



ORIGINAL ARTICLE / ÖZGÜN ARAŞTIRMA



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# The Creative Class: Navigating the Dynamics of Organisational Silence, Social Undermining, and Intrinsic Motivation\*

## Yaratıcı Sınıf: Örgütsel Sessizlik, Sosyal Baltalama ve İçsel Motivasyon Dinamiklerinde Yol Almak

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### Abstract

**Aim:** This study investigates how intrinsic motivation among the creative class moderates the relationship between social undermining and organizational silence. Drawing on Conservation of Resources Theory and Social Exchange Theory, it explores the dynamics of these relationships and the factors that influence employee silence in the workplace. The goal is to understand how intrinsic motivation impacts how employees respond to social undermining and how this response affects organizational silence.

**Method:** This study focuses on identifying the conditions under which employees remain silent in the face of social undermining and the underlying dynamics that drive this behavior. By analyzing different levels of intrinsic motivation, the study provides insights into the complex interactions between managerial behavior and employee silence.

**Results:** The findings reveal that for employees with low intrinsic motivation, the relationship between managerial undermining and protective silence remains consistent. In contrast, for employees with high intrinsic motivation, defensive silence decreases as managerial undermining increases, while protective silence increases. These results suggest that employees with high intrinsic motivation are more likely to engage in protective silence as a response to social undermining, rather than defensive silence, which may indicate a higher sense of control or resilience in the workplace.

**Conclusion:** These results underscore the importance of intrinsic motivation in understanding how employees respond to social undermining and its implications for organizational silence. The

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study offers valuable insights for both researchers and practitioners, highlighting the need for more focused leadership and management strategies that account for the varying effects of motivation on employee behavior in the workplace.

### Keywords

Social undermining, intrinsic motivation, organizational silence, conservation of resources theory, social exchange theory

### Öz

**Amaç:** Bu çalışma, yaratıcı sınıf içindeki içsel motivasyonun, sosyal baltalama ile örgütsel sessizlik arasındaki ilişkiyi nasıl düzenlediğini incelemekte, Kaynakların Korunması Teorisi ve Sosyal Değişim Teorisi'ni kullanarak bu etkileşimin dinamiklerini keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

**Yöntem:** Çalışmada, çalışanların sessizliğini etkileyen çeşitli koşullar incelenmiş, bu sessizliğin arkasındaki nedenler ortaya konulmuştur. Ayrıca, içsel motivasyonun bu ilişkilerdeki düzenleyici rolü detaylı bir şekilde ele alınmıştır.

**Bulgular:** Araştırma sonuçları, düşük içsel motivasyona sahip çalışanlar için yönetici baltalaması ile koruyucu sessizlik arasındaki ilişkinin tutarlı kaldığını göstermektedir. Bu durumda, çalışanlar, kendilerini savunmasız hissettiklerinde, sessizliğe daha fazla yönelmektedir. Ancak, yüksek içsel motivasyona sahip çalışanlar için farklı bir durum söz konusu olmaktadır. Bu çalışanlar, yönetici baltalaması arttıkça savunma amaçlı sessizliği terk etmekte, buna karşılık koruyucu sessizliğe daha fazla başvurmaktadır. Bu durum, içsel motivasyonun sosyal baltalamaya verilen tepkilerdeki kritik rolünü ortaya koymaktadır.

**Sonuç:** Çalışma, çalışanların sosyal baltalamaya karşı gösterdiği tepkilerin örgütsel sessizlik üzerindeki etkilerini anlamının önemini vurgulamaktadır. Bu bulgular, örgütsel yönetim ve liderlik uygulamalarına yönelik değerli çıkarımlar sunarak, uygulayıcılara daha etkili yönetim stratejileri geliştirme fırsatı sunmaktadır. Ayrıca araştırmacılara sosyal baltalama ve içsel motivasyon arasındaki ilişkilere dair daha fazla araştırma yapmaları için yönlendirici bilgiler sağlamaktadır.

### Anahtar Kelimeler

Sosyal baltalama, içsel motivasyon, örgütsel sessizlik, kaynakların korunması teorisi, sosyal değişim teorisi

## Introduction

In today's dynamic economic landscape, countries striving for growth and adaptability prioritize Research and Development (R&D) operations and innovative endeavors. This strategic emphasis aids businesses in maintaining their competitive edge within global markets. Investments directed towards fostering growth at both national and regional levels often revolve around well-equipped R&D centers and Technoparks (Erbay & Arkan, 2019). Human capital emerges as a critical component in the development of these infrastructures, alongside financial resources and technological advancements. Coined by Florida (2002), the term "creative class" refers to individuals actively engaged in creative and innovative activities that contribute to revenue generation. It is widely acknowledged that organizations can effectively navigate changing environmental conditions and stay competitive only through the collective efforts of employees who possess the capacity to think critically, innovate, and deliver tangible outcomes. However, within the social structures of organizations, both desirable and undesirable behaviors can manifest. Social undermining, identified as a negative behavior within organizational contexts, is often influenced by individual personality traits (Sabeen & Arshad, 2019) and organizational culture. Examples of organizational undermining behaviors encompass alterations in the work environment, unfavorable working hours, and challenging conditions (Alparslan & Tunc, 2009; Freebairn et al., 2006).

Social undermining is a behavior aimed at impeding the development and maintenance of healthy interpersonal relationships, hindering success in work-related endeavors, and tarnishing one's reputation over time (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002: 332). Vinokur and Van Ryn (1993) define it as involving direct expressions of anger, criticism, and hostility towards a specific individual, with the aim of thwarting their goals and hindering their personal growth (Vinokur, Price, & Caplan, 1996). This behavior often leads to negative emotional experiences for employees, including stress, anxiety, desensitization, and despair (Gant, Nagda, Brabson et al., 1993). Studies have consistently shown that exposure to undermining behavior increases employees' intentions to leave the organization and elevates their stress levels. Furthermore, research indicates that such behavior adversely affects employees' ability to achieve their goals and undermines their motivation, leading to decreased performance and self-efficacy. Over time, individuals who encounter negative emotions and experiences of undermining may witness a decline in their self-confidence and, consequently, their creative capacities (Cavus, Develi & Sarioglu, 2015). Adverse interactions can result in confusion and a sense of threat, contributing to a significant rise in employees' stress levels and incurring costs for both individuals and organizations (Rook, 1992).

