Knowledge Hiding in Consulting Industry: 
the Case of EY in Kazakhstan

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Sincerely,
Meiras and Fithawi
ABSTRACT

Aim: This study aims to explore the knowledge hiding phenomenon among project team members in the consulting industry. This study investigated why, when, how and what type of knowledge team members hide.

Methodology: This research applied a qualitative research with inductive approach. Semi-structured interviews with eleven participants from EY in Kazakhstan were conducted. Secondary data was obtained from existing scientific articles and books.

Findings: Findings of the study provided that (i) variables affecting knowledge hiding at individual level also influence at team level; (ii) the technological and organizational barriers had a minor influence on knowledge hiding at team level; (ii) tacit/explicit and key/common knowledge are subject to hiding among team members; (iv) three additional variables are discovered at team level, i.e. laziness, fear of being seen silly and self-study.

Theoretical contributions: This study contributes to the counterproductive knowledge behaviour by exploring patterns of knowledge hiding among team members. Additional knowledge sharing barriers of why and when team members hide knowledge were found. Team members hide knowledge when they feel ownership over knowledge and territoriality serves as a mediating tool. Nevertheless, collective knowledge psychological ownership weakens knowledge hiding, because team’s success is more important than individual’s goals.

Managerial implications: Organizations are encouraged to nurture team environment, because team members might feel that they are obliged to share their knowledge. Also, management should consider to lower territoriality perspectives (e.g. by team buildings, etc.).

Limitations and future research: Future research should increase the number of respondents from different companies, industries and geographical areas. To validate the three newly found knowledge hiding variables at team level, they can be tested at individual level. On top of that future research can focus on the effects of interpersonal injustice on knowledge hiding on each member, motivational process on knowledge concealing/sharing and cross-cultural differences of how knowledge concealing is interpreted can be researched.

Keywords: Knowledge management, knowledge hiding, psychological ownership, territoriality, consulting industry, team.
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Chapter 1. Introduction

The introduction chapter provides the background with a motivation of the importance of the study. The discussion will provide problem formulation, aim of the study and research questions. Delimitations and disposition of the study are also included.

1.1 Background of the study

In an ever more turbulent, complex and knowledge-based economy, organizations’ competitiveness depends on efficient and effective knowledge management (Peng, 2013). Organizations need to develop systematic procedures of producing and leveraging knowledge to gain and sustain competitive edge (Peng, 2013). Rahimli (2012) outlined that in strategic management the importance of creating competitive advantage over competitors is uppermost agenda. Hence, it is clear that organizational competitiveness and capability of making decisions are greatly dependent on the knowledge base (Van Winkelen & McKenzie, 2010). Moreover, the chances of decisions to address the unpredictable and intricate forces influencing competitive business conditions is high, once the knowledge base is strong (Van Winkelen & McKenzie, 2010).

“The CEO's role in raising a company's corporate IQ is to establish an atmosphere that promotes knowledge sharing and collaboration.” – Bill Gates

Indeed, as Bill Gates stated in the quote above, knowledge management serves as a bridge in connecting strategy and organizational context with organizational effectiveness (Zheng, Yang & McLean, 2010). Theoretical approaches underlining the relevance of knowledge reflects the increasing importance of knowledge as a critical resource (Lindner & Wald, 2011). Moreover, knowledge is one of the most strategic assets that can lead to sustainable increase in profits, thus, it is no surprise that many researchers have investigated potential factors that fosters knowledge (Rahimli, 2012; Nonaka, Toyama, & Konno, 2000). Therefore, knowledge management practices are becoming increasingly imperative (Al-Khouri, 2014).

Peng (2013) outlined that from the many tasks in knowledge management, acting to suppress persons from hiding knowledge and swaying them to share their knowledge or information within their organizations is the main one. Knowledge sharing is the procedure through which
individuals share their knowledge with one another and it has turned out to be a standout amongst the most vital knowledge management topics (e.g. Connelly, Zweig, Webster & Trougakos, 2012; Peng, 2013; Serenko & Bontis, 2016). In previous researches, much attention has been paid to several factors that contribute to knowledge sharing and why and when people share their knowledge have been identified (Wang & Noe, 2010). Intra-company knowledge sharing takes place when workers share on voluntarily basis their tacit (know-where, know-how, expertise and skills) and explicit knowledge (reports, templates, documents and videos) with their co-workers (Bock, Zmud, Kim & Lee, 2005).

Knowledge sharing research has been continuously studied, while counterproductive knowledge behaviour has received less attention from academicians (Serenko & Bontis, 2016). An individual’s intentional withholding or concealing of knowledge that has been requested by another person is identified as knowledge hiding (Connelly et al., 2012). Knowledge hiding phenomena has been paid lack of attention from researchers in knowledge management studies and the reason for why and when people hide their knowledge had received insufficient commitment (e.g. Connelly et al., 2012; Peng, 2013; Serenko & Bontis, 2016).

1.2 Motivation of the study
Knowledge hiding is spread phenomenon in work settings nowadays (Peng, 2013). Babcock (2004) stated that Fortune 500 organizations lose at least USD 31.5 billion per year by failing to motivate its workers to share knowledge within entities. Also, in a survey conducted in the United States and China recently, 76 percent of the US respondents reported they once hide knowledge (Connelly et al., 2012) and from the respondents in China 46 percent admitted they once concealed knowledge (Peng, 2013).

Pierce & Jussila (2010) expanded psychological ownership from individual basis to collective basis. Collective psychological ownership can provide intra-group sharing due to the reason that an individual might elevate the team’s goals higher than own personal interests (Pierce & Jussila, 2010). Group psychological ownership of knowledge can influence differently on knowledge hiding (Peng, 2013). Around 82 percent of organizations with 100 workers or more have teamwork mechanisms (Gordon, 1992) and nowadays workplaces require more teamwork (Capelli & Rogovsky, 1994). There is a lack of investigation of why, how and
when individuals hide key and common, tacit and explicit knowledge in teams (Li, Yuan, Ning & Li-Ying, 2015; Peng, 2013; Serenko & Bontis, 2016). Hansen (1999) outlined that failing to share knowledge which already resides in a team can cause extra cost to obtain it from another source. Hansen (1999) further clarified that once knowledge hiding occurs in project team members, thorough intra-organizational searches will be time-consuming, if not impossible. Moreover, Landaeta (2008) demonstrated that enhancing level of knowledge transfer across project teams is positively associated with an increase in the capabilities and performance of project teams. Therefore, effective knowledge transfer system in a team is highly important.

Further, according to Dawson (2012), consulting companies are business services that are founded on the application of exceedingly specialized knowledge and expertise. These companies have three fundamental assets: their people, the relationships with client which their people build and the intellectual capital that members of the firm put effort to develop (Heller-Schuh & Kasztler, 2005). Being knowledge based is one characteristic that all these three assets have in common (Heller-Schuh & Kasztler, 2005).

For knowledge is the basic service that professional consulting firms sell, to make a further study in the field of knowledge management in consulting industry is appreciated (Ditillo, 2004) and firms within this industry are the best place in studying this field. Therefore, we have chosen EY (previously Ernst & Young) professional services firm. Since EY is a multinational professional services company that provides consulting services, we were motivated to take EY Kazakhstan as our research field. That is because Kazakhstan is an emerging country and emerging economy’s prominence is largely increasing and has gained economic importance impressively over the last decades (Nölke, Brink, Claar & May, 2015). Moreover, since the emerging market is classified as rapid growing and changing economy, companies are expected to adopt to changes and learn all the time (Hoskisson, Eden, Lau & Wright, 2000). These reasons provide motivation of studying emerging markets as these markets provide solid research field for knowledge dissemination and its barriers.

