

## Unveiling Interpersonal Distrust as a Mediator between Contingent Workers and Knowledge Hiding in International Construction Projects in the Gulf Region

**Diana R. Anbar**

Ph.D. Candidate, Dept. of Construction and Real Estate, School of Civil Engineering, Southeast University, Nanjing 211189, China

**Xiaopeng Deng**

Professor, Dept. of Construction and Real Estate, School of Civil Engineering, China-Pakistan Belt and Road Joint Laboratory on Smart Disaster Prevention of Major Infrastructures, Southeast University, Nanjing 211189, China

**Mohammed Taha Alqershy \***

Ph.D. Candidate, Dept. of Construction Management and Real Estate, School of Economics and Management, Tongji University, Shanghai 200092, China

**Safi Ullah**

Ph.D. Candidate, Dept. of Construction and Real Estate, School of Civil Engineering, Southeast University, Nanjing 211189, China

### Abstract:

This study explores the dynamics of knowledge hiding (KH) within international construction projects (ICPs) in the Gulf region, with a focus on the influence of contingent workers (CWs) and interpersonal distrust (ID). It aims to understand how these factors influence KH and explore the mediating effect of ID on the relationship between CWs and KH. Through a survey distributed to ICP participants in the Gulf region, which yielded 157 complete responses, we applied structural equation modelling (SEM) to test the research hypotheses. The results show the both significant influence of CWs and ID on KH, along with the partial mediating effect of ID on the CWs-KH relationship. While this study highlights the complex dynamics of KH in ICPs in the Gulf region, it also open avenues for future research to explore the influence of other contextual factors and organisational structures. The practical implications of this research are important, providing actionable insights for creating a transparent and inclusive culture of knowledge sharing (KS) in multicultural project teams, thereby enhancing project outcomes and organisational success. This study emphasises the importance of open communication, diverse team structures, and mentoring initiatives as critical to reducing KH and enhancing project collaboration, thus contributing to the overall success of ICPs.

### Keywords:

Contingent workers; International construction projects; Knowledge hiding; Interpersonal distrust, Gulf countries.