only non-Slovenian in Slovenians. The superiority of locals has influenced my intention to intentionally hide an idea from Slovenian team members» (M7, M9, M18).*

In contrast to the experiences of young migrant workers at the Slovenian multinational companies described above, hiding knowledge to their Slovenian colleagues, a young Canadian migrant (M3) has experienced knowledge hiding to his CEO. He had to hide his expertise from the groups of the directors and chiefs of the department. Someone that is very high up, C level. The one who has power and opinion that other people agree with him.

M3 works as a game designer in the Slovenian MNC for 3,5 years. His role is to point out what will work better and what simply won't work for this particular project, give feedback, and proactively give and think about how things could be done better and improved. M3 has

highlighted that his work is very much team-based. The CEO usually leads projects. And the decision is made by them as well. He furthered that disagreements take place a lot while working with the Slovenian superiors. He admitted *age, occupational status, working history, and national background differences*. According to his words, those dimensions affected his engagement in knowledge hiding behavior.

He said that the majority is created very quickly by people higher in the hierarchy who speaks more actively. He narrated that there was a situation when the majority was quickly forming around by the Slovenian CEO. He appeared as a minority in the group since he was only a young migrant co-worker having over three years of working experience among the Slovenian directors and chiefs of the department. He explained that it got harder to argue points on. As a result, he had to step back from his idea. Thus, he hid some ideas from his executives due to *perceived age, working history, and occupational status differences*. At the same time, he *perceived himself as a minority regarding his idea and national background*.

He furthered that he didn't share the majority's point of view or decision that has been made regarding the task that had to be solved. He has continued that sometimes in creative work when you are working on a feature like a game for a while, people quickly get less sensitive to that idea, and it takes some time for something new and fresh to come out. That is slightly excited to get everyone that this idea is better. He has faced the fact that he perceived himself as a minority in the group to his idea and national background. Consequently, he admitted that he usually tried not to contradict the group's decision as the project had to be done. He specified that he didn't see the point in arguing for an hour with people who led the project and had their ideas regarding it. Arguing didn't give anything, and he would spend time. So, often it's easier to get this stuff to be done.

However, that required stepping back from his ideas and points. It happened that he *conformed to the decision taken by the majority* of the team by the Slovenian CEO. It was surpassing the young Canadian migrant in professional status, age, working history, and origin. Consequently, M3 has experienced knowledge hiding regarding the game design project to his Slovenian CEO, a perceived majority of the group by a young migrant employee. The following quotation explains this,

*«My work is very much team-based. I mainly work with Slovenians. The majority can be created very quickly by someone higher in the hierarchies, speaking louder. Then you have a situation when the majority is quickly forming around you. In this turn, it's hard to argue your point. For example, a chief or director, a very high up, C level with power and opinion that other people agree with. It happened, I had to conform to the decision taken by the majority of the team by my CEO. It is hard to point my ideas or opinions out when the whole team agrees that decision should be taken even if I don't fully agree with it. I don't like going against the crowd» (M3).*

## 5.2 Workplace inclusion and knowledge hiding

Findings of section 5.2 show that young migrant workers, including those of the former Yugoslavia, respond to perceived exclusion strategically. They engage in knowledge hiding behavior to avoid perceived workplace exclusion and increase their perceived inclusion at the workplace. Two themes were examined to explain causes of knowledge hiding related to the perceived workplace inclusion, maintaining the relationship, and job security was identified to influence minority members, including those of the former Yugoslavia knowledge hiding behavior.

The experiences of the perceived exclusion, segregation, and isolation at work intensified the desire to belong and are included to the Slovenian colleagues and superiors at multinationals and across the different faculties of the University Ljubljana. Young migrant workers engaged in knowledge hiding behavior due to avoiding controversy and advancing relationships with Slovenian colleagues. They tended to hide knowledge to maintain better and healthier relationships with the Slovenian colleagues, avoid frustration, and perceive them negatively.

Besides, the young migrant workers, including those from the former Yugoslavia, engaged in knowledge hiding behavior since they desired to keep the job position. Job security reason was found to have a detrimental influence over cultural minority members' intention to engage in knowledge hiding behavior. Job security reasons enhanced young migrant workers' sense of the desired inclusion to the Slovenian colleagues and respective managers at multinationals and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. Table 9 below represents fine-grained themes for causes of knowledge hiding. In particular, the relationship between knowledge hiding and perceived workplace inclusion was examined.

*Table 9: Fine-grained themes for knowledge hiding as a strategy towards increasing perceived workplace inclusion*

Theme	Theme description	Exemplary interview quote
<b>Maintaining the relationship</b>  [To maintain the relationship at a satisfactory level. To avoid conflicts with a Slovenian co-worker or supervisor]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior to avoid disconnection, offensive reactions, conflicts from the majority group members and to keep a healthier and better relationship with majority members</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior to avoid frustrations, exclusion, and misunderstandings</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior to avoid push backs, rollbacks, negative perceptions</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior in turn to keep the friendship</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior to avoid offense from majority group members</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior in turn to keep team membership</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior to avoid competition</li> </ul>	<p>"It's simply I didn't tell him because it was not relevant for him to know at that particular moment. The information was not ready to be shared. Then it will create some frustrations at work and in our relationship."</p> <p>"To make what is the best for the relationship. That is why things are not shared."</p> <p>"Yes, sometimes you have to hide some part of knowledge maybe just because not to compete with your colleagues and to keep balance in the team (knowledge-wise)."</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior since the desire to keep the relationship</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior since being relation oriented</li> </ul>	
<b>Job security</b> [Having a job that is safe and there is a slight chance to be fired or lose it]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior in turn to keep the job position</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior due to status, power, authority, and hierarchical difference</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior since being (perceive the self as) a subordinate</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior since being a newcomer, junior, lacking experience and competencies</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior in turn to keep a good relationship with a supervisor</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior since the difficulties to get a job</li> </ul>	"Our project mainly was led by the supervisor, so he took major decisions on the project. So, he was saying what and how to do things. So, all different points I kept in myself."  "Due to perceived hierarchical differences and job security reasons, it is intentional that I hide requested knowledge or information from my executives."  "I was afraid to express my ideas and challenge them. I thought I would get fired and lost my job."

Source: Own work

### 5.2.1 Theme I. Maintaining the relationship

Keeping the relationship is a first determinant demonstrating the relationship between young migrant workers' knowledge hiding behavior and the perceived workplace inclusion. Qualitative narratives of young working migrants have demonstrated that hiding knowledge can also have a positive outcome. That is to achieve the sense of perceived inclusion to the Slovenian colleagues and superiors at multinational companies and the faculties of the University of Ljubljana. Analysis has shown that migrants tend to hide the requested knowledge and information to establish interpersonal connections and relationships with majority group members at work.

Interviews with M32 have unveiled that she has hidden information and ideas from Slovenian colleagues to *keep [a] healthier and better relationship* with them. Serbian participant, working as a researcher for a year, has shared that by caring about colleagues' feelings and the relationship between them, they have hidden information that was not ready to be delivered to the colleague. That might involve detachment, disappointment, and disengagement from colleagues. Consequently, she has decided to conceal some ideas that could affect and damage the relationship and bring frustration. The following statement justifies this,

*«It's simply I didn't tell him because it was not relevant for him to know at that particular moment. The information was not ready to be shared. Then it will create some frustrations at work and in our relationship» (M32).*

With the same intention, a German participant working in an IT department in MNC has shared that she hid her idea from a Slovenian colleague. She anticipated that provided idea would not benefit a colleague at that time of collaboration. Additional interviews with German respondents

revealed that she has resisted sharing an idea(s) with her Slovenian colleague since she had already maintained a good relationship with a dominant culture member. Therefore, she was able to achieve feelings of perceived inclusion and belonging to the colleagues. Therefore, she pointed out that ideas and additional information she possessed didn't ruin relationships and feelings of inclusion. She furthered that firstly, the idea was pointing to a different angle of the matter, and secondly, she did not want to challenge a colleague and make *disconnections*. Thereby, respondent M4 preferred to keep the maintained feelings of inclusion and belonging to a colleague of the dominant majority group and hid extra (additional) information from him. The following quotation explains this,

*«This is the case when we are discussing the idea... It's always a question – “will you challenge a person with more challenging work, with more complex staff?” When an idea is slightly different, most likely, you are cautious about spreading it out. Then you don't tell it (them). To make what is the best for the relationship. That is why things are not shared. Why tell him (them) something that won't benefit anyone at that stage? » (M4).*

To achieve a sense of inclusion and belonging was prioritized by the minority members. Working as a game designer in MNC, a Canadian participant clarified that sometimes he hid his knowledge or opinion when a Slovenian colleague asked him for feedback or evaluation of his work. He further explained that he did provide only partial information to the colleague to *avoid misperception* and *offensive reaction* by the Slovenian colleagues. Strong relationships enabled him to feel valued, supported, and respected at the workplace. Therefore, he preferred to keep his comment short and pleasurable to keep a good image of himself. Positive and inclusive relationships are essential. M3 respondents provided just partial information and feedback to keep a deliberately built relationship with majority group members. The following statement testifies that,

*«I do hold back some details when providing feedback to people. When feedback is received, my role is to assess it and see if it's valuable. Sometimes, the idea is good but may not fit for various reasons that could take too long to explain how it works. And sometimes, it can be too offensive to hear why certain decisions were taken. So, to save me time and image, I can keep my feedback on their idea short and sweet» (M3).*

Further interviews with other participants (M16 and M21) – the 28 years old Turkish researcher and 30 years old Georgian architect - unveiled the experiences as to how migrants have hidden the requested knowledge from their Slovenian colleagues in order not to compete and argue with them. M21 explained that she simply hasn't passed on the requested knowledge to her colleagues because she wanted to maximize her relationships and communication in the working group where Slovenian employees dominated. Thus, knowledge was hidden to create a better atmosphere and more positive and inclusive relationship in the working team and keep a better relationship with majority group representation. They have stated this as follows,

*«Yes, sometimes you have to hide some part of knowledge maybe just because not to compete with your colleagues and to keep balance in the team (knowledge-wise). To have a better relationship with colleagues» (M16, 21).*

In contrast to the above-given stories, other narrators (Macedonian researchers) have explained that they find it difficult to contradict people's ideas with whom they are in a friendship. They argued that they never felt any disengagement or exclusion from the Slovenian colleagues. On the contrary, the Slovenians were open and friendly to them from the beginning. However, they also had to work on themselves and build their image to be more acceptable, inclusive, and positive. They have furthered that they found it difficult to contradict and argue with people who are their friends. They considered wasting all of his efforts to build up an inclusive and positive relationship at work. Therefore, they preferred to conceal their ideas to keep away from the conflicts and broken relationships with their colleagues. The following citation justifies this,

*«There will be a point when my relations with colleagues affect the ideas I express. Sometimes it's hard to express yourself fully when your thoughts contradict ideas of people who are not only your colleagues but friends» (M29,30).*

Moreover, one of the Serbian interviewees, working as a researcher, has stated that he does conceal knowledge or information from a colleague, with the reason to avoid offensive reactions and do not spoil an achieved relationship with Slovenian colleagues. Building up strong relationships helps him feel more valued, included, and respected by the majority group members. Narratives revealed that he approaches a person to his or her character, capabilities, mood, and perceptions and adjusts information to him. He documented that he had situations when he had to hide requested information from a colleague to make him feel more comfortable and positive. The following statement manifests that,

*«I need to understand who I am working with, and what are their capabilities and perception, and to adjust my answer to that kind of person to achieve him to feel comfortable. I mean, I do withhold some part of the information requested just to keep a good relationship with him» (M27).*

Further interviews showed that young migrants sometimes hide the requested knowledge and/- or information to avoid interpersonal disconnections, misperceptions, and misunderstandings with cultural majority group colleagues. Failure to interact with the representatives of the dominant culture made minority employees find ways to avoid conflict, unpleasant emotions, and social tension. Therefore, to maintain a better relationship with culturally dominant group colleagues at work.

Participants (M24 and M31) have described situations where they try to evade sharing their historical and political topics with Slovenian colleagues. Coming from the neighbor (border) countries and the geographic area of ex-Yugoslavia, which has a part of shared history with Slovenian people, the young Serbian migrants couldn't dare express their opinions regarding political and historical projects since they feared being misunderstood by the dominant culture group members. She worked in Ljubljana. That affected her perception to contradict Slovenian colleagues at work.

Mostly, knowing that such situations *end up in conflict*, she holds herself back in expressing her opinion regarding some political issues, as she knows she will get emotional. It will be perceived not positively arguing or discussing this in the Slovenian context since she is a minority in the

current environment to argue her perspective. So, she holds her emotions and her opinion back whenever she is asked for it. So, she makes an effort to maintain healthier communication and integrates better with them. Consequently, she always tried to avoid misunderstandings and contradictions with Slovenian colleagues by simply hiding her knowledge and expertise regarding the working projects. The following quotations justify this,

*«My work is politically oriented. I tend to keep my opinion about politics and history to myself. The present surrounding (e.g., Slovenia) doesn't allow me to speak up my opinions. I probably know I will be misunderstood, as surrounding doesn't encourage me to talk about this. I avoid some conversation, expressing my thought since I know that Slovenians will have a different opinion. Due to the complex political history of this region, in general, we are careful when speaking about some political reflections. These attitudes can be misinterpreted or even offensive to somebody - that is the main reason. I have to make a bit effort in how to communicate with them or in the integration process» (M24, M31).*

Knowledge hiding was presented as a strategy to avoid push-backs and negative perceptions and promote better inclusion and belonging in the case of the following participants. Working as a team designer in MNC already for two years, Chinese respondent has shared her experience of how her initiatives and activities to propose new fresh ideas have received negative perceptions, judgment, and distance between minority and majority group members. She narrated an incident when she wanted to help with a project and share general ideas regarding it with a colleague from a different department. After few work-related meetings, she realized that Slovenians got a bit defensive when sharing something new with them. Besides being an outsider in the group of Slovenians, she furthered that that affected her knowledge sharing. Since she didn't aim to contradict and make problems with Slovenian colleagues, she intended to hide her knowledge and points for the next meeting. Knowledge hiding was employed to promote better inclusion and avoid negative perceptions and push-backs. The following citation justifies this,

*«For example, sometimes I would have some ideas for other projects, general ideas. I could just think about some idea to be cool and propose it in the meeting, and then I saw that it wasn't perceived as I expected it. I would say what I think or something that we can try or improve. Then they (Slovenians) got a bit more defensive - saying that either they already are doing that, or they don't feel comfortable hearing things like that. So, it has been perceived as if I am challenging their capabilities. That affected me. So, in the future, I will think carefully about how to present my ideas. Just to avoid negative perceptions from their side, or push backs from their side» (M10).*

In-depth interviews with the respondents (M10 and M22) revealed that minorities intentionally hid knowledge from their colleagues to avoid controversy and promote better inclusion. Besides, a Chinese participant (M10), working as a team designer in a Slovenian multinational company, has shared several challenges working with Slovenians. She has narrated that the company is open, and employees are encouraged to be active, open, inclusive, diverse, innovative, and creative. However, she experienced pushbacks and controversy from Slovenian colleagues due to proposing different ideas, correcting, or working with them.

Similar incidents made her think more carefully about what kind of information and knowledge to share with Slovenian colleagues and present them to be understood, perceived, and accepted better and more positively. She had described situations when it was hard for her to put forward her idea to a Slovenian colleague. Moreover, she got judgmental responses to her shared knowledge or expertise. She found that Slovenians perceive her help and sharing negatively, even offensively. As if she aimed to challenge them as persons and their expertise. In the end, she argued that it is not her goal to be in controversy or conflict with Slovenians. On the opposite, she opts to feel more included and belonged to the team. Thus, she has concluded that she preferred to *avoid controversy* and *conflict* and hide her opinions, ideas, or expertise from the cultural majority group colleagues. The following statement justifies that,

*«In my current company, I am encouraged to speak up. There is always room for discussion. But at the same time, I have to present them accordingly to others. For instance, when you challenge others in their way of doing things, or you think differently, some people may feel offended if you say it, especially when you step into their area of expertise or they achieved some results and if you point out that maybe you can improve on that. If you just speak straightforward and just don't raise it well, they take it as if I point fingers for their workspace. Some people may think that you just challenge them and their expertise. I do not aim to be in controversy with others. So, this is something that makes me sometimes reserve myself from giving advice or idea» (M10, 22).*

#### 5.2.2 Theme II. Job security

Job security was found to be another determinant of perceived workplace inclusion related to minorities' knowledge hiding. Narratives of the young working migrants have unfolded that they intentionally hid requested knowledge from Slovenian colleagues and supervisors because they felt that passing on knowledge to the co-workers and superiors could put their job positions in danger. A detailed discussion with several young migrants (M11 and M23) revealed that the difference in professional status among them and their superiors could influence their decision to hide knowledge. Since basically, the projects that they worked on were under supervision.

M11 and M23 explained that they had to follow superiors' requirements. Macedonian informant, working as a researcher at one of the faculties at the University of Ljubljana, described her experience working with a Slovenian supervisor. As a new employee, she subordinated herself to him and his decisions. She demonstrated her ideas and thoughts regarding the project according to her supervisor's demands and directions. Since she was a new employee, she was afraid to argue her points. Thereby, since she was very concerned about her job security, she preferred to hide her knowledge from the supervisor. Throughout the narratives, the working experiences of Macedonian migrant stories revealed that she intentionally hid requested knowledge from Slovenian managers because she felt that passing on knowledge that the managers could potentially deny could jeopardize her job. The following statement manifests that,

*«Our project mainly was led by the supervisor, so he took major decisions on the project. So, he was saying what and how to do things. I was demonstrating myself according to this. As I was working there on him, I agreed with his suggestions. If I had the opportunity to design a project*



*by myself, of course, I would do it differently. But it was not up to me. So, all different points I kept in myself» (M23).*

Similarly, another participant, working as a researcher at the faculty, has described his struggles to share his points regarding the working project with a Slovenian superior. A detailed discussion with a North African researcher (M11) unveiled that he remained reluctant to share with his supervisor an idea that could help him perform better in his profession, thereby contributing more effectively to help the team achieve its goals. North African representative has described that he works as a young researcher at the faculty, where the supervisor leads the project that he works on. He furthered that it is difficult to argue his points and ideas with a supervisor.

He stated that he felt he didn't have an opportunity to speak up and share his idea with a supervisor since he perceived the supervisor's complete control and power over the working project. He has stated that he usually *conforms* to the thinking way and working style of the Slovenian supervisor. Mainly, he tries not to contradict his supervisor as he wants to finish the project as soon as possible. Consequently, The North African young researcher intentionally hid requested knowledge from the Slovenian supervisor. He felt that passing on knowledge to the superior could trigger conflict between them and lose his faculty position. M11 stated this as follows,

*« "Are you allowed to decline the request of the supervisor? I didn't notice that this was an option." Whatever your supervisor says, you just do it. You, as an employee, really don't have this luxury of saying no to him. You can argue and discuss an idea, but you have to do that if he wants you to do something. It does happen a lot to do something and share a supervisor's viewpoint that goes against my idea or point of view. Sometimes, I may have made that this is not the best way to do things, and it could be done better. However, I have seen that it's a headache to reach across the table to the high seat, that it's too much. So, I just say okay, this is part of the least resistance. Somehow, the project has to be accomplished. So, afterward, I usually intentionally hid requested knowledge or an idea from my supervisor» (M11).*

Like M11, interviews with the Canadian respondent (M3) from a Slovenian IT multinational company revealed a similar story. He narrated that the Slovenian company where he works as a game designer is flat, which means that he interacts much more with people from C levels of departments. That is a new thing to understand for him. For example, when he has an idea for a game, his role is to pitch his ideas to his immediate superiors. He narrated that he has to deal with occupational status and age hierarchical differences between him and the company CEO. He clarified that each department is filled with 60 years old people, who are not mostly as progressive as the young generation. He has realized that those people who work with this for so long now won't change things. That's mold.

Consequently, M3 narrated that he was reluctant to share valuable knowledge with his project managers on a specific game design project. He perceived that the words of C levels of the department (e.g., executives) should listen more than other co-workers. He has shared that he is constantly learning how to deal with that. As a young migrant employee, he recognized that he has to listen to, follow, and conform to his executives' ideas, project views, and leading. He believed

that proposing ideas or viewpoints could be perceived as going against the CEO's way of doing things and leading a project.

Consequently, a young Canadian migrant has admitted that he intentionally hid his executives' ideas, perspectives, and expertise since it is a job for him. He wants to *keep his position* at the company. The following statement describes that,

*«A person with the biggest title you listen to and you follow their words. Consequently, you conform to them. First of all, because they are C levels of departments and secondly, because of my position there, thereby, it is predictable to say that due to perceived hierarchical differences and job security reasons, it is intentional that I hide requested knowledge or information from my executives» (M3).*

Interviews with two other respondents (M15 and M18) described the story when migrants had to hide requested knowledge from the seniors (superiors). They noticed that senior managers gave preferences to other more experienced members. Chinese (M15) and Costa Rican (M18) participants have decided to hide a requested knowledge or an idea since he was a newcomer in the company. They have noticed that managers prefer senior employees who are more experienced in the working field. Since as newcomers, they lacked the necessary competencies and experiences in the particular field and expertise of the work. M15 and M18 have narrated that they were unwilling to share knowledge or an idea with their project line managers since they felt fear of being considered ignorant and inexperienced in the field. That itself could put in danger their jobs. Thereby, their desire to keep the job position caused engagement in knowledge hiding behavior. The following quotation justifies this,

*«Yes, I had to hide knowledge because of less experienced at the workspace, and my manager was considering/giving preferences to the seniors whatever they suggest. I have decided to hide my knowledge mainly because of job security» (M15, M18).*

The stories of Macedonian migrants (M29) unveiled how she has decided to hide her ideas and insights due to job security reasons. The narratives of the Macedonian researcher unveiled that she intentionally hid requested knowledge from the project supervisor since she, first of all, cared about his reputation since he made a mistake during discussions. On the other hand, she didn't want to spoil the relationship with him. Additionally, she receives an assessment from him. Thus, she thought if she highlighted his mistake, corrected him, or pass on her idea, that could jeopardize her researcher position at the faculty. The participant has explained that the supervisor entirely led the project they worked on. They furthered that she has noticed a mistake regarding the project outcome made by the superior. However, she hid this from the manager since she wanted to keep the good relationship she had with him, receive a good evaluation from him by the end of the working year, and keep the job position. She has described this as follows,

*«We work in a team with supervisors. I had a good relationship with my supervisor. It happened that he made a mistake which I have mentioned but decided not to tell him. I have kept my supervisor's reputation on the same level, as I didn't want to spoil my relationship with him.*

*What's more, my supervisor gives an appraisal to me at the end of the year, and somehow I was also counting on my job security as well» (M29).*

Unlike the other stories, one of the participants (M17) has shared that she had to hide her knowledge and ideas as being afraid to bring up some different ideas throughout the discussion with her superiors. Interviews with an Indian young researcher have revealed that she was very reluctant to share requested knowledge with her superiors due to a fear that trickling down knowledge to them could jeopardize her career prospects at the faculty. Consider what M17 has narrated about her superiors and perceived difference in experience and expertise. Fear of getting fired and desire to keep the job position made her engage in knowledge hiding behavior to her Slovenian supervisors. She was afraid to challenge the superiors and gave some additional propositions regarding the project since she thought that might affect her career prospects at the faculty.

Besides, she explained that she perceived additional threats to be at risk of being fired and lose the job since she came from an under-developed country, India. The fear of being perceived negatively due to the perceived ethnic class status differences occupied her mind. She only shared a small part of her knowledge with them and kept the essential information to herself. The narratives of respondent M17 revealed that the fear of being fired and misunderstood could cause troubles regarding her researcher position at the faculty. This is stated as follows,

*«Yes, I had to hide the ideas for a few projects/tasks due to job security reasons. I thought I had more experience in those projects compare to my superiors. Somehow, I was afraid to express my ideas and challenge them. I thought I would get fired and lost my job» (M17).*

### **5.3 Knowledge hiding strategies**

As is illustrated in table 10, three knowledge hiding facets were employed by the young cultural minorities, including those of the former Yugoslavia. Young migrants engaged in playing dumb tactics by pretending that they did not know what the requester asked for. They also evasively hid knowledge from the Slovenian colleagues by providing them with partial information, evading response, or simply stating that they did not have time to proceed with the requester. Lastly, young internationals hid knowledge in a rationalized manner, explaining that the requested information was personal, confidential, and could not be shared.

Findings demonstrated that young migrant workers, including those of the former Yugoslavia, desired to belong and be included in the cultural majority colleagues. They decided to observe and learn the socio-cultural norms, mindset, and perceptions of the Slovenian colleagues and superiors, their likes and dislikes, and most importantly – how to present ideas and proposals to be perceived as more valuable and acceptable by Slovenians. Adjustable knowledge hiding was employed by young foreign workers, including those of the former Yugoslavia, to promote workplace inclusion and belonging to the majority group members at work.

When Slovenian socio-cultural norms, perceptions, and understandings are recognized, observed, and learned, young migrant workers entirely hide the requested information and adjust the response to the perceptions of the requester. When the hider is not well familiar with the requester's socio-cultural perceptions, preferences, understandings, and interpretations, he or she partially hides the requested information. At first, the hider tests the requester by providing only half of the information and adjusts the response to the perceptions of the requester. According to the requester's perception and understanding of the shared information, the hider decides how to proceed with another part. Typically, another part of the information was hidden.