Social undermining, a concept with substantial ramifications for organisations, is typically attributed to employees, supervisors, and customers in the literature. Since the research group being studied does not have direct contact with clients, social undermining has been analysed in two aspects (Duffy et al., 2002). According to social learning theory, first-line managers and leaders are important in causing and spreading undermining behaviour in the organisation (Eiss & Whyland, 2018). Managers' undermining behaviour towards their subordinates can cause the subordinates to view these actions as legitimate (Mawritz, Mayer, Hoobler, Wayne & Marinova, 2012).

Subordinates often channel the undermining behaviours they experience towards colleagues they view as less powerful. The transfers and ripple effects described by Eissa et al. (2018) result in workplace disputes over time as individuals seek to reciprocate within the organisation, as noted by Andersson and Pearson (1999). The reciprocity norm, a concept in social exchange theory, refers to the inclination to respond to negative behaviour with negative behaviour in social interactions (Swift & Virick, 2013: 718). Social undermining is considered a detrimental interpersonal behaviour that creates bad social exchange connections in the workplace (Duffy et al., 2002).

Expanding on these theories, when a person shares their expertise and skills to help the organisation, they anticipate that it will boost their visibility and reputation in their professional circle and reinforce their relationships. Conversely, a decline in the willingness to communicate information often leads to a preference for silence (Constant, Kiasler, and Sproull, 1994: 406; Hall, 2001; Kankanhalli, Tan & Wei, 2005, p. 116). Another significant theory to consider is the 'conservation of resources theory.' This theory promotes the endeavour to obtain, enhance, and safeguard individual resources (Hobfoll, 2001; Hobfoll, 2002; Laguna & Razmus, 2018). Employees rely on their supervisors, colleagues, and other third parties to safeguard and improve their assets (Duffy, Scott, Shaw, Tepper & Aquino, 2012). This theory suggests that employees who feel intentionally and systematically undermined in order to weaken themselves are likely to distance themselves from organisational knowledge sharing over time, choosing to conserve their resources and remain silent (Pinder & Harlos, 2001: 334; Constant et al., 1994: 406; Hall, 2001, pp. 7-11; Kankanhalli et al., 2005, p. 116; Ozdil, 2017; Tepper, Simon & Park 2017; Fatima, Majeed & Jahanzeb, 2020; Ustun & Ersolak, 2020; Jung & Yoon, 2019; Gupta & Mishra, 2016).

This research aims to examine the complex relationships among social undermining, intrinsic motivation, and organisational silence using Conservation of Resources Theory and Social Exchange Theory, focusing on the creative class. While existing literature has explored the negative impacts of social undermining on employees, this study aims to contribute by examining the moderating role of intrinsic motivation in shaping the relationship between social undermining and various dimensions of organizational silence.

Specifically, our focus is on understanding the conditions under which employees, particularly those belonging to the creative class, may choose silence as a response to social undermining. By

integrating intrinsic motivation as a moderating factor, we aim to add a nuanced understanding to existing theories, illuminating the motivations and behaviors of employees in the face of undermining behaviors from supervisors and coworkers. This research not only aims to advance theoretical frameworks but also offers practical insights for both researchers and practitioners seeking to comprehend and address the complexities surrounding employee silence in the contemporary organizational context. While social exchange and conservation of resources theories have been extensively studied, they are not frequently applied to investigate the connection between social undermining and employee silence (Xu, Ayub & Iqbal, 2022; Fatima, Salah-Ud-Din, Khan et al., 2015; Pelit, Dincer & Kılıç, 2015).

## The Theoretical Foundations and Hypotheses of The Research

### The Relationships Between Social Undermining, Employee Silence, and Intrinsic Motivation

Various barriers within organizations, spanning managerial, organizational, and cultural dimensions, have been identified as impediments to creativity (Samen, 2008). In the pursuit of creativity within complex social systems, it is imperative for individuals to operate within a structure that provides a free and trusting environment (Keskin, 2005). The creative potential of employees is adversely affected when they perceive constraints within the organization, experience a fear of making mistakes, and anticipate criticism (Keskin, 2005; Sungur, 1997).

Research has identified abusive supervision (Malik, Shahzad, Razig, et al., 2019), bullying (Jiang, Gu & Tang, 2019), and social undermining (Eissa, Chngchanachokchai, & Wyland, 2017) as variables that can diminish employees' creativity. Social undermining involves actions aimed at diminishing an employee's positive reputation, obstructing work progress, and impeding their ability to form positive relationships, thereby negatively impacting the creative class within the organization (Duffy et al., 2002).

Duffy et al. (2002) delineate three traits of social undermining: intent, erosion of talents, and a gradual detriment to interpersonal relationships and reputation. Exposure to undermining behavior can induce negative feelings, including tension, anxiety, desensitization, and despair (Gant et al., 1993). Employees subjected to such behavior also experience heightened psychological distress and emotional fatigue (Gant et al., 1993; Ulbegi, Iplik & Yalcin, 2019), leading to increased stress levels (Ulbegi, Iplik & Yalcin, 2019).

The stress resulting from exposure to socially damaging behavior inhibits employees from utilizing knowledge, concepts, and skills necessary for creativity over time (Černe, Nerstad, Dysvik & Skerlavaj, 2014). This stress-induced hindrance can lead to reduced knowledge sharing and creativity within organizations and employees (Tepper et al., 2017; Fatima et al., 2020; Ustun & Ersolak, 2020; Jung & Yoon, 2019; Constant et al., 1994; Hall, 2001; Kankanhalli et al., 2005; Khan, Malik & Shahzad, 2022; Eissa et al., 2017).