Moreover, during analysis of the literature regarding knowledge hiding phenomenon we found that most of the researches were of quantitative nature (e.g. Peng, 2013, Connelly et
al., 2012; Serenko & Bontis, 2016; Li et al. 2015), thus, we were motivated to conduct qualitative study in order to complement the previous studies and provide additional insights.

In light of the above, a research gap related to the knowledge hiding within a team will be investigated in this qualitative study. And employees in EY consulting company in Kazakhstan are chosen as a sample for this study.

1.3 Problematization

1.3.1 Knowledge hiding consequences

Concept of knowledge hiding among employees has been discussed since the creation of the knowledge management (Davenport, 1997; Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Nevertheless, scholars mainly focused on the knowledge sharing (Connelly et al., 2012; Manhart & Thalmann, 2015), even though, knowledge hiding occurs in entities on a daily basis (Connelly et al., 2012). The consequences of knowledge hiding can be devastating for companies, for example Serenko & Bontis (2016) outlined the following consequences:

1. The interruption of knowledge flows creates the reproducing of knowledge when individuals have to spend additional time in order to acquire the knowledge that has been possessed by another employee who have intentionally chosen not to share it.
2. The knowledge hiding of co-workers reduces the overall level of organizational commitment.
3. The quality of organizational processes might not perform at its best when important knowledge is possessed only by some employees instead of being included in company’s processes. This influences also on stakeholders and customers.
4. Barriers in knowledge flows might decrease the level of company’s innovativeness, competitiveness and profitability.
5. A company can lose knowledge when employees leave the firm unless this knowledge was shared to others.

Moreover, as a result of knowledge hiding a company’s creativity might be compromised (Connelly et al., 2012) and the consequences of knowledge hiding are likely to be devastating to organizational innovation, performance and creativity (Černe, Nerstad, Dysvik & Škerlavaj, 2014). The above consequences of knowledge hiding provide reasons to
investigate the knowledge hiding phenomena among employees which is discussed in the following section.

1.3.2 Knowledge hiding among employees
In this study, we applied the definition of knowledge management as the process of creating communication channels and promoting knowledge flow in a firm through teamwork and thus it can be properly utilized, improved and built upon to leverage the individual performance and consequently the whole firm (Wong, Tan, Lee & Wong, 2015). Individuals are expected to share their knowledge with their fellow workers (Gagne, 2009) and companies invest efforts and money in developing knowledge management systems to facilitate this transfer (Wang & Noe, 2010). Moreover, knowledge sharing is a flow of activity (Nissen, 2006), where one party (individual, group) provides own knowledge to another party (individual, group) (Hall, 2003) and frequent knowledge exchange among the team members (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). Scholars identified that knowledge sharing in teams is crucial for team efficiency, because team members rely on each other (Powell Piccoli & Ives, 2004). Despite all efforts to increase the knowledge sharing among employees, many workers are averse to share own knowledge with their co-workers and engage in knowledge hiding (Connelly et al., 2012).

1.4 Problem formulation
According to the current literature in the field of knowledge management, researchers state that knowledge hiding among employees phenomenon have paid little attention (e.g. Connelly et al., 2012; Peng, 2013; Manhart & Thalmann, 2015; Li et al. 2015; Serenko & Bontis, 2016). The research of Peng (2013) examined why and when individuals hide knowledge based on the theoretical model which is constructed on knowledge psychological ownership theory with knowledge hiding through territoriality concepts, but he did not investigate the phenomenon on a team basis and knowledge hiding consequences within a team. Further, Li et al. (2015) investigated the psychological ownership with the key and common knowledge sharing concepts at individual level, but they did not investigate the key and common knowledge sharing at the team level. Lastly, Serenko and Bontis (2016) suggested that future research of knowledge hiding can be conducted on the hiding or collaborative behaviours of tacit and explicit knowledge within a team.
Based on the literature review of knowledge hiding and what consequences it has on organizational performance, it is crucial to understand why, when, how and what type of knowledge employees hide. However, there is a lack of investigation of knowledge hiding on a team level. Therefore, in our study we will apply the above four variables at the team level, i.e. why, when, how and what type of knowledge employees hide. With this respect, we believe that this study can provide additional knowledge to the academic community and will contribute managerial and practical implications which are discussed in the conclusion section.

1.5 Research aim and research questions
Within the field of knowledge management, the aim of the study is to investigate why, when, how and what type of knowledge employees hide within a team context in EY in Kazakhstan. To achieve this aim, the study will answer the following research questions:

1. What type of knowledge (tacit and/or explicit and key and/or common) do project team members hide?
2. How, why and when project team members hide knowledge?

1.6 Delimitation
The knowledge hiding process within consulting industry can be studied from several perspectives. Within knowledge hiding phenomenon, we focus on the key and common, tacit and explicit knowledge hiding within team context in the consulting industry in emerging market and within one department with the application of psychological ownership theory and territoriality perspectives. Therefore, additional studies conducted in other markets, companies and departments can provide additional empirical findings.

We fulfil the aim of the study by observing the factors that influence on team-based key/common and tacit/explicit knowledge hiding. The empirical findings of this study provide future inquiry about knowledge hiding within psychological ownership and employees’ attitudinal behaviour. Anything outside the field of knowledge management particularly knowledge hiding is not within the scope of this study.
1.7 Disposition

In order to achieve the aim of the study and answer to the research questions this study provides the following sequence of the presentation order. Chapter one provides the introduction part, background of the study, problem formulation, motivation of the study, the aim of the study and research questions. The rest of the study is structured in the following way. Chapter two provides literature review within knowledge phenomenon and the conceptual model of the research that guides through the study on knowledge hiding within teams. Following this, chapter three provides the methodology of the study which includes data collection method and research design. Chapter four presents the empirical study part. Chapter five will present the analysis and discussion of the empirical findings. The last chapter will provide conclusion and comments of the study, answers to the research questions, give implications and limitations of the study as well.
Chapter 2. Literature review

This chapter provides literature review in the following order: knowledge based view of the firm, definition of knowledge, types of knowledge, knowledge management, knowledge sharing and hiding, how employees hide knowledge, why and when employees hide knowledge and main theories applied in this study. This chapter also provides the conceptual model of the study.

2.1 Knowledge based view of the firm

This study addresses the knowledge based view of the firm. The knowledge-based view of the firm contemplates knowledge as the most strategically important resources of a firm (Håkanson, 2010). Proponents of the knowledge-based view argue that knowledge-based resources are hard to emulate, immobile, intangible, socially complex and diverse which enables them to create a sustained competitive advantage (Curado, 2006; Blome, Schoenherr & Eckstein, 2014). With the increasing influence of globalization and technological change, the competitive atmosphere of firms is changing as well (Wild & Wild, 2016). Consequently, the sources used for competitive advantage have changed enormously and firms are required to create new knowledge to enhance their efficiency, structure and processes which is to increase their innovativeness (Håkanson, 2010).

Foss (2005) pronounces that knowledge economy is highly stimulated by the development of information and communication technology. More contemporary concepts of the knowledge-based view of the firm indicate that organizational learning plays a key role in the sustainability of competitive advantages (Wang & Wang, 2012). Some contributions of the knowledge based theory of a firm emphasized the efficiency of firms in exploiting existing knowledge (Winter & Szulanski, 2001), however others regarded their supremacy in creating new knowledge (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998), thus the knowledge based theory of a firm remained to be somewhat a diverse literature (Kaplan, Schenkel, Von Krogh & Weber, 2001). For it is the basis of the current study, in the next section, we will provide what knowledge is from different perspectives and scholarly definitions.