Table 10: Knowledge hiding facets

Index code	Next-level code	Code description	Exemplary interview quote
Knowledge hiding facets	Playing dumb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pretending not to understand the question</li> <li>- Pretending not to know the question</li> </ul>	<i>"When my colleague asked me some questions, I have pretended that I have not understood the question."</i>
	Evasive hiding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hiding by giving partial information</li> <li>- Hiding due to the lack of time</li> <li>- Hiding due to time pressure, deadlines, and overload at work</li> <li>- Promising to help later on</li> <li>- Being occupied, busy</li> <li>- Ask the requester to find information independently from other sources</li> </ul>	<i>"I do not explain the whole process, just part of it."</i>  <i>"When I am super busy, I usually do not help a colleague."</i>
	Rationalized hiding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stating that information is confidential and cannot be shared</li> <li>- Hiding since information is personal</li> <li>- Hiding since information is secret</li> </ul>	<i>"I would explain that this information is confidential and cannot be spread around."</i>
Adjustable knowledge hiding	Learning and observing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fully hides the requested information and adjusts the response to the perceptions of the requester</li> </ul>	<i>"Throughout my working period and experience with Slovenian people, I needed to learn their perceptions and views regarding the subject. Then, I was presenting and twisting my ideas so that they were perceived more positively by them. So, yeah, I had to hide some of my true knowledge to be perceived better by them and accepted by them."</i>

	Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partially hides the requested information</li> <li>- Tests the requester by providing only a half of the information and adjusts the response to the perceptions of the requester</li> <li>- Hiding knowledge by testing the requester</li> <li>- Hiding knowledge since the hider is not well familiar with the socio-cultural perceptions, preferences, understandings, and interpretations of the requester</li> <li>- Hiding another part of the information by adjusting it to the requester's perceptions, etc.</li> </ul>	<p><i>"Firstly, you provide a small part of the requested information. Then you watch how it's perceived and further information accordingly. Since there appeared a lot of misunderstandings and misperceptions, I usually needed to hide another part of the information and provide my Slovenian colleagues with information that would be more acceptable for them."</i></p>

Source: Own work

### 5.3.1 Playing dumb knowledge hiding behavior

Analysis has shown that one of the facets of knowledge hiding -playing dumb – was used by minority members to hide requested knowledge to avoid workplace exclusion and promote workplace inclusion. This strategy implies pretending that a person does not know what the knowledge requestor is talking about and stating that he or she is not very knowledgeable about the topic. In this sense, one of the Serbian participants, working as a researcher, has shared that whenever he was asked for some information to share, he *pretended* that he *had not understood the question* to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretation of the given information. He furthered that several experiences of being misunderstood and misinterpreted due to differences in the socio-cultural norms. He found it difficult to share knowledge when he is asked for any. The following quotation justifies that,

*«When my colleague asked me some questions, I have pretended that I have not understood the question. I preferred to look not know than to involve misunderstandings and misinterpretation of requested information» (M25).*

Similar to M25, another participant of Serbian nationality, working as a researcher at the university, clarified that she refuses to share any information that, in her opinion, is not final. She prefers to tell that she has *no idea* what her colleague is talking about and evade sharing requested information. She stated this as follows,

«Why to tell a colleague something that is not smooth or final? I preferred to pretend that I didn't know what he is talking about» (M37).

### 5.3.2 Evasive knowledge hiding behavior

Analysis has demonstrated that minority members hide requested information or knowledge in an evasive manner. That strategy represents a technique when a person offers the knowledge requestor some other information instead of what was required; additionally, stalling for time and promising to help the knowledge requester later.

The evasive hiding strategy was found to be the most used strategy to hide knowledge by minority members. The Serbian (M28) and Chilean (M13) respondents narrated that they give *partial information* to the Slovenian colleagues when they ask to share some work or task-related information or knowledge. They explained that they prefer to show how to manage or fix something instead of giving prepared material to a person. They give only a part of the information whenever they are asked for any. The following quotation illustrates that,

«I kind of do not want always to give a fish when someone is hungry. I mean, I just explain to them, “this is the way” ... I do not explain the whole process, just part of it» (M13; M28).

Another participant, a Russian architect working at the Slovenian MNC, has narrated a story that she *could not find time* to help a colleague due to enormous time pressure. Furthermore, she has continued that she often evades the request due to being busy and overwhelmed. However, her hiding intention carries intentional characteristics. She stated this as follows,

«That depends on the situation. When I am super busy, I usually do not help a colleague. However, I explain that I am swamped, and will come back to him at the first opportunity» (M12).

*Time pressure* has also been an essential factor for another participant, a researcher from Serbia. He narrated that typically he is too busy to find time for helping a colleague when he or she needs that. Deadlines and overloading at work do not allow him to give help to a colleague. Usually, he avoids getting requests for help or sharing information. Even though providing a requestor with a very polite explanation that he *will come back to her or him later*, as soon as he is free enough to talk to a colleague. This is illustrated as given,

«When I have a big pressure and a colleague asks me for information. Typically, I just direct her to read about this. And promising to talk about this as soon as we have some free time» (M40).

Like M28 and M12, Costa Rican respondent working as a game designer in a multinational company has shared his experience of hiding knowledge in an evasive manner. He has narrated that *lack of time* influences his desire to share any information with a Slovenian colleague or help when they need that. He usually doesn't give complete information when a colleague requests to share some. Often, he finds it easiest to promise to help later on when he is more accessible and able to share information to the full extend. M7 testified to this,

*«When I don't have the time to explain fully what the person wants to know, then basically I do not share requested information and promise to help her with that as soon as I can do so» (M7).*

### 5.3.3 Rationalized knowledge hiding behavior

Rationalized hiding - stating that the knowledge is confidential and cannot be shared or that a person is not allowed to share the requested knowledge – was found to be used by minority members. Stating that information is *confidential* and cannot be shared around and/or across departments and colleagues was highlighted by one of the informants during the interviews. A young Canadian migrant worker (M3) is a game designer in MNC, and the French participant is a young politician. They clarified that he is reluctant to share or give information that he was asked not to propagate to colleagues or the department. He furthered that once, his Slovenian colleague came to him after the working team meeting and asked him for information since he was late for the meeting. The 30 years old Canadian respondent replied that the information is confidential and can't be shared in the department. The following statement manifests this,

*«Unlike it's an information that I have been told not to share. It's secret... I would explain that this information is confidential and cannot be spread around» (M3; M6).*

Unlike the story of M3, Costa Rican (M7) and Indian (M5) respondents narrated that when they were asked to share some work-related information, they stated that information is confidential. They saw some personal involvement behind the question. They felt offended and disturbed by that Slovenian colleague. They refused to provide an answer to the requested question. Additionally, they clarified that whenever they saw that they were asked to share some information that they would not like to share with a colleague, they refused the request and explained that information is *personal* and they hesitate to share it. The following quotation is stated as follows,

*«When I see that there is personal involvement behind the question, then I do hesitate to share information with the colleague. I mean, if they ask to share some information or opinion that I don't want to share, I don't share. Simply stating that information is personal and confidential» (M5; M7).*

Chinese researcher (M14), working at the university faculty and Serbian marketer (M38), shared a story that once they shared information with a Slovenian colleague. It spread quickly in the following days across the departments. That experience made them keep all types of information or expertise to himself. They clarified that they do not want people to talk about the information he possesses. They want to avoid gossiping and spreading the information among all colleagues and across departments that are not related and connected with them. They stated that information is *confidential* and they cannot provide any help regarding the requested information. The following quotation clarifies that,

*«I keep the information when I do not want people to talk about it. Typically, I reply that information is barely confidential» (M14; M38).*

#### 5.3.4 Adjustable knowledge hiding behavior

Besides three knowledge hiding behaviors conceptualized by Connelly et al. (2012), the analysis showed that young migrant workers, including those of the former Yugoslavia, hid knowledge in an adjustable manner. This strategy helped avoid the perceived workplace exclusion and promote their better inclusion and belonging to the Slovenian colleagues and superiors within the work-groups and environments at multinational companies and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. The new find, e.g., adjustable hiding, can be defined as young migrant workers' adjustment of their points or ideas to the requests of the Slovenian colleagues and superiors.

Qualitative analysis of young cultural minorities' narratives of young working migrants demonstrated that the learning mindset of majority group members was the best tactic towards avoiding pushbacks and achieving desired workplace inclusion. In particular, respondents shared their stories about how differences in proposed ideas, knowledge, ethnicity, and culture affected their feelings of exclusion and knowledge-hiding behavior to the Slovenian colleagues and superiors at work. They felt excluded since their inputs, contribution, collaboration, and shared knowledge were not valued, respected, and accepted by the culturally dominant group colleagues. Consequently, they decided to adjust their knowledge by learning and testing the requester (e.g., Slovenian) to avoid the perceived exclusion and foster the perceived inclusion at work.

Adjustment of the requested knowledge to the Slovenian colleagues' perception implied that minority members had to hide their actual ideas, knowledge, and perspectives. In particular, they adjusted information or ideas to the culturally dominant group colleagues so that the shared information or ideas would be perceived more positively and accepted by the cultural majority group members. That is to hide any kind of requested knowledge, information, idea, or decline providing any kind of help or proceed with further explanations to Slovenian colleagues by adjusting to the culturally dominant colleagues' perceptions, preferences, and understanding.

In particular, cultural minority respondents reported situations when they simply shared or provided information that they knew would be perceived better and more positively by a Slovenian colleague in a foreign work environment. Knowledge was hidden better to match the knowledge requester's cultural perceptions and values. The requested knowledge adjustment implied partial or complete adjustment of the information, idea, or knowledge to reflect better Slovenians' cultural perceptions, preferences, and understandings. Young migrants adjusted the requested knowledge to the Slovenian colleagues by testing, observing, and learning their socio-cultural norms, behaviors, perceptions, preferences, and understandings of the requested piece of information or knowledge.

#### **Knowledge hiding behavior by observing and learning the perceptions and preferences of the Slovenian colleagues and superiors**

Categorization and distinction among cultural minority and majority group colleagues and superiors caused young migrants' knowledge to hide from the Slovenian colleagues at multinationals and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. After experiences



of young migrant workers' ideas, perspectives and knowledge have been rejected, unaccepted, and excluded by the Slovenian colleagues and superiors due to the perceived differences in age, ethnic, national, cultural, and language status, the young working migrants reported that they decided to observe and learn the Slovenian colleagues' socio-cultural norms, behaviors, perceptions, preferences, communication, and working styles.

The stage of observing and learning involved situations when a foreigner previously got rejected due to the different points, ideas, knowledge of the work-related topic, task, or project discussed among cultural minority and majority group colleagues. Young foreign workers, including those of the former Yugoslavia, tended to anticipate well ahead of potential differences of provided opinions, perspectives, ideas, and knowledge and hid the requested information to avoid perceived rejection, ignore, exclusion and foster the sense of their inclusion at work. Cultural minorities hid the requested knowledge by adjusting their thoughts and views to the culturally dominant group colleagues' perceptions, preferences, and understanding. For example, they observed and learned the likes and dislikes of the cultural majority group colleagues and what kind of behaviors and ideas they preferred to hear and work on.

Consequently, young migrant workers fully adjusted their responses to the requesters' (e.g., Slovenian colleagues) request to share information, provide additional explanations, or help them solve the task-related problems. Young international employees' knowledge hiding to facilitate their perceived inclusion involved complete hiding of original thoughts, ideas, or perspectives. This tactic was usually used by young migrant employees who worked for 2 to 3,5 years when they have already become familiar with the socio-cultural norms, perceptions, and mindset of culturally and socially different co-workers and superiors. They have learned what they listened to and what they expected from the work-team member. In particular, from the very distinct foreigners in terms of the proposed ideas, ethnicity, culture, and language from the Slovenian colleagues.

After his experience of the inconsistency, task, and idea conflict with the Slovenian colleagues, that has created the numerical and cultural majority in his work-team, has affected the Canadian game designer's knowledge sharing, contribution, and collaboration with the culturally dominant group members. The perceived distinction in nationality, culture, and since the ideas diverged, resulted in the rejection of the Canadian game designer's ideas have been rejected. Working for three and a half years in a multinational company based in Ljubljana, M3 decided to hid his knowledge from Slovenian colleagues for future team meetings and discussions. Since his ideas have been rejected, his motivation, passion, enthusiasm, contribution, and collaboration with the Slovenian team members are so needed for the creative artist to design and create something innovative, creative, and novel. He decided to hide the requested propositions and ideas for the following team discussions since he believed that they would be rejected and not appropriately appreciated by the culturally and socially different team colleagues.

Throughout the interviews, M3 clarified how in-advance preparations for the meetings and more in-depth talks with people who once judged and declined his ideas helped him explore more about Slovenian culture, social norms, and mindset perceptions, preferences, and understandings. He

specified that the Slovene colleagues' created numerical and cultural majority in his work-group affected his future behaviors. The created majority by the Slovenian colleagues he perceived as superior and powerful tension on him and his proposed ideas. His ideas that were in the minority were rejected several times. Besides, it did not match the perception, understanding, and preferences of the Slovenian colleagues, their way of solving the task, and project-related challenges and problems.

The created fear of future evaluations, predictable rejection, and unacceptance made him elaborate on avoiding future rejections from the created cultural and numerical majority of the work-group. He got individually to some people that he knew would be at the next group meetings and discussions. Before the actual work-group meetings, he attempted to talk to those who most likely would analyze that meeting and the proposed ideas. He aimed to get the superiors' feedback, perceptions, preferences, and understanding of the game features and ideas that he was going to present.

So, by observing and learning the perceptions and preferences of his Slovene team members, he intended to prepare better for the next meetings. However, learning and understanding the mindset and perceptions involved hiding his original ideas from the Slovenian colleagues. He clarified that he understood that his Slovenian colleagues and superiors worked on that project, idea, and development for a long time. They would not change things quickly, especially by the ideas and propositions against their understanding and perception of the work-task and project. Consequently, he hid his ideas and decided to provide the Slovene colleagues the ideas that they would more likely accept and be happy with. He justified to that,

*«I knew that there were people in the group that are hard to handle in a slashing manner in those meetings. They will speak loudly and strongly. They would gather a lot of people on their side. That affected me because I was more dreading to express myself and my thoughts for the next meetings. Since their superiority and power affected me and triggered unacceptance and rejection of my ideas. I have learned to tackle that by preparing more for the meetings and preparing myself for more if I knew who would be at the meeting. To get their thoughts and input, talk with them more, and get to know if they would more likely follow and like a new and fresh idea, the feature that I would be suggesting. Suppose they would be court on the court on my side. It was like an adaptation that I had to do. By learning the perceptions and preferences of my Slovene team members, I could prepare better for the next meetings. However, learning and understanding their mindset and perceptions involved hiding my original ideas from them. I understood that they were working with this for so long that they wouldn't change things. I hide my ideas and provide them the ideas that they would more likely accept and be happy with» (M3).*

Thirty-year-old Canadian game designer (M3) said that since he desired that the collaboration among him and his Slovenian work-group members has continued, he started observing and learning his surrounding, Slovenians' socio-cultural norms, perceptions, and understanding. He desired to increase his engagement, group identification, belonging, and inclusion to Slovenian colleagues. As he narrated before, his observable and learning behavioral strategy helped him

realize what the Slovenian colleagues expect to hear from team members and potentially avoid future pushbacks.

M3 has learned how to present his ideas that were most likely accepted and perceived more positively by the Slovenian team members. Knowledge hiding occurred since the Canadian game designer understood that he could not change the ideas, attitudes, or activities, the dominant trend in their opinions, perceptions, decisions, and intentions shared by most group-work members and considered standard conventional for them. M3 just conformed to the situation and the decisions of the numerical and cultural majority of the work-group. The Canadian respondent fully restrained himself from sharing opinions or ideas potentially misunderstood or undesirable by the superior members. He presented ideas in such a way that they would be better perceived and accepted.

In-depth interviews revealed that the Canadian young migrant employee engaged in knowledge hiding behavior to avoid future potential rollbacks and improve his group identification, to belong, and inclusion. Sometimes, he entirely hid his ideas by adjusting them to Slovenian colleagues' mindset and mainstream. Sometimes, they were hidden partially. Anyhow, he desired to belong and be a recognized and valued member of his workgroup. Withholding his ideas gave him this opportunity.

On the one hand, this negative behavior required hiding his unique characteristics regarding his knowledge, ideas, perspectives, and skills. That was so needed for the development of the project from a different perspective. On the other hand, it had a positive intention to promote self-satisfactory belonging and inclusion to the Slovenian colleagues and superiors at a multinational company. He justified to that,

*«I think you learn to understand these people and what they like to hear. How it's good and how to twist and present your idea in a way that you know they are more likely to enjoy and accept. You know, if you could go and find solutions that you know before meetings that they won't like the work you pursue, they won't punch you for that. I tend to hide my original ideas or perspectives on the task or project since I know I will be most likely rejected again. Therefore, I have learned that I have to deliver more consistent ideas with the mindset and perception of my Slovenian colleagues. Sometimes, I fully hide the requested knowledge. Sometimes, it's hidden partially. Anyhow, I desire to belong and be a member of my workgroup. Withholding my ideas provides me such an opportunity» (M3).*

Similar to the narratives of M3, 27 years old Serbian researcher employed in one of the faculties of the University of Ljubljana narrated that she was very much observed at the beginning at her workplace. She most likely referred to the perceived differences in ethnic, culture, national, language, and age/ generational backgrounds among her and Slovenian colleagues. Even though they share many similarities in culture, language, and history, she proceeded that at the beginning of her migration to Slovenia for job purpose, she perceived an observation as separation and detachment from the Slovenian colleague. She was a newcomer and foreigner. By that time, she was experiencing mental and emotional strain or tension because of the created situation. As perceived as being in the minority, she found it best to learn more about Slovenian socio-cultural

norms, perceptions, behaviors, preferences, and mindset. To take actions to promote better belonging and inclusion to culturally dominant group colleagues at work.

As a young Canadian migrant, a Serbian respondent also started observing and familiarizing herself with the Slovenian work environment and the Slovenian people with whom she worked. Recognizing differences, she learned how to communicate and collaborate with Slovenian colleagues to match particular circumstances better and avoid distinction and separation. That required withholding her original points or ideas when a Slovenian colleague asked her to share some. Knowledge hiding had a positive intention to avoid interfering with SI colleagues and tied more with them, socially and professionally. Learning culture, Slovenian people, their thinking, communication, and working style, involved hiding her actual ideas, behaviors, or preferences. However, she could attach, belong, and include more to the new cultural majority group colleagues and work environment at the faculty. She justified to that,

*«I was very much observed at the beginning at my workplace. That made me feel tense and stressed. I decided to know how all these people are, what this culture is about, and how to do things. I have learned how to express myself to be more accepted and avoid bothering my Slovenian colleagues. However, that involved concealment of some of my true ideas and knowledge» (M24).*

Other interviews with 27 years old German respondent (M4), employed in a multinational IT company for four and a half years, unveiled that she also had to learn what her Slovenian colleagues like to hear, learn how to communicate, and collaborate an idea with them. She explained that Slovenians represent the numerical and cultural majority of the workforce in a company where she is employed. Twenty-seven years old German employee explained that Slovenian socio-cultural norms, communication, and work styles, behaviors, and mindset are novel and different for her: that caused misperception and misunderstanding among her and other Slovenian colleagues. Since interaction and collaboration are inevitable with Slovenian colleagues, she attempted to learn and get familiarized with them, their culture, and mindset. She certainly tried to maintain a relationship with them.

She narrated that she had to accommodate culturally dominant colleagues. She had to understand them, learn their professional and communicative language. She made many efforts to find the best way to feel more attached, belong, and included in the Slovenian colleagues. She explained that hiding the ideas that were once perceived negatively or distinct helped her to be better accepted in their group. In particular, she had to adjust to the Slovenian colleagues working and communication style, what they like and dislike to hear, and their expectations from the foreign co-worker. She could facilitate her perceived inclusion at work. Even though that involved hiding her original ideas, knowledge, and skills. She justified to that,

*«Each company requires a specific set of skills and professional language from you. Those are used in the particular work setting. They are all distinct and new. You need to learn this language. You can't come to know these skills and language. If you don't get accepted, integrated, you will l(earn) nothing. Why would colleagues cooperate with you if you are not on the same wave with them? I tried to approach them because I wanted to learn their work "language," their*

*communication, and their working styles. To get their advice and feedback on the executed job. Of course, that involved the withholding of my original views or knowledge. Learning those skills helped me to be better accepted even though I have to adjust the requested idea or knowledge to their perspectives» (M4).*

### **Knowledge hiding by testing the requester**

The second strategy to hide the requested knowledge or ideas is testing the requester [Slovenian] by providing just a piece of the requested information to him or her. That strategy helped avoid future potential rejection and exclusion and promote better inclusion to the culturally dominant group colleagues. Observing and testing the Slovenians' perception of the shared information or perspective helped young migrants anticipate their reactions to shared information or knowledge. Afterward, the cultural minority members adjusted the rest of the information or idea to the perception and understanding of the knowledge requester. The testing stage involved partial hiding. When a foreign employee was new, working only one year, and did not have time to learn the Slovenian colleagues' mindset and perceptions fully.

In support of this view, interviews with the 26 years old Serbian game designer, working for a year in one of the multinational companies in Ljubljana, revealed that he, as a first step tested the Slovenian colleagues requested to share task-related information. He tested their perceptions, understanding, and preferences by providing only a piece of the requested information. He would better see whether Slovenian colleague(s) understood and accepted the share information. Since cultural and knowledge misunderstanding and misperception occurred, the Serbian game designer hid another part of the requested information and adjusted the following information to the Slovenian colleague's cultural and social understanding and perception. In the end, the adjusted information was perceived positively. M33 could avoid task and relationship conflict and enhance his belonging, acceptance, and inclusion to the Slovenian colleagues at his work. M33 justified that,

*«Firstly, you provide a small part of the requested information. Then you watch how it's perceived and further information accordingly. Since misunderstandings and misperceptions occurred, I hid another part of the information and provided my Slovenian colleague(s) with information that would be more acceptable for them» (M33).*

Another 26 years old Turkish respondent, working as a marketer for two years in one of the multinational companies based in Ljubljana, narrated his story of hiding the requested knowledge through testing the Slovenian colleague. He explained that he is new at his work company. It has been only a year that he moved to Slovenia, Ljubljana, for work purposes. He regretted that he could not thoroughly learn the culture, Slovenians, mindset, or behaviors. He experienced some cultural misunderstandings and misperceptions of his ideas by the Slovenian colleagues at the beginning of his employment. Afterward, he is careful since he doesn't want to fuel more distinction, differentiation, and categorization among him and culturally dominant group colleagues at the interpersonal level or within work-groups.

M1 proceeded that he had a situation when a Slovenian colleague asked him to share some information. Firstly, the young Turkish marketer gave only a tiny piece of the requested information to the requester to understand his perception of the shared information. The Slovenian colleague misunderstood M1's shared information. That affected the rest of the information provided by the young foreigner. A young Turkish migrant decided to adjust his knowledge and provide the rest of the information better, matching the requester's mindset, socio-cultural norms, understanding, perceptions, and preferences. Responding to the request by hiding the actual knowledge, a Turkish new employee engaged in self-defensive behavior. He could avoid potential cultural or knowledge misunderstandings, task or relationship conflicts, or mistreatment by the culturally dominant group colleagues at work and advance his chances of being perceived more positively, accepted, and included by Slovenian colleagues. M1 justified to this,

*«Since I am new in this country, I could not completely learn the culture, Slovenians, or their mindset yet. There was the case when my Slovenian colleague asked me for some information. I have provided only a small part of the puzzle to watch his opinion just for testing him out. The appeared difference in opinion and perception have guided my further explanation in a different direction. Afterward, I have provided him a different point of view of mine. To avoid potential future conflict and enhance my belonging and inclusion to the Slovenian colleagues» (M1).*

#### **5.4 Social and cultural differences**

Throughout the sections of 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3, I could not find the differences in the experiences of exclusion-inclusion, their triggers and strategies for hiding knowledge between migrant workers from the former Yugoslav and other foreign countries, employed in multinationals, and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. Both groups of respondents, as migrants from East and West Europe, Asia, North Africa, and Latin America, so migrants from the former Yugoslavia [Serbia and Macedonia] narrated that it would be much easier to maintain relationships, communicate, feel included, and belonged at work if colleagues came from similar national and linguistic backgrounds, having the similar mindset, perceptions, understandings, communication, and working styles, behaviors, socio-cultural norms, requirements, perspectives, vision, etc.

Even though migrant workers from the neighboring countries (e.g., Serbians and Macedonians), who have a part of shared history and who know the culture, language, and social norms of Slovenian people, experienced similar social, cultural, and work-related problems as migrants from other foreign countries, who migrated to Ljubljana knowing nothing or a little about the culture, working styles, etc. Both groups of young migrant workers narrated similar experiences of their perceived exclusion and knowledge hiding towards the Slovenian colleagues, based on their ethnicity, language, culture, and ideas. Moreover, migrant workers from the former Yugoslavia could better their relationship and experiences of exclusion from Slovenians. That is, for example, to hide the requested knowledge during future interpersonal interactions or team discussions since once being rejected, ignored, and not accepted due to the perceived historical and political difficulties between the representative countries of the former Yugoslavia [Between Slovenia, Serbia, and Macedonia].

The experiences of exclusion-inclusion, knowledge hiding of young migrant workers from other foreign countries did not differ from that of the young migrant workers from the former Yugoslavia countries. As narrated, the level of acceptance, belonging, and inclusion of both migrants' groups was equal. However, the belief and perception of young migrant workers from Yugoslavian territories were stronger, grounded in the existed socio-economic, political, and historical tension between Slovenia and other countries of the former Yugoslavia. Additionally, as narrated, the Slovenian employees' beliefs, perceptions, preferences, stereotypes, and behavior were also significantly less favorable compared to the migrant group from other foreign countries.

As narrated, Slovenian employees expressed considerable ethnic and social distance towards their culturally and socially different colleagues, regardless of whether members of those cultural minority groups worked with them or not. Perceived exclusionary tendencies were rooted in migrants' cultural, social, or age backgrounds. The potential causes of the perceived exclusion lie in the structure of the represented organizations and the nature of their work behavior and socio-cultural norms. Balkans were more sensitive to the narrated experiences of exclusion inclusion, and that they have to hide their authentic knowledge to achieve inclusion and avoid exclusion. What matters is that findings confirmed the expectations that young migrant workers will most likely feel excluded due to the perceived difference in their ethnic, national, social, cultural, and age status, including the difference in ideas and knowledge.

In general, both groups of young migrant workers narrated that it is challenging to propose ideas if they do not correspond with Slovenian colleagues' perceptions and thinking. They perceived that it would be easier to collaborate and provide help if both representatives came from the same national and linguistic backgrounds. Migrant workers equally had to adapt to the Slovenian colleagues' communication and working styles, behaviors, socio-cultural norms to learn their perceptions, preferences, and understandings. As migrants from other foreign countries, the former Yugoslavia had to accommodate and adjust to the Slovenian colleagues and superiors at their workplace.

Both groups of young migrant workers narrated that they have a poor relationship with their Slovenian colleagues at their workplaces. Knowledge was hidden due to the perceived personal dislikes and lack of personal identification with culturally majority group representatives. Perceived differences in social and cultural backgrounds among young foreigner workers, including those of the former Yugoslavia and the Slovenian colleagues, could trigger the young migrants' feeling like perceiving the self as an out-grouper, a foreigner, a minority, and feeling excluded due to being of non-Slovenian descent and speaker. As in-depth interviews revealed, the Slovenian employees preferred to communicate, interact, generate or collaborate a work, task, or project-related idea between each other, consciously or unconsciously excluding the foreign colleague or team member.