Employee silence, defined as the withholding of knowledge and ideas to improve work and organizational processes, has become a prevalent issue in contemporary workplaces (Bagheri, Zarei & Aeen, 2012). Despite having the potential to effect behavioral, cognitive, and emotional changes within the organization, employees choose silence, exhibiting three dimensions: acquiescent, defensive, and protective (Pinder & Harlos, 2001; Van Dyne, Ang & Botera, 2003). Acquiescent silent is an intentional sort of passive behaviour. Defensive silence occurs when employees choose not to share their opinions, knowledge, and thoughts due to fear of negative reactions and the need to protect themselves (Acaray & Sevik, 2016). Protective (prosocial) silence is when an individual refrains from expressing their opinions and thoughts about work in order to support the organization's aims or a specific group inside the organisation (Akan & Oran, 2017). Frequent exposure to negative workplace behaviors prompts employee silence (Ozdil, 2017), with some adopting a compliant attitude (Fatima et al., 2020; Gupta and Mishra, 2016), while others choose silence within the framework of social exchange and conservation of resources theories (Ustun & Ersolak, 2020; Jung & Yoon, 2019; Zahed, 2015).

In this context, the main hypotheses of the research are as follows:

H<sub>1a</sub>: Social undermining (a) manager undermining, (b) coworker undermining positively and significantly effects acquiescent silence, which is the sub-dimension of employee silence.

H<sub>1b</sub>: Social undermining (a) manager undermining, (b) coworker undermining significantly and positively effects defensive silence, which is the sub-dimension of employee silence.

H<sub>1c</sub>: Social undermining (a) manager undermining, (b) coworker undermining significantly and positively effects protective silence, which is the sub-dimension of employee silence.

Motivation is the important key for reducing organisational silence and enhancing employees' readiness to contribute to the organisation. Motivation is the exertion of effort by an individual to pursue a particular goal, accompanied by the enthusiasm felt throughout the endeavour. Satisfaction in intrinsic motivation is derived from the job itself, as per the Self-Determination Theory (Gagne & Deci, 2005, p. 331). Individuals with strong intrinsic motivation engage in tasks willingly and without external incentives or prizes; they do so purely because they find the task inherently engaging and delightful (Ahmed & Bruinsma, 2006). People with intrinsic motivation are driven to work willingly, come up with innovative ideas, and take the lead in their responsibilities (Demir, 2011). Akgunduz (2013) found that intrinsic incentive tools positively influence employees' creativity ability. Research shows that intrinsic motivation is linked to organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Abdurrezak & Ustuner, 2020; Agca & Ertan, 2008; Karatepe & Uludag, 2007). Saygili (2018) discovered that intrinsic motivation decreases the likelihood of blue-collar workers wanting to quit their employment. Dogan and Aslan (2018) discovered that intrinsic motivation played a mediating role in the relationship between psychological capital and job satisfaction.

An employee's belief that they are being undermined by superiors or coworkers might result in hesitancy to share thoughts, ideas, and feelings that could benefit the organisation. The strong intrinsic motivation of employees can be the initial focus of research to shift away from silence behaviour. The research aims to investigate if intrinsic motivation moderates the relationship between social undermining and organisational silence.

In line with all these explanations, the hypotheses to investigate the moderating effect of intrinsic motivation are as follows:

H<sub>2a</sub>: Intrinsic motivation plays a moderating role between social undermining, both (a) supervisor undermining and (b) coworker undermining, and the acquiescent silence sub-dimension of employee silence.

H<sub>2b</sub>: Intrinsic motivation plays a moderating role between social undermining, both (a) supervisor undermining and (b) coworker undermining, and the defensive silence sub-dimension of employee silence.

H<sub>2c</sub>: Intrinsic motivation plays a moderating role between social undermining, both (a) supervisor undermining and (b) coworker undermining, and the protective silence sub-dimension of employee silence.

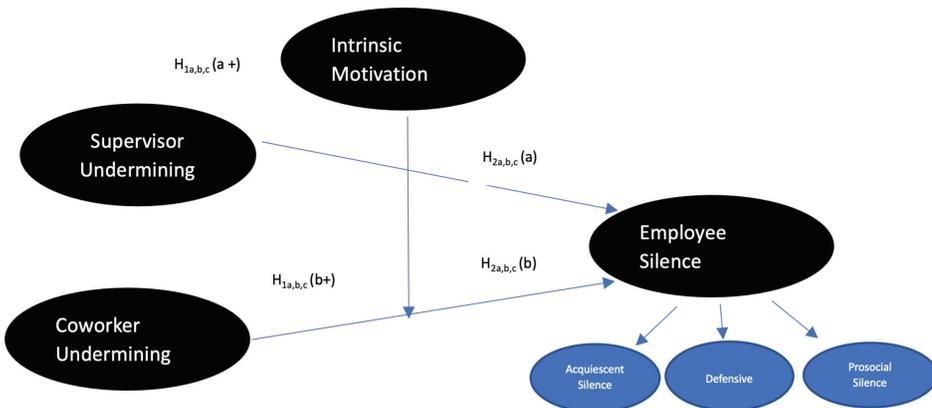


Figure 1: Research model

## Method

### Population and Sample

The research focuses on the creative professionals employed in Technoparks in Kayseri and Nevsehir. There are 1300 employees in 242 enterprises linked to Erciyes Technopark and 16 companies associated with Cappadocia Technopark in Kayseri. In adherence to the TOP (Transparency and Openness Promotion) guidelines, we emphasize the transparency and openness incorporated into the research methodology. The determination of the sample size, guided by Sekaran's (2003, p. 294) table, was explicitly stated, with the rationale behind selecting 297 participants detailed. Out of 325 distributed questionnaires, 302 were returned, and 297 were considered appropriate for the study, providing clarity on participant inclusion. In the surveys that were not evaluated, it was observed that all expressions were marked in the same way.