2.2 Knowledge

Knowledge is a broad concept that has been debated in philosophy since the classical Greek era and in the past decades there is a rising interest in treating knowledge as an asset in organizations (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). Researchers defined knowledge as state of mind, an
object, a process, a capability, data and information or expertise to complete a task. McQueen (1998) defined knowledge as a state of mind with knowing is a condition of understanding. However, Carlsson, El Sawy, Eriksson & Raven (1996) defined knowledge as an object which can be stored and manipulated or as a process of knowing and applying/acting expertise. Moreover, Carlsson et al. (1996) suggested that knowledge is a capability for influencing actions. In addition, Fahey & Prusak (1998) stated that knowledge relates to information and data is shaped by individual's needs and initial stock of knowledge.

Further, researchers state that knowledge is an important source of sustainable competitive advantage for organizations (e.g. Nonaka, 1991; Quintas, Lefrere & Jones, 1997; Fernie, Green, Weller & Newcombe 2003; Chang & Lee, 2007). Whereas other researchers assert that knowledge is vital for a company to survive (e.g. Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Indeed, a knowledge-based perspective of an organization has appeared in management literature due to its significance (e.g. Spender, 1996; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). This perspective is based on the resource-based theory originally facilitated by Penrose (1959) who stated that it is not tangible assets that provide an organization with competitive advantage, but the services rendered by those assets. With this context, the definition of knowledge as an individual’s expertise and skills to accomplish a process (service) (Kogut & Zander, 1992) is more applicable in this study. Apparently, knowledge is a source that an individual or a group owns (De Long & Fahey, 2000). Based on the above mentioned, in the next section we will define types of knowledge that individuals and groups possess.

2.3 Types of knowledge
The two primary dimensions of knowledge, tacit and explicit knowledge, were introduced for the first time by Polanyi (1966). Ashkenas, Ulrich, Jick & Kerr (2015) prescribed that individuals possess somewhat different types of tacit and explicit knowledge and use their knowledge in unique ways by using different viewpoints to think about problems and invent solutions. Individuals also involved in knowledge sharing and group physical and intellectual assets in new ways (Smith, 2001).

2.3.1 Tacit knowledge
Smith (2001) defined tacit knowledge as a knowledge being understood without being openly expressed or knowledge for which we do not have words. Tacit knowledge is dependent,
personal and resides only in the memory of individuals (Tsoukas & Vladimirou, 2001) and it contains individual’s technical and interpersonal skills (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) as well as teams’ synergies (Polanyi, 1966). Tacit knowledge refers to know-how (Bock, Zmud, Kim & Lee, 2005). According to Liebowitz & Beckman (1998), tacit knowledge requires little or no time or thought, it is automatic and helpful in the decision making of organizations and impacts members’ collective behaviour. Polanyi (1967) and Smith (2001) also labelled tacit knowledge as knowing how to do it without even thinking about it, like driving a car, it is knowing more than we can tell. Tacit knowledge is not available in books, databases, manuals or files and tends to be local, but is highly personal, habitually informal and is subjective form of knowledge (Smith, 2001).

2.3.2 Explicit knowledge

Explicit knowledge refers to formal aspects (e.g. policy, rule, etc.) and is simple to transfer (Harvey, 2012) from one individual to another and is referred as know-what (Bock, Zmud, Kim & Lee, 2005). Explicit knowledge is technical and normally requires academic understanding and is attained through organised study or formal education (Smith, 2001). Explicit knowledge is sensibly codified, put away in a chain of command of databases and is accessed with high calibre, reliable, quick data recovery frameworks (Dhanaraj, Lyles, Steensma & Tihanyi, 2004). Once classified or codified, explicit knowledge resources can be reused to solve numerous comparable sorts of issues or associate individuals with significant and reusable information or knowledge (Dienes & Perner, 1999).

Smith (2001) outlined that comparing explicit and tacit types of knowledge is not to point out differences, but a way to think. Smith (2001) further summarized the basic ways of using tacit and explicit knowledge in the workplace, and sets main thoughts underlying them into ten general categories which are presented in table 1 below. This table provides clear difference between tacit and explicit knowledge in the workplace which helps to understand the main practical difference between these two variables, because our study requires clear differentiation between tacit and explicit knowledge.
## Table 1: Tacit and Explicit knowledge at work place

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Explicit knowledge</th>
<th>Tacit knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Work process - organized tasks, routine, reuse codified knowledge</td>
<td>Work practice - spontaneous, improvised, web-like, channels individual expertise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Learn - on the job, trial-and-error</td>
<td>Learn - supervisor or team leader facilitates and reinforces openness and trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teach - trainer designed using syllabus</td>
<td>Teach - one-on-one, mentor, internships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Type of thinking - logical, based on facts, use proven methods</td>
<td>Type of thinking - creative, flexible, develop insights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Share knowledge - extract knowledge from person, code, store and reuse etc.</td>
<td>Share knowledge - altruistic sharing, networking, face-to-face chatting etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Motivation - often based on need to perform to meet specific goals</td>
<td>Motivation - inspire through leadership, vision and frequent contact with employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Reward - tied to business goals, competitive within workplace</td>
<td>Reward - incorporate intrinsic or non-monetary motivators and rewards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Relationships - may be top-down from team leader to team members</td>
<td>Relationships - open, friendly, unstructured, spontaneous sharing of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Technology - related to job, based on availability and cost, invest heavily in IT</td>
<td>Technology - tool to select personalized information, invest moderately in IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Evaluation - based on tangible work accomplishments</td>
<td>Evaluation - based on demonstrated performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own created, adapted from Smith (2001)

### 2.3.3 Key and common knowledge

The distinction between explicit and tacit knowledge is important, because it provides understanding of knowledge transfer (Polanyi, 1966). Nevertheless, the distinction between tacit and explicit knowledge is not enough to describe knowledge sharing, because people do not consider knowledge as tacit or explicit during knowledge transfer (Li et al., 2015). Contrary, people are more likely to consider knowledge sharing whether it will insult own interests (Von Krogh, Roos & Slocum, 1994). Thus, a crucial factor that influence on the knowledge sharing decision is whether the knowledge relates to the individual interests (Li et al., 2015).

Thus, Li et al. (2015) provided difference between key (core interest) and common (do not concern core interests) knowledge. Their concept is based on the psychological ownership.
theory (Pierce, Kostova & Dirks, 2001, 2003). The key and common knowledge relates to the tacit and explicit knowledge and they provided a more comprehensive and knowledge sharing concept than other concepts (Li et al., 2015). The essential factor in key and common knowledge is whether the knowledge bears personal core interests that employees do not want to share (Li et al., 2015).

Further, the notion that knowledge can be managed is basic to the knowledge-based companies, organizational learning, intangible assets and intellectual capital (Quintas et al., 1997). Therefore, in the next section we will describe the knowledge management.

2.4 Knowledge management
There are different definitions of knowledge management. For example, Seleim & Khalial (2011) state that knowledge management is a system that consolidates processes, individuals and technology to enhance performance via learning. While, Gurteen (1998) defined knowledge management as organizational processes, principles, structures, applications and technologies that mediates knowledge to deliver business value. Onwards, Davenport & Prusak (1998) stated that knowledge management concerns the development and exploitation of the explicit and tacit knowledge. Also, knowledge management refers to establishing communication channels and creating flow of the knowledge in the company through teamwork (Corso, Giacobbe & Martini, 2009). Therefore, Wong, Tan, Lee & Wong (2015) defined the knowledge management as the act of developing communication channels and facilitation of knowledge flow in a firm through teamwork and this definition is applied in our study, because our sample includes analysis of team members. In the next section, we will provide two areas of study in the field of knowledge management, namely, knowledge sharing and knowledge hiding (Connelly & Zweig, 2015).