The perceived social and cultural categorization, differentiation, and preferences could result in young migrant workers, including those of the former Yugoslavia, perceived self-exclusion from the Slovenian colleagues, and negative reciprocation of knowledge hiding in response to those perceived social or cultural distinctions. However, the experiences of the perceived exclusion

could equally affect both migrant groups' desire to belong and be included in the Slovenian colleagues and superiors at work. As migrants from different foreign countries, migrants from Serbia and Macedonia intended to hide the requested information or knowledge to maintain a better relationship with the culturally dominant group colleagues and secure their jobs.

Both groups of migrant workers hid knowledge in three knowledge hiding facets. Young migrants, including those of the former Yugoslavia, played dumb hiding by pretending that they did not know what the requester asked for. They also evasively hid knowledge from the Slovenian colleagues by stating that they did not have time to proceed with the requester, providing them with partial information, or evading to give a response. Young internationals from other foreign countries and the former Yugoslavian territories hid knowledge in a rationalized manner by politely explaining that the requested information is confidential and could not be shared.

There were not elaborated differences among groups of the young migrant workers nor in adjustable knowledge hiding. Migrants coming from East and West Europe, Asia, North Africa, and Latin America, so migrants coming from Serbia and Macedonia, had to observe and learn the socio-cultural norms, mindset, and perceptions of the Slovenian colleagues and superiors, their likes and dislikes, and most importantly – how to present ideas and proposals so that they were perceived valuable and acceptable by Slovenian colleagues and superiors at multinationals and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana.

Linguistic, cultural, geographic, and historical proximity could prevent the experiences of exclusion and knowledge hiding of migrant employees from the former Yugoslavia. New foreign workers employed knowledge hiding was employed, despite their social and cultural backgrounds, to promote workplace inclusion to the Slovenian colleagues and superiors.

## **5.5 Managers' perspectives on knowledge hiding**

Middle-level management of the Slovenian multinational companies has emphasized that the companies lack intercultural competencies and communication tools. They do not organize any intercultural training, seminars, or workshops introducing Slovenian culture, people, socio-cultural norms, and language. Besides, sometimes Slovenian language classes are offered to foreigners. Moreover, interviewed Slovenian multinational companies' workforce consists of 75% of Slovenian employees. That means Slovenians dominate in the workforce that tends to be diverse and multinational. Moreover, along with the lack of socio-cultural workshops and introductory sessions, leaders have admitted that they do not promote workshops, seminars, or training regarding inclusive and integrative environments at the workplace. Likewise, they lack similar workshops and seminars ensuring interpersonal relationships, equality between minority and majority group members.

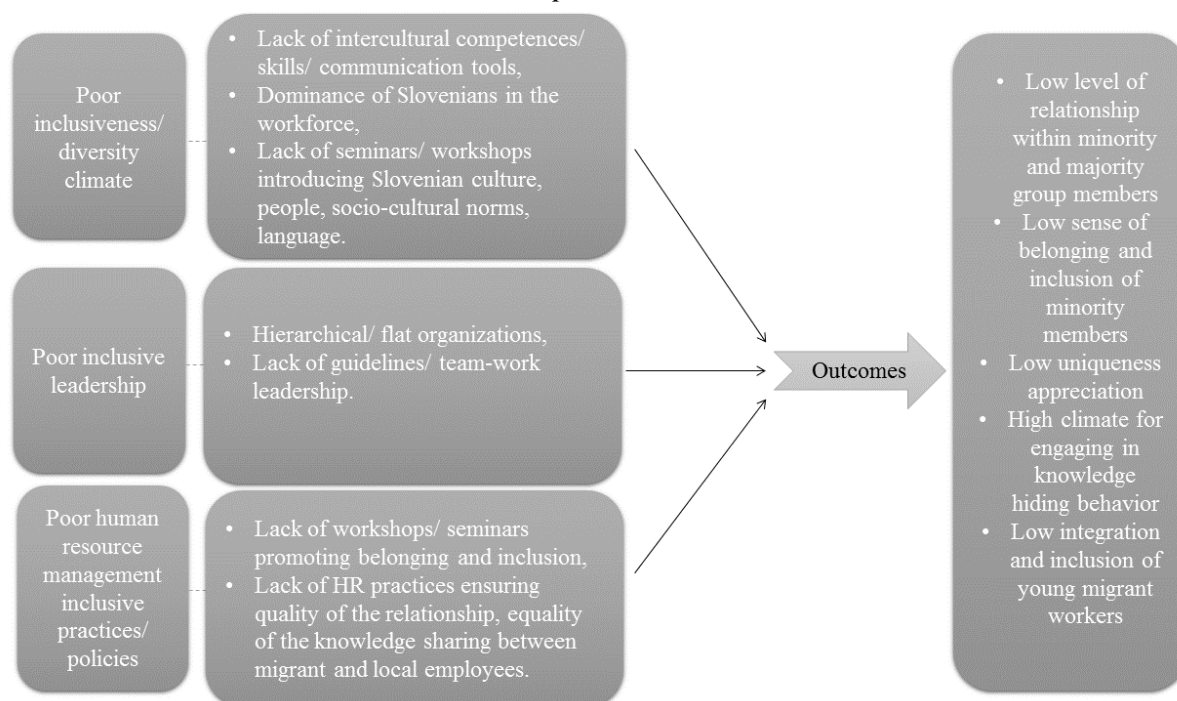
Besides, those companies have a flat structure. However, at the same time, managers have highlighted that organizations tend to have a more hierarchical organizational structure than a flat. That means that decision-making takes place from the top of the organization to the bottom. That being emphasized, presented multinational companies in Ljubljana have poor inclusive leadership,



poor inclusive/- organizational diversity climate, and poorly implemented human resource management inclusive practices and policies. Potential outcomes of those contextual factors refer to the decreased interpersonal and inter-cultural relationships among cultural minority and majority group members.

Besides, the decreased sense of belonging and inclusion of minority members and little appreciation and respect towards international unique characteristics. I expect that the climate to engage in knowledge hiding behavior may be high among cultural minority and majority group colleagues and superiors at work. Figure 2 represents the summary of the inclusive and diverse organizational climate, HRM practices and policies, and inclusive leadership in multinational companies in Ljubljana. Besides, their potential outcomes regarding international employees' inclusion, belonging, and knowledge sharing.

*Figure 2: Managers' perspectives of contextual antecedents and outcomes of perceived workplace inclusion*



*Source: Own work*

### 5.5.1 Diversity climate and HR practices

One of the managers working in MNC as a middle-level manager has shared that the company's workforce is very diverse and multicultural. Even though, majority of the employees represent Slovenian employees. Middle-level managers and young migrants have specified that more than 75% of the workplace consists of Slovenian employees.

*«From the earlier times, we have people from all over ex-YU in the company as well as some foreigners working altogether (US, Russia, Zimbabwe, also remember a Thai student, Lithuanian,*

...). Even though, Slovenian employees are dominated in the organization, consisting of approximately 70%» (P2).

Furthermore, he explained that the multinational company that he works in lacks intercultural training or seminars organized in the company as they should be promoted within a multicultural workforce. He has explained that there happened to be general “soft skills” training to improve interpersonal competencies and work with other people. However, he has admitted that some specific intercultural training and seminars do only a small job since some particular event or incident depends on the specific situation and the person himself. Thus, whether those intercultural training work or no depends on how strongly a person works out and uses obtained skills and knowledge regarding others’ cultures. He has claimed this as follows,

*«In general, there are not many of these kinds of training. In general, the company is having another kind of "soft skills" training. Specifically, cultural training themselves. Well, they are more like eye-openers and make you more aware of certain situations and how to recognize and react better to them. So yes, I'd say they work in a small portion for sure. It all depends on the situation and the person. If you can fully utilize/practice training material which is usually not the case. But I cannot say they are not working» (P2).*

Another manager working in MNC as a middle-level manager has described that the company is multicultural, consisting of 281 Slovenians and 36 internationals. So, this statistical evidence is similar to P2’s data that 75% of the workplace consists of Slovenian employees.

*«Company consists of 317 employees - where 281 are local employees, (e.g., Slovenians), and 36 are internationals» (P1).*

She has explained that they do not have specific training, which could be used to educate staff regarding differences between cultures and countries. Nor do they organize multicultural or cross-cultural seminars or workshops to prepare local and international employees for better and smooth communication and working processes. She has stated this as follows,

*«We don't have any diversity training or seminars. The only thing that we have is SDI and Arbinger training. But this is not something about inclusion or diversity, which means that diversity refers to different nationalities, cultures, and not too different personalities. Those tools are based on how to promote better communication and how to build better relationships. Maybe we have some other types of policies, specifically oriented on inter-cultural communication, but the fact is that we never use any of them» (P1).*

Lack of multicultural training and workshops could affect communication and working processes among local and international employees and superiors. Whether she considers the company culturally competent and inclusive, she has stated that she has noticed that Chinese, Indian and South EU employees *have difficulties in working and communication processes* with their Slovenian colleagues. Compared to Slovenian employees, international employees tend to be pushy, proactive, and loud in the working process that distinguishes them.

Moreover, she has continued that it is noticeable that international employees try to adapt to the company's working structure, standards, and regulations. However, as was mentioned above, there is not organized any specific inter-cultural pieces of training or seminars that would help to balance those differences. Moreover, nothing is done to help international employees to learn more about Slovenian socio-cultural norms, communication styles, and working processes. She has concluded that all those cultures that have different working or communication approaches have to adapt. Otherwise, it might be challenging for international employees to work in the future. Facing so many inter-cultural, social and work-related challenges and problems in their diverse workforce, she quickly reported that the company does not organize any special inclusive or inter-cultural workshops, seminars, or training to resolve described problems. P1 stated this as follows,

*«For example, Chinese, Indian, or South European people have too many cultures, communication, or working approaches compared to Slovenian culture. I see that people coming from those countries have a bit problem with adaptation and have problems in communication with us. I have noticed that they are a bit pushy, active, or loud in the working process. They communicate differently. They try to adapt to us, Slovenians, to our standards, working process, working structure, etc. Because if they don't adapt, otherwise, it will be difficult for them in the future. But again, nothing special is organized for such type of problems» (P1).*

Similar to the above-described statistical evidence on the diversity of multinationals' workforce, another Slovenian middle-level manager working in MNC reported that the workforce is dominated by Slovenian employees where 75% of the workplace consists of Slovenian employees.

*«Very diverse. We have six counties, including Slovenia, Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, and Austria. We use English as an official language. However, Slovenian workforce is predominant (around 75%) » (P3).*

Compared to the above-narrated two multinationals' experiences of inclusive and diverse practices and policies, the P3, Slovenian middle-level manager narrated that the multinational company is employed, multicultural training, seminars, and teaching trust, teamwork and reduce prejudices among culturally diverse employees are provided. Besides, employees with different cultural, national, and linguistic backgrounds have the opportunity to learn the Slovenian language and culture.

*«We have some internal sessions discussing prejudices, trust, teamwork, but we do not have concrete diversity training. Mentioned sessions work in some limited scope. Ninety minutes are usually not enough to go deeper into the topic. We also provide classes about Slovenian language and Slovenian culture» (P3).*

### 5.5.2 Leadership

The middle-level manager of MNC has shared her perspective regarding the leadership style adopted by her work company. She explained that even though the multinational company is considered a flat organizational structure, some hierarchies are present. Nine levels of CEO are

established within the company, and the working projects have to go through many checks and given directions of each level of CEO. She has explained that it is hard to make individual steps for employees regarding the project since it should go through many approval processes. She has added that it is hard to decide something for an employee, which has been resulted in changing and adjusting their ideas and project closer to superiors' approach.

Further interviews with P1 revealed that the representative CEO or included in the decision-making did not appreciate employees' contributions and input. P1 described a situation when an employee is given a task to work on. She proceeded that the executed project has to go through many approvals, persons, and levels of executives. For instance, when an employee is assigned to execute a particular project, they have to talk with, for example, five persons and get their feedback on the executed project. In the end, you notice that the project is not yours. So, you have to rethink everything. She admitted that employees need to adjust their propositions and ideas regarding the project. In particular, throughout its execution and presentation. Naturally, those steps involve changes in their ideas and approaches. Since the higher the person's occupational status, the more power he or she has in the decision-making process.

She agreed that the represented company has to change its organizational structure on probably become hierarchical in its structure. Since they have nine levels of executives, she admitted that she could see that this typical hierarchical structure of the organization affected employees. In particular, she has noticed that those several approval stages could influence employees' following projects. She could see the difference in employees' proposed ideas sound closer to their requirements. She agreed that employees have to change or adjust their ideas and propositions to succeed in front of the CEO. P1 justified this,

*«I would say that our organization is flat from the point of view of communication. On the other hand, with all those approval processes and how projects are done, there are still some hierarchies. We have nine levels of CEO. So, for example, if one works on the project and executes it, he has to get the approvals of many people above him. The higher level you are more you have power in decision-making. Likewise, I would like to admit that, when you are an employee it may be hard to decide on something because, in the end, they have to listen to many people. They can't easily decide on something by themselves. It is so – even if my project members think or offer some different point, in the end, I will do as I want. CEO means, and they have power. So, maybe we have to reconsider the claim that we are a flat organization, but it is so. The project has to go through a lot of approvals, persons, levels. For instance, when you come up with a project, you have to talk with five people and get their feedback. In the end, you notice that the project is not yours. So, you have to rethink everything. In the end, of course, you need to adjust, and that involves changes in your ideas and approaches. You can see, that influences their next projects when they present their ideas and projects closer to our approach» (P1).*

Furthermore, she proceeded that all international employees have problems adapting to their working process, to their many approval processes that are necessary to accomplish. Typically, international employees complained about them. She explained that she understands that they work with creative artists and designers who need more space and freedom to generate and

implement their creative and innovative ideas. Furthermore, she explained that she understands that it is hard to adapt to their regulations, policies, and so many approval processes for employees from different cultural, national, linguistic, and age backgrounds. The cultural and organizational structures and processes differ among Slovenia and South European, Asians, or Latin-American cases.

Regarding this, she explained that she could not do anything about that. International employees have to adapt, to their organizational and socio-cultural norms, adjusting their behaviors, communication, knowledge, and working style. However, she referred to one situation. For example, suppose she looks at their offices located, for example, in India. In that case, she can see that Slovenian employees or managers do not need to adapt or adjust their ideas, behaviors, or socio-cultural norms to the Indian colleagues. She suggested that it is better if internationals will adapt and adjust their ideas, behaviors, or communication and working styles to the Slovenian work environment. Since otherwise, it will be challenging for internationals to work with the Slovenians in the future. Highlighting so many inter-cultural, social and work-related challenges and problems they face in terms of their diverse workforce, she quickly concluded that the company does not organize any special inclusive or inter-cultural workshops, seminars, or training, nor they promote any diverse or inclusive HRM practices and policies to resolve described problems. The following statement justified this,

*«I would say that all internationals have problems adapting to our working process – we have a lot of approval processes that are necessary to be done. Usually, they complain about this. We work with creative artists, designers that need more space and freedom, and for them, it is hard to adapt to our regulations, policies, and so many approval processes. For example, if I look at our offices located in India, then it is not the same – we do not do something like adaptation. We do not need that. So, I can say, all these cultures that have different working or communication approach they have to adapt. I do not see that is the problem Because if they don't adapt, it will be difficult for them in the future. But again, nothing special is organized for such type of problems» (P1).*

Like P1, another Slovenian middle-level manager working in a multinational company has explained that the company has a flat structure supporting communication. However, she as well admitted that hierarchies present in the organizational structure. Since, similarly to an above-narrated multinational company, this particular company also has several levels of the CEO. Identically the employees have to follow the guidelines and instructions of the executives to accomplish the projects and tasks. She likewise admitted that to succeed in the presented project or task, an employee has to change or adapt their ideas and perspectives to their regulations and structure. This is stated as follows,

*«Organization tends to have a "flat" structure and to encourage open communication and open-door policy. However, often it is given just guidelines, without giving concrete instructions for some crucial issues and topics. Usually, employees have to follow those guidelines and present their project according to it» (P3).*

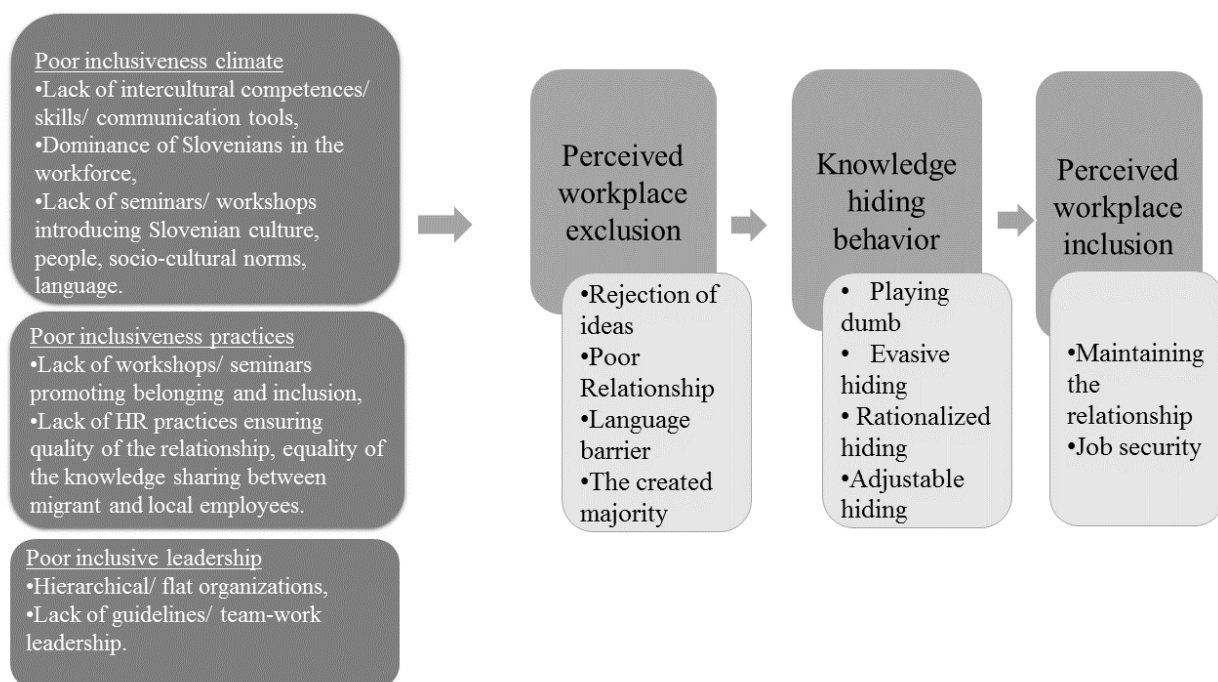
## 6 DISCUSSION

### 6.1 Discussion of main findings

The relationship between the perceived workplace exclusion-inclusion and knowledge hiding behavior was examined in young migrant workers' context, particularly among cultural minority and majority group colleagues and superiors at multinational companies and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. Young migrant employees employed knowledge hiding due to their perceived workplace exclusion and a strategy to advance their perceived workplace inclusion. Besides, contextual antecedents of the perceived workplace inclusion, in terms of the inclusive organizational climate, practices, and leadership and their influence on the relationship between young migrants' perceived workplace exclusion-inclusion and knowledge hiding behavior, were analyzed.

Figure 3 illustrates the final model of the dissertation. It presents the analyzed constructs of the dissertation, along with the confirmed themes. Young migrant workers perceived exclusion in the form of the rejection of the ideas, the poor relationships, the language barrier, and the created majority. Those determinants affected cultural minorities' knowledge hiding behavior. Besides, the proposed themes of perceived workplace inclusion in maintaining the relationship and job security are presented. Minorities hide their knowledge for achieving desired inclusion at work. Besides conceptualized knowledge hiding facets (e.g., playing dumb, evasive, and rationalized hiding), the new facet, knowledge adjustment hiding was found. Poor inclusive climate, policies, and leadership could potentially affect the examined relationship in this dissertation.

*Figure 3: Overarching model presenting the examined relationship in this dissertation*



*Source: Own work*

### 6.1.1 Perceived workplace exclusion and knowledge hiding behavior

#### **Rejection of the ideas and knowledge hiding behavior**

The created social hierarchies (Tajfel & Turner, 1985) regarding ethnic, national, linguistic, and age categorization resist knowledge sharing among culturally diverse team members (Dahlin et al., 2005; Hoefer et al., 2012). Social hierarchies can affect social and work-related relationships, so knowledge sharing among cultural minority and majority group members. The difference in national, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds affected the interpersonal relationships and interactions among young migrants and the Slovenian employees at the interpersonal and within teams. Those factors could create task conflict (Semerci, 2018) regarding the dissimilarity in perceptions, acceptances, and integrations of different knowledge and ideas. That has resulted in minorities' self-exclusion and knowledge hiding from the Slovenian colleagues at multinationals and the faculties of the University of Ljubljana.

Shore et al. (2011) stated that when an individual experiences difficulty to belong and being appreciated for his or her unique characteristics, including knowledge, a person feels excluded from the group or another individual. As found, cultural minorities felt excluded, disengaged, and detached from the Slovenian colleagues once the culturally dominant group members have rejected their proposed ideas and perspectives. At the beginning of their employment, young migrant workers were very eager to share their knowledge, perspectives, and ideas with the Slovenian colleagues, develop the project from a different perspective, collaborate, and contribute. However, the perceived biased factors that resulted in the rejection of minorities' ideas have stimulated young migrants' knowledge hiding behavior toward their Slovenian colleagues at work.

Minorities' perceived exclusion in terms of the rejection of ideas has created the barrier to cooperate less actively in the future with the culturally dominant group members at multinationals and the faculties of the University of Ljubljana. They stopped caring whether the project would not develop from a different perspective. Like so, knowledge hiding was negatively reciprocated by the young migrants in response to the perceived exclusion due to once ideas have been rejected. Cerne et al. (2014) stated that distrust is elaborated when a coworker is denied sharing information or knowledge. An employee engages in negative reciprocal behavior, that is, knowledge hiding from the former knowledge hider. However, their studies have not examined negative reciprocal knowledge hiding in young migrant workers in response to the perceived exclusion from the culturally dominant group members at multinationals and the University.

The high score of Slovenia on Uncertainty Avoidance (Hofstede Insights, 2020) explains Slovenians' behavior towards something new and non-traditional. Along with the national, cultural, and linguistic differences that affected the rejection of young migrants' ideas, high uncertainty avoidance displays intolerance for different behavior and ideas, connected with traditionalism and nationalism, and even xenophobia (Podrug et al., 2006). Since low prosocial motivation, low cultural tightness, and low uncertainty avoidance trigger knowledge-hiding behavior among Slovenian and Chinese working professionals (Cerne et al., 2015; Babic et al., 2018).

Slovenian employees and the Slovenian superiors in multinationals and across the faculties of the University of Ljubljana will fail to benefit from the useful resource that culturally diverse employees bring with them, different knowledge, ideas, and perspectives. Knowledge is essential for those work environments to keep creativity, innovativeness, competitiveness, efficiency, and success. Since both groups of the respondents have clarified that their contribution, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing being that at the interpersonal level or within teams are reduced due to the perceived exclusion, and discriminatory treatment in terms of ideas has been rejected once.

Besides, young migrants as well harm themselves by negatively reciprocating knowledge hiding at work. Since they all are knowledge workers who deal with problem-solving, critical thinking, exploring new issues, rapidly transfer knowledge and skills to the work-teams, collaborate efficiently, innovatively, creatively, be passionate and enthusiastic. The experiences of ideas that the Slovenian colleagues have rejected were perceived as if young migrants' knowledge, ideas, or insights were lost. Especially, young researchers face real difficulties in distributing their ideas and knowledge to culturally dominant colleagues that are so important since the key of the great joint inter-cultural project is integrating diverse ideas that could make excellent research results. The perceived exclusion in terms of ideas that have been rejected has resulted in minorities' decreased self-perception, belonging, and self-labeling in an out-group, non-Slovenian, and foreigner.

Findings on potential contextual predictors of workplace inclusion have demonstrated that multinationals in Ljubljana have a low inclusive and diverse organizational climate and culture regarding poorly implemented intercultural policies and practices. An inclusive and diverse organizational climate could enhance work-group cohesion (Bernroder, 2013) and the psychological safety of minority employees (Hirak et al., 2012). It is essential to develop inclusive and diverse strategies to support the smooth and better generation, development, acceptance, and integration of diverse ideas among cultural minority and majority group colleagues. Well-implemented inclusive practices will help to decrease the task or interpersonal conflicts based on social categorizations and knowledge hiding among cultural minority and majority group colleagues at work.

### **The poor relationship and knowledge hiding behavior**

A work environment is where individuals might strive to maintain social connections, interactions, and inclusion with other colleagues, which is sometimes hardly achieved in a culturally diverse workforce. Besides unaccepted and rejected ideas and knowledge, young migrants' experiences of social categorization based on the perceived differences in ethnic, cultural, linguistic backgrounds, along with the different ideas, could develop a poor relationship among cultural minority and majority group colleagues. High-status group members tend to exclude low-status group members due to perceived differences in ethnicity, language, nationality, age, ideas, and perspectives (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). That potentially has resulted in disconnections, disengagement, decreased personal identification among high and low-status group colleagues employed in multinationals and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. The perceived cultural distinction facilitated minorities' demotivated, passive, harmful, and low prosocial (Babic et al., 2018) behaviors regarding knowledge hiding behavior.



The perceived categorization among cultural minority and majority group members resulted in weak personal connection with majority members and minorities' perceived personal insults. Findings have demonstrated that young migrants, including those from the former Yugoslavia, are very cautious about sharing requested knowledge or information with Slovenian colleagues. They were challenged or even threatened when a Slovenian colleague, who is not in a very close work or personal relationship with them, asked to share information, ideas or provide some help. Since minorities were reluctant to provide Slovenian colleagues with the requested information or help when they experienced rigid categorization in terms of the differences in ethnicity, nationality, language, and proposed ideas.

Relationship conflict or simply, interpersonal inconsistency between colleagues may cause disappointment, distrust, and hostility (van Woerkom & van Engen, 2009), which affects knowledge hiding behavior among employees across different work settings (Cerne et al., 2017; Skerlavaj et al., 2018) and cultures (Butt, 2019). Besides, facilitate the perceived exclusion at work. Especially, knowledge hiding behavior due to the perceived workplace exclusion in terms of the poor relationships can be intensified among cultural minority and majority group colleagues. Lack of social connection, disengagement, and disregard towards their Slovenian colleagues have strengthened minority members' feelings of the perceived exclusion at their work organizations. Similar to the above-described young migrants' negative reciprocal knowledge hiding in response to the perceived exclusion in terms of the idea rejection, so, the created poor relationships among cultural minority and majority group colleagues could facilitate minorities' knowledge hiding from their culturally dominant group colleagues.