Before the main study, a pilot study involving 70 participants was conducted, aiming to assess the clarity of the questions in the survey instrument. Following the pilot study, one item on the social undermining scale was revised based on input from two experts. The final version of the measuring instrument was presented in a pilot study involving 25 employees. Questionnaires intended for data collection were issued to employees and retrieved the following day. In some workplaces, the surveys left to the authorized officers were received the next day. The research data collection began in June 2021 and lasted for approximately 6 months. In this study, we adhered to The Journal of Applied Psychology methodological checklist. The data are not available because they are proprietary. The research data was analyzed using SPSS 23 for statistical analysis and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to assess measurement tool validity. Hayes' process macro was employed to explore moderating relationships between variables. These methods facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the research framework and provided insights into the success of restaurant information systems.

### Data Collection Tool

The social undermining scale developed by Duffy et al. in 2002 and translated into Turkish by Ulbegi et al. in 2014 was used to measure social undermining. The measure has 26 items categorised into two dimensions: manager undermining and coworker undermining, with each component consisting of 13 items. The Mottaz (1985) employee motivation scale, adapted into Turkish by Dundar, Ozutku, and Taspinar (2007) following the work of Brislin, MacNab, Worthley et al., (2005) and Mahaney and Lederer (2006), was used for measurement. This study only utilised the first dimension of the scale, which focuses on intrinsic motivation and consists of 9 items. The Van Dyne et al. (2003) scale for evaluating employee silence was used after being converted into Turkish by Taskiran (2011). The data collection tools, comprising the social undermining scale, employee motivation scale, and employee silence scale, were meticulously chosen based on their established reliability and validity. Each scale, presented as a 5-point Likert scale without any reverse-coded items, contributes to the clarity and straightforwardness of the research instruments.

The scale has three dimensions: acquiescent silent, defensive silence, and prosocial silence, with a total of 15 items. All scales utilised in the research are 5-point Likert scales without any items that are reverse-coded. Reliability coefficients for each scale were calculated, with  $\alpha=0.88$  for the undermining scale,  $\alpha=0.82$  for intrinsic motivation, and  $\alpha=0.80$  for organizational silence. These coefficients affirm the internal consistency of the scales, indicating their reliability in measuring the intended constructs.

The analysis of the participants' characteristics reveals that 57.6% are male, 73.7% are aged between 18-30, 78.8% are unmarried, and 59.9% have a bachelor's degree. Regarding the participants' experience durations, 45.5% have 1-5 years of experience, 25.3% have less than 1 year, 17.2% have 6-10 years, and 13.1% have 11 years and above.

The Validity of the Factor Structures of the Scales Used in the Research: First-Level Confirmatory Factor Analyses

Factor analyses were used to confirm the structures of the scales in the investigation. The variables were assessed for factor analysis suitability using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Sphericity test. Results showed KMO values of 0.874 for Undermining, 0.86 for Motivation, and 0.838 for Silence, with corresponding  $\chi^2$  values and degrees of freedom, all with  $p<0.0001$ . The values suggest that the dataset is appropriate for factor analysis.

Two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were revealed in the AFA analysis of the Social Undermining Scale. The factor loadings for the two-factor structure range from .85 to .55 for employee undermining and from .74 to .57 for supervisor undermining. The two dimensions created account for a cumulative variation of 47.95%. A first-order confirmatory factor analysis was undertaken using the SEM framework to examine the link between the items of the Social Undermining Scale and its structural features. The goodness-of-fit indices verified the significance of the Social Undermining Scale with a chi-square value of 966.704, degrees of freedom of 294, and a p-value of 0.00. The  $\chi^2/df$  value was determined to be 3.288, falling within the specified range ( $\chi^2/df/5$ ) as referenced by Byrne (2011) and Yaslioglu (2017). The fit goodness indices were calculated as follows: CFI=0.91 (Comparative Fit Index), GFI=0.90 (Goodness of Fit Index), IFI=0.90 (Incremental Fit Index), NFI=0.90 (Normed Fit Index), and RMSEA=0.088 (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation). Based on these values, it is evident that the two-factor model is consistent. The scale's reliability coefficient was determined to be .86.

A single factor with an eigenvalue larger than 1 was detected in the AFA results for the Intrinsic Motivation Scale. The factor loadings of the scale vary from .73 to .56, collectively accounting for 39.66% of the variation. The fit indices supported the importance of the Intrinsic Motivation Scale with a chi-square value of 114.280, degrees of freedom of 25, and a p-value of 0.00. The fit goodness index values were calculated as follows: CFI=0.89, GFI=0.92, IFI=0.90, NFI=0.90, and RMSEA=0.09. Based on these data, it was concluded that the single-factor model is consistent. The scale's reliability coefficient was determined to be .84.

Three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were detected in the AFA results for the Organisational Silence Scale. One item was excluded from the analysis due to its distribution across two dimensions, prompting a repetition of the study. The factor loadings of the scale items for defensive silent in the first dimension ranged from .77 to .64, explaining 31.585% of the total variance. The factor loadings of items for prosocial silence dimension varied from .86 to .68, accounting for 22.79% of the total variance. The factor loadings of items for acquiescent silent in the third dimension varied from .82 to .57, explaining 8.11% of the total variance. The chi-square value for the Organisational Silence Scale was  $\chi^2 = 243.359$  with 86 degrees of freedom, and the p-value was found to be significant at  $p = 0.00$ . The  $\chi^2/df$  ratio was 2.830, indicating acceptability. The fit indices are as follows: CFI = 0.93, GFI = 0.90, IFI = 0.93, NFI = 0.90, and RMSEA = 0.078. Based on these results, it was determined that the three-factor model is coherent. The reliability coefficients of the scale were .83 for defensive silence, .80 for acquiescent silence, and .85 for prosocial silence.

**Table 1.** Goodness of Fit Indices for the Structural Model

Scales	CMIN	DF	CMIN/DF	CFI	GFI	IFI	NFI	RMSEA	P
Social Undermining	966.704	294	3.288	0.91	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.088	0.00
Intrinsic Motivation	114.280	25	4.571	0.89	0.92	0.90	0.90	0.090	0.00
Organizational Silence	243.259	86	2.830	0.93	0.90	0.93	0.90	0.078	0.00

By providing this comprehensive overview, the research methodology aligns with the transparency and openness principles outlined in the TOP guidelines, ensuring that the study's design, participant selection, pilot study, and reliability and validity assessments are clearly communicated and accessible to the readership.