2.5 Knowledge sharing and knowledge hiding
To facilitate smooth knowledge transfer, companies largely invest in developing their knowledge management frames (Wang & Noe, 2010). It is always expected that employees share their knowledge with their colleagues (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002; Gagné, 2009). To achieve this aim many companies formulate different strategies to increase knowledge sharing among employees, like developing reward systems (Bock, Zmud, Kim, & Lee, 2005), developing interpersonal relationships and social networks (Kuvaas, Buch, & Dysvik, 2012;
Jarvenpaa & Majchrzak, 2008; Škerlavaj, Dimovski, Mrvar, & Pahor, 2010) and creating company cultures which promote knowledge sharing (Connelly & Kelloway, 2003; Muller, Spiliopoulou, & Lenz, 2005). However, for contemporary managers, knowledge sharing which is the willingness to share knowledge with fellow employees, has become one of the most serious issues in the field of knowledge management (Serenko & Bontis, 2016).

Knowledge sharing in teams has identified several of its elements including mutual familiarity (Gruenfeld, Mannix, Williams & Neale, 1996), diversity (Cummings, 2004) and diversity of team members’ competences (Stasser, Vaughan & Stewart, 2000). Also, knowledge sharing includes communication and cooperation between team members (Cohen & Bailey, 1997), in particular identification of the specific knowledge of each members of the group (Faraj & Sproull, 2000). Many companies use project teams to provide services and project teams include members with supplementary skills (Blankenship & Ruona, 2009) where team members cooperate together to accomplish a specific task, e.g. to solve a problem (Wenger & Snyder, 2000).

Although knowledge sharing among employees benefits an organization, many employees are hesitant or unwilling in sharing their knowledge with their colleagues (Connelly & Zweig, 2015). Despite of the fact that employees are aware of knowledge sharing may benefit the bigger group, they still consider the potential personal cost they may pay by sharing, like the fear of loss of power or status (Ulrike, Beatriz, Jurgen, & Friedrich, 2005) and fear of being undervalued (Bordia, Irmer, & Abusah, 2006). Thus, many workers do not truly share all possessed knowledge (Cress, Kimmerle, & Hesse, 2006; Connelly & Zweig, 2015). On the contrary, workers may engage in knowledge hiding, i.e. while it has been requested by a fellow employee of the company, they attempt to conceal or withhold knowledge (Connelly et al., 2012).

In addition, previous studies suggest that the sharing of knowledge in teams succeeds only in case when team members engage in knowledge sharing (Lee, Gillespie, Mann & Wearing, 2010). The team knowledge required to complete a task has been long ago considered vital to efficient team performance (Hackman, 1986). Nevertheless, previous studies identified that in some cases team members resist to share (i.e. hide) their knowledge with the other group mates (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005).
Moreover, previous field observations also revealed that, knowledge sharing and knowledge hiding might be conducted simultaneously by employees (Ford & Staples, 2008). While withholding the vital and tacit knowledge, employees may share out some explicit knowledge with colleagues (Peng, 2013). In some contexts, even though knowledge hiding may have positive intents or outcomes, like the intention might be protecting feelings of other party (Connelly et al., 2012), it is frequently a negative perception on the contribution of knowledge by an individual in most work scenarios (Peng, 2013). Connelly et al., (2012) proposed that although comparing knowledge hiding with sharing might urge that individuals either share or hide their knowledge, these variables are not contraries to each other but rather two contextually different paradigms.

Knowledge hiding is different and does not infer to a lack of knowledge sharing. Both knowledge sharing and hiding are the result of distinct motivational sources and their difference is demonstrated empirically. For instance, knowledge sharing is often pro-socially motivated, whereas knowledge hiding might be motivated by instrumental or anti-social drives. In addition, a failure to share knowledge does not necessarily imply a deliberate attempt of knowledge withholding. (Connelly et al., 2012)

Unlike other negative behaviours in a workplace, it is not the direct intention of knowledge hiding to harm a person or a company, instead it is a natural or common reaction to a given pattern (Connelly & Zweig, 2015). Certainly, knowledge hiding is different from many related, but dissimilar manners like social undermining, incivility, deception and territoriality (Webster et al., 2008).

Therefore, it is noticeable that counterproductive workplace behaviours, aggression in the workplace, social undermining in the workplace, workplace incivility, deception, knowledge hoarding and knowledge sharing are related, but distinct behaviours resembling the acts of knowledge concealing (Connelly & Zweig, 2015). As we can see from figure 1 below, although there may be some conceptual overlap between knowledge hiding and other workplace attitude, Connelly et al. (2012) argue that knowledge hiding is a unique paradigm. Moreover, knowledge hiding and knowledge hoarding might demonstrate a degree of empirical and conceptual overlap. But according to Hislop (2003) knowledge hoarding represents the act of accumulating
knowledge that may or may not be shared at a later date. It might be considered that both knowledge hiding and hoarding shares the same behaviour which can be classified as withholding knowledge, but knowledge hoarding refers to the knowledge accumulation that has not necessarily been requested by another individual (Webster et al., 2008).

Figure 1: Knowledge hiding and other behaviours in organizations

Moreover, knowledge hiding is not the same as lack of knowledge sharing. It looks that these two concepts might be similar behaviourally, but the motives behind knowledge hiding and a lack of knowledge sharing are patently different, like an absence of the knowledge itself can drive to a lack of knowledge sharing (Fox, Spector & Miles, 2001). But, knowledge hiding is identified as an intentional attempt by a person to conceal or withhold knowledge that has been requested by another person and might be driven by different reasons such as distrust, keeping power, job security, etc. (Connelly et al., 2012). In the next section, we are going to address the ways employees hide knowledge in the knowledge hiding process.
2.6 How employees hide knowledge
Connelly and Zweig (2015) outlined that knowledge hiding is encompassed of three separate but related factors, they are:
1. Rationalized hiding: a situation in which the hider provides a reason or justification for the failure to share the requested knowledge by explaining the difficulty of providing the requesting knowledge or just blaming another person or party for the failure.
2. Playing dumb: in this situation, the hider pretends as if he does not know and is ignorant of the relevant knowledge.
3. Evasive hiding: a case in which the hider provides an information which is not correct or a deceptive promise to provide a complete answer in the future, however in reality there is no plan of doing it. Perpetrators who use this technique may also simply try to convince the knowledge seekers that the knowledge required is simple (while it is actually quite complicated) and enforce them that they can try to acquire it by themselves (Anand & Jain 2014).

Connelly et al. (2012) further elaborated, although it is likely that individuals will hide knowledge from others they do not trust, but their perceptions of the context may affect the particular knowledge hiding demeanour that they use. For instance, while the organizational climate supports knowledge sharing, it is less likely that people will engage in evasive hiding, but when addressing complex question, it is more likely to be evasive (Connelly et al., 2012). Another important aspect of knowledge hiding, why and when employees hide knowledge will be examined in the next part.