As it was mentioned above, poorly developed, inclusive, and diverse organizational climates could affect the Slovenians 'distrust towards foreigners, distancing from them in terms of perceived differences in communication, behaviors, ideas, ethnicity, nationality, and language. A well-implemented inclusive climate could foster communication (Janssens & Zanon, 2007) and high-quality relationship (Shore et al., 2011).

For example, each academic year, Slovenia launches new programs to rejuvenate research groups and enable the inflow of fresh ideas and approaches within academic settings. They tend to recruit more diverse, highly qualified, and motivated personnel with a potential that will create a tremendous competitive edge for the Slovenian economy and other socially relevant areas (Slovenian Research Agency, 2019). Hence, young migrant researchers have to be a driven force for developing and extending international projects and research. Therefore, the University of Ljubljana and multinationals have to ensure a healthy high collaborative knowledge-sharing, and inclusive work environments and workforces. Besides, they have to ensure the Slovenian employees' high cultural intelligence (Bogilovic et al., 2017), since that will promote mutual support and trust, simplifying to pass on the requested knowledge, mitigate culturally different behaviors, and encourage an open and friendly relationship and work-related discussions among young migrants and the Slovenian employees.

### **The language barrier and knowledge hiding behavior**

The language barrier represents a pivotal barrier to maintaining connection and interaction among minority and majority employees, which has resulted in knowledge hiding behavior. Findings demonstrated an English language barrier as one of the significant facilitators in experiencing disconnection and even unconscious exclusion among minority and majority employees in a way that constrained the ability to share knowledge or information, participate in work-related activities and decision-making processes at work. Linguistic and cultural differences can indeed affect information flow (Gaur, Ma & Ge, 2018). However, language insufficiency can cause a sense of disconnection, exclusion (Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999a; 1999b; Major et al., 2014) and resist knowledge sharing in a diverse workforce. That was the case among young migrant and Slovenian colleagues at multinational companies and across the faculties of the University of Ljubljana.

Slovenia tends to become more international and multinational in terms of business and labor. They develop, establishing more multinational companies, and ensuring the diversification of the academicians. The results demonstrated young migrants struggled to maintain a relationship, including those from the former Yugoslavia, who expected to have fewer problems in achieving inclusion to Slovenian colleagues since they share a similar language, culture, socio-political relationship, and history. Young migrant workers have difficulties setting English as a new language of communication, translating documents, handbooks, job manuals, and reports from the Slovenian to the English language, and working collaboratively and inclusively.

Goffman (1967) proposed that the higher the ethnic status, the more distanced and choosier the interaction becomes. For example, a person of higher social and ethnic status tends to ignore a lower social and ethnic status. Fangen (2010) found that young Canadian immigrants perceived being excluded by Norwegian colleagues due to their unwillingness to speak the English language with them. In line with previous research, I also find that Slovenians suddenly switch to the Slovenian language, discussing the project development process in Slovenian, totally ignoring the minority members' position that they do not understand the language. The decision has been made since Slovenians dominated in work-groups, which caused the perceived feelings of minorities in the work-group. The language exclusion, lack of involvement, and participation caused young migrants' knowledge hiding behaviors in the future.

Even though the superiors at multinational companies and the faculties of the University of Ljubljana required international employees and researchers to learn and take the Slovenian language classes, some of them provide such classes as well. It could not minimize the minorities' experiences of the perceived exclusion due to the created language barrier among young migrants and Slovenian employees. Young migrants are entitled to execute international projects conducted in English. Slovenian employees' unwillingness or sense of nationalism to communicate in Slovenian should not affect the communication, interaction, maintaining connection, and relationship with their colleagues with different cultural, national, linguistic, and age backgrounds in the English language. Nor should it affect work-related issues. To collaborate and exchange knowledge in the English language at the interpersonal level or within teams.

Findings from the managers of multinational companies have manifested that they lack and have insufficient inclusive and diversity policies, training, and practices. Besides, multinational

companies and the faculties of the University of Ljubljana have to rethink their language proficiency. That might improve the relationship, the sense of the perceived inclusion, and decrease knowledge hiding among the Slovenian and young migrant employees.

### **The created majority and knowledge hiding behavior**

As findings demonstrated, categorization and differentiation in terms of ethnic, culture, national, and language status differences among young migrants, including those from the former Yugoslavia and the Slovenian employees, occurred at the interpersonal level within the work-teams. It has been studied that high-status group members influence low-status group members (Turner et al., 2006). Findings found that the job of young migrant researchers and workers in other fields were very much team-based. Usually, the working teams consisted of 6 persons, where 4-5 of the members were Slovenians, and internationals represented only one member of the workgroup. Slovenian group members created the numerical and cultural majority within the work-groups. Therefore, the Slovenian employees dominated and affected the minorities. It was difficult for young minorities to impose their ideas or opinions regarding the work projects. That resulted in inconsistency, task conflict, young migrants' increased sense of the perceived exclusion, decreased inclusion, belonging, and knowledge resistance among the team members.

The created majority, and their superiority over minorities' ideas, behaviors, decisions, and intentions tensed young migrants to communicate and collaborate their ideas and knowledge with Slovenians. In response, minorities negatively reciprocated and hid their ideas requested by the Slovene colleagues during the next team meetings and discussions. Whenever cultural minorities were asked to share an idea or opinion, they preferred to hide them since they understood that the Slovenian team members would take the final decision. By the time, they could not see the point to argue their ideas on. Since they realized that their group membership was not fully recognized and appreciated by the culturally dominant group members (Earley, 1999; Shore et al., 2011). Moreover, as the main principle of social dominance theories, Slovenians also show favoritism (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) towards Slovenians and their ideas over group's mutual collaboration, integration of different ideas, and development of the project from different perspectives.

Findings revealed that young migrants applied for their current job positions since Slovenia is a European Union country that is advanced, culturally diverse, and provides many opportunities to develop intercultural competencies, communication, personal and professional skills. Indeed, statistics show that Slovenia represents a multinational country with more than 300 MNCs (AJ PES, 2018). The University of Ljubljana is the largest and highest quality Slovenian scientific research organization – consistently recognized by the international scientific community (UL, 2013). Along with the well-implemented Protection against Discrimination Act (MDDSZ, 2019) and the Health and Safety at Work Act (Eurofound, 2019). This way, the intellectual capital of people despite their gender, age, nationality, etc. is no longer lost, and it is utilized to promote new knowledge and, consequently, support the creation of a better quality of life (Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport, 2020).

Findings revealed that the work environment, including discriminatory treatment and attitude of the Slovenian colleagues, didn't fulfill young migrants' expectations. Since by hiding knowledge, migrants lost the potential, motivation, enthusiasm to develop more, collaborate, and contribute an idea. As found, multinationals and the faculties of the University of Ljubljana lacked implementation of those policies and practices determined by the Government in reality. That was reflected in the Slovenian colleagues' poorly maintained communication, social and work-related relationships, and different ideas among culturally different colleagues. Slovenians preferred to interact and work in Slovenian with each other. That affected young cultural minorities' sense of the perceived exclusion, in terms of perceived differences in ethnicity, nationality, culture, and language, and knowledge hiding towards their Slovenian colleagues in the next work-group meetings and discussions.

Firstly, the workforce of the represented multinationals and the faculties of the University of Ljubljana lacked personnel diversification in terms of ethnicity, nationality, language, and age. Since the middle-level managers and the young migrants, more than 75% of the workplace consisted of Slovenian employees. That stimulated categorization and distinctiveness among the cultural minority and majority group colleagues regarding their differences in ethnicity, culture, language, ideas, and knowledge. That resulted in young migrants' knowledge hiding from their Slovenian colleagues. Secondly, the represented work settings lacked inclusive and diverse HRM practices and policies. That could affect the relationship and task conflict (Nishii, 2013), and stereotyping (Bilimoria et al., 2008), and inter-cultural communication (Janssens & Zanon, 2007), and knowledge-sharing (Li et al., 2015) within a culturally diverse workforce.

The collectivistic culture of Slovenia encourages in-group members' favoritism (Kito et al., 2017). Along with the poorly fostered inclusive diverse organizational climates, this national culture dimension also explains why it was hard to maintain the relationship and trust among cultural minority and majority group colleagues. Those external factors potentially affected Slovenians sense of superiority over minorities' proposed ideas, depreciation, and unacceptance of those different perspectives. Slovenians created numerical and cultural majority within the work-groups affected foreigners' sense of the perceived exclusion in terms of self-labeling like a minority and out-group member and knowledge hiding behavior towards Slovenians for the future. Young migrants, including those of the former Yugoslavia, negatively reciprocated the knowledge hiding in response to their perceived exclusion and Slovenians' superiority over their ideas, intentions, and attempts to develop the work projects from different perspectives.

### **The summary of the causes of knowledge hiding behavior related to the perceived exclusion at work**

Literature on knowledge hiding behavior identifies different forms of the perceived workplace exclusion that leads to knowledge hiding behavior at the workplace. The perceived workplace ostracism (Zhao et al., 2016), the perceived workplace incivility (Arshad & Ismail, 2018), the perceived workplace bullying (Yao et al., 2020a), and gossiping (Yao et al., 2020b) affect Chinese employees' interpersonal relationships and trust, and therefore, knowledge hiding behavior. However, my research findings added other layers of possible perceived workplace exclusion sources related to knowledge hiding or withholding, one of cultural diversity and subsequent

workplace exclusion based on national, ethnic, linguistic, and age backgrounds. Besides, I have identified that a low inclusive organizational environment in multinationals in Ljubljana and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana can potentially affect young migrant workers' sense of perceived exclusion and knowledge hiding at work.

The recent research findings confirmed all four proposed themes as the main determinants of the perceived workplace exclusion among cultural minority and majority group members at their work companies and faculties. The knowledge hiding behavior employed among cultural minority and majority colleagues at multinational companies and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana had harmful intentions and outcomes. It was negatively reciprocated in response to the perceived exclusionary experiences in terms of rejected ideas. They created poor relationships, the language barrier that caused disconnection, disengagement, and miscommunication among young migrants, including those from the former Yugoslavia, Slovenian colleagues and superiors, and the created majority of the Slovenian colleagues.

The leadership has to reconsider their attitude towards their workforce. By maintaining a relationship, mutual understanding, respect, and recognition, all employees, despite ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and age backgrounds, have an equal right (Bell et al., 2011) to distribute the knowledge. As young migrants were employed from 1 to 5 years in multinationals and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana, their knowledge hiding may increase over time if the inclusive organizational climate, diverse policies and practices, and inclusive leadership will not be reinforced. In particular, if the cultural intelligence (Bogilovic et al., 2017) of the workforce will not be increased, status differences (Zheng et al., 2017) decreased, supportive (Carmeli et al., 2013) leadership behavior practiced, the sense of the perceived exclusion of young migrants ' , including those of the former Yugoslavia will not decrease. The likelihood that knowledge hiding will be negatively reciprocated in response to the perceived exceptional threats, including poor relationship, idea rejection, miscommunication due to the limited language skills, and the superiority of Slovenes, will be increased.

#### 6.1.2 Perceived workplace inclusion and knowledge hiding

##### **Maintaining the relationship and knowledge hiding behavior**

Maintaining the relationship with the Slovenian colleagues and superiors affected cultural minorities' knowledge hiding behavior to their cultural majority group colleagues and superiors at work. Experiences of ideas have been rejected, the created poor relationship with the Slovenian colleagues and superiors, the language barrier, and the created numerical and cultural majority by the Slovenian employees within the culturally diverse work-groups could strengthen the young migrant workers' intention to belong more and be included at the workplace to the culturally dominant group members. Knowledge hiding was found as the best strategy employed by the young cultural minorities, including those of the former Yugoslavia, to achieve belonging, acceptance, and inclusion to their Slovenian colleagues and superiors at their work companies faculties of University, based in Ljubljana.

Young migrant workers engaged in knowledge hiding behavior to avoid the potential controversy with the Slovenian colleagues in terms of different ideas, knowledge, and perspectives that determined cultural minorities' sense of the perceived exclusion at work and maintain better interpersonal and work-related relationships with the Slovenian colleagues at multinationals in Ljubljana and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. Since the sense of the perceived inclusion can be driven by relation-orientees (Jackson et al., 1995) and high-quality relations (Mor Barak, 2000; 2005) with group members and superiors. As found, young migrant workers decided to hide the requested knowledge from their Slovenian colleagues since they have already maintained an inclusive and positive interpersonal relationship with the Slovenian colleagues at work.

Theory of Optimal Distinctiveness (Brewer, 1991) explains that an excluded person tries to achieve an "optimal balance" to maintain self-satisfactory group membership (Sheldon & Bettencourt, 2002; Bradley, 2009). Through knowledge hiding, young cultural minorities, including those of the former Yugoslavia, could achieve feelings of the perceived inclusion and belonging to their culturally dominant colleagues at work. The disconnection, disengagement, rejection, categorization, distinctiveness, and exclusion, the diverged ideas brought with them were mitigated by hiding the Slovenian colleagues' requested knowledge. Cultural minorities avoided disconnection and damaged the already established positive and inclusive relationships with the Slovenian colleagues. Knowledge was hidden to avoid misperception and offensive reactions, to create a better atmosphere, maintain positive and inclusive relationships among young migrants, including those of the former Yugoslavia and Slovenian colleagues at the multinationals and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana.

Knowledge hiding was employed as a strategy by young migrant workers, including those of the former Yugoslavia, to preserve and protect their ideas, skills, knowledge, or perspectives from perceived criticism, perceived negative perceptions, understanding, and treatment and the culturally dominant group colleagues. Knowledge was hidden due to self-defense and self-interest. It helped facilitate the perceived inclusion of maintaining the relationship with the Slovenian colleagues and superiors and preventing the breaking and harming the relationship due to the perceived differences and categorizations of the ideas, ethnicity, culture, age, nationality, and language at multinationals in Ljubljana and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. Inclusion refers to the group's willingness and readiness to include and accept the particular individual (Ellemers & Jetten, 2013).

As found, interviewed middle-level management in multinational companies based in Ljubljana argued that international employees experience adaptation to Slovenians, their standards, working process, working structure, and communication. Foreigners communicate, work, and behave differently, being pushy, active, or loud in the working process compare to culturally dominant group employees. They are required to adapt and accommodate. Because if they do not adapt, otherwise, it will be difficult for them in the future. This adaptation involved young migrant workers, including those of the former Yugoslavia, partial or complete changing or hiding their ideas from SI colleagues and superiors. Management has to push their local employees to interact

with the young migrants, accept them into their team, organizational culture, and make them productive and efficient coworkers (Elmore, 2014).

As found, lack of international and diversity training, seminars, and workshops, along with a weak diverse and inclusive workforce, could potentially influence young migrants' knowledge hiding intention. If represented work environments had a more robust inclusive climate, migrants would not hide their unique ideas and knowledge to be perceived better or keep better relationships with Slovenian colleagues. Since inclusion literature (Mor Barak, 2005; Shore et al., 2018) suggests, an inclusive environment involves recognizing all cultures and viewpoints. The literature on knowledge hiding also confirms that leadership (e.g., Men et al., 2018) and organizational climate (e.g., Cerne et al., 2014) can positively affect knowledge hiding and significantly decrease it, employees within different work settings. A well-implemented inclusive organizational climate and leadership may facilitate a better relationship among cultural minority and majority group members, promote inclusion and decrease cultural minorities' knowledge hiding.

The currently organized workshops on promoting better communication and building better relationships are not enough. Other policies, mainly oriented on inclusive and inter-cultural communication, are needed to promote an open-minded and respectful attitude and acceptance of all nationalities, cultures, languages, and ideas, instead of encouraging foreigners' adaptation or changes in behaviors. That involved their knowledge hiding even with a positive intention. Multinational companies, along with the university's faculties, should encourage workplaces that foster communication and active interaction, support growth and development, knowledge sharing, creativity, and innovativeness, and keep the workforce active (Foss et al., 2013; Radaelli et al., 2014). Young migrant workers with different ages, cultural, ethnic, national, and linguistic backgrounds can bring full fresh perspectives, ideas, and thinking to multinational companies and the University.

### **Job security and knowledge hiding behavior**

Pelled et al. (1999) found that job security, as a desire to keep the job position, represented another indicator of the perceived inclusion at a perishable goods company in the Midwest. The perceived differences in age, professional (occupational), hierarchical, ethnic status, and ideas affected knowledge hiding among the young migrant workers, including those of the former Yugoslavia and their respectful Slovenian supervisors across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana and managers at multinational companies based in Ljubljana. Young foreigners intentionally hid requested knowledge since they perceived a threat to pass on knowledge to their Slovenian superiors. The managers would potentially deny that shared knowledge due to the perceived differences, and young foreigners would lose the job positions.

As found, senior managers gave preferences to other more experienced members in the working fields. Young migrants' propositions and ideas were rejected and not included in the decision-making process. As perceived by the young foreigners, the executives' decision could be affected by young migrants' age (aged between 26 and 30 years) and working history that counted from 1

to 5 years. Those characteristics could potentially affect the Slovenian superiors' perceptions of young migrants' expertise, knowledge, experience, working ability, skills, competencies, and information processing at work. Besides, as found, on the contrary, the superiors' older age affected young migrants' perception of them as being not as progressive as the young generations (Krishnan et al., 2012; Schäffer, 2012). Superiors seemed to be reluctant to accept new ideas (Kite et al., 2005; Morgeson et al., 2013) of young migrants. It was challenging to change the Slovenian superiors' mindset since they worked with the represented work projects for a long time.

The study revealed that Slovenian young employees' teaching and shared knowledge, their propositions, and ideas were resisted by senior managers in Slovenian companies (Brcic & Mihelic, 2015). Knowledge sharing was perceived to be more resisted in young migrant workers, including those of the former Yugoslavia. The ethnic background was perceived to be an additional perceived threat of being at risk of exclusion, rejection, and losing the job. The perceived fear determined the young foreigners' future intention to intentionally hide knowledge from the Slovenian managers and supervisors at multinational companies in Ljubljana and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. Since they came to Slovenia, Ljubljana to obtain better qualifications, competencies, knowledge, quality of life, higher salaries, opportunities, and inter-cultural networking.

Professional and hierarchical status have also influenced young migrant employees, including those of the former Yugoslavia, to hide knowledge from their superiors at work. Since their employee status did not allow them to contradict the decisions and guidelines of the Slovenian superiors, that resulted in conformity to superiors' decisions, guidelines, and views. Since projects were supervisor-based, the significant power in decision-making and group membership had a higher professional status, e.g., the Slovenian managers and supervisors. The perceived professional hierarchies among employees and superiors affected the young migrants' knowledge hiding. On the one hand, knowledge was hidden because of the perceived differences in age, ethnic, hierarchical, and occupational status. On the other hand, differences in communication (Aker, 2009), collaboration, and knowledge sharing among young foreign employees and the Slovenian supervisors and managers affected knowledge hiding.

Those perceived factors affected the fear to argue the points, ideas, and propositions with the Slovenian superiors. The perceived differences in age, professional (occupational), and ethnic status affected young migrant workers' knowledge hiding behavior at work. Knowledge or information was hidden since it might not be perceived positively and accepted by the Slovenian superiors at work. The young internationals decided to hide knowledge for future project discussions, presentations to avoid controversy with superiors, maintain the relationships, and enhance the likelihood of their sense of perceived inclusion at work. An intention to stay (Mor Barak et al., 2006; Acquavita et al., 2009) and secure the job intensified knowledge hiding of young migrant workers, including those of the former Yugoslavia, at multinational companies and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana.

On the one hand, the organizational system and approval stages resisted elaborating the knowledge among young migrant subordinates and the Slovenian supervisors and managers at the



multinational companies in Ljubljana and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. Since students at University had principal supervisors and entirely depended on their advice and guidance (UL, 2013). Multinationals had quite a hierarchical organizational structure, where different levels of CEO and approval processes were presented. As a consequence, young migrant workers' knowledge was hidden. Since international employees did not feel that they were allowed to act independently, each idea or decision had to be confirmed by the management. To avoid conflict with the CEO, to keep the job position, to not been shown as competing with a superior, perceived young cultural minority employees engaged in knowledge hiding behavior to their superiors at work.

On the other hand, the perceived ethnic hierarchies resisted knowledge sharing of young migrant workers, including those of the former Yugoslavia. All of the representative managers were Slovenians, common for Slovenian multinational companies (Jaklic & Svetlicic, 2008). The perceived power dynamics played a central role in interactions and collaboration among young foreign subordinates and their Slovenian superiors at work. Slovenia is high power distanced country where hierarchies are accepted and presented within its society and work settings (Hofstede Insights, 2021). The perceived ethnic and professional hierarchies required minority members' adjustment to social and organizational norms (Dipboye & Halverson, 2004). They feared losing the job positions.

Knowledge was hidden in the future from the managers. They were fully adapting and accommodating Slovenians' requirements. Since conformity to majority team rules and structure could reduce negative perceptions, attitudes and increase chances for inclusion and integration of the minority members (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Fiske, 2000). Through knowledge hiding, young migrant workers, including those of the former Yugoslavia, could avoid their perceived threats and secure their job positions. Their sense of the perceived inclusion was achieved through hiding the ideas, perspectives, or propositions that might be potentially perceived negatively by their Slovenian superiors.

The management of the multinationals and the faculties of the University of Ljubljana has to reconsider its organizational climate. Since poorly implemented inclusive and diverse organizational climate, practices, policies, and leadership represent weaknesses and threats for the future development, competitiveness, innovativeness, and success of multinational companies in Ljubljana and the university's faculties. Those work settings in Ljubljana attempt to become more international in their personnel, projects, publication, collaboration, etc. Young migrants and their knowledge are essential since they ensure social development in enhancing social integration, intergenerational interactions, and relationships as in multinational companies within different academic settings (Slovenian Research Agency, 2019). Besides, young labor contributes to economic development to encourage young skilled workers to increase creativity, productivity, and competitiveness as in multinational companies so different academic settings (Slovenian Research Agency, 2019).

Besides, a culturally diverse young workforce can ensure the internationalization and diversification of the workforce and organizations. Knowledge was hidden due to the perceived

differences in ethnic status, age, and profession (occupation), along with the hierarchical and autocratic leadership styles (Hofstede Insights, 2021), resisted the elaboration of the different ideas from employees who differ in their age, ethnicity, culture, nationality, language, occupational status. If SI would be more long-term oriented, they had to value all the employees' skills, knowledge, and perspectives despite their nationality, ethnicity, culture, age, and language. When a diverse workforce brings so many advantages with it.

Management in the represented multinational companies and across the faculties of the University of Ljubljana have to re-think their leadership styles and HRM inclusive policies. To become more decentralized (Cardinal, 2001) in motivating their subordinates, efficient communication, promoting quick decision-making, satisfying employees' needs, growth, and diversification, supporting participative and active workforce (Bernroider, 2013). To foster more inclusive work environments where mutual understanding, appreciation, and acceptance of all nations is achieved. That may help decrease young migrants' knowledge hiding and supporting knowledge sharing among them and the Slovenian colleagues and superiors.

### **The summary of the causes of knowledge hiding behavior related to the perceived inclusion at work**

The relationship between knowledge hiding and the perceived workplace inclusion, particularly in terms of maintaining the relationship and securing the job, is not yet investigated in the literature on knowledge hiding. The only study of Yao et al. (2020b) found that organizational identification has a mediating effect on the relationship between workplace bullying and knowledge hiding among Chinese employees. However, my research findings have identified that knowledge hiding moderates the relationship between perceived exclusion and inclusion at the workplace. Besides, I have identified possible contextual factors, in terms of a high inclusive organizational climate and leadership, affecting young migrants' sense of perceived exclusion-inclusion and knowledge hiding in multinationals and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana.

As found, the knowledge hiding behavior did not intend to be such a negative behavior employed among cultural minority and majority colleagues at multinational companies and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. Knowledge hiding had positive intentions and outcomes (Saxe, 1991). It intended to protect the young migrants' feelings and reactions to perceived exclusionary experiences, to help them to advance their chances of belonging, acceptance, more positive perception, and inclusion. Knowledge hiding was employed as a strategy to advance the perceived inclusion. Even though this strategy involved withholding the young migrants' knowledge, ideas, or perspectives, it helped them avoid perceived workplace exclusion in terms of the rejection of ideas, the poor relationship, the language barrier, and the created majority role.

Young migrants, including those of the former Yugoslavia, hid knowledge from the Slovenian colleagues and superiors to maintain the relationship and secure the job in multinationals and across the university's different faculties Ljubljana.

### 6.1.3 Knowledge hiding facets

Three facets of knowledge hiding behavior (Connelly et al., 2012), including playing dumb, evasively hiding knowledge, and rationalized hiding were employed by the young cultural minorities, including those of the former Yugoslavia. For example, as found, young migrant employees engaged in playing dumb tactics by pretending not to know what the requester asked for. They also evasively hid knowledge from the Slovenian colleagues by providing them with partial information, evading response, or simply stating that they did not have time to proceed with the requester. Lastly, young internationals hid knowledge in a rationalized manner, explaining that the requested information was personal, confidential, and could not be shared. Those knowledge hiding facets were found to be employed by the young migrant workers to decline the requests of the Slovenian colleagues and respective managers to share knowledge, information, or ideas at multinational companies and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana.

In addition to those knowledge hiding facets conceptualized by Connelly et al., (2012), I found that young migrant workers, including those of the former Yugoslavia, hid knowledge in an adjustable manner. The new find, e.g., adjustable hiding, that can be defined as an adjustment of young migrant workers' points or ideas to the foreign working audience (e.g., Slovenians) is the principal aspect of this research. Adjustment of the requested knowledge to the Slovenian colleagues' perception implied that minority members had to hide their actual ideas, knowledge, and perspectives. In particular, they adjusted information or ideas to the culturally dominant group colleagues so that the shared information or ideas would be perceived more positively and accepted by the cultural majority group members.

The desire to belong and be included facilitated engagement in different behaviors and strategies to create new social bonds (Gardner et al., 2000, 2005; Maner et al., 2007; Lakin et al., 2008), which potentially enhanced chances to be more included to the culturally dominant group colleagues and superiors at work. To achieve belonging and inclusion, young migrant workers intended to behave more regarding the cultural majority group colleagues (Turner, 1985, 1991). That is to hide their original ideas, knowledge, information, or perspectives and adjust the shared responses to the Slovenians' socio-cultural norms, perceptions, preferences, understanding, and behaviors.