## Findings

### Correlation Analysis Results

Analysed were the means, standard deviations, and correlations of the research variables, with the findings displayed in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Correlation Matrix for the Concepts

	Mean	S.S.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Intrinsic Motivation	4.14	.74	<b>1</b>							
2. Social Undermining	1.83	.83	-.289**	<b>1</b>						
3. Supervisor Undermining	1.68	.59	-.202	.702	<b>1</b>					
4. Coworker Undermining	1,75	.65	-.229	.753	.141**	<b>1</b>				
5. Employee Silence	2.35	.61	-.242**	.364**	.185**	.156**	<b>1</b>			
6. Acquiescent Silence	1.95	.76	-.120**	.211**	.105**	.139**	.409**	<b>1</b>		
7. Defensive Silence	1.83	.78	-.243**	.338**	.114**	.233**	.643**	.415**	<b>1</b>	
8. Prosocial Silence	4.04	1.00	-.029	.052	.082*	.057	.057	-.065*	.036	<b>1</b>

\*The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

\*\*The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

A negative and significant correlation was observed between intrinsic motivation and social undermining, supervisor undermining, coworker undermining, employee silence, acquiescent silence, and defensive silence. There is a weak and insignificant negative correlation with prosocial silence ( $r=-.029$ ;  $p>0.01$ ), the final sub-dimension of organisational silence. There are strong and meaningful connections between social undermining and organisational silence, as well as its components acquiescent silence and defensive silent. There is a weak positive correlation between supervisor undermining and employee silence, as well as organisational silence and its sub-dimensions acquiescent silence and defensive silence. A positive and significant relationship was discovered between coworker undermining, a sub-dimension of social undermining, and employee silence ( $r=.156$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), organisational silence, as well as its sub-dimensions, acquiescent silence ( $r=.139$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and defensive silence ( $r=.233$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). However, positive but not significant relationships were observed between prosocial silence ( $r=.057$ ;  $p>0.05$ ).

The average number for social undermining within the creative class is 1.83, indicating a low level. The value of organisational silence is 2.35, which is close to the mean value of 2.5. The investigation shows that employees have a high level of intrinsic motivation, with an average score of 4.14 being the highest recorded. Acquiescent silence scored 1.95, defensive silence scored 1.83, and prosocial silence scored 4.04, indicating that prosocial silence is above average.

## Findings Regarding Hypotheses

Hayes' (2013) moderation analysis was used to investigate the effect of intrinsic motivation in moderating the relationship between social undermining and organisational silence. The research model includes independent variables such as supervisor undermining and coworker undermining as sub-dimensions of social undermining, with intrinsic motivation acting as the moderating variable. The dependent variable comprises employee silence and its sub-dimensions: acquiescent, defensive, and prosocial silence. Table 3 displays the analysis results of how intrinsic motivation moderates the connection between supervisor and coworker undermining and acquiescent silent.

**Table 3.** Moderating Role of Internal Motivation in the Relationship between Supervisor and Coworker Undermining and Acquiescent Silence

	Model	$\beta$	S.H.	t	p	LLPCI	ULCI	Model Summary
AcS	SupU	.109	.098	1.107	.269	-.084	.302	R= .134; R <sup>2</sup> =.018; F=1.494; p=.216
	IntMo	-.136	.085	-1.598	.111	-.304	.031	
	Interaction	.115	.123	.935	.350	-.127	.358	
AcS	CowU	.033	.085	.390	.696	-.202	.135	R= .150; R <sup>2</sup> =.022; F=1.881; p=.133
	IntMo	-.204	.091	-2.235	.026	-.384	-.024	
	Interaction	.140	.091	1.538	.125	-.039	.319	

AcS: Acquiescent Silence, IntMo: Internal Motivation, SupU: Supervisor Undermining, CowU: Coworker Undermining

The interaction between intrinsic motivation and supervisor and coworker undermining on acquiescent silent was not statistically significant, as shown in Table 3. The impact of supervisor and colleague undermining on acquiescent silent is not statistically significant ( $F_{SupU}=1.494$ ;  $F_{CowU}=1.881$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). Hypotheses  $H_{1a}$  and  $H_{2a}$ , which suggest that social undermining by supervisors and coworkers significantly influences employee silence, were not supported in the context of acquiescent silence. Additionally, the hypothesis that intrinsic motivation moderates the relationship between social undermining and employee silence was also not supported.

Table 4 displays the results of the investigation on how intrinsic motivation moderates the relationship between supervisor and coworker undermining and defensive silence, a component of employee silence.

The analysis in Table 4 shows that intrinsic motivation moderates the relationship between supervisor undermining and defensive silence in a statistically significant way. In the model excluding the interaction term, the impact of supervisor undermining on defensive silence is positive and statistically significant, with a beta coefficient of 0.154, a t-value of 2.014, and a p-value less than 0.05. The inclusion of the interaction term (SupervisorUndermining\*IntrinsicMotivation) decreased the impact of supervisor undermining on defensive silence from  $\beta=0.154$  to  $\beta=0.129$ . The model summary ( $R^2=0.036$ ;  $F=3.051$ ;  $p=0.029$ ) suggests that the model is statistically significant. The relationship between coworker undermining, a subcategory of social undermining, and protective silence is not statistically significant ( $t=0.077$ ;  $p>0.05$ ).

**Table 4.** Moderating Role of Intrinsic Motivation in the Relationship between Supervisor and Coworker Undermining and Defensive Silence

	Model	$\beta$	S.H.	t	p	LLPCI	ULCI	Model Summary
DefS	SupU	.154	.095	2.014	.037	-.033	-.342	R= .190; R <sup>2</sup> =.036; F=3.051; p=.029
	IntMo	-.189	.082	-2.288	.023	-.353	-.026	
	Interaction	.129	.119	2.082	.030	-.306	-.365	
DefS	CowU	.006	.083	.077	.937	-.151	.171	R= .193; R <sup>2</sup> =.037; F=3.141; p=.026
	IntMo	-.261	.088	-2.948	.003	-.436	-.086	
	Interaction	.158	.088	1.789	.074	-.016	.332	

DefS: Defensive Silence, IntMo: Internal Motivation, SupU: Supervisor Undermining, CowU: Coworker Undermining

$H_{1b}$  states that supervisor and coworker undermining have a good and significant impact on defensive silent in creative employees. The assumptions regarding the moderating effect of intrinsic motivation on the link between supervisor undermining and protective silence in employees are

not validated. The analytical results on how intrinsic motivation moderates the connection between supervisor and coworker undermining and the sub-dimension of protective silence in employee behaviour are shown in Table 5.