2.7 Why and when employees hide knowledge
Interpersonal dynamics impact or influence a person whether he/she is going to hide knowledge (Černe et al., 2014). Employees have a tendency to engage in knowledge hiding against co-workers they do not trust (Černe et al., 2014; Connelly et al., 2012). Moreover, situational aspects are also vital in hiding knowledge (Connelly et al., 2012). Employees are more likely to hide when the knowledge is complex or mind boggling, when it is not related to task and when employees understand that the knowledge sharing atmosphere in their organization is at low level (Connelly et al., 2012).
The issue of power may also play an important role in knowledge hiding process (Serenko & Bontis, 2016). Power can be inferred along two different dimensions mainly, social - one’s ability to take control or have influence on others and personal - one’s ability to be off from control or influence by others (Lammers, Stoker & Stapel, 2009; van Dijke & Poppe, 2006). Depending on the self-confidence, seniority level, career plans, perceptions of job security, working style and relationships with colleagues, each dimension may have a different effect on an employee’s attitude toward sharing or hiding of knowledge (Serenko & Bontis, 2016). For example, because of his or her incompetence, a person may reflect a selfish technique of gaining social power by retaining and accumulating knowledge and hides it from his or her colleagues, and another employee may try to acquire personal power by accumulating expertise and knowledge to secure job autonomy (Serenko & Bontis, 2016). Thus, to gain personal or social power, employees fail to fully share knowledge with proven value that enables the entire organization to benefit (Serenko & Bontis, 2016).

Because of the intrinsic complexity of examining perceptions of a deliberately hidden behaviour, knowledge hiding is difficult to study (Černe et al., 2014). However, relational self-construals can affect perceptions of interpersonal conflict and thus gives us some light in the particular topic (Gelfand, Nishii, Holcombe, Dyer, Ohbuchi & Fukuno, 2001). Thus, based on that several antecedents of knowledge hiding, like complexity of knowledge, task-relatedness of knowledge, perception of distrust, and knowledge sharing climate were identified in previous researches (Connelly et al., 2012).

Members of the team have a preference for some types of knowledge over others due to the reason that each team member has his/ her own goals, thus, he/she deliberately shares or withholds information that helps to fulfill own interests (Wittenbaum, Hollingshead & Botero, 2004). Examples of such goals include to reach status in the team, avoid conflict and not being troublemaker (Wittenbaum et al., 2004). These goals can influence on the intentional hiding of knowledge (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Further, the motives of group members also influence the decision of what type of knowledge to share and what and which type of knowledge should be withheld (Wittenbaum et al., 2004).

From the above statements, the goals and motives have direct influence on team members’ evaluation of how and to whom they hide knowledge. In order to fulfill their own goals and
motives, team members can provide only partial knowledge and can misrepresent knowledge with goal-biased spin. Thus, team members decide to hide knowledge from particular individuals. For example, when risky knowledge is communicated, probably it will be shared only between some members because he/she believes them and other members might not verify the potential provided information. (Wittenbaum et al., 2004)

In addition, Riege (2005) categorized knowledge sharing barriers into potential individual barriers, potential organizational barriers and potential technological barriers. Potential individual barriers include lack of awareness that knowledge sharing will benefit to others, strong hierarchical structure and use of position-based power, lack of interaction between knowledge sources and recipients, lack of trust, information source may not be reliable, differences in national culture or ethnicity (including language), tolerance over mistakes and learning from them. Moreover, some employees believe that others may misuse knowledge or take credit for it and employees can cover up mistakes, blame others or ignore mistakes, thus not learning from it. (Riege, 2005)

In addition to Riege’s (2005) findings other scholars found that individuals hide knowledge when they lack time to distribute knowledge and identify a co-worker who needs specific knowledge (O’Dell & Grayson, 1998). Employees focus on tasks that are beneficial to them (Michailova & Husted, 2003). Therefore, time to distribute knowledge can be seen as a cost issue and employees may not be willing to share knowledge (Grant, 1996). Moreover, Gold, Malhotra & Segars (2001) found that individuals hide knowledge when there is a lack of formal and informal spaces where colleagues can interact. Even thought that formal and informal environments increase knowledge sharing among employees, some managers believe that employees should be always doing something, but being always busy does not mean that employees are working efficiently (Skyrme, 2000).

Other researchers stated that there is a fear that knowledge sharing can jeopardize job security, knowledge or information power, inequality in status can be knowledge sharing barriers (Riege, 2005). Some employees believe that knowledge sharing can weaken corporate position, power or status (Tiwana, 2002). Moreover, employees fear that knowledge sharing reduces job security because employees are ambiguous about sharing objectives and intent of their management (Lelic, 2001). In addition, middle and lower level workers hoard their knowledge
deliberately, because they are afraid that if they will appear more knowledgeable than their superiors, they might not be promoted (Michailova & Husted, 2003). O’Dell & Grayson (1998) believe that knowledge hiding occurs when there is a prevalence of sharing explicit over tacit knowledge. Meyer (2002) stated that knowledge hiding occurs due to inefficient communication which is fundamental for knowledge sharing.

Other variables of potential individual knowledge sharing barriers include difference in age, gender, experience, place of education (Sveiby & Simons, 2002), lack of social network, where direct individuals’ contacts within and outside an organization, personality (introverted against extroverted) and ability to cooperate with others influences on knowledge sharing (Baron & Markman, 2000). Finally, Wheatley, (2000) stated that some employees do not share their knowledge when they are not motivated (not recognized by management for their work for the work) to share and learn or support a co-worker.

According to Riege (2005), potential knowledge sharing organizational barriers include lack of recognition and rewards systems to motivate employees to share knowledge, poor corporate culture to support knowledge sharing (Fjellström & Zander, 2017), high competition within business units led by conflicting tasks and interests, physical work environment limits knowledge sharing, when communication is done in certain direction (e.g. top to down), hierarchical structure of a company and poor organizational culture. Moreover, poor knowledge dissemination can occur when there is a lack of formal and informal spaces. Knowledge sharing can perform without formal mechanisms as well, since many employees share information and teach in informal situations. (Riege, 2005)

In addition to Riege’s (2005) findings other scholars found that potential organizational barriers include when integration of knowledge management strategy with organizational strategy is missing or unclear (Doz & Schlegelmilch, 1999), when the retention of highly experienced employees is not a priority (Stauffer, 1999), lack of infrastructure and resources to facilitate knowledge sharing (Gold et al., 2001). Also, potential organizational barrier is when there is a lack of leadership and poor managerial communication, because knowledge sharing is efficient and done on a voluntary basis, thus trainings and guidelines are prerequisites for knowledge sharing (Ives, Torrey & Gordon, 2000). Finally, size of business units influences on efficiency and activities of knowledge sharing (Sveiby & Simons, 2002).
The final cluster of knowledge sharing barriers is potential technology barriers (Riege, 2005) which include insufficient trainings of employees about IT’s possibilities and familiarisation of new IT, poor technical support and immediate maintenance hinder work routines and communication. Moreover, potential technology barrier includes poor integration of information technology (IT) systems and processes which prevent the way employees work, poor compatibility between different IT systems and processes, mismatch between requirements needed for completion of tasks and actual IT systems and aversion to use unfamiliar IT systems and lack of communication about advantages of new IT. (Riege, 2005)

In order to conceptualize the reasons why and when employees hide knowledge in the next section we will describe the main theories which can provide explanation on why and when employees hide knowledge and these theories are applied in the current study.

2.8 Main theories applied in the study

The first theory applied in our study is psychological ownership. Researchers, consultants, practitioners and management scholars agreed that, ownership is a psychological phenomenon. Although many researchers recognize psychological ownership as an important phenomenon of an organization, the literature on this topic is still fragmented and not mature. But an insight of the concept can be gleaned from related theories in psychology, philosophy, sociology and human development which is based on various researcher’s work on the psychological attitude of mine. (Pierce, Kostova & Dirks, 2001).