An individual may feel a strong sense of belonging to the group once they appear more similar, familiar, and local in front of majority members (Brewer, 1991). Young migrant workers decided to hide their present ideas, knowledge, and skills. They learned how to present ideas and proposals to be perceived as more valuable and acceptable by Slovenians. Since achieving similarity with the majority, the group can help to reduce out-group differentiation (Jetten et al., 2002, 2004). When acceptance is high, inclusion is most likely achieved (Shore et al., 2011).

After cultural minorities' experiences of ideas have been rejected, the poor interpersonal relationships with the Slovenian colleagues, the impact of the limited English language skills, and the created majority by Slovenians at interpersonal level or within work-teams, young migrants, firstly, probed and tested the requester (e.g., Slovenian) by proving just piece of the requested information and testing Slovenians perception of the shared information or perspective. Afterward,

the minority member adjusted the rest of the information or idea to the perception and understanding of the knowledge requester. This knowledge hiding strategy implied partial or complete adjustment of the information, idea, or knowledge to reflect the Slovenians better cultural perceptions and understandings. Knowledge was hidden better to match the knowledge requester's cultural perceptions and values. Consequently, to avoid the perceived exclusion and enhance their perceived inclusion at work.

The testing stage involved partial hiding. When a foreign employee was new and could not learn the Slovenian colleagues' mindset and perceptions fully. The second stage involved learning and observing. After young migrants' experiences of their ideas have been rejected and excluded by the Slovenian colleagues and superiors due to the perceived differences in age, ethnic, national, cultural, and language status, the young working migrants decided to observe and learn the Slovenian colleagues' socio-cultural norms, behaviors, perceptions, preferences, communication, and working styles. That potentially caused categorization and distinction among cultural minority and majority group colleagues and superiors at multinationals and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana.

As a consequence, young migrant workers fully adjusted their responses to the requesters' (e.g., Slovenian colleagues) request to share information, provide additional explanations, or help them to solve the task-related problems. That involved complete hiding of original thoughts, ideas, or perspectives and considered employees on long term working when they have already become familiar with the perceptions and mind-set of culturally and socially different co-workers and superiors, to know what they want to listen, and what they expect. This manner of hiding knowledge could also promote the sense of the perceived inclusion to the Slovenian colleagues and superiors at multinationals and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana.

The cultural minority employees hid their true ideas or knowledge for self-defense and self-interest to belong and be included to the cultural majority group colleagues. They perceived that if they hid their true ideas and knowledge that were perceived differently and rejected by the Slovenian colleagues, they could promote better inclusion. By adopting a specific role within the group (Bettencourt et al., 2006), that is, partially or fully adjusting the required knowledge or information to the perception, preferences, or understanding of the Slovenian, they could appear more similar, and familiar to the majority members (Brewer, 1991). To advance their inclusion. That is defined by the group and its desire to provide a position within the group to another person (Leary & Baumeister, 2000).

Cultural minorities' perception of being excluded and rejected due to the differences in ideas, age, nationality, language, culture, language, and occupational status has to be decreased. Since that involved the increased desire to belong and be included to the Slovenian colleagues and superiors at work. As a moderator, knowledge was hidden to enhance young foreigners' sense of the perceived inclusion. Even though knowledge hiding involved a positive intention and outcome, it harmed the hider. Young migrant workers are active, ambitious (Schäffer, 2012, 2015), full of new ideas and different perspectives. By hiding the knowledge, they decrease the chance to learn new skills and competencies, grow professionally and personally. It is also destructive for the

knowledge requesters and organizations. Since competitive edge, innovativeness, creativity, and success of the organization may be decreased (Labafi, 2016).

If the perceived threats to exclusion will not be minimized, on the one hand, knowledge hiding may intensify by the time of young migrants' employment. Since 1 to 5 years of work time is not enough to thoroughly learn how to adapt or accommodate the new cultural work environments. On the other hand, it should be realized that even that knowledge was hidden for positive intentions and outcomes, e.g., being more included and belonged, its damaged young migrant workers, including those of the former Yugoslavia. Intentional and conscious adaptation to the Slovenians' socio-cultural norms and perceptions will be required also in the future to their Slovenian colleagues, supervisors across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana, and managers in multinational companies in Ljubljana. That will exhaust and harm the knowledge hidings. The inclusive and diverse organizational climate has to be reinforced to reduce exclusion, increase inclusion, therefore, decrease knowledge hiding.

#### 6.1.4 Social and cultural differences

I was interested in how cultural and social background affect perceived exclusion and inclusion and strategies for hiding knowledge. There are possible differences and similarities in triggers of perceived exclusion and inclusion and strategies for hiding knowledge between workers on different social and cultural backgrounds in multinationals and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. In particular, among the migrant workers of other foreign and former Yugoslav countries.

I expected young migrant workers from different foreign countries (e.g., Russia, Chile) and cultures (e.g., Asia) would most likely face social, cultural, and work-related difficulties. They are often discriminated against and excluded due to differences in cultures, social norms, and languages (see Zavratnik, 2012). That potentially could increase migrant workers' sense of the perceived exclusion and inclusion and knowledge hiding to their Slovenian colleagues at work. They potentially would have zero or little knowledge and experience of Slovenian people's social and cultural norms, mindset, understanding, communication, working styles, behaviors, perceptions, preferences, inter-cultural intelligence level, etc. When a foreigner migrates to another country for part or full-time work, they have to consider all potential barriers that might arise at their work company even though Slovenia is an excellent destination for non-EU and EU nationals (e.g., STAT, 2018).

On the contrary, I expected migrants from the neighboring countries (e.g., Serbians and Macedonians) who have a part of shared history and who know the culture, language, and social norms of Slovenians fewer social, cultural, or work-related problems. Since Slovenia's independence in 1991, the country became a top destination for immigrants from the former Yugoslavian territories. For example, Serbs represent the largest ethnic group in Slovenia. That is 2.0% of the total population (STAT, 2002) of Slovenia. The proximity in languages, cultures, and social structures could better include the former Yugoslavian migrant workers into Slovenians at work. Besides, I expected that geographic and historical similarities could prevent triggers of the

perceived exclusion and knowledge hiding among Slovenians and the former Yugoslavian migrants at work.

I found that young migrant workers, including those from the former Yugoslavia, perceived being excluded from the Slovenian colleagues based on the perceived differences in nationality, ethnicity, culture, and language, which caused their knowledge hiding. Those findings are in line with the research on (im)migrants in Slovenia (e.g., Bajt, 2005; Kralj, 2008).

I could not find the differences in the triggers of exclusion-inclusion and strategies for knowledge hiding between migrant workers from the former Yugoslav and other foreign countries, employed in multinationals, and across the university's different faculties of Ljubljana. Both groups of migrant workers hid knowledge in the future from the Slovenian colleagues due to the perceived differences and categorizations in social and cultural backgrounds among them. For example, Balkans' intentional knowledge hiding during future interpersonal or team interactions was determined by the perceived historical and political difficulties between the representative countries of the former Yugoslavia. That has affected Serbian and Macedonian researchers,' and the Slovenian colleagues have rejected workers' ideas.

Both groups of young migrants reported that it is difficult to propose ideas if they do not correspond with Slovenian colleagues' perception and thinking way. Besides, that separated and excluded them from Slovenians during team discussions, task-solving or decision-making. Knowledge was hidden in the future from the Slovenian colleagues. Young migrants, including those of the former Yugoslavia narratives, revealed that it would be easier to collaborate on an idea and provide help if colleagues were from the same national and linguistic backgrounds and had a similar mindset, perceptions, understandings, communication, and working styles, behaviors, socio-cultural norms, requirements, perspectives, vision, etc.

Both groups of the migrant workers hid knowledge in three knowledge hiding facets. Young migrants, including those of the former Yugoslavia, engaged in playing dumb hiding by pretending that they did not know what the requester asked for. They also evasively hid knowledge from the Slovenian colleagues by stating that they did not have time to proceed with the requester, providing them with partial information, or evading to give a response. Young internationals from other foreign countries and the former Yugoslavian territories hid knowledge in a rationalized manner by politely explaining that the requested information is confidential and could not be shared.

There were not elaborated differences among groups of the young migrant workers nor in adjustable knowledge hiding. Migrants from East and West Europe, Asia, North Africa, and Latin America, so ones from Serbia and Macedonia, observed and learned equally the socio-cultural norms, mindset, and perceptions of their Slovenian colleagues and superiors, their approvals and disapprovals. They learned how to present ideas to be accepted and perceived positively by Slovenian colleagues and superiors at multinationals and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana.

Linguistic, cultural, geographic, and historical proximity could prevent the experiences of exclusion and knowledge hiding of migrant employees from the former Yugoslavia. Both groups

of the migrant workers equally had to adapt to the Slovenian colleagues' communication and working styles, behaviors, socio-cultural norms to learn their perceptions, preferences, and understandings. Migrants from other foreign countries and the former Yugoslavia had to accommodate and adjust to the Slovenian colleagues and superiors at their workplace. Knowledge hiding was employed by young foreign workers, despite their social and cultural backgrounds, to promote workplace inclusion to the Slovenian colleagues and superiors.

## **6.2 Theoretical contributions**

This study makes a range of different contributions to literature at the intersection of workplace exclusion-inclusion and knowledge hiding behavior.

(1) Research findings enrich the existing literature on knowledge hiding behavior by expanding its nomological net and investigating another antecedent of knowledge hiding, e.g., *the perceived workplace exclusion*. Those research findings align with other findings on the relationship between the different forms of perceived workplace exclusion and knowledge hiding (Zhao et al., 2016; Yao et al., 2020a; 2020b) among Chinese service organizational employees. I advance those findings by examining other possible layers of perceived exclusion in cultural minorities and subsequent workplace exclusion based on national, ethnic, and language backgrounds.

(2) Idea rejection was found as one of the potential adverse outcomes of knowledge hiding. Young migrant workers negatively reciprocated knowledge hiding in response to the perceived exclusion in terms of idea have been rejected before by Slovenian colleagues at their workplaces. The perceived idea rejection harmed knowledge hider since it decreased the motivation to generate and implement creative ideas to their work-groups. Those findings complement the conclusions of Cerne et al. (2014) that knowledge hiding harms employees' idea generation (creativity), as well as previous findings that the fear of being evaluated strictly affects knowledge-hiding behavior (Bordia et al., 2006; Butt, 2019; Butt & Ahmad, 2019). Since minorities engaged in knowledge hiding so far as they knew, they would be rejected and criticized as well in the future by the culturally dominant group colleagues.

In a paper focused on knowledge withholding, Kang (2016) asserted that knowledge receivers discriminate against less professional individuals, are of a lower rank, or differ in their employment status when accepting knowledge. I add other layers of possible discrimination sources related to knowledge hiding, one of cultural minority and subsequent workplace exclusion based on nationality and ethnic background.

(3) Besides, findings have demonstrated that an English language barrier can also trigger disconnection and even unconscious exclusion among minority and majority employees in a way that constrains the ability to share knowledge or information. Linguistic and cultural differences can indeed affect information flow (Gaur, Ma & Ge, 2018). However, to the best of my knowledge, no prior research has investigated how language represents a pivotal barrier to maintain connection and interaction among minority and majority employees and potentially results in knowledge hiding. In this way, these research findings present first narrative evidence of the role of language

in knowledge-hiding processes, specifically in the context of cultural minority and majority group colleagues at multinationals and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana.

(4) Furthermore, lack of personal relationships (e.g., personal dislike and lack of trust) was found to be another reason for young migrants' knowledge hiding from their Slovenian colleagues at work. For instance, scholars have found that poor interpersonal relationship affects knowledge hiding between employees (Cerne et al., 2014; Butt & Ahmad, 2019). The recent research findings complement those findings and add the other layers of the poor relationship that is social categorization based on ethnicity, culture, language, and nationality. Young migrants engaged in negative reciprocal knowledge-hiding behavior in response to the perceived workplace exclusion in terms of the created poor relationship among cultural minority and majority group colleagues.

(5) Status differences (low and high status of employees within the organization) affect knowledge hiding behavior and significantly decrease the creativity of low-status employees (Rhee & Choi, 2017; Bogilovic et al., 2017). I compliment those studies. I add other potential sources of low and high-status group members' knowledge hiding behavior, in terms of group members' ethnic status differences, i.e., culturally majority group members' privilege and superiority over minority group members intensified minorities' knowledge hiding behavior toward their culturally dominant group colleagues at work. The culturally dominant group members' superiority and privilege over young migrants (thus, minorities) idea, propositions, and knowledge based on the perceived ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and age differences, could *create the perceived majority* within the work-groups. Therefore, minorities engaged in knowledge hiding behavior due to the majority role.

(6) Furthermore, findings have shown that minorities hide knowledge to avoid push backs, controversy and *keep relationships* with cultural majority group colleagues. Connelly et al. (2019) called for more research to examine the potential benefits of knowledge hiding. In this regard, I contribute to the positive outcomes of knowledge hiding since young migrants employed knowledge hiding as a strategy to enhance their subjective perception of workplace inclusion in terms of keeping the relationship.

(7) I contributed to the literature on knowledge hiding by examining one more positive outcome of this harmful behavior - *job security*. Research findings have demonstrated that young migrants hid the requested knowledge from the Slovenian colleagues and superiors to secure their jobs to enhance their perception of being included in the culturally dominant group colleagues and superiors in multinationals across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. Those findings could complement the findings of Butt & Ahmad (2019). Seniors in the United Arab Emirates chain and supply organizations hide knowledge to secure their job positions since they are afraid that some consequences can jeopardize their jobs. I added other layers of possible job security related to knowledge withholding, which is one of the perceived differences in hierarchizes, occupational, ethnic, nationality, language, and age status among cultural minority and majority group colleagues and superiors at work.

Besides, job security as one of the features of workplace inclusion (Pelled et al., 1999) was not examined by the recent research on knowledge hiding; especially, among the cultural minority and majority group colleagues and superiors. Therefore, hid knowledge was a strategy to keep the



relationship with culturally dominant superiors and colleagues and avoid perceived rejection and exclusion at work. In this way, to strengthen the minorities' subjective perception of workplace inclusion.

(8) This study also found a new dimension of knowledge hiding employed by young migrant workers, e.g., adjustable hiding. Minorities engaged in this strategy to adjust their information and knowledge to the requester (e.g., Slovenian). They avoided controversy and fostered a better perception of the requested information and knowledge. Consequently, this research finding adds to the existing three knowledge-hiding dimensions (evasive hiding, rationalized hiding, and playing dumb; Connelly et al., 2012) and highlights the potential of considering the fourth facet of knowledge hiding in the context of a diverse workforce. This facet implies changing knowledge or information that was better aligned to the knowledge requester's culture and values.

(9) I contribute to the literature on knowledge hiding by analyzing it in the context of the young migrant workers employed in multinational companies and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. I advance studies on cultural elements of knowledge hiding that have up to this date focused on cultural intelligence (Bogilovic et al., 2017), socio-cultural aspects (Babič et al., 2018), national cultural dimensions (Gaur et al., 2018; Dodokh, 2019), specific cultural contexts (Issac & Baral, 2020) or specific professional cultures (Hernaus et al., 2019). I specifically focus on how and why young migrants' perceptions of workplace exclusion lead to their knowledge hiding from cultural majority group coworkers and make their feelings of exclusion-inclusion a central theme of this qualitative deductive analysis. Such research goes deep into subjective experiences of young migrant workers related to knowledge hiding, complementing studies referred to above that have investigated knowledge hiding in a specific cultural setting with quantitative, deductive approaches.

(10) Besides growing attention to the antecedents of employees' knowledge hiding behavior within different work environments, little has been investigated regarding the academicians' knowledge hiding behaviors within different academic settings. However, the literature on knowledge hiding identifies few studies confirming this negative behavior in academic settings (Demirkasimoglu, 2016; Hernaus et al., 2018; Ghani et al., 2020). However, knowledge hiding behavior in academic settings is still an under-researched phenomenon that needs a deeper empirical and theoretical investigation (Connelly et al., 2012; 2019; Ruparel & Choubisa, 2020). This research contributes to the literature on knowledge hiding within academia by providing additional findings that knowledge hiding behavior occurs within the University of Ljubljana. Young migrant researchers employed knowledge hiding as a strategy to avoid perceived workplace exclusion in terms of the above-described four determinants and advance their perceived workplace inclusion in terms of already described two determinants across the university's different faculties in Ljubljana.

(11) The research findings have found that multinationals and the faculties of the University of Ljubljana lack an inclusive and diverse organizational climate, HRM practices, and policies. That resists young migrant workers' knowledge hiding. Knowledge can be controlled and minimized through well-promoted HRM practices (Butt & Ahmad, 2019; Dodokh, 2029). I compliment those findings. I recommend implementing inclusive HRM practices, policies, intercultural training,

seminars, and workshops to decrease knowledge hiding among cultural minority-majority group colleagues and superiors in multinational companies and across the faculties of the University of Ljubljana. That will also decrease the perceived categorization in out-group and in-group members. The perceived exclusion will be decreased, and minorities' sense of the perceived inclusion increased.

(12) The research findings have found that multinationals and the faculties of the University of Ljubljana lack inclusive leadership, and the organizational structure of multinationals consists of hierarchies. Several studies on knowledge hiding have identified that ethical (Men et al., 2018) and transformational (Ladan et al., 2020) decrease this negative behavior among employees and superiors across different work settings. I compliment those recommendations. I suggest implementing inclusive leadership that focuses on decentralization and building inclusive work teams. That will help multinationals and the faculties of the University of Ljubljana to increase the sense of the perceived workplace inclusion and, consequently, reduce knowledge hiding among cultural minority and majority group colleagues.

(13) Other main contributions are related to the research on workplace exclusion-inclusion (Mor Barak, 2000; 2005; Shore et al., 2011; 2018). I enhance the theoretical and practical evidence on workplace exclusion-inclusion by expanding its nomological net and investigating another negative consequence of workplace exclusion, i.e., knowledge hiding behavior. The research emphasized that workplace exclusion fuels engagement in uncooperative behavior (Wessellmann et al., 2010; 2012). Therefore, I enrich the literature on workplace exclusion, demonstrating knowledge hiding as one of the *negative behavioral outcomes* of perceived workplace exclusion.

(14) I advance the literature on workplace inclusion by examining perceived workplace inclusion as one of the *positive outcomes* of perceived workplace exclusion. Complementing the theoretical and practical evidence of other scholars that workplace inclusion presents a positive outcome of the perceived workplace exclusion (Williams, 2007; Robinson et al., 2013; Shore et al., 2011; 2018). Findings demonstrated that minorities desire to achieve inclusion to the culturally dominant group members to avoid their perceived workplace exclusion.

(15) By identifying knowledge hiding as a strategy to advance perceived workplace inclusion of young migrant workers to their Slovenian colleagues and superiors at multinational companies and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana, I add more contribution to perceived workplace exclusion-inclusion literature. Scholars suggested identifying other strategies that can increase perceived inclusion among employees at work (Mor Barak, 2008; Nkomo, 2014, Byron & Post, 2016).

(16) Besides, I contribute to the literature on workplace exclusion-inclusion by analyzing it in the context of the young migrant workers employed in multinationals and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. I advance studies on cultural elements of workplace exclusion-inclusion that have up to this date focused on sexual minorities (Shore et al., 2018), religious minorities (Nishii, 2013), immigrants, individuals with disabilities, and people with accents (Sabharwal, 2014; Mor Barak, 2005; Tang et al., 2015).

(17) While the concept of the perceived workplace inclusion has become popular among diversity and organizational scholars, most of the studies lack a comprehensive theoretical framework and empirical validation of those ideas (Shore et al., 2011). I have contributed to the exclusion-inclusion literature by examining it in the context of young migrant workers employed in European Member state country, Slovenia, at the multinational companies and universities based in Ljubljana. By that, I am providing more theoretical and empirical evidence on young migrants' perceived exclusion-inclusion and its relation with knowledge hiding behavior at multinational companies and universities.

(18) Research in Slovenia has paid little attention to the social or work-related experiences of exclusion, the inclusion of migrant workers, in particular, focusing on immigrants, including national and ethnic minority groups residing within Slovenia since 1991. The scholars devoted almost no attention to the incoming migrant workers' experiences of exclusion, inclusion, and knowledge hiding behavior at work. Migrants' work-related relations to the Slovenians, whether they hide knowledge as a consequence of their perceived exclusion and attempt to advance their workplace inclusion so far, remain overlooked. Even though I compliment the findings by Bajt (2008), Zavratnik (2012), and Kralj (2008) that found that (im)migrants face unequal positioning on the labor market based on their ethnic, social, and cultural status and class.

### **6.3 Practical implications and recommendations**

This study should be essential for HR and organizational scholars and practically applicable to supervisors and managers in multinational organizations and across the different faculties of the universities. Fostering an inclusive multicultural working environment can improve migrants' collaboration, satisfaction, self-perception, engagement, knowledge sharing, and organizational performance. Knowledge sharing plays a vital role in organizational functioning. It is essential to create an environment where different national, ethnic, and linguistic employees will be valued due to their abilities, knowledge, skills, and competencies. Migrant workers will be more eager to maintain a healthy relationship.

Findings have demonstrated that young migrant researchers and workers in different fields in multinational companies and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana faced many difficulties to be accepted and included. They engaged in knowledge hiding behavior to avoid perceived workplace exclusion. Besides, knowledge hiding behavior was employed to be perceived more as in-grouping, thus enhancing perceived inclusion to the team of Slovenian members. Specifically, the perceived workplace exclusion examined a negative predictor of knowledge hiding behavior. Besides, perceived inclusion represented a positive outcome.

In their inclusion framework, Shore et al. (2011) define inclusion as a high sense of belongingness and uniqueness that makes an individual feel more accepted and valued member of the team, thus included. I have followed the definition of inclusion provided by Mor Barak (2000; 2005), which explains that inclusion refers to any person's perception that makes him or her feel included at work. I found that young migrants intentionally hide the requested knowledge from their Slovenian colleagues to maintain the relationship with them and secure the job position that they occupy.

Although I examined young migrant workers' subjective perceptions of their workplace inclusion at work, it is essential to recognize that young migrants' perceived workplace exclusion, inclusion, and knowledge hiding signal their assimilation to the Slovenian colleagues and superiors. In their inclusion framework, Shore et al. (2011) define assimilation as a situation when an individual may experience high belongingness and low uniqueness. An individual is perceived as in-group member when he or she conforms to the majority groups. For instance, some circumstances, surroundings, and/or groups may trigger changing and/or hiding a less powerful person's authentic and unique self to fit in (i.e., to assimilate).

As found, young migrant workers, including those from the former Yugoslavia, could achieve desired belonging and inclusion, and at the same time feel unique, by adopting a specific role (e.g., Bettencourt et al., 2006). They adjusted the requested knowledge to the Slovenian colleagues' socio-cultural perceptions, preferences, and understanding. Even though they could achieve their desired inclusion, they were at risk of assimilation into the Slovenian colleagues. They had to hide their authentic knowledge to advance their chances of inclusion at work.

It is essential to realize that exclusion exists in the examined multinational companies in Ljubljana and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. To realize that exclusion causes the potential assimilation into the culturally dominant group members at work. Since knowledge is essential for organizations' functioning, efficiency, competition, creativity, etc., managers and leaders have to avoid young migrant workers' potential assimilation into the Slovenian-dominated workforces. To keep them authentic, including their ideas and knowledge, and, therefore, facilitate their inclusion and belonging to the culturally dominant group colleagues and superiors at work.

An important question arises what the management of universities and multinational companies can do regarding it? This research has several practical recommendations for the managers on developing and promoting a more inclusive organization that will help reduce knowledge hiding among minority and majority groups, within diverse teams, and overall, to the organization. Since the leadership of the academic and multinational work settings has to consider the harmful consequence knowledge hiding has on employee creativity (Cerne et al., 2014).

1. Management (chairs or directors) has to recognize *that knowledge hiding does occur among young migrant academicians and workers in diverse work fields and Slovenian colleagues and superiors*. In the same context, it occurs in multinational companies based in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Management has to recognize that typical behavior is harmful to knowledge requesters, so for the institutions and multinational companies. Moreover, research shows that it is even harmful to the knowledge hiders (Cerne et al., 2014). Since the primary duty for the researchers and workers in other fields and departments is knowledge generation, creation, collaboration, and innovativeness.
2. The research shows that employment decisions might affect knowledge exchange in different work settings (Hernaus et al., 2018). Therefore, the leaders should be cautious when *recruiting candidates from different national, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds*. Indeed, Slovenian multinational companies and knowledge-intensive organizations have to rethink their diversity policies, providing full rights protection and conforming with generally accepted standards of

respectable or moral behavior. They have to ensure the equal treatment of all workers, ensuring that there is no social or work-related tension between colleagues of minority and majority groups, nor with the superiors. This can facilitate better knowledge flow between minority and majority group members. Since results demonstrated that young migrant workers hide knowledge due to their ideas have been rejected, misperceived, misunderstood, mistreated by Slovenian colleagues.

Knowledge was hidden by the minorities due to the created majority by the Slovenians in a working team, along with the lack of interpersonal ties, connectedness, and identification between minority and majority group members. The difference in national and linguistic backgrounds, historical and political tension between the members of the former Yugoslavia, and that minorities labeled themselves as being out-groupers, representative of minority groups, non-Slovenian origin, non-Slovenian speakers, and foreigners caused knowledge hiding behavior.

3. Multinational companies and the faculties of the University of Ljubljana have to *improve regulations regarding languages* and allow documentation to be also provided in the English language. The failure of Slovenians to ensure proficient English language skills during formal and informal work-related meetings and prioritizing speaking in the Slovenian language triggered miscommunication, interpersonal and task conflicts, disengagement, exclusion. Young migrants hid knowledge from Slovenian colleagues at work. Multinational companies and the University of Ljubljana can offer Slovenian language courses to their foreign employees and reduce the language barrier.
4. Representative organizations have to ensure that meetings are held in English. Young migrant workers were invited to work on international projects held in English. Thus, the departments' leadership has to minimize language exclusionary behaviors by Slovenians towards the migrant employees. Since the English language is a required official working language in representative working settings, this will encourage more assertive collaborative behavior between migrant and Slovenian colleagues and knowledge sharing and new ideas. The faculties can organize open intercultural seminars and workshops. That will ensure that researchers with different national and linguistic backgrounds so Slovenians are aware of intercultural competencies.
5. Findings demonstrated that job manuals and reports are in English, even working in multinational companies. Therefore, leadership must ensure the translation of work materials, manuals, and reports in the English language and show respect towards employees from different racial and linguistic backgrounds. Moreover, there are many free websites or qualified translators, or translation services that can help translate the text from one language to another.
6. Organizations have to strive to *achieve an inclusive multicultural environment* where each culture is valued, and no group dominates (Nkomo & Kossek, 2000). Inclusion climate implies an organization where an individual (e.g., foreigner) feels like a working organization. That includes both the formal processes, such as access to information and decision-making

opportunities and informal processes, such as lunch meetings and gatherings on break (Mor Barak, 2011). Such an atmosphere around and within the organization can foster an environment where all employees' skills and competencies are utilized and accepted (Mor Barak et al., 1998).