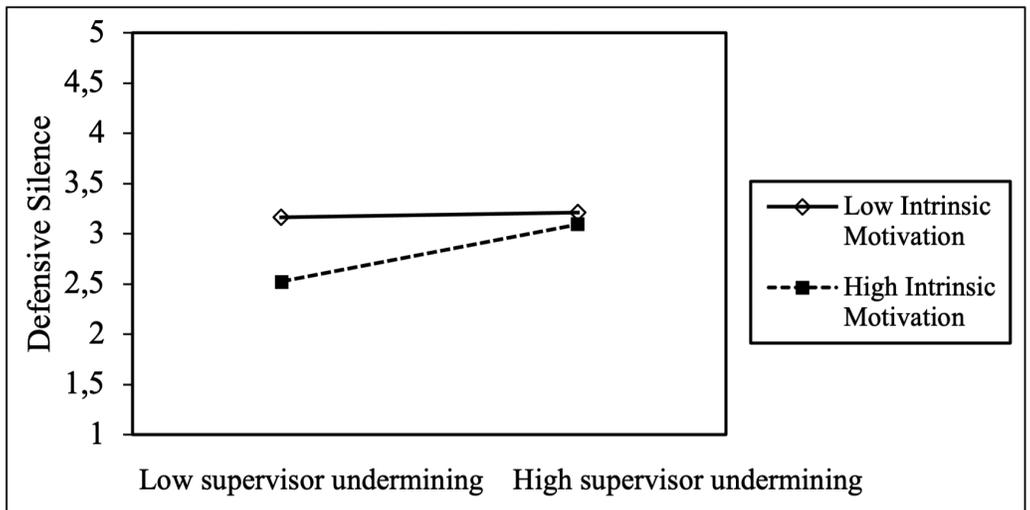
**Table 5.** The moderating role of intrinsic motivation in the relationship between supervisor and coworker undermining and protective silence

	Model	$\beta$	S.H.	t	p	LLPCI	ULCI	Model Summary
ProS	SupU	-.172	,117	-2.465	.029	-.403	-.342	R= .216; R <sup>2</sup> =.047; F=3.451; p=.022
	IntMo	,113	,101	-2.001	.034	-.307	-.026	
	Interaction	-.154	,107	-2.182	.024	-.484	-.096	
ProS	CalB	,097	,102	.950	.342	-.151	.171	R= .124; R <sup>2</sup> =.015; F=1.278; p=.282
	IntMo	.174	,109	1.594	.112	-.436	-.086	
	Interaction	-.135	,108	-1.243	.215	-.349	.079	

ProS: Protective Silence, IntMo: Internal Motivation, SupU: Supervisor Undermining, CowU: Coworker Undermining

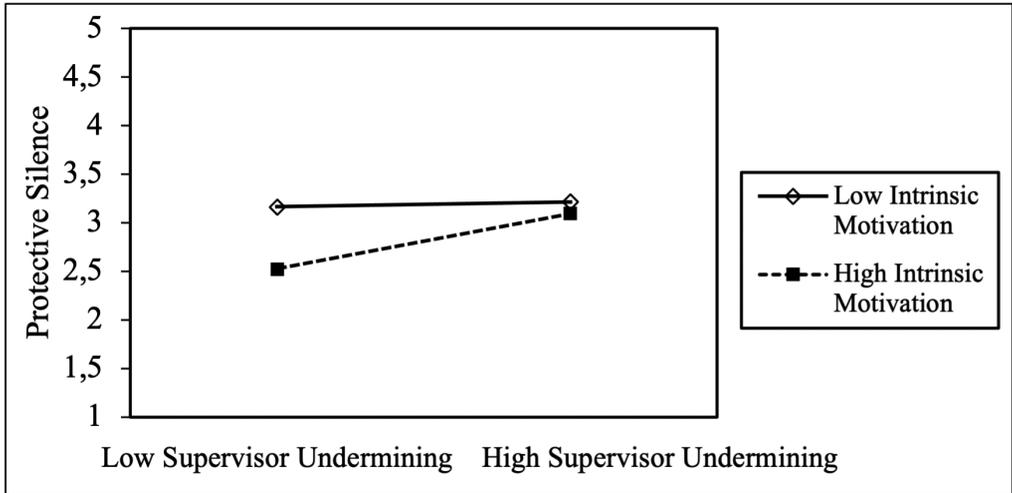
The relationship between supervisor undermining and protective silence is influenced by intrinsic motivation, as seen in Table 5. In the model without the interaction term, supervisor undermining has a significant positive impact on protective silence ( $\beta=-0.172$ ;  $t=-2.465$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). The addition of the interaction term (SupU\*IntMot) decreases the impact of supervisor undermining on protective silence from  $\beta=-0.172$  to  $\beta=0.154$ . The model summary ( $R^2=0.047$ ;  $F=3.451$ ;  $p=0.022$ ) suggests the model's significance. The relationship between coworker undermining, a sub-dimension of social undermining, and protective silence is not statistically significant ( $t=0.950$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). Hypothesis 1c, which suggests that social undermining from both supervisors and coworkers has a significant and positive impact on the sub-dimension of protective silence, is confirmed. Hypothesis 2c, which suggests that intrinsic motivation influences the relationship between social undermining (supervisor and coworker) and protective silence in employee silence, is supported for the supervisor undermining factor.

Figures 1 and 2 display the graphical representation of how intrinsic motivation moderates the relationship between supervisor undermining and defensive and protective silence at low and high levels of intrinsic motivation.