To psychologically experience the relation between self and several targets of ownership, such as cars, homes etc., is common for people (Dittmar, 1992). These targets become part of the stretched self, possessions greatly influence the identity of the owner (Dittmar, 1992). Although many agree that ownership is toward a tangible object, it can also be experienced toward an intangible item, such as ideas, artistic creations, and others, like ownership experienced toward rhymes and songs, and when scientists feel ownership of ideas (Pierce et al., 2001). Based on the above, Pierce et al., (2001) summarized psychological ownership in the following:

1. It is part of the human condition to feel ownership.
2. People can develop sense of ownership for both tangible and intangible objects.
3. Feeling of ownership has vital impact on the identity of a person, it has psychological, emotional and behavioural effects.

Thus, psychological ownership is the state in which individuals feel sense of ownership for the target corporeal or incorporeal object, which is the feeling of possessing something and being psychologically knotted to it (Pierce et al., 2001). O’driscoll, Pierce & Coghlan, (2006) outlined that psychological ownership is vital to a firm’s competitiveness. Because once you feel sense of ownership, mostly it is accompanied by sense of responsibility which result in the sharing the burden of the organization (Pierce & Jussila, 2011; Druskat & Kubzansky, 1995).

The question why workers conceal their knowledge can get a potential explanation from psychological ownership theory (Peng, 2013). Psychological ownership theory outlines, if individuals have constant control over a target and are familiar with it by investing much time or energy, they can easily form a feeling of ownership (Pierce et al., 2001, 2003). Moreover, since they will experience negative emotions and loss of control if they share with others, individuals are not willing to share the target of ownership (Peng, 2013; Pierce et al., 2003). Meanwhile, once knowledge is created, acquired and controlled by individuals, it is easy for them to feel that the knowledge is their personal psychological property, and then want to hide it (Peng, 2013). Accordingly, it is rational to suggest that knowledge hiding is positively related to experienced psychological ownership for knowledge (Peng, 2013). Every time knowledge is shared from one person to another, the conflict of knowledge ownership appears (Rechberg & Syed, 2013; Serenko & Bontis), since the transferred knowledge may ultimately disperse all over the whole organization and become an irrevocable part of the intellectual capital of the organization, however transferred knowledge provides limited personal benefits for the initial knowledge owner (Serenko & Bontis, 2016).

The second theory applied in our study is territoriality theory. This theory of human territoriality has traditionally involved a focus on physical space (Altman, 1975). At first, territorial behaviour was studied and observed in animals, which focused on genetic roots with additional implications of evolution on territoriality behaviour (Brown & Bentley, 1993; Stokols & Altman, 1987; Sundstrom & Altman, 1974;). But in the middle 1980s a significant shift in territoriality study happened as scholars started to make research on human
Territoriality, whereby territoriality toward a physical space became associated with individual behaviour, social and communal functioning (Brown, Lawrence & Robinson, 2005).

Territoriality is defined as behaviour of individuals while expressing their feeling of ownership toward an object. It is about behaviours whereby one feels exclusive attachment with an object, which can include communicating, constructing, restoring and maintaining territories around it. Comparing psychological ownership with territoriality, the former is a psychological state, but the latter is a social behavioural perception which includes at least two facets. First, it only includes social actions that flow from psychological ownership in a social context. That is, although you can feel attached to many objects globally, but territorial behaviour is developed only by the objects with proprietary attachment. Territoriality is about communicating, establishing and maintaining relationship with the object, for example “this is my bag and not yours” however, forming some sort of an attachment with an object alone cannot be considered as territoriality, for example, “I love my school”. Second, territoriality only occurs when people amenably own and guard an object as their own in a social environment. (Brown, et al., 2005)

Brown et al., (2005) further outlined that psychological ownership and territoriality is applicable to both tangible and intangible objects in a way of possessions, physical space, ideas, responsibilities, roles and social entities.

The territorial perspective is another theory which may help to explain the relationship of the basic inducing mechanism between knowledge hiding and knowledge-based psychological ownership (Webster, Brown, Zweig, Connelly, Brodt & Sitkin, 2008; Brown & Robinson, 2007). The territoriality theory explains the higher a person’s psychological ownership of an object is, the prospect that he or she will treat that object as his or her territory and then retain and protect it as his or her own (Brown, Lawrence & Robinson, 2005). In light of this perspective, once a person experiences a strong sentiment of ownership for the knowledge that he or she created, acquired, invested and controlled in work, automatically there will be strong territoriality over his or her knowledge, which causes to less interaction with others, a tendency of defending his or her knowledge territory which causes to hiding knowledge (Peng, 2013).
Below we provide a table of literature review with summary of why, when and how employees hide knowledge and the conceptual model applied in the current study will be followed subsequently.
Table 2: Summary of why, when and how employees hide knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge hiding</th>
<th>Why and when</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>How</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When risky knowledge is communicated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited benefits to others; Certain direction of communication;</td>
<td>Riege (2005)</td>
<td>Evasive hiding (Connelly &amp; Zweig (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competition between business units and functional areas;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hierarchical structure and position-based power;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National culture and ethnic background (including language);</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inaccurate physical work environment;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor integration of IT systems and poor technical support;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of trainings about IT’s possibilities, familiarisation and advantages;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor compatibility between different IT systems and processes and requirements mismatch;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of interaction between knowledge sources and recipients;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tolerance over mistakes and learning from them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal power, job security, inequality in status</td>
<td>Tiwana (2002); Lelic (2001); Michailova &amp; Husted, (2003); Serenko &amp; Bontis (2016)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loss of control</td>
<td>Serenko &amp; Bontis, (2016)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distrust of fellow employees</td>
<td>Riege (2005); Černe et al., (2014); Connelly et al., (2012)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational goals are missing or unclear</td>
<td>Doz &amp; Schlegelmilch, (1999)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of leadership and managerial communication</td>
<td>Ives, Torrey &amp; Gordon, (2000)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of the business; Difference in experience, age, gender, place of study</td>
<td>Sveiby &amp; Simons, (2002)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of formal and informal spaces; Lack of infrastructure and resources.</td>
<td>Gold, Malhotra &amp; Segars, (2001)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit versus tacit knowledge</td>
<td>O’Dell &amp; Grayson, (1998)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of rewards systems and motivation</td>
<td>Wheatley (2000); Riege (2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge is complex When it is not related to task</td>
<td>Connelly et al., (2012)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When knowledge sharing climate (culture) in the company is low</td>
<td>Riege, 2005; Connelly et al., 2012; Fjellström &amp; Zander, 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time</td>
<td>O’Dell &amp; Grayson, (1998); Grant (1996)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor or lack of communication</td>
<td>Meyer (2002)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of social network</td>
<td>Baron &amp; Markman (2000)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention of experienced employees is not a priority</td>
<td>Stauffer (1999)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own created.
2.9 Conceptual model

Based on the theoretical concepts of knowledge hiding, a conceptual model (See: Figure 2) is proposed and applied to the knowledge hiding process which helps this study in guiding to specific direction. Within the field of knowledge management, the main aim of this study is to investigate how, why and when knowledge hiding takes place in consulting industry within a project team.