7. Findings have demonstrated that minority members *lack social support and help at their workplaces*. To help minority members, organizations can create employee resource groups. Similar groups help to provide support, enhance the career and personal development of the employees. Employee resource groups can provide insights and information regarding working for a setting and organization. Likewise, they help connect with other employees, share ideas, learn more about surroundings, and make networks. This step can improve the wellness of the employees. Those groups will create more equality for the employees. They will enhance the awareness of the different employees in the diverse workforce. For example, to ensure that all organization members have the same voice in the workplace, have access to the information, have networks with other employees, the opportunities to make contributions and develop and make progress within the organization.
8. Organizations have to create a harmonious and healthy organizational culture and working environment (Bogilovic et al., 2017; Serenko & Bontis 2016; Ghani et al., 2020) to decrease knowledge hiding behavior. Perceived organizational policies (Malik et al., 2018), low fairness sensitivity, lack of pro-social motivation (Cui et al., 2016), and low task-interdependence (Fong et al., 2018) affect knowledge hiding, team and individual creativity. Therefore, management can inherit inclusive managerial practices (e.g., Stevens, Plaut, & Sanchez-Burks, 2008), and lastly, develop and practice more “inclusive competencies” among (cultural) majority employees (Pless & Maak, 2004). Those factors can significantly influence inclusion's work environment and perception (Bilimoria et al., 2008).
9. Teamwork is highly promoted in Ljubljana. More than 300 research groups (ARRS, 2020) to execute international and national research projects, joint papers, etc. Therefore, these research findings have to be beneficial for the leadership and management of the university since they have to take care of the created communication, task, and relationship problems that appear among cultural minority and majority group members. Obviously, by supporting inclusive and diverse work-groups, organizing different workshops, seminars to let foreigners and locals get to know each other more, to reduce the perceived ethnic status difference among those groups. Therefore, to support knowledge sharing, inclusion, and belonging, cooperation, exchange of different ideas, and significantly, acceptance and appreciation of different perspectives and knowledge among cultural minority and majority group members.
10. Knowledge-hiding behavior doesn't occur within a positive organizational knowledge culture (Serenko & Bontis, 2016) or when individuals have a high level of cultural intelligence (Bogilovic et al., 2017). Bogilovic et al. (2017) has found that an environment where employees are highly culturally intelligent can foster a decrease of an individual social categorization and knowledge hiding and increase individual creativity. It is essential to promote training and seminars that support the enhancement of individual cultural intelligence.

The literature emphasizes three dimensions of cultural intelligence. The first dimension includes *metacognitive* cultural intelligence - an individual's capabilities to adjust to a new cultural environment, plan for upcoming intercultural meetings, and revise past meetings. The second dimension refers to *cognitive* cultural intelligence - increasing knowledge about other's cultures, norms, practices, language, and social systems (Erez et al., 2013). The final dimension is *motivational* cultural intelligence – one's willingness to deal with intercultural interactions (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008). Practicing all three dimensions of cultural intelligence can increase the degree of the social exchange between minority and majority members.

11. Scholars suggested that transformational leadership (Ladan et al., 2018) and ethical leadership (Tang et al., 2015; Men et al., 2018) decreases employees' knowledge hiding behavior. Besides, management can *cultivate more inclusive leadership styles* (Shore et al., 2011, 2018). An inclusive leader strives and appreciates employees' contributions, employs a collaborative leadership style, handles conflicts, is familiar with cultural competencies, and creates a feeling of collective identity (Deloitte, 2011). Research identifies the requirement of specific leadership skills, including good listening and communication skills, openness to new ideas and diversity, humility, and the ability to accept differently (Hays-Thomas et al., 2012). An inclusive leadership style will encourage employees of different cultural, national, ethnic, linguistic, and age backgrounds to collaborate and share knowledge efficiently. Regarding this, leadership can try
  - a. To *increase perceptions of trustworthiness among the minority and majority colleagues* by emphasizing a shared identity or giving particular importance to the situations when trustworthiness has been displayed (Connelly et al., 2012). Findings demonstrated how poor relationships between migrant and local employees affect minorities' knowledge hiding behavior.
  - b. To change the decrease climate for knowledge hiding and manifest more *managerial support for knowledge sharing*. Leadership can also increase employees' opportunities for social interactions (Connelly & Kelloway, 2003). By *organizing some discussions and meetings* on that topic (during working hours) or having team building activities. Employees from different environments might also share some information about their cultural practices, and by supporting dialogue, some misunderstandings might be resolved.
  - c. In their study, Geofroy & Evans (2017) have indicated that organizations can control knowledge-hiding behavior by *creating a culture of trust, teamwork, and organizational commitment* (Geofroy & Evans, 2017). HR management could also implement specific employee activities accordingly to make a diverse workforce more engaged and integrated. Since according to the findings, natives tend to separate employees of foreign descent due to differences in language and being non-Slovenian. Therefore, most workers perceived workplace exclusion as a consequence of experienced exclusion, rejection, and mistreatment.
  - d. Participants have explained that primarily the projects are led by the supervisors that affect their knowledge sharing extent. Likewise, hierarchies present, and they have to listen to their managers and supervisors. It was highlighted that culture is formal when it comes to interaction

between employees and managers. As a consequence, minority members prefer to hide their knowledge due to job security reasons. I suggest *the management develop a friendship* with their employees that can help to strengthen trust, which will help improve knowledge sharing between them and decrease knowledge hiding (Butt, Sohal, & Prajogo, 2019). Moreover, practicing more familiarity with their employees could help migrant workers to express their ideas in a more open environment.

- e. Moreover, new employee socialization must be paid enough attention to and addressed adequately by the literature on organizational behavior. Management has to strive to support a healthier social exchange climate and enhance interaction with the employees. Pucko & Cater (2011) have found that Slovenian managers appreciate more self-protective and autonomous leadership styles (Pucko & Cater, 2011). That is, independent and individualistic leaders are self-centered, status-conscious, procedural, and conflict-inducing (House et al., 2004; Steyrer et al., 2008). Following this, leaders and supervisors must encourage employees to share knowledge and take care of knowledge hiding consequences by *practicing more team-oriented leadership, supporting effective team building, and mutual support*. Moreover, the inclusive leader has to *support participative and inclusive team designs* (Bernroider, 2013).

Workforce diversity is considered to add value to the organization. Often companies fail to meet all the requirements of an inclusive workplace. Management and leadership of the universities and multinational organizations must pay more attention to developing inclusive practices and policies that will encourage better interpersonal relationships, consequently, better information and knowledge flow. The management and organizations must create and maintain an environment where all the members and employees are treated equally. This could decrease knowledge hiding between minority and majority group members and teams and support the easier generation of new ideas and promote innovation within the team (Cerne et al., 2014).

Being diverse and multinational helps companies stay competitive in the current business environment. They rely on the advantages that international diversity brings with it. These are people from different cultures, having different work experiences, knowledge, and perspectives. Management must ensure an inclusive organizational climate, fostering inclusive and diverse policies, practices, and leadership to achieve inclusion. That is when an employee feels unique and belonged at the same time.

## **6.4 Research limitations**

The primary research limitation concerns the small sample size. I interviewed 40 participants, which allowed me to perform an in-depth study, but the sample size limits the possibility of generalization over a larger population (Myers, 2010), which was not the purpose of this qualitative study. The sampling technique that was chosen due to the accessibility of participants – purposive sampling – also has limitations, bias, and lack of probability in choosing the unit of analysis. On the other hand, there were no other chances to replicate the findings and strengthen them during the research. However, the contextualized findings of how knowledge hiding operates in the workplace add to our understanding of knowledge hiding and provides a starting point for



future research, which could test the findings by conducting large-scale studies in other cultural and country settings.

Where ethics are concerned, some participants that were affiliated with the university were concerned that the results would be presented at the School of Economics and Business, University of Ljubljana, particularly as they shared personal stories of conflicts with their colleagues. In particular, young migrant researchers were worried that their supervisors and colleagues would be able to identify their responses, which would create obstacles or difficulties in the relationship with their Slovenian colleagues and supervisors. Only one participant labeled as a young migrant worker from North Africa hesitated to say the particular country he is from since he was the only young researcher working at the faculty from this particular North African country. Even though I reassured the participant that in line with the ethics protocol followed by this research, his anonymity would be preserved, and the university would only receive aggregated results of my doctoral research, he did not allow me to mention his original country of birth. Therefore, we agreed that I will mention that he is generally from North Africa since I needed this information for data analysis.

Another research limitation of this study is limited construct exploration. The themes were co-constructed through the conversation and interviews with the participants. The themes “social inequality,” “ethnocentrism,” “stereotyping and prejudices,” “social or ethnic hierarchies,” as the other reasons for experienced and perceived workplace exclusion and desire to belong, were not explored. Participants rejected answering interview questions regarding social inequality and its influence on knowledge hiding intention. Consequently, it would be interesting to tackle those themes through future research.

Lastly, respondents seemed to be not very honest when answering questions, especially regarding their relationship with Slovenian colleagues and managers. Several reasons may consider the role of leaders/ managers since participants asked if results and responses will be presented to their superiors. They have expressed the danger of consequence. In this way, they tried to talk about their working experience in a neutral or even better way.

## **6.5 Future research directions**

Although motives for engaging in the knowledge hiding behavior are much well investigated in the literature (Cerne et al., 2014; Connelly et al., 2012; Bogilovic et al., 2017), still more investigation is needed to understand the better interplay between workplace inclusion and knowledge hiding intentions. Findings have demonstrated that migrant employees engage in knowledge hiding behavior due to inclusion and integration at the workplace. However, besides those findings of the recent study, more investigation of such a relationship of qualitative character will be necessary to understand the research problem and motives of such behavior.

Secondly, different samples can be considered, such as samples representing different racial and ethnic groups within different countries. For example, migrants from Non-European countries are working and living in European Union countries, or ethnic minorities (Afro, Asian, Latino) in

United States, South Europe, France, etc. Since, in my opinion, the experiences of certain groups of migrants may vary different character according to countries working and integration policies itself organization type. The findings can provide richer empirical evidence. For example, in the case of the United States of America, South Europe and/- or France, due to country size, heterogeneity of population and workforce, their cultural specifics – a determined attitude towards a particular group of ethnic minority or migrants, likewise, distinct perception towards a different religious group of people; that can be rooted and explained by their historical relationship.

The following scope of interest for future research can be a range of constructs that I have proposed. They were not confirmed by young migrants working in multinational companies in Ljubljana and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. I sought whether migrants' perceived exclusion and desire to belong to a cultural majority group resulted from ethnocentrism, stereotyping and prejudices, differences in social status, and ethnic class (e.g., social hierarchies), and social inequality. Those constructs could influence the intention to engage in knowledge hiding behavior. Since literature explains, those constructs can influence skills and competencies, knowledge sharing, employees' work-related inputs, and contributions (Bussley & Bandura, 1999).

Since the main focus of the current study is on the knowledge provider, thus on ethnic minority and migrant employees' intentions to hide their knowledge from knowledge requestor, so from majority member (Kang, 2016). Thirdly, I think it makes sense to look at the research problem in the opposite context - for example, whether or not majority employees intend to hide knowledge from minority group employees and on which bases. Additionally, what are their perspectives, their preferences, and perceptions towards a diverse workforce? That would provide additional comprehension to a recent study as to the general scope of knowledge hiding.

Fourth, since this study focuses on the interpersonal level of analysis that knowledge concealment occurs among minority and majority employees, workplace inclusion as an intention to hide knowledge can also be studied at the organizational level. Migrant workers' opinions regarding work-related activities, such as decision-making and task-solving, have to be evaluated. It also has to be studied migrant workers' relationship with superiors, if they are seen as a part of the organization, have equal opportunity to develop their skills, receive objective feedback, etc. That would extend recent findings and the general scope of knowledge hiding behavior. Identity-regulation and identity work (Alvesson & Billing, 2009; Essers et al., 2013; Zanoni & Janssens, 2007) can help to fill the gap. Those concepts explain how organizational norms and rules control employees and facilitate change of employees' ethnic and racial backgrounds (Baumeister et al., 2005).

Lastly, knowledge type and characteristics can be considered as a potential limitation of this study. Most papers on knowledge hiding behavior examine personal knowledge that refers to information, ideas, and expertise related to the tasks (Bartol & Srivastava, 2002). The current study can be replicated in the context of organizational and structural knowledge - related to job manuals, documents, policies and procedures, market research, suppliers, and customers to see whether or not different types of knowledge hiding have different outcomes at an organizational level. On the

other hand, researchers also should consider the idea of exploring and highlighting the differentiation between hiding tacit or explicit knowledge from peers (Peng, 2013), especially in the context of the diverse sample.

## CONCLUSION

Companies and universities strive to become more international, multinational, and diverse. I believe it is relevant to pay more research attention to the workplace exclusion-inclusion processes that significantly affect young migrant workers' knowledge hiding behavior and, likely, knowledge requester, teams, and organizations. Given attention to the context of young working migrants makes significant input for organizations as a unique context to study similar social and workplace phenomena like perceived workplace exclusion-inclusion and knowledge hiding behavior. With this research, I aim to bring the newly emerged concepts of workplace exclusion-inclusion and its influence on knowledge hiding behavior into a brighter light, hoping that those findings will encourage future research to be explored more deeply.

This qualitative research identified how members of the minority, i.e., young migrants and majority, i.e., Slovenians, group members, execute tasks, projects, and interpersonal relationships with each other. Examining the research problem in the context of young migrant workers allowed me to understand the strategies, styles better, and approaches those groups to engage to avoid perceived workplace exclusion and foster perceived workplace inclusion to their Slovenian colleagues and respective managers.

I have discussed the relationship between perceived workplace exclusion-inclusion and knowledge hiding behavior in the context of young migrant workers, aged between 26-30 years, employed in the MNCs and across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana for five years or less. According to the research findings, I have discussed the potential effects of age, national, ethnic, and linguistic differences that influenced the perception of the minorities to label themselves as minorities, foreigners, out-groupers, and non-Slovenians. Furthermore, I have discussed the consequence of those perceived factors on young migrant workers' knowledge-hiding behavior towards their Slovenian colleagues and superiors.

As it has resulted, the study found that young migrant workers hide the requested knowledge due to the perceived workplace exclusion and lack of a sense of belonging and inclusion to the Slovenian colleagues and managers at multinational companies and the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana. As a consequence, knowledge hiding was employed by the minorities as a strategy to avoid perceived workplace exclusion and improve their chances to feel more belonged and included to the host colleagues, leaders, and organizations.

The rejection of ideas, the language barrier, the poor relationship, and the majority role, as determinants of the perceived workplace exclusion, affected young migrants' engagement in knowledge hiding behavior to their culturally dominant colleagues and superiors. Therefore, knowledge hiding behavior was found to be a consequence of minorities' perceived workplace exclusion. Moreover, the desire for belonging, acceptance, and inclusion to the culturally dominant

group colleagues fueled minority members' knowledge hiding behavior. They employed knowledge hiding as a strategy to keep the established relationship and avoid controversy with the Slovenian colleagues and managers at the workplace and the desire to secure the job position.

Besides, I have discussed potential contextual predictors that might influence and explain the behavior of culturally dominant group members, Slovenians. That included analyzing Slovenian work context in terms of national cultural dimensions, multinational and university work environments, and perspectives. Therefore, I provide some solutions that need to be considered if the leaders and managers of multinational companies and the University of Ljubljana faculty want to benefit from the knowledge and ideas that culturally different young migrants bring with them.

Knowledge is a competitive advantage, especially for multinational companies and the faculties of the University of Ljubljana. Since they can only develop through innovativeness, collaborative knowledge, and technology, that can't be achieved without a well-developed inclusive, and knowledge-sharing work environment in a diverse workforce. However, besides implemented workshops, seminars, and initiatives to create inclusive organizations, the perceived exclusion exists among colleagues at work, especially in different cultural contexts. Since often employees of different nationalities and cultures do not feel fully involved, engaged, or accepted by local colleagues. The challenge is that knowledge sharing among culturally different colleagues and supervisors is effective when there are smooth relationships between the organization and its staff. Managers, HR, and employees should be familiar with cultural differences, should show respect, appreciation, and ethical behavior towards the cultural minority group representatives.

On the one hand, the cultural, ethnic, social, and age-diverse employees are tolerated within examined work settings. Leaders of the represented work settings slowly progress in accommodating their needs. However, their rights are formally protected by the Protection against Discrimination Act, which requires equal treatment of all individuals despite their gender, age, ethnicity, social status, etc. (Ministry of Labor, Family, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities, 2019). On the other hand, young migrant workers, including those from the former Yugoslavia, are not nearly "accepted," "belonged," and "included" in Slovenian employees at work. The research findings confirm the existence of discriminatory treatment and stereotyping, which fueled the perceived exclusion among young migrant and Slovenian employees and the apparent disregard of the young migrants' proposed ideas, knowledge, perspectives, etc. Slovenians at work.

It is essential to create a highly inclusive and diverse work environment. Since I believe that minorities will become less sensitive towards the perceptions, reactions, or attitudes of the Slovenian colleagues and superiors, most probably will more problems, like minorities' stronger demotivation, isolation, and feelings of frustration, decreased contribution, and collaboration. Besides, higher engagement in knowledge hiding behavior. Since 1 to 5 years of the working period does not look promising to thoroughly learn cultural majority group colleagues' socio-cultural norms, perceptions, and behaviors. On the one hand, reduced sensitivity towards the perceived exclusion factors may help young migrant workers harm themselves at work. However, on the other hand, minorities' knowledge hiding behavior will be significantly increased by the time among migrant and Slovenian employees. The minorities will hold themselves back from

proposing new ideas or sharing work-related knowledge and information more intensively in their future employment years.

Organizations, managers, and HR management have to consider and pay more attention to fostering and ensuring equal acceptance and treatment of all nationality co-workers. They have to address cultural minority members' (young migrants) needs, requirements, and complaints towards the management, which the Slovenian managers in this research point. Since high knowledge hiding climate among cultural minority-majority colleagues, across departments, and within organizations will facilitate low organizational outcomes. In particular, the decreased creativity, innovativeness, and competitiveness of the organizations. Well-promoted and well-established workgroup inclusion, leader inclusion, perceived organizational inclusion, inclusion climate, and inclusion practices can strengthen young migrant workers' belonging and inclusion to the Slovenian colleagues and superiors. They also can help resist engagement knowledge-hiding behavior at multinational companies and the University of Ljubljana.

For instance, the Slovenian government provides generous funding for young researchers. They invest a lot in youth to learn more, obtain new skills and knowledge, generate ideas, create, and contribute to the research interest. Therefore, they have to rethink their inclusive policies to avoid the adverse effects of knowledge-hiding behavior among cultural minorities and majority research colleagues within academic settings.

Organizations must be aware that relationship and task conflict may occur within inter-cultural work teams since ideas may diverge. This means knowing how to integrate diverse ideas to resolve conflict and enable dominant culture representatives to share minorities' perspectives and ideas. Moreover, leadership has to realize that ideas, prospects, and knowledge of one group (minority) are not heard, accepted, and accounted as essential to include in the decision by the members of a privileged group. It is essential to recognize that it is necessary to integrate and enable the perceived minority group members to distribute knowledge and avoid hiding it to achieve an inclusive working environment.

It was discussed that the multinational companies and the faculties of the University of Ljubljana became more international in the last few years. Therefore, it is essential to keep the diverse workforce by implementing different inclusive and diversity training, policies, and seminars to foster young migrants 'sense of inclusion, belonging acceptance, and identification with the cultural majority group colleagues and superiors. Thereby, it's essential to develop an environment where mutual understanding, appreciation, and acceptance of all nations is created to foster knowledge-sharing among minority and majority groups.

For instance, multinational companies and the University of Ljubljana have to ensure inclusive practices, policies, and training, by providing extra possibilities for employees to get familiar with each other besides their jobs (Nishii, 2013). To facilitate effective communication and encourage interaction among a diverse workforce is very important. Ensuring them can boost mutual understanding, appreciation, and respect among cultural minority and majority group colleagues. Often, individuals tend to differentiate or favor a similar person to themselves simply because they lack knowledge regarding a particular group of people. Organizing more mixed group-based work

will help grow and expand team members' experiences and perceptions about each other. Moreover, similar training will teach how to combine culturally different ideas and knowledge, learn more from each other, develop more listening skills, patience, and accept different ethnicity, cultural values, knowledge, and perspectives of others.

Cultural intelligence is an ability to adapt to new cultural settings, understand and act appropriately during cross-cultural interactions, learn about others' cultures, and enhance an interest in interacting with different racial, ethnic, or linguistic people. Lastly, it helps adapt and modify behavior to succeed and smooth the interaction and relationship with diverse people (Ang et al., 2012). It can reduce knowledge hiding and enhance creativity in the diverse work environment (Bogilovic et al., 2017). Cultural intelligence helps to integrate diverse resources, use multiple perspectives and ideas that the international environment brings with and drives up creativity, innovation, and knowledge sharing (Templer et al., 2006). High cultural intelligence can decrease knowledge hiding behavior among cultural minority and majority colleagues and superiors at the Slovenian multinational companies and the University of Ljubljana.

It is essential to ensure high cultural intelligence among cultural minority and majority colleagues to enhance cross-cultural relationships, cooperation, knowledge sharing, and a sense of inclusion and belonging. Managers and HR management have to be sure that cultural and linguistic barriers are overcome during cross-cultural communication. An inclusive organization where cultural, generational, and language differences are seen, heard, appreciated, accepted, and celebrated (Mor Barak, 2015) is created.

Moreover, since 1 to 5 years of the working period does not seem much to thoroughly learn cultural majority group colleagues' socio-cultural norms, perceptions, and behaviors. Thus, I believe that young migrant workers' knowledge hiding will be increased by the time of employment. They will hold themselves back from proposing new ideas or sharing work-related knowledge and information more intensively during their future employment years. If multinational companies and the faculties of the University of Ljubljana will not take seriously into consideration that they have to reinforce their inclusive and diverse organizational climate, along with the leadership.

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## **APPENDICES**



## **Appendix 1: Daljši povzetek disertacije v slovenskem jeziku (An extensive summary of the basic findings in Slovenian)**

Znanje je konkurenčna prednost, zlasti za multinacionalna podjetja in univerze. Takšna delovna okolja si prizadevajo postati bolj mednarodna in multinacionalna v smislu vključevanja posameznikov z različnimi kulturnimi, etničnimi, jezikovnimi in starostnimi ozadji. Kulturno raznoliko delovno mesto spodbuja izmenjavo znanja z ustvarjanjem več idej, znanja in perspektiv z različnih zornih kotov (DiTomaso et al., 2007), spodbujanjem visokokakovostnih odločitev, skupne ustvarjalnosti, doseganja ciljev in uspeha (Mannix & Neale, 2005). Vseeno pa je včasih izmenjava znanja zavirana, s čimer se znanje skriva med kulturno raznolikimi kolegi. Fenomen vedenja s katerim posamezniki skrivajo znanje je opredeljen kot namerno skrivanje želenih informacij ali znanja (Connelly et al., 2012). V svoji študiji kanadskih zaposlenih so Connelly in ostali (2012) preučili tri različne vidike:

1. Izmikajoče skrivanje - posameznik prosilcu za znanje ponudi druge informacije namesto tistih, ki jih potrebuje, ali zavlačuje s podajo informacij in prosilcu obljubi, da bo le-ta potrebne informacije prejel kasneje;
2. Delati se neumnega - posameznik se pretvarja, da ne ve, o čem prosilec za znanje govori, ali trdi, da o temi ne ve prav veliko;
3. Racionalizirano skrivanje - posameznik izjavi, da je znanje zaupno in ga ni mogoče deliti, ali pa da nima dovoljenja za deljenje zahtevanega znanja (Connelly et. al. 2012).

Literatura o vedenju skrivanja znanja opredeljuje več faktorjev ki takšno vedenje napovedujejo, vključno s skupinsko kulturo (Bogilović et. al. 2017), značilnostmi skupinskih nalog (Cerne et. al., 2014), zaupanjem skupine (Connelly in Zweig, 2014) in negativnimi odnosi s sodelavci (Nowlin et al., 2015), ki vplivajo na skrivanje znanja s strani zaposlenih pri delu. Poleg tega statusne razlike zaposlenih v organizaciji vplivajo na skrivanje znanja in znatno zmanjšajo ustvarjalnost zaposlenih z nizkim statusom (Rhee & Choi, 2017). Kljub temu je malo znanega o tem, kako in zakaj se to negativno vedenje delovne sile pojavlja med kulturno raznolikimi kolegi in nadrejenimi.

V zadnjih letih se vse več raziskovalne pozornosti posveča kulturnim elementom fenomena skrivanja znanja v nezahodnem kulturnem kontekstu in znotraj raznolike delovne sile. Raziskave vedenja s katerim se skriva znanje preučujejo vpliv kolektivističnih kultur na skrivanje znanja (npr. Peng, 2013; Tang et. al., 2015; Huo et. al., 2016), pa tudi vpliv individualističnih kultur na skrivanje znanja (npr. Serenko in Bontis, 2016; Černe et. al., 2017; Škerlavaj et. al., 2018). Študija od Bogilovic et. al., (2017) je preučevala skrivanje znanja ki se skriva znotraj kulturno mešane skupine. Glavni cilj raziskave od Bogilovic et. al., (2017) je bil preučiti razmerje med skrivanjem znanja in ustvarjalnostjo na ravni posameznika in ekipe v okviru kulturno raznoliklega vzorca. Poleg tega so Babic et. al. (2018) preučevali, kako prosocialna motivacija in nacionalne kulturne dimenzije oblikujejo skrivanje znanja.