**Figure 1.** Graphical representation of the moderating effect of intrinsic motivation on the relationship between supervisor undermining and defensive silence.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between supervisor undermining and protective silence in the creative class based on their level of intrinsic motivation. The graph shows that for employees with low intrinsic motivation, the relationship between supervisor undermining and protective silence stays consistent. For highly intrinsically motivated employees, a rise in supervisor undermining leads to a decrease in defensive silent. The relationship between supervisor undermining and protective silence is influenced by intrinsic motivation.



**Figure 2.** Graphic representation of the moderating effect of intrinsic motivation on the relationship between supervisor undermining and protective silence.

Figure 2 shows the relationship between supervisor undermining and protective silence among employees with low or high motivation. The graph shows that the relationship between supervisor undermining and protective silence stays consistent for employees with low motivation. For highly intrinsically motivated employees, a rise in supervisor undermining leads to a corresponding increase in protective silent. The relationship between supervisor undermining and protective silent is influenced by intrinsic motivation.

## Result

Technoparks showcase exemplary university-industry collaboration and stand out due to their association with the creative class, comprised of innovative, diverse, and unique individuals. Exposure to social undermining behaviours, regardless of the source, is believed to discourage employees from sharing valuable information, thoughts, and feelings with the organisation. The study’s premise is that the observed silent behaviour would be influenced by intrinsic motivation. This study aims to investigate how intrinsic motivation moderates the relationship between social undermining (supervisor and coworker undermining) and employee silence (acquiescent, defensive, and prosocial). The study’s objective is elucidated by the model and hypotheses presented.

The research results show that when supervisors engage in undermining behaviour, employees are more likely to exhibit defensive silence and less likely to engage in protective silence, which involves behaviours targeted at safeguarding the organisation and its employees. The analytical findings suggest that supervisor-initiated undermining behaviour has no effect on acquiescent silence.

The results indicate around 15% of the rise in employees’ defensive silence actions and 17% of the decline in protective silence actions can be linked to supervisor-induced undermining behaviour. No statistical interaction was found between coworker-initiated undermining behaviour and employee silent. Research in the field indicates that supervisor undermining behaviour leads to an increase in defensive silent. (Milliken, Morrison & Hewlin, 2003; Zahed, 2015; Ugur, 2017; Eissa et al., 2018; Jung & Yoon, 2019; Ustun & Ersolak, 2020). Eissa et al. (2018) and Eby (2024, p. 131) highlighted that disciplinary measures, lack of incentives and rewards, and biased performance evaluations can cause

employees to engage in defensive silence. Employees engage in defensive silence as a protective measure, choosing not to express their emotions, thoughts, or facts out of concern for potential repercussions (Ustun and Ersolak, 2020). Individuals may refrain from expressing their thoughts and ideas to save their resources, based on the research findings of Xu, Ayub, and Iqbal (2022). Employees, over time, are inclined to react to criticism, humiliation, and obstructive behaviours they encounter, as per social exchange theory. Perceiving a superior displaying undermining behaviour as a representative of the organisation could lead employees to reveal sensitive information that requires organisational protection.

The research results show that social undermining influences the relationship between supervisor undermining (a type of social undermining) and employee silence, particularly in the defensive and protective silence aspects, by the moderating influence of intrinsic motivation. A 1-unit rise in supervisor undermining results in a 0.154-unit increase in defensive silence, as indicated by this study. When intrinsic motivation is added to the model, the influence of a 1-unit alteration in supervisor undermining diminishes to 0.129. This suggests that intrinsic motivation assists in reducing the impact of undermining behaviour on defensive silence. A 1-unit increase in supervisor undermining leads to a -0.172-unit decrease in protective silent. However, when intrinsic motivation is added to the model, the effect of a 1-unit change in supervisor undermining drops to -0.154. Intrinsic motivation reduces the influence of undermining behaviour on protective silence. The research indicates that boosting employees' intrinsic motivation can help reduce the impact of supervisor undermining.

This study proposes that intrinsic motivation moderates the relationship between social undermining and employee silence, based on the literature evaluation. The silent behavior adopted by employees to safeguard their resources as a result of undermining behavior from superiors and coworker might decrease if the individual has intrinsic motivation and finds their work important, enjoyable, and useful. Having employees with high intrinsic motivation is essential in this scenario. The study's design hypothesised that employees who experienced undermining behaviour from supervisors and coworker would be more likely to remain silent, and that high intrinsic motivation would reduce this inclination. The study also aimed to find out if the origin of undermining behaviour has an impact and which aspect of silence it influences. Exposure to supervisor undermining causes employees to engage in defensive silence to protect their resources, while decreasing protective silent, which entails withholding information that could benefit the organisation or its members. Supervisor undermining does not impact acquiescent silence, which is a form of silence resulting from employees' cooperation or acceptance of the current circumstances. Acquiescent silent is characterised by a passive demeanour, showing a lack of involvement in organisational growth and process enhancements, and an attitude of apathy (Van Dyne et al., 2003). The distinctive structure, objectives, and traits of personnel in technoparks may have influenced this outcome. Undermining behaviour from peers or colleagues does not affect employee silence.

The main idea of the study is intrinsic motivation. Supervisors' undermining behaviour leads to less protective silence, which diminishes with high intrinsic motivation. The employee's inclination to safeguard the organisation, supervisors, and coworkers diminishes as a result of undermining behaviour, particularly when intrinsic motivation is high. Various factors such as engaging tasks, the significance of work to the employee, job engagement, accountability, variety, innovation, chances to utilise one's abilities, and positive performance evaluations are elements that boost intrinsic motivation (Mottaz, 1985; Dundar, Ozutku, & Taspinar, 2007). Organisations can enhance employees' intrinsic motivation by successfully utilising these techniques. Given the significance that technoparks attribute to creativity and success, it is essential to establish processes and human resource policies that reduce the impact of supervisor undermining, which can result in employee silent. All procedures, from recruiting highly intrinsically motivated people to effectively utilising instruments that enhance employees' intrinsic motivation, must be evaluated.