Figure 2: Proposed conceptual model - Knowledge hiding

The conceptual model is constructed to investigate the following:
1. The hiding process starts with identification of what type of knowledge individuals within project team hide, i.e. tacit and/ or explicit, key and/ or common.
2. After identification of the type of knowledge project team hides, we will research how, why and when project team members hide knowledge by applying knowledge based psychological ownership and territoriality theories. The effect of these theories of psychology were previously tested on knowledge hiding at individual level (Peng, 2013; Serenko & Bontis, 2016; Connelly & Zweig, 2015). Especially Peng (2013), has exhaustively used these theories in investigating
why and when individuals hide knowledge. Thus, we are going to apply these psychological
theories in investigating why and when individuals hide knowledge at team level as well. 
3. The last step conceptualizes the findings of the knowledge hiding process among project 
team members in consulting industry.
Chapter 3. Methodology

This chapter provides research approach and methodology of this study. It presents description of the primary and secondary data collection process and the type of the case study. In addition, it provides data analysis, the validity and reliability of the study, ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

3.1 Research design and research paradigm

The main aim of this part is to provide a detailed outline of how an investigation will take place, the methods and procedures applied in collecting and analysing the variables (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). As per Bryman and Bell (2014), to understand a societal spectacle, qualitative method is more appropriate and apposite, thus in investigating the aim of this study, a qualitative method is used. Based on the literature review we formulated the theoretical framework of the study. The inductive approach is used in investigating the main aim of the research which is knowledge hiding in project teams. This study is a descriptive (single case study) and is based on comprehensive interviews with employees of EY from different project teams, departments and positions. Interview questions are formulated from the theoretical background and the empirical data is presented in the empirical findings part. Further, Conclusion following the analysis of the empirical data in accordance with the theory would be the final stage of this study.

As per Bryman and Bell (2014), a paradigm is a set of beliefs and prerequisites for researchers in specific area of study that influence what ought to be explored or investigated, how it should be done and how the results should be interpreted. Bryman and Bell (2014) also outlined that the fields of social sciences have been the same and are of paradigmatic in nature which indicates that they are well known in struggling for paradigm position.

Therefore, the research methodology in this study focuses at the two paradigms of ontological (beliefs that we hold about the nature of being and existence) and epistemological (beliefs that we have about the nature of knowledge) analysis which are the two different ways of viewing the research philosophy. In this research, we assume that the influence of knowledge hiding is a social phenomenon. This study is based on ontological analysis, for it is appropriate to investigate human behaviour which is suitable in this subject as well, for it counts on a system of belief that reflects an interpretation of an individual about what constitutes a fact.
3.2 Research strategy and approach

Holme and Solvang (1997) clarify that there are two methodological strategies which can be used, namely qualitative and quantitative research. Although both methods are possible to achieve the main objective of this study, but as noted above, since the general aim of the study is to provide more in-depth knowledge on the research questions, the qualitative research is arguably most applicable (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2014). On top of that, since interview is the primary data collection method, qualitative research is the best way fitting for analysing interviews. Therefore, this study is a qualitative research.

In relationship between theory and social research, deductive and inductive approach are the two mainly used approaches. In deductive approach, researchers analyse the hypothesis per existing theories and transfer it to operational terms which is more appropriate and common in quantitative research. On the other hand, in inductive approach the study’s conclusion is based on the insinuations of the findings according to theories and show how the results can be a response to the above-mentioned theory and knowledge. (Bryman & Bell, 2014)

In conducting a qualitative research method, it is more advised to use the inductive approach (Saunders, et al., 2007). To achieve the main aim of this study, which is providing an in-depth knowledge of the research questions (addressing knowledge hiding in a team), as many scholars advice, this study adapts the inductive approach.

3.3 Case study

Yin (2014) outlined that case studies are adopted when the research question is “how or why” aimed at answering a phenomenon and showing no interest of controlling the variables. Parallel to this statement, our research is aiming to answer the why, how, when and what question by considering to the chosen strategy. If a research is exploratory it is apposite to adopt a case study (Saunders et al. 2007). Therefore, since the research questions are comprised of why, how when and what adding that it followed an inductive approach this study has adopted a case study.

There are two types of case studies, single and multiple (Yin, 2014). Since this study is investing knowledge hiding in one company it is fitting to the single type case study. On top that, single case study is suitable to decide if the theories are correct or needs some alterations
(Yin, 2014). It is the belief of the authors that, this case study and its setting was not addressed previously. Therefore, this study will create a prospect to access more information and possibly new findings. This requires more efficient communication, which smooths primary data collection. Therefore, it has been seen more pertinent to solely focus on a single case study.

3.4 Data collection

In order to answer the research questions, this study have used both primary and secondary data. Each part was complemented targeting the diverse aim of the research questions. In the data collection process a careful assessment and analysis was taken in choosing the right source and sample. The details of the data collection process are explained in respective parts below.

3.4.1 Primary data

The primary data has been collected through semi-structured interviews with the same questions asked to each of the respondents. The main reason for choosing semi structured interview is that it provides flexibility in asking questions and to come up with more elaborating question during the interview process. In doing so we followed the attributes given by Bernard (1988) by developing and using an interview guide which was a list of questions and topics that was covered during the conversation, which was in a particular order. The authors (interviewers) and respondents (interviewees) engaged in a formal interview. Throughout the interview process, the authors followed the guide, but were able to follow topical trajectories in the conversation that may stray from the guide when they felt was appropriate, which is the main advantage of semi structured interview.

Another reason for choosing semi structured interview as Bernard (1988) also outlined is that it is the most convenient way, when the chance of interviewing someone is not more than one time. In this case although we got the chance of interviewing our targets more than once, at first considering the workload of the interviewees we thought that it might be difficult to interview them again and we decided that the semi structured interview is fitting to the overall situation.

The authors found appropriate to make interviews with at least one manager, seniors and junior consultants who had experience in working with different teams. Managers are considered to be influential, prominent and well-informed people in an organisation or community and thus
would provide us classified information of the subject matter. Further, adding seniors who worked with many teams before and juniors who are newly added to the teams helped in giving valuable classified information from different angles as well. The manager was selected based on her experience in areas relevant to the study (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). All the other interviews (seniors and junior professionals) were selected based on their work experience within project teams who were engaged in team work for at least two years and also were highly involved in knowledge sharing activities.

Moreover, EY Kazakhstan is chosen as the venue of this study. This is because EY is a multinational professional services company that provides consulting services and gives us the ground in exploring the knowledge based view of the firm. In addition, Kazakhstan is an emerging country and emerging economy’s importance is increasing and has gained economic importance over the last years. In addition, emerging market is classified as rapid growing and changing economy. Thus, studying knowledge management in emerging market, a place where companies are also facing many challenges and barriers is worthy, for it provides solid research field for knowledge dissemination and its barriers. During the interview process, English was the language used in the first four interviews, but later due to some language barriers the authors used local language which is Russian as a medium of communication, thus in some interviews two languages were applied. The average interview duration was approximately 53 minutes. Moreover, as Fjellström & Guttormsen (2016) stated the researchers need to build relationships and trust with organizations and people which are subject to study, thus, in order to be closer to the interviewees we conducted interviews mostly in Russian and explained the benefits of our study to the respondents by explaining that it costs nothing to the company and the research area important for their knowledge based firm. The details of the interviewees are presented in table 3 below and the interview questions are attached in Appendix 2.
Table 3: Respondents’ profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Work experience in the company</th>
<th>Department/position</th>
<th>Interview format</th>
<th>Date/ duration</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Tax department/ Consultant</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>10 and 13 April 2017, 58 minutes</td>
<td>English and Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Assurance department/ Senior 2</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>11 and 13 April 2017, 66 minutes</td>
<td>English and Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.5 years</td>
<td>Tax department/ Senior</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>11 and 13 April 2017, 68 minutes</td>
<td>English and Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Tax department/ Senior</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>14 April 2017, 49 minutes</td>
<td>Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>1.5 years</td>
<td>Tax department/ Consultant</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>14 April 2017, 41 minutes</td>
<td>Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Tax and GCR department/ Manager</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>10 and 18 April 2017, 72 minutes</td>
<td>English and Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Tax department/ Consultant</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>15 April 2017, 43 minutes</td>
<td>Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>3.5 years</td>
<td>Assurance department/ Senior</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>15 April 2017, 57 minutes</td>
<td>Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Tax department/ Consultant</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>17 April 2017, 43 minutes</td>
<td>Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Tax department/ Consultant</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>17 April 2017, 50 minutes</td>
<td>Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Tax department/ Consultant</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>17 April 2017, 40 minutes</td>
<td>Russian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own created