Čeprav so znanstveniki raziskali več kulturnih elementov vedenja, s katerim posamezniki skrivajo znanje in njegove posledice na delovnem mestu, je potrebnih še več teoretičnih in praktičnih

raziskav, s katerimi bi izboljšali razumevanje takšnega vedenja pri kulturno različni delovni sili tako na ravni posameznika kot tudi skupine. Posebne situacije so še vedno premalo raziskane. Natančneje, ni še raziskav, ki bi preučevale skrivanje znanja med posamezniki iz različnih kulturnih okolij; zlasti med kulturnimi manjšinskimi in večinskimi skupinami kolegov in nadrejenih v multinacionalnih podjetjih ter na različnih fakultetah univerz.

Teorija socialne identitete (Tajfel & Turner, 1985) zagovarja, da člani skupine z visokim statusom, tj. kulturno prevladujoči zaposleni razvrstijo, izključijo ali diskriminirajo posameznika, ki se razlikuje glede na skupne perspektive in znanje (Shore et. al., 2011), kulturo, narodnost, jezik ali starost (Tajfel & Turner, 1970). Znanstveniki trdijo, da kulturna raznolikost spodbuja procese socialne kategorizacije, ki ne podpirajo izpopolnitve znanja različnih članov ekipe (Hoever et al., 2012; Dahlin et. Al., 2005). Kategorizacija in diferenciacija spodbujata sodelovanje v negativnem vedenju, vključno s slabo prosocialnim ali slabo k sodelovanju usmerjenim vedenjem, skupaj z drugimi asocialnimi vedenji (Robinson et al., 2013). Zaposleni to negativno vračajo in skrivajo svoje znanje (Cerne et. al., 2015; Babić et. al., 2018); zlasti znotraj skupine z raznoliko delovno silo. Zato pričakujem, da bodo mladi priseljeni delavci svoje znanje skrivali pred slovenskimi kolegi. Negativno skrivanje znanja lahko uporabljajo kot odziv na njihove izkušnje z izključenostjo zaradi kulturne, etnične, jezikovne in starostne razlike med njimi in slovenskimi kolegi.

Literatura o skrivanju znanja opredeljuje več oblik zaznane izključenosti na delovnem mestu. Na primer, zaznana neprimernost na delovnem mestu (Arshad & Ismail, 2018), zaznano izobčenje na delovnem mestu (Zhao et al., 2016), zaznavanje ustrahovanja in ogovarjanja na delovnem mestu (Yao et al., 2020a, b) in zaznani cinizem (posmehovanje) na delovnem mestu (Aljawarneh & Atan, 2018) lahko privede do vedenja, s katerim bo posameznik skrival svoje znanje pred drugimi pri delu. Dopolnujem ugotovitve Zhao et. al., (2016), in predpostavljam, da lahko skrivanje znanja predstavlja samozaščitno strategijo mladih priseljencev, s katero se želijo izogniti zaznani izključenosti na delovnem mestu zaradi superiornosti kulturno prevladujočih kolegov in nadrejenih v skupini ter slabo vključujoče organizacijske kulture v večnacionalnih podjetjih ter na različnih fakultetah Univerze v Ljubljani.

Študije so pokazale tudi to, da lahko jezikovne in kulturne razlike ogrozijo odnos, pripadnost in pretok informacij (Welch et al., 2005) med kolegi iz kulturnih manjšin in večin. Jezikovna distanca med zaposlenimi lahko povzroči izključitev in izogibanje izmenjavi informacij in znanja s kolegi prevladujoče večinske skupine. Jezikovne in kulturne razlike lahko resnično vplivajo na pretok informacij (Gaur, Ma & Ge, 2018). Kolikor nam je znano, pa ni nobena predhodna raziskava raziskala, pomen jezika kot ključno oviro za ohranjanje povezave in interakcije med zaposlenimi v kulturni manjšini in večini, kar lahko potencialno privede do skrivanja znanja. Tako bom predstavil prve pripovedne dokaze o vlogi jezika v procesih skrivanja znanja, zlasti v okviru raznolike delovne sile.

Shore et. al. (2011) trdi, da se sodelavci, katerih edinstvene lastnosti, kot so znanje, informacije, perspektive, izkušnje, mnenje, niso zaznane kot pomembne s strani njihovih sodelavcev in nadrejenih iz večinske skupine, torej, sodelavci iz etničnih skupin in priseljenci, počutijo bolj

izključene, nepovezane s sodelavci in nadzorniki in čutijo da ne prispevajo dovolj k organizaciji in ekipi (Brewer, 1991; Mor Barak, 2000; Shore et. al., 2011). Zato predvidevam, da lahko izkušnja zavrnitve ideje vpliva na skrivanje znanja mladih priseljencev v prihodnosti do svojih kolegov in nadrejenih iz večinske skupine.

Poleg tega so Cerne et. al. (2014) ugotovili, da slab medosebni odnos vpliva na skrivanje znanja med slovenskimi zaposlenimi/študenti. Odnosi, interakcije in komunikacija vplivajo na sodelovanje in vključenost posameznikov na medosebni ravni in znotraj delovnih skupin. Zato na osnovi teorije socialne identitete (Tajfel in Turner, 1986) ki pravi da člani skupine z visokim statusom običajno izključujejo člane skupine z nizkim statusom zaradi zaznanih razlik v etničnosti, jeziku, narodnosti, starosti, idejah in perspektivah, predvidevam, da bodo zaradi ustvarjenih ovir v odnosih med priseljenci in kolegi večinskih kulturnih skupin, priseljenci kot odziv na zaznano izključenost pri delu skrivali znanje pred kolegi večinske kulturne skupine.

Glede zaznane kulturne, nacionalne, jezikovne in starostne kategorizacije predvidevam, da lahko te zaznane razlike vplivajo na konflikt med nalogami in odnosi v kontekstu pripadnikov manjšinske-večinske skupine, zato bo verjetnost, da se bodo člani manjšinske skupine posluževali skrivanja znanja, velika, zaradi zaznane pripadnosti v delu skupine z nizkim statusom in zaznane superiornosti lokalnih kolegov. Rhee & Choi, (2017) sta ugotovila, da statusne razlike (nizek in visok status zaposlenih v organizaciji) resnično vplivajo na skrivanje znanja in bistveno zmanjšujejo kreativnost in ciljno usmerjenost zaposlenih z nizkim statusom (Rhee & Choi, 2017). Poleg tega je Semerci (2018) ugotovil, da na vedenje prikrivanja znanja vplivajo konflikti med nalogami in odnosi med zaposlenimi. Zato pričakujem, da bo ustvarjena večina v skupinah kot eden od dejavnikov zaznane izključenosti na delovnem mestu lahko okrepila namen manjšin, da namerno skrivajo zahtevano znanje pred skupinskimi člani nadrejene kulture.

Raziskava ugotavlja, da se izključeni posamezniki, vključno s kulturnimi priseljenci, sčasoma naučijo, kako se spoprijeti z zaznano izključenostjo na delovnem mestu in jo prenašati, s čimer postanejo manj občutljivi na pojav socialne ali z delom povezane zavrnitve, ignoriranja ali izključevanja (Twenge et. al., 2001; 2002; DeWall & Baumeister, 2006). Poleg tega pa krepijo svojo željo po pripadnosti in vključenosti (Pless & Maak, 2004) med kulturno dominantne kolege v skupini in nadrejene v službi. Občutek zaznane vključenosti bi lahko pomagal odstraniti zaznane statusne razlike med kulturno različnimi zaposlenimi na medosebni ravni in znotraj skupin. Spoštovanje različnih kompetenc in perspektiv med člani skupine lahko spodbudi občutke svobode in izmenjavo znanja. Kljub vsemu se priseljenci poslužujejo različnih vedenjskih strategij, da se dominantnim članom skupine z visokim statusom zdijo bolj prijateljski (Turner, 1991) in se velikokrat obnašajo kot član dominantne skupine (Goffman, 1963), da s tem povečajo svoje možnosti za vključenost v delovno skupino ali organizacijo.

Teorija optimalne različnosti (Brewer, 1991) navaja, da kadar se posameznik počuti drugačnega od drugih, lahko doživlja izključenost in grožnje pripadnosti dominantnim članom skupine. Na primer, posamezniki se morda ne bodo prepirali o svojih idejah zaradi strahu pred izključitvijo in izgubo skupinske kohezije (Janis, 1972). Da bi se izognil zaznani izključenosti na delovnem mestu, želi doseči ravnovesje med vključenostjo in razlikovanjem znotraj organizacije in med skupinami.

Glede tega predvidevam, da bodo mladi priseljeni delavci, ki so nekoč zaznali izključenost in zavrnitev s strani kulturno prevladujočih kolegov v skupini zaradi predlaganja drugačnih idej ali perspektiv, najverjetneje skrili zahtevano znanje v prihodnosti, da bi dosegli vključenost in pripadnost do kolegov kulturnih večin, skupin, vodij ali organizacije. Torej, ko bo enkrat "optimalna identiteta" (Sheldon & Bettencourt, 2002) ustvarjena s skrivanjem znanja, bodo mladi priseljeni delavci najverjetneje doživeli vključevanje ali preprosto zadovoljili svoje potrebe po vključenosti v skupino.

Potreba po pripadnosti pomeni, da imajo zaposleni temeljno potrebo po vzpostavitvi visokokakovostnih odnosov z drugimi kolegi (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Mor Barak, 2005), in da so del delovnih skupin in organizacije; še posebej je to lahko pomembno v kontekstu raznolike delovne sile. Predvidevam, da se bodo mladi priseljenci zaradi izkušenj z izključitvijo zaradi različnih stališč in perspektive poslužili skrivanja znanja kot strategijo za izogibanje konfliktom in ohranjanja odnosa s kolegi iz večinske kulturne skupine. Torej, za povečanje zaznavanja njihove vključenosti v organizacijo.

Pelled et. al., (1999) so ugotovili, da varnost zaposlitve predstavlja še en pokazatelj zaznane vključenosti v delovne nastavitve. Pričakujem, da lahko starostna, hierarhična, profesorska (poklicna) in etnična razlika med mladimi priseljenimi delavci in njihovimi slovenskimi nadrejenimi vpliva na skrivanje znanja mladih priseljenih delavcev pri delu, pred njihovimi kulturno prevladujočimi kolegi in menedžerji. Mladi priseljeni delavci se lahko poslužujejo skrivanja znanja kot strategijo za zagotavljanje stabilnosti delovnih mest in odnosov z nadrejenimi. Mladinskih delavcev, njihovih predlogov in idej starejši menedžerji v slovenskih podjetjih niso zaznavali resno (Brcic in Mihelic, 2015). Nameravam dodati še eno spremenljivko, to je pripadnost manjšinski in kulturni skupini, za namen proučevanja skrivanja znanja mladih priseljenih delavcev pred njihovimi nadrejenimi in kolegi. Starostne in generacijske razlike, hierarhične, strokovne (poklicne) in etnične statusne razlike lahko vplivajo na skrivanje znanja pripadnikov manjšine v družbi.

Polstrukturirani razgovori so bili opravljeni z mladimi priseljenimi delavci, starimi med 26 in 30 leti, ki so bili v multinacionalnih podjetjih in na fakultetah Univerze v Ljubljani zaposleni 5 let ali manj. Kvalitativna tematska deduktivna analiza je pokazala, da so pripadniki manjšin skrivanje znanja uporabljali, da bi se izognili izključenosti na delovnem mestu ter spodbujali vključevanje in sprejemanje pri slovenskih kolegi in nadrejenih v multinacionalnih podjetjih in na fakultetah Univerze v Ljubljani. Zlasti izkušnje z izključevanjem, zavračanjem, slabim ravnanjem in razvrednotenjem zaradi razlik v etničnem statusu, narodnosti, jeziku, starosti in predlaganih idejah so faktorji, ki so sprožili skrivanje znanje pripadnikov manjšin, ki prikrivajo informacije pred slovenskimi kolegi in menedžerji na delovnem mestu.

Namerno skrivanje znanja podobno kot drugi negativni vedenjski izidi zaznane izključenosti na delovnem mestu in zmanjšanega občutka pripadnosti (Ilgen & Youtz, 1986; Twenge et. Al., 2005; Robinson et. Al., 2013), je bilo ugotovljeno kot negativna vedenjska posledica pri mladih priseljenih delavcih kot odgovor na zaznano izključenost od slovenskih kolegov, delovnih skupin in nadrejenih v večnacionalnih podjetjih in na različnih fakultetah Univerze v Ljubljani.

Ugotovitve so pokazale, da se manjšine počutijo izključene, odmaknjene in ločene od slovenskih kolegov, ko le-te kot kulturno prevladujoči člani skupine zavrnejo njihove ideje in perspektive. Na začetku njihove karierne poti so mladi delavci, ki so se priselili iz tujine, v zelo veliki meri želeli svoje znanje, perspektive in ideje deliti s slovenskimi kolegi, razvijati projekte iz druge perspektive, sodelovati in prispevati. Vendar zaznani pristranski dejavniki, ki so privedli do zavračanja idej manjšin, so spodbudili vedenje skrivanja znanja mladih priseljencev pred slovenskimi kolegi na delovnem mestu.

Zaznana kategorizacija članov kulturne manjšine in večinske skupine je povzročila šibko osebno povezanost s člani večine in zaznanimi osebnimi žaljivkami na strani manjšin. Ugotovitve so pokazale, da mladi priseljenci, tudi tisti iz nekdanje Jugoslavije, zelo previdno delijo svoje znanje ali informacije s slovenskimi kolegi. Počutili so se izzvane ali celo ogrožene, ko jih je slovenski kolega, ki z njimi ni v tesnem delovnem ali osebnem razmerju, prosil za izmenjavo informacij, idej ali pomoč. Manjšine slovenskim kolegom niso bile pripravljene posredovati želenih informacij ali pomoči, kadar so doživele togo kategorizacijo glede razlik v etničnosti, narodnosti, jeziku in predlaganih idejah.

Jezikovna ovira predstavlja ključno oviro za ohranjanje povezanosti in interakcije med zaposlenimi v manjšini in večini, kar je povzročilo dodatno skrivanje znanja. Ugotovitve so pokazale, da je bila jezikovna ovira pri angleškemu jeziku eden glavnih razlogov za doživljanje nepovezanosti in celo nezavedne izključenosti med manjšinskimi in večinskimi zaposlenimi na način, ki je omejeval zmožnost izmenjave znanja ali informacij, sodelovanja pri dejavnostih in odločanju procesi pri delu. Jezikovne in kulturne razlike lahko resnično vplivajo na pretok informacij (Gaur, Ma & Ge, 2018). Vendar pa lahko tudi jezikovna nezadostnost povzroči občutek nepovezanosti, izključenosti (Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999a, 1999b; Major et. al., 2014) in preprečuje izmenjavo znanja med raznoliko delovno silo. Tako je bilo med mladimi priseljenci in slovenskimi kolegi v multinacionalkah in na fakultetah Univerze v Ljubljani.

Namen manjšin, da skrivajo znanje, je bil pogojen tudi z ustvarjeno večino med sestanki in razpravami v skupini. Manjšinski člani so morali upoštevati odločitve, ki jih je sprejela ustvarjena večina v ekipi. V ta namen so ustvarili rutino, ki je nastala po več zavrnitvah in zlorabah idej in prispevkov pripadnikov manjšin, saj so se zaradi njih odločili, da bodo sledili okoliščinam in svoje ideje zadržali pred kolegi. Ugotovitve so pokazale, da pripadniki manjšin ne delijo informacij, ne sodelujejo pri odločanju in da jih večinski kolegi, ki so ustvarili podlago za njihov občutek izključenosti na delovnem mestu, ne slišijo in poslušajo. Posledično je bilo ugotovljeno, da je prikrivanje znanja posledica zaznane izključenosti mladih priseljencev na delovnem mestu v smislu zavračanja idej, slabih odnosov, jezikovnih ovir in večinske vloge.

Po izkušnjah z zaznano izključenostjo od slovenskih kolegov, manjšanjem motivacije manjšin in zmanjšanjem navdušenja za sodelovanje in izmenjavo znanja so ugotovitve raziskav poleg tega pokazale, da se pripadniki manjšin ukvarjajo tudi z zavednim skrivanjem znanja kot strategijo za boljše dojetje njihove vključenosti in pripadnosti kulturno prevladujočim skupinskim kolegom, nadrejenim, delovnim skupinam in organizacijam v multinacionalkah in na različnih fakultetah Univerze v Ljubljani. Kot sem predlagal, so mladi priseljenci skrivali znanje, da bi ohranili odnose

in se izognili kontroverznosti s slovenskimi kolegi in spoštljivimi menedžerji na svojem delovnem mestu.

Če se sooča z izključenostjo na delovnem mestu, se lahko oseba odloči, da se bo ravnala ugodno (Williams, 2007; Williams & Govan, 2005) do drugih. Poleg tega se lahko take osebe odločijo, da bodo spremenili svoj odnos, pristop in se prilagodili situaciji, se prilagodili družbeno-kulturnim normam, skupinskim odločitvam in razlikam v miselnosti. Člani manjšinskih skupin so se odločili, da bodo prevzeli družbene norme svojih kolegov in se prilagodili razmišljanju in načinu dela večine. Glede tega so ugotovitve pokazale, da si za namene spodbujanja in krepitve potrebe po pripadnosti, tujci prizadevajo, da bi bili sprejeti člani ekipe in da bi se izognili prihodnji izključenosti (npr. da bi se izognili polemikam, odmikom, obsojanju). Motivacija za pripadnost ekipi in izogibanje prihodnjim odzivom sta zaposlene manjšine pripravila do iskanja načinov, kako se izogniti konfliktom, neprijetnim čustvom in socialni napetosti, s skrivanjem znanja, za katerega so vedeli, da bi lahko v prihodnosti povzročilo težave in razdruževanje. Rezultati so pokazali, da so pripadniki manjšin nekatere informacije ali ideje raje skrivali pred kolegi iz večinske (kulturne) skupine, da bi ohranili bolj zdrave in boljše odnose z njimi.

Nazadnje je bilo ugotovljeno, da je varnost zaposlitve kot eden od elementov vključenosti (Pelled et al., 1999) sprožila namero pripadnikov manjšin, da se poslužujejo skrivanja znanja. Ugotovitve so pokazale, da so razlike v poklicnem, etničnem statusu in starosti mladih priseljencev in njihovih slovenskih nadrejenih vplivale na odločitev manjšin, da skrivajo znanje. Dejstvo, da so zaposleni, in zlasti da so tujci in mladi, jim ni dovoljevalo, da bi bili v fazi razvoja ali predstavitve projektov v nasprotju z odločitvijo nadrejenih. To je privedlo do skladnosti z odločitvami in stališči nadzornikov. Mladi priseljenci so se odločili skriti svoje znanje, da bi ohranili odnos z nadrejenimi in si na splošno zagotovili delovna mesta v multinacionalkah in na različnih fakultetah Univerze v Ljubljani.

Skrivanje znanja so mladi priseljeni delavci uporabili kot strategijo za povečanje možnosti zaznane vključenosti in pripadnosti kulturno prevladujočim kolegom v skupini in nadrejenim v mednarodnih podjetjih in na fakultetah Univerze v Ljubljani. Še posebej pa pripadniki manjšin skrivajo znanje, da bi izboljšali svoje doživetje vključenosti na delovnem mestu v smislu ohranjanja boljših odnosov s člani in nadrejenimi večinske kulturne skupine, izogibanja polemikam in boljšo koordinacijo s slovenskimi kolegi in nadrejenimi na delovnem mestu. Poleg tega, da si zagotovijo delovna mesta.

Manjšine so uporabile tri vidike skrivanja znanja (Connelly et al., 2012), vključno s taktiko delati se neumnega, izmikajočim skrivanjem znanja in racionaliziranim skrivanjem. Kot so, na primer, pokazale ugotovitve, se pripadniki manjšin poslužujejo taktike delati se neumnega, tako da se pretvarjajo, da ne vedo, kaj prosilec zahteva; poleg tega se pripadniki manjšin poslužujejo izmikajočega skrivanja tako, da podajo le del informacij, se izogibajo odgovarjanju ali preprosto izjavijo, da nimajo časa; poleg tega so pripadniki manjšin uporabili racionalizirano skrivanje, pri čemer so navajali da so podatki osebni in zaupni. Ugotovljeno je bilo, da so mladi priseljeni delavci te tri vidike skrivanja znanja uporabljali v namen zavračanja zahtev slovenskih kolegov in njihovih

nadrejenih po izmenjavi znanja, informacij ali idej v multinacionalnih podjetjih in na različnih fakultetah Univerze v Ljubljani.

Poleg teh vidikov skrivanja znanja ki jih je v literaturi o skrivanju znanja izrazil Connelly et. al., (2012), sem ugotovil, da mladi priseljeni delavci skrivajo znanje na prilagodljiv način. Nova najdba, npr. prilagodljivo skrivanje, - *prilagoditev njihove ideje ali pogleda tuji delovni populaciji* - konkretno, v okviru mladih priseljenih delavcev, zaposlenih v multinacionalnih podjetjih in na različnih fakultetah Univerze v Ljubljani, je glavni fokus te študije. Natančneje, prilagajanje zahtevanega znanja percepcijam slovenskih kolegov pod pogojem, da morajo pripadniki manjšin skriti svoje resnične ideje, znanje in perspektive. Zlasti so informacije ali ideje prilagodili kulturno prevladujočim kolegom iz skupine, tako da so bili skupni podatki ali ideje zaznani pozitivneje in sprejeti s strani članov večine skupine.

Po več izkušnjah zavračanja idej, slabih medosebnih odnosov s slovenskimi kolegi, vpliva omejenega znanja angleškega jezika in ustvarjene večine Slovencev v delovnih skupinah, na vedenje manjšin v smislu skrivanja znanja, mladi priseljenec (npr. iz skupine izključen član) najprej dreza in preizkusi prosilca (npr. slovenca) tako, da slovenskemu kolegu poda le del zahtevanih informacij in preizkusi njegovo zaznavanje skupnih informacij ali perspektive. Nato pripadnik manjšine prilagodi ostale informacije ali ideje zaznavanju in razumevanju prosilca za znanje. Ta strategija skrivanja znanja pomeni rahlo ali popolno prilagajanje informacij, idej ali znanja, npr. njihovo skrivanje, da se bolje prilagodi kulturnim percepcijam in vrednotam prosilca za znanje.

To vključuje delno skrivanje znanja zaposlenih pri kratkotrajnem delu, ko se niso mogli v celoti naučiti mišljenja in dožemanja svojih kolegov. Prvič, manjšine so se naučile novega delovnega okolja in kulture, družbeno-kulturnih norm, vedenja in dožemanja slovenskih kolegov in nadrejenih ter zahtevana znanja prilagodili okolici, da bi jih kulturno prevladujoči kolegi dojemali bolj pozitivno in jih sprejemali. Drugič, udejanjanje prilagodljivega vedenja se nanaša na situacijo, ko ponudnik (npr. priseljenec na delu) v celoti prilagodi svoj odgovor prosilcu (npr. Slovencu). To vključuje popolno skrivanje prvotne misli, ideje ali perspektive in se zadeva zaposlenih, ki delajo dolgoročno, ko so se že seznanili z dožemanjem in miselnostjo kulturno in socialno različnih sodelavcev in nadrejenih.

Ugotovitve o upravljanju multinacionalnih podjetij na srednji ravni poudarjajo, da zastopanim multinacionalkam primanjkuje medkulturnih kompetenc in komunikacijskih orodij. Ne organizirajo nobenega medkulturnega usposabljanja, seminarjev ali delavnic, ki bi predstavljale slovensko kulturo, ljudi, družbeno-kulturne norme in jezik. Poleg tega se le včasih tujcem ponujajo tečaji slovenskega jezika. Nadalje so ugotovitve pokazale, da delovno silo sestavlja 75% slovenskih zaposlenih. To pomeni, da Slovenci prevladujejo med delovno silo, ki naj bi bila raznolika in večnacionalna. To lahko pojasni superiornost Slovencev med druženjem in razpravami delovnih skupin. Poleg tega intervjuvane multinacionalke nimajo družbeno-kulturnih delavnic in uvajalnih sej, seminarjev ali usposabljanj za spodbujanje vključevanja kulturno različnih zaposlenih.

Intervjuvana podjetja imajo bolj verjetno bolj hierarhično organizacijsko strukturo kot nehierarhično. To pomeni, da odločanje poteka od vrha organizacije navzdol, do dna. Predstavljeni projekt je moral iti skozi več vodstvenih delavcev, njihovih zahtev in predpisov. To mladim priseljencem otežuje posamezne korake, otežuje pa jim tudi to, da se držijo svojih idej. Zato hierarhična struktura in zapleten postopek odobritve pojasnjujeta namen skrivanja znanja, da bi si zavarovali delovna mesta ali se prilagodili miselnosti in odločitvam Slovencev. Prvič zaradi zaznanih razlik v narodnosti, poklicu, starosti. Drugič, mladi priseljenci nebi mogli spremeniti dojemanja, miselnosti in razumevanja starejših lokalnih nadzornikov in menedžerjev. Prav tako nebi mogli nasprotovati predpisom in sistemu multinacionalk.

Anketirani vodje so poročali, da vedo, da zaposleni spreminjajo svoje ideje. Kako pa naj bi vedeli, da mladi tuji zaposleni tudi skrivajo svoje ideje ali perspektive? In če bi vodstvo vedelo za to, kaj bi storili za rešitev te težave? Ker znanje predstavlja konkurenčno prednost za podjetja, predlagam, da vodje upoštevajo in ponovno razmislijo o svojih vključujočih in raznolikih politikah in praksah upravljanja človeških virov. Poleg tega bi morda lahko razvili več veščin za team building in inkluzivno vodenje. To bi lahko pomagalo zmanjšati občutek mladih priseljencev o zaznani izključenosti, povečati vključenost in izmenjavo znanja med kolegi in nadrejenimi iz kulturne manjšine in večinske skupine.

Poleg ugotovitev, da se skrivanje znanja lahko uporablja s pozitivnimi nameni, da bi se izognili zaznani izključenosti in spodbudili zaznano vključenost pri delu, je to vedenje uničujoče za prosilce znanja in organizacije, torej tudi za skrivalce znanja. Po eni strani bi se pripadniki manjšin s skrivanjem znanja pred slovenskimi kolegi in nadrejenimi lahko izognili zaznani izključenosti in skupinskemu sporom. Po drugi strani s tem tvegajo, da bodo izgubili konkurenčno prednost - biti kreativni, pametni, strastni, navdušeni in inovativni glede projekta ali raziskav, ki jih zanimajo. Analizirano skupino mladih priseljenih delavcev so sestavljali znanstveniki, zaposleni kot raziskovalci, inženirji, oblikovalci, arhitekti itd.