## Organizational Implications

The findings of this study bear significant implications for organizations, particularly those within technoparks, where creativity and innovation are paramount. Recognizing the adverse impact of

supervisor undermining behavior on employee silence, specifically defensive and protective silence, is crucial for organizational leaders. Strategies aimed at curbing such behaviors are imperative for fostering a healthy and productive work environment.

In light of the study's emphasis on the moderating role of intrinsic motivation, organizations should prioritize initiatives to enhance this motivational factor among employees. Creating engaging tasks, emphasizing the significance of employees' work, promoting job engagement, and providing opportunities for skill utilization are essential components in bolstering intrinsic motivation.

To address the challenges posed by supervisor undermining, organizations are encouraged to establish transparent and equitable guidelines for performance evaluations. These guidelines should underscore fairness and impartiality, reducing the likelihood of undermining behaviors that contribute to defensive and protective silence.

Continuous monitoring of employee morale and well-being is recommended, with regular feedback sessions between supervisors and subordinates serving as a means to create an open communication channel. Such practices can help identify and mitigate potential issues related to undermining behavior, thus diminishing the occurrence of defensive and protective silence.

Given the specific characteristics of personnel within technoparks, organizations must evaluate their human resource policies and processes. Incorporating intrinsic motivation enhancement techniques, such as those emphasizing engaging tasks and positive performance evaluations, becomes paramount. Selective recruitment processes focusing on identifying individuals with high intrinsic motivation can contribute to creating a workforce less susceptible to the adverse effects of supervisor undermining.

In conclusion, the organizational implications suggest a holistic approach that combines efforts to curb supervisor undermining, enhance intrinsic motivation, and tailor human resource policies to the unique context of technoparks. By adopting these measures, organizations can strive to create an environment conducive to creativity, success, and reduced instances of employee silence stemming from undermining behaviors.

## Managerial Implications

The managerial implications derived from the study provide insightful recommendations for leaders and managers within technoparks. A foundational consideration involves cultivating an awareness among managerial staff regarding the potential adverse consequences of supervisor undermining behavior on employee silence, particularly manifested in defensive and protective silence. Proactive recognition and effective addressing of such behaviors are identified as crucial components for fostering a healthy and productive work environment. Emphasizing the role of intrinsic motivation, the study underscores the importance for managers to prioritize strategies that enhance this intrinsic drive among employees. This entails providing engaging tasks, acknowledging the significance of their work, promoting job engagement, and creating opportunities for skill utilization. Moreover, the study advocates for the cultivation of a positive work culture within organizations, characterized by an environment that nurtures creativity, innovation, and positive performance evaluations. Such a culture contributes significantly to elevating employees' intrinsic motivation, subsequently reducing the propensity for defensive and protective silence in response to undermining behaviors. Acknowledging the implications for recruitment and training, organizations are encouraged to incorporate assessments of intrinsic motivation in their recruitment processes and design training programs aimed at enhancing intrinsic motivation and equipping employees with effective coping mechanisms for addressing undermining behaviors. Finally, the study underscores the necessity for leaders to actively address and discourage undermining behaviors, particularly those emanating from supervisors. This involves the implementation of disciplinary measures, the provision of incentives and rewards, and the establishment of unbiased performance evaluation mechanisms to foster a work environment that discourages such detrimental behaviors.

## Limitations of the research

This study, like every research, has specific limitations. Choosing the survey method as the data collection tool is one of these restrictions. Research data collection during the epidemic has been limited to technopark staff in certain cities. This study is a cross-sectional study. While this research

successfully demonstrated correlations between variables based on created assumptions, a future research recommendation includes doing a longitudinal investigation. Conducting this study again with varied variables across multiple sectors and time frames could help confirm the findings.

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## Özet

Çalışan sessizliği, iş yerinde çalışanların görüşlerini, endişelerini veya düşüncelerini dile getirmekten kaçınmalarıdır. Bu durum, bireysel ve örgütsel performansı olumsuz etkileyebilir. Özellikle yaratıcı sınıf olarak tanımlanan ve yenilikçi çözümler üreten çalışanlar için sessizlik, daha büyük sorunlara yol açabilir. Bu nedenle çalışmada, yaratıcı sınıftan teknopark çalışanlarının içsel motivasyonu vurgulanmaktadır. İçsel motivasyon, bireyin içinden gelen iş yapma isteği olarak tanımlanır. Yüksek içsel motivasyona sahip çalışanlar, işlerine daha bağlı, daha üretken ve yaratıcı olabilir. Aynı zamanda olumsuz durumlara başa çıkmada daha dirençlidirler.

Örgütlerde istedik davranışların yanı sıra, çalışanları olumsuz etkileyen sosyal baltalama gibi olumsuz tutumlar da görülmektedir. Sosyal baltalama, bir çalışanın diğerine kasıtlı zarar vermesidir ve ciddi bireysel ve örgütsel sonuçlara yol açabilir. Bu çalışmada, yaratıcı sınıfın içsel motivasyonunun, sosyal baltalama ve örgütsel sessizlik arasındaki düzenleyici rolü incelenmiştir.

Veriler, Kayseri ve Nevşehir'deki teknopark çalışanlarından toplanmış ve Hayes (2013) Proses makrosu ile analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar, çalışan baltalaması ile sessizlik arasında anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmadığını göstermektedir. Ancak yönetici baltalaması, savunmacı ve korumacı sessizlikle anlamlı

*ilişkilidir. İçsel motivasyon, yönetici baltalaması ile sessizlik arasındaki ilişkiyi düzenlemektedir. Yüksek içsel motivasyona sahip çalışanlarda yönetici baltalaması artsa bile savunmacı sessizlik azalmakta, korumacı sessizlik artmaktadır.*

*Bu çalışma, iş yerinde sessizliğı etkileyen dinamikleri anlamada önemli katkı sunmaktadır. Çalışanların içsel motivasyonunu artırmak, sosyal baltalamanın olumsuz etkilerini azaltmak için stratejik adımlar atılmasını önermektedir.*