Ustvarjanje idej, izmenjava, sodelovanje in vključenost so prioritete njihovih delovnih mest. Zdravi medosebni odnosi, izmenjava znanja, aktivno sodelovanje, medsebojno razumevanje in vključevanje pomagajo ustvariti nekaj novega, konkurenčnega in inovativnega. Visoka izmenjava znanja, sodelovanje in vključujoča organizacijska klima pomagajo prispevati, ustvarjati, biti konkurenčni, aktivni, znani in pametni v primeru raziskovalcev ali drugih delovnih področij, povezanih z ustvarjalnostjo (npr. arhitekti, oblikovalci itd.). To zagotovi tudi konkurenčnost, inovativnost in učinkovitost zastopanih organizacij.

Ta študija daje vrsto različnih prispevkov k literaturi na presečišču izključenosti-vključenosti na delovnem mestu in vedenja, s katerim posamezniki skrivajo znanje. Najprej, te ugotovitve razširjajo literaturo o skrivanju znanja (Cerne et al., 2014; Zhao et. al., 2016; Rhee & Choi, 2017; Bogilovic et. al., 2017) z razširitvijo njene nomološke mreže in jo nasgrajujejo z novimi vzroki ki so povod za skrivanje znanja, kot so zaznavanje izključenosti in vključenosti na delovnem mestu. Bolj natančno, dopolnujem ugotovitve Zhao et. al., (2016), z dodajanjem drugih plasti možnih izključujočih virov, povezanih s skrivanjem znanja, v smislu kulturne raznolikosti, narodnosti in etničnih ozadij. Poleg tega povezava med zaznanim vključevanjem na delovnem mestu in



skrivanjem znanja še ni bila raziskana. K literaturi o skrivanju znanja prispevam s preučevanjem pozitivnih rezultatov skrivanja znanja; to je, da so pripadniki manjšin bolje vključeni v delo. Ta ugotovitev prispeva k Connelly et al. (2019), ki je pozval k več raziskavam, ki bi proučile potencialne koristi vedenja povezanega s skrivanjem znanja v organizacijah.

Drugič, malo je bilo raziskav v zvezi s skrivanjem znanja akademikov, zaposlenih v različnih izobraževalnih okoljih (Demirkasimoglu, 2016; Hernaus in et.al., 2018). Tako je drugi teoretični prispevek k literaturi o skrivanju znanja ta, da je bil fenomen preučen v okviru mladih priseljenih delavcev, zaposlenih na različnih fakultetah Univerze v Ljubljani. Poleg tega je bilo to vedenje dobro preučeno tudi v multinacionalkah s sedežem v Ljubljani v Sloveniji. Tretjič, odkril sem novo dimenzijo skrivanja znanja -prilagodljivo skrivanje. Ta raziskovalna ugotovitev doda obstoječim trem dimenzijam skrivanja znanja (izmikajoče skrivanje, racionalizirano skrivanje in igrati se neumnega; Connelly et al., 2012) in poudarja potencial razmišljanja o četrtem vidiku skrivanja znanja v kontekstu kulturne manjšinske in večinske delovne sile.

Četrtič, nadgrajujem študije o kulturnih elementih skrivanja znanja, ki so se do danes osredotočale na kulturno inteligenco (Bogilovic et al., 2017), družbeno-kulturne vidike (Babič et al., 2018), nacionalne kulturne dimenzije (Gaur et. al., 2018; Dodokh, 2019), posebne kulturne kontekste (Issac & Baral, 2020) ali posebne poklicne kulture (Hernaus et al., 2019). Posebej se osredotočam na to, kako in zakaj dojemanje mladih priseljenih delavcev o izključenosti na delovnem mestu vodi do tega, da skrivajo svoje znanje pred kolegi in nadrejenimi iz kulturne večine.

Poleg prispevkov k literaturi o skrivanju znanja, ugotovitve te raziskave dodajajo vrednost literaturi o izključevanju in vključevanju (Mor Barak, 2005; Shore et al., 2011, 2018). Teoretične in praktične dokaze o izključenosti-vključenosti na delovnem mestu krepim z razširitvijo njene nomološke mreže in preiskovanjem dodatnega negativnega vedenjskega rezultata izključenosti na delovnem mestu, tj. skrivanja znanja. Nadalje, prispevam k literaturi o zaznanem vključevanju na delovnem mestu s preučevanjem še enega dejavnika, ki povečuje občutek zaznane vključenosti med zaposlenimi na delovnem mestu (Mor Barak, 2008; Byron & Post, 2016), to je pogajalna vloga skrivanja znanja med zaznано izključenostjo in vključenostjo s strani mladih priseljencev na delovnem mestu.

Ta študija bi morala biti ključna za kadrovske in organizacijske strokovnjake ter praktično uporabna za nadzornike in menedžerje v multinacionalkah in na različnih fakultetah univerz. Spodbujanje vključujočega večkulturnega delovnega okolja lahko izboljša posameznikovo sodelovanje, zadovoljstvo, samopodobo, angažiranost, izmenjavo znanja in s tem organizacijsko uspešnost. Poleg tega, ker ima izmenjava znanja pomembno vlogo pri organizacijskem delovanju, je pomembno ustvariti okolje, v katerem bodo zaposleni bolj stimulirani za ohranjanje zdravih odnosov in se počutili bolj cenjene zaradi svojih sposobnosti, znanja, spretnosti in kompetenc, ki jih imajo.

Vključujoča klima pomeni organizacijo, v kateri se posameznik (npr. tujec) počuti kot del svoje delovne organizacije. To vključuje tako formalne procese, na primer dostop do informacij in priložnosti odločanja, kot neformalne procese, kot so sestanki na kosilih in druženja med pavzami (Mor Barak, 2011). Ustvarjanje in vzpostavljanje takšnega vzdušja okoli in znotraj organizacije

lahko torej spodbuja okolje, v katerem so optimalno uporabljene in sprejete vse spretnosti in kompetence zaposlenih (Mor Barak et al., 1998). Menedžerji mednarodnih in multinacionalnih podjetij bi lahko imeli koristi od te raziskave. Ugotovitve so pokazale, da se priseljenci, ki delujejo v večnacionalnih podjetjih, soočajo z vrsto težav pri sprejemanju ali vključevanju. Zato se nagibajo k skrivanju znanja, da bi se izognili izključenosti na delovnem mestu in bi jih sodelavci bolj dojemali kot del skupine. Posledično si morajo vodje prizadevati za razvoj in spodbujanje klime za bolj vključujočo organizacijo, ki bo pomagala zmanjšati skrivanje znanja med manjšinami in večinami v različnih skupinah in na splošno v organizaciji.

Tako bi lahko ti kontekstualni dejavniki lahko vplivali na deljenje znanja, pripadnost in vključenost tujcev na delu. Mladi priseljenci, ki so sodelovali v tej raziskavi imajo od 1 do 5 let delovnih izkušenj. Predvidljivo je domnevati, da se bo z večanjem starosti skupin in zaposlenih njihovo čutno zaznavanje različnih incidentov izključevanja s slovenskimi kolegi in nadrejenimi zmanjšalo. Vendar se bosta zmanjšala tudi motivacija in navdušenje za razvoj projektov iz različnih perspektiv ali za posredovanje različnih idej in misli slovenskim kolegom in menedžerjem. Posledično se bo deljenje znanja zmanjšalo. Če torej multinacionalke in fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani ne bodo ponovno premislile o vključevanju in raznolikosti njihove organizacijske klime, pričakujem, da bodo mladi priseljenci v prihodnosti bolj skrivali zahtevane informacije ali znanje.

Preprosto rečeno, šteje, da raznolikost delovne sile dodaja vrednost organizaciji, čeprav zaznana izključenost in slabo ravnanje s pripadniki manjšin vpliva na to, kako svoje znanje, ideje ali dožemanje skrivajo pred slovenskimi kolegi. Zato morajo tako vodstvo kot tudi organizacije kot celote ustvariti in vzdrževati okolje, v katerem bodo vsi člani in zaposleni obravnavani enako. To bi lahko zmanjšalo skrivanje znanja znotraj raznolike delovne sile, kar bo podprlo lažje ustvarjanje novih idej in spodbujalo inovacije v skupinah (Cerne et. al., 2014).

## **Appendix 2: Letter for the recruitment of participants**

Dear Mr. (s),

I am currently conducting Ph.D. studies at the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana, where I am researching “Knowledge hiding behavior and workplace inclusion of minority members.” This international research aims to analyze the interplay between knowledge hiding and workplace inclusion of minority members. Through this analysis, I will aim to sort out young migrant employees’ feelings towards their working company, including the relationship with co-workers (e.g., Slovenians). Secondly, to examine whether or not perceived workplace exclusion-inclusion in the context of young migrant workers triggers their intention to hide knowledge from the cultural dominant group colleagues and superiors at work. Research is focused on young migrant workers working in multinational companies based in Slovenia, as well across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.

I kindly ask you to participate, at a time of your convenience, in a semi-structured interview. The interview will last approximately 30-60 minutes, and there is no need to prepare beforehand. I will send the questionnaire in advance. I want to make an audio record and field notes of our conversation, if you do not mind. Your responses are voluntary. The results will be confidential and be used only for academic purposes.

If you are willing to participate in the interview, please let me know by e-mail at [mar\\_marusa@mail.ru](mailto:mar_marusa@mail.ru) along with your preferred date and time. I suggest we meet in the area of your company.

Thank you for your receptiveness and your cooperation!

Yours sincerely,

Marika Miminoshvili, MSc

### **Appendix 3: Verbal consent form**

I am a Ph.D. student at the University of Ljubljana, School of Economics and Business, here, in Slovenia. I am studying Organizational behavior in Ljubljana, Slovenia. I am interested in migrant workers' knowledge hiding behavior at work. I am also interested in migrant workers' experiences of exclusion and inclusion at work. In particular, what makes them feel excluded and less connected to Slovenian co-workers and supervisors, whether they disengage and hide knowledge from them.

If you agree to participate in this study, I will ask you questions about your work relationship with Slovenian colleagues and superiors. In particular, whether you have experienced exclusion from them, and on which basis? How belonged and included do you feel at work? And whether you have hidden knowledge from Slovenian colleagues and superiors due to the perceived exclusion and/ or inclusion? This usually lasts between 30 to 60 minutes. I will make an audio record and field notes of our conversation if you do not mind. Some of these may be personal or sensitive questions. You are free to choose not to answer any question. I will also stop taking notes if you prefer. You are also free to end the conversation at any time. If you decide to stop the conversation, you do not have to give me a reason why. I also acknowledge that you can opt out of interviews without fear of my negative reaction or perception.

Anything you tell me will be private. I will not use your name or any personal details that might identify you when I write and publish my work. For example, the company name where you work, or the names of your colleagues and superiors will stay confidential. I will not tell anyone that we have had a conversation, and I will not reveal your details, including your name, surname, and working company name. They will be coded. Here I would like to clarify that the codes provided in your name will be associated with the interview order. Your confidentiality will be protected. My notes will be stored securely.

I may send you the transcripts to overview, check, and provide feedback on any misunderstandings. I also may ask to assess the adequacy of the data. We can have additional discussions, and/or follow-up questions with additional thoughts via e-mail or Skype. I will make a draft of the interview outcomes and send it to you. Afterward, I with you may discuss whether you adopt and agree with the research outcomes. I would like that we paid more attention to the themes which need further investigation and verification.

You will not be paid for taking part in this study. Helping me with this project will not affect your job position or relationship with your colleagues and superiors in any way.

Do you have any questions about me, my project, or this conversation before we begin?

My supervisors are Assoc. prof. Matej Cerne and Assoc. prof. Tamara Pavasovic Trost. I can give you their e-mail addresses. If you have any concerns about this study or my behavior, you can contact them. If you need help sending them an email, I will help you.

You can contact me at my email address, or Skype. I will give you them at the end of our

conversion.

[I provided the participants with the contact information, including the researcher's and my supervisors' e-mail addresses, full names and addresses].

#### Appendix 4: Questionnaire: Workplace exclusion and inclusion, and knowledge hiding of young migrant workers

Questions for all respondents	Research questions and propositions
<i>Information on the respondents' profile:</i>	
Country of origin Gender Age Position/- Charge Organizational type Working period Contact email (Optional by the interest of feedback)	
<i>Background questions on workgroup identification/ belonging:</i>	
1. How strongly do you feel/- think you belong in your working company? How much do you identify with Slovenian colleagues and superiors? 2. What difficulties have you ever faced during the <i>working process</i> with Slovenian colleagues and managers at work? 3. Was there any situation when you felt <i>disengaged</i> or <i>mistreated</i> by a Slovenian colleague? What was the basis for that? 4. How would you evaluate your workplace performance, activity, participation? What about your <i>work motivation</i> ?	
<i>Questions on knowledge hiding as a consequence of perceived exclusion:</i>	
1. Has it happened that your <i>knowledge sharing, involvement, and participation in problem-solving or decision-making</i> have been <i>perceived negatively, poorly judged, ignored, or considered ignorantly, declined</i> by Slovenian colleague or superior? On which basis? 2. What is the <i>relationship</i> with your Slovenian colleagues? Does it affect your sense of perceived exclusion-inclusion and knowledge hiding? 3. Have you ever had trouble communicating with your Slovenian colleagues? What about the <i>English language barrier</i> ? Has it affected knowledge hiding? The sense of perceived exclusion from the Slovenian colleagues, team, or managers at work? 4. Are discussions/meetings <i>dominated/ led</i> by Slovenians? How do you feel about it? In the case of the created majority by Slovenians, has it affected your knowledge hiding with Slovenian colleagues and managers for the future?	RQ1
<i>Questions on participants' cultural and social background, its impact on exclusion-inclusion and knowledge hiding:</i>	
1. How <i>similar</i> do you feel with Slovenian colleagues? 2. How <i>distinct</i> do you feel with Slovenian colleagues? 3. Have perceived similarities or differences between you and the Slovenian colleague <i>affected</i> your sense of the <i>exclusion-inclusion, and knowledge hiding</i> towards your Slovenian colleagues?	RQ4
<i>Follow up questions on exclusion outcomes and desired belongingness:</i>	
1. How has perceived exclusion affected you? 2. What was the eventual outcome of the perceived exclusion at work? 3. Have you felt the need to belong more?	

<b><i>Questions on knowledge hiding as a strategy towards increasing perceived workplace inclusion:</i></b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What <i>do you do</i> to be more engaged, belonged, or included at the workplace?</li> <li>2. Has it ever happened that colleagues asked you for some information or knowledge, and you hid it for being more included?</li> <li>3. How <i>important</i> is this job for you? Has it happened that you reserved some information to <i>secure the job position</i>?</li> <li>4. Have you ever hidden requested knowledge to ensure <i>better relationship</i> or opposite, to avoid some conflicts with the Slovenian colleagues and managers?</li> </ol>	RQ2
<b><i>Questions on knowledge hiding dimensions (playing dumb, rationalized, and evasive hiding):</i></b>	
<p>Can you remember any situation when you have not shown a specific co-worker how to do something, only gave a part of the information needed, declined to tell something s/he needed to know, or did not help him/her learn something important?</p> <p>For example, <i>in this specific situation, I....</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agreed to help him/her but never really intended to...</li> <li>2. Agreed to help him/her but instead gave him/her information different from what s/he wanted...</li> <li>3. Told him/her that I would help him/her out later but stalled as much as possible...</li> <li>4. Offered him/her some other information instead of what he/she wanted...</li> <li>5. Pretended that I did not know the information...</li> <li>6. Said that I did not know, even though I did...</li> <li>7. Pretended I did not know what s/he was talking about...</li> <li>8. Said that I was not very knowledgeable about the topic...</li> <li>9. Explained that I would like to tell him/her, but was not supposed to...</li> <li>10. Explained that the information is confidential and only available to people on a particular project...</li> <li>11. Told him/her that my boss would not let anyone share this knowledge...</li> <li>12. Said that I would not answer his/her questions...</li> </ol>	RQ3
<b><i>Questions on strategies to increase inclusion:</i></b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Has it happened that Slovenian colleagues asked you for some information or knowledge and hid it to be <i>more included</i>?</li> <li>2. Can you describe how you have done that?</li> </ol>	RQ3
<b><i>Questions on Inclusive practices, policies, and leadership</i></b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do you consider the company culturally competent? Culturally inclusive?</li> <li>2. How culturally diverse is your workforce?</li> <li>3. How often do you have diversity training, workshops, seminars, etc.? Do they work?</li> <li>4. Which knowledge management tools and practices are implemented and used to reinforce an inclusive environment?</li> <li>5. Are cooperation and teamwork promoted in your organization? How?</li> <li>6. How would you describe leadership style in your work environment?</li> <li>7. What are the two most important things, which the leaders of the organization must do to create an inclusive climate?</li> </ol>	RQ5

## Appendix 5: Codebook

### Codebook: Attribute codes

Code	Description	Group ID	Analytical memo
Age	26-30	Group I – „other “migrant workers Group II – migrant workers from the former Yugoslavia	Young migrant workers, including those of the former Yugoslavia, aged between 26 to 30 years.
Gender	Male Female	Group I Group II	
Ethnicity	Costa Rican, Canadian, Turkish, Indian, Ukrainian, North African, Chinese, Russian, Chilean, French, German, Georgian.	Group I	Participants came from different countries.
	Serbian, Macedonian	Group II	Participants came from the countries of the former Yugoslavia
Occupation	Game Designer, Team Designer, Designer, Politics, Engineering, Architectural, Researcher, Marketing, IT.	Group I	Participants work in different fields.
	Researcher, Politics.	Group II	
Organizational type	Multinational companies The faculties of the University of Ljubljana	Group I Group II	Young migrant workers, including those of the former Yugoslavia, working in multinational companies based in Ljubljana. As well across the different faculties of the University of Ljubljana.
Working years in Ljubljana	1-5	Group I Group II	Participants are working for five years or less.

### Codebook: Analytical codes

Index code	Next-level code	Code description
Perceived exclusion		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feeling excluded due to ethnicity, language, migrant (minority) status, cultural difference</li> <li>- Feeling lack of trust and respect towards newcomers (e.g., minorities)</li> <li>- Feeling lack of trust and respect towards minorities ideas and expertise</li> <li>- Feeling excluded due to barriers to</li> </ul>



		<p>communication – poor English; language and ignorance of Slovenian language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feeling excluded from working team and work environment</li> <li>- Feeling excluded from/ during social or work-related gatherings</li> <li>- Feeling excluded once experienced idea rejection during discussions, team meetings, and group work</li> <li>- Feeling of being a minority during the group gathering and discussions (the idea being in the minority, dominance of the Slovenians decision, being in a minority position against group decision)</li> </ul>
	Lack of belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feeling low group identification and belonging at work</li> <li>- Not feeling part of the group</li> <li>- Feeling not comfortable working with Slovenian colleagues due to ethnic status difference</li> <li>- Having (experiencing) poor relationship with the majority group</li> </ul>
	Self-labeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feeling like an out-grouper</li> <li>- Feeling like a foreigner</li> <li>- Feeling like a minority</li> <li>- Feeling excluded due to being of non-Slovenian descent</li> </ul>
	Experiences of exclusion (barriers to collaboration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experiences of the idea being judged, non-appreciated, non-respected, criticized</li> <li>- Experiences of the idea being ignored, disengaged, mistreated, negatively perceived</li> <li>- Feeling low self-esteem, feeling demotivated, low confidence in own expertise and ideas</li> <li>- Having a fear of being misunderstood and excluded from the dominant culture group</li> <li>- Frequent comparison to others and analysis of own ideas, actions, communication style</li> <li>- No information flow – miscommunication.</li> <li>- Having no social support</li> <li>- Lack of social connection, interaction</li> </ul>
Perceived inclusion		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Things that make people feel included</li> </ul>
	Sense of belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Belonging and being noticeable, accepted</li> <li>- Belonging and being representative</li> <li>- Belonging and have a good image</li> <li>- Feelings of being familiar to the Slovenian colleagues and superiors</li> <li>- Feelings of being more similar to the Slovenian colleagues</li> </ul>
	Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The experience that ideas are perceived better</li> <li>- Ideas are understood</li> </ul>

		- Ideas are accepted
Strategies to increase inclusion		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Places to inclusion (meet with majority representatives during social gatherings, making unofficial meetings, talks, discussions with Slovenian co-workers)</li> <li>- Learning mindset of the cultural majority group (e.g., Slovenians) members</li> <li>- Learning working style</li> <li>- Testing and observing surrounding, their behavior, thinking way, culture, social and cultural norms</li> <li>- Decision to adjust knowledge and ideas to the Slovenian colleagues and superiors' perceptions, understanding, preferences, socio-cultural norms</li> </ul>
Knowledge hiding facets	Playing dumb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pretending not to understand the question</li> <li>- Pretending not to know the question</li> </ul>
	Evasive hiding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hiding by giving partial information</li> <li>- Hiding due to the lack of time</li> <li>- Hiding due to time pressure, deadlines, and overload at work</li> <li>- Promising to help later on</li> <li>- Being occupied, busy</li> <li>- Ask the requester to find information independently from other sources</li> </ul>
	Rationalized hiding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stating that information is confidential and cannot be shared</li> <li>- Hiding since information is personal</li> <li>- Hiding since information is secret</li> </ul>
Adjustable knowledge hiding	Learning and observing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fully hides the requested information and adjusts the response to the perceptions of the requester</li> </ul>
	Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partially hides the requested information</li> <li>- Tests the requester by providing only a half of the information and adjusts the response to the perceptions of the requester</li> <li>- Hiding knowledge by testing the requester</li> <li>- Hiding knowledge since the hider is not well familiar with the socio-cultural perceptions, preferences, understandings, and interpretations of the requester</li> <li>- Hiding another part of the information by adjusting it to the requester's perceptions, etc.</li> </ul>
Reasons to hide and adjust the requested knowledge		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hiding knowledge to avoid misinterpretation, misperceptions, misunderstandings</li> <li>- Hiding knowledge to avoid future potential interpersonal or task conflicts</li> <li>- Hiding knowledge to advance the sense of the perceived inclusion</li> </ul>

Causes of knowledge hiding	Perceived workplace exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reasons for engaging in knowledge hiding arising from previous exclusion:</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to experienced in-group conflict</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to experienced different points of view</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to opinion divergent</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to judgmental attitude towards minorities' ideas</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to experienced unacceptance of the idea</li> </ul>
	Perceived workplace inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reasons for engaging in knowledge hiding arising from attempts to be included:</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding to feel more welcomed</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding to identify more with the Slovenian colleagues, superiors, team members</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding to feel more accepted</li> </ul>

### Codebook: Fine-grained themes for “Causes of knowledge hiding.”

Knowledge hiding as a consequence of perceived exclusion	
Theme	Theme description
<b>Rejection of the ideas</b>  [A situation when a person experiences that his or her idea is not accepted]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to experienced criticism</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to feeling disengaged</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to Negative perception</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to experienced rejection of the idea</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to perceived ignore when sharing idea/ knowledge</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to perceived lack of respect towards minorities ideas</li> </ul>
<b>Poor relationship</b>  [Lacking connection, identification, personal sympathy, and empathy towards a colleague or senior]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to personal dislike, having personal grudges, personal disidentification, and disconnection with majority members</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to experienced lack of appreciation and rewards for own (e.g., minorities) work</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to experienced conflict with majority member/ group</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to experienced/ feeling personal and social tension</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to feeling lack of attachment</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to feeling discrepancies</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to feeling judgmental attitude towards minorities ideas</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to perceived lack of social connection with the majority group</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to perceived lack of engagement</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to perceived disbelief and distrust towards minorities ideas</li> </ul>
<b>The language barrier</b>  [A situation when the language barrier creates difficulties in communication]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to poor English language</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to feeling disengaged, disconnected, and miscommunicated due to the English barrier</li> </ul>
<b>The created majority</b>  [The most significant part of the working group members; the created numerical and cultural majority of the group members. The number representing more than half of the total group members]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to being in minority/ idea being in the minority, dominance of the Slovenians decision, being in a minority position against group decision</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to arising incoordination</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to arising segregation</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding decision due to difficulties to impose an idea</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to experienced lack of participation in decision making</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding intention due to task interdependence and task relatedness</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding triggered by conformity to the majority's decision</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to accomplish the task/project</li> <li>- Knowledge hiding due to the importance of reaching the common goal</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge hiding as a strategy towards increasing perceived workplace inclusion</b>	
<b>Maintaining the relationship</b>  [To maintain the relationship at a satisfactory level. To avoid conflicts with a Slovenian co-worker or supervisor]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior to avoid disconnection, offensive reactions, conflicts from the majority group members and to keep a healthier and better relationship with majority members</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior to avoid frustrations, exclusion, and misunderstandings</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior to avoid push backs, rollbacks, negative perceptions</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior in turn to keep the friendship</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior to avoid offense from majority group members</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior in turn to keep team membership</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior to avoid competition</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior since the desire to keep the relationship</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior since being relation oriented</li> </ul>

<b>Job security</b>  [Having a job that is safe and there is a slight chance to be fired or lose it]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior in turn to keep the job position</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior due to status, power, authority, and hierarchical difference</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior since being (perceive the self as) a subordinate</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior since being a newcomer, junior, lacking experience and competencies</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior in turn to keep a good relationship with a supervisor</li> <li>- Engaging in knowledge hiding behavior since the difficulties to get a job</li> </ul>
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### Codebook: Analytical codes for inclusive organizational climate

Index code	Next-level codes	Code description
Inclusiveness climate		
	Intercultural competences/ skills/ communication tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The level of the inter-cultural intelligence of the employees</li> <li>- Organizing and implemented workshops developing intercultural competencies, skills</li> <li>- Workshops improving inter-cultural communication</li> </ul>
	Diversity of cultures, nationalities, ethnicities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cultural diversity of the workforce</li> <li>- Linguistic diversity of the workforce</li> <li>- Ethnic diversity of the workforce</li> <li>- Age diversity of the workforce</li> </ul>
	Inclusive seminars/ workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- organizing seminars and workshops introducing Slovenian culture, people, socio-cultural norms, language</li> </ul>
Inclusiveness practices		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- workshops/ seminars promoting belonging and inclusion,</li> <li>- HRM practices ensuring the quality of the relationship, equality of the knowledge sharing between migrant and local employees.</li> </ul>
Inclusiveness leadership		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organizational structure</li> <li>- leadership style</li> <li>- Leadership skills, competencies, approach</li> <li>- Leadership strategy, philosophy</li> </ul>

		- Relationship with co-workers, other staff
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