3.4.2 Secondary data

Secondary data was used to investigate and analyse the study of knowledge management focusing in the area of knowledge hiding. In determining the research gap and developing the literature review, it was done by collecting comprehensive range of secondary data such as scientific and academic journals, articles, books and other relevant sources. Secondary data are data collected previously by others (Saunders et al., 2007). Secondary data from the company’s website and previous papers along with the above mentioned sources were used in the
foundation of this study, which enabled the authors to see what has been previously studied (Saunders et al., 2007). The google scholar was used to access the articles published in different journals and books due to its inclusiveness and accessibility.

3.5 Operationalization

Operationalizing of the questions used for interviews is presented in this section. The category of the question, the theory and reference and the motivation behind why we asked that question are presented in table 4 below. The aim of this part is to provide the reader a clear understanding of why we asked the questions and on which theory these questions are relied while constructed. The interview questions were motivated and based on the theoretical framework. The main aim of the questions is to answer the research questions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Theory and Author</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is knowledge management for you?</td>
<td>Knowledge management</td>
<td>Seleim &amp; Khalial (2011); Gurteen (1998); Wong et al. (2015)</td>
<td>To understand respondent's view on the subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does your company manage knowledge?</td>
<td>Knowledge management</td>
<td>Corso, Giacobbe &amp; Martini (2009)</td>
<td>To understand how the firm manages knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When do you work in a team?</td>
<td>Background</td>
<td>Teams' synergies (Polanyi, 1966)</td>
<td>General knowledge of the respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you share knowledge with your team members?</td>
<td>Knowledge sharing in a team</td>
<td>Connelly &amp; Zweig (2015); Cabrera &amp; Cabrera (2005)</td>
<td>To understand knowledge sharing process in a team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think needs to be improved in order to enhance knowledge sharing within your team?</td>
<td>Enhancing knowledge sharing in a team</td>
<td>Bock et al. (2005); Kuvas et al. (2012); Muller et al. (2005); Lee et al. (2010)</td>
<td>To understand if there are obstacles for knowledge sharing and how it should be handled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you refuse to share knowledge with your team members?</td>
<td>Knowledge hiding</td>
<td>Connelly &amp; Zweig (2015); Connelly et al. (2012); Peng (2013); Serenko &amp; Bontis (2016)</td>
<td>To understand if knowledge hiding takes place in a team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What type of knowledge did you refuse to share with your team members?</td>
<td>Types of knowledge subject to hiding</td>
<td>Smith (2001); Polanyi (1966); Ashkenas et al. (2015); Bock et al. (2005); Harvey (2012)</td>
<td>To understand what type of knowledge might be concealed in project teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What have you done when you did not want to share the knowledge with the team members?</td>
<td>How team members hide knowledge</td>
<td>Connelly &amp; Zweig (2015) Anand &amp; Jain (2014); Connelly et al. (2012)</td>
<td>To understand how project team members hide knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why and when did you not want to share knowledge with your team members?</td>
<td>Why and when team members hide knowledge</td>
<td>Peng (2013); Černe et al. (2014); Serenko &amp; Bontis (2016); Riege (2005)</td>
<td>To understand why and when employees in a team hide knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you experience that your team members did not want to share knowledge?</td>
<td>Knowledge hiding from another team member’s vista</td>
<td>Riege (2005); O’Dell &amp; grayson (1998); Wittenbaum et al. (2004)</td>
<td>To understand knowledge hiding in a team from another point of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What type of knowledge and how your team members did not want to share knowledge?</td>
<td>Knowledge type subject to hiding from another angle</td>
<td>Harvey (2012); Ashkenas et al. (2015)</td>
<td>To understand what type of knowledge another team member concealed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Background and effect of hiding knowledge</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What measures does your company take to avoid knowledge hiding among employees?</td>
<td>Lee et al. (2010); Babcock (2004); Connelly et al (2012); Peng (2013)</td>
<td>To understand how the company works in avoiding knowledge hiding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that organizational culture is conducive for promoting knowledge sharing? Why?</td>
<td>Riege (005); Connelly et al. (2012); Fjellström &amp; Zander (2017)</td>
<td>Measuring that variable from previous theory among team members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that the communication system within your team is supportive enough to minimize knowledge hiding?</td>
<td>Riege (2005)</td>
<td>Measuring that variable from previous theory among team members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the size of your company in general and the size of your team in particular affecting knowledge hiding?</td>
<td>Sveiby &amp; Simons (2012)</td>
<td>Measuring that variable from previous theory among team members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you compete with other teams in your company? Did you refuse to share knowledge with other teams? if yes, why and what type of knowledge?</td>
<td>Riege (2015)</td>
<td>Measuring that variable from previous theory among team members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does difference in experience, age, gender, education, national culture and ethnic background influence knowledge hiding?</td>
<td>Sveiby &amp; Simons (2012)</td>
<td>Measuring that variable from previous theory among team members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel sense of belongingness in the company and does the company take initiative to maximize the employees sense of belongingness in the company?</td>
<td>Knowledge based psychological ownership</td>
<td>To understand knowledge based psychological ownership and if employees feel organizational psychological ownership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel that the knowledge used in work is your personal property? Why do you feel so?</td>
<td>Territoriality theory (Knowledge is in your territory)</td>
<td>To understand If employees feel that the knowledge they have lies in their territory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own created
3.6 Data presentation and analysis

For its ability to analyze significant and insignificant differences in variables within the research questions, qualitative research method has become popular method of research in the last years (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Also, qualitative method of research is more preferable when there is a need to obtain in-depth knowledge (Bryman & Bell, 2014).

Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) state that analysis of data consists of reading the interviews, reflecting theoretically on the findings and providing interpretations. A conceptual framework developed in the theory part is applied during the interview process. Based on the literature review presented in chapter two, we constructed interview questions for data collection. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. After we successfully transcribed the interviews, the raw data were provided in the empirical findings chapter. In order to investigate the collective knowledge hiding phenomenon we applied open coding with respect to the answer from interview questions. We collected data and interpreted them word by word and categorized the responses whether knowledge hiding occurred among team members.

Overall, in collecting, coding and interpreting data, we followed what Creswell (2013) proposed. We gathered raw data from the target interviewees which are related to the theoretical framework. After reading the raw data again, we coded the data. Coding implies the process of combing the data for themes, categories and ideas and then marking similar passages of text with a marker or label code, thus they can easily be retrieved for comparison and analysis at a later stage (Saldana, 2015). Coding the data simplifies the searching, comparing and identifying patterns that require additional investigation. In the coding process, we sorted and arranged it in to different categories of information (themes), e.g. data related to why and when employees hide knowledge, we put it under that topic, those data related to how employees hide knowledge we sorted them under that topic, etc. The questions why and when were allocated under one topic, because we could not find the differentiation between why and when questions within knowledge management. Moreover, Peng (2013) allocated the why and when questions under one topic, thus we followed his approach.

The coding step smoothed the summarizing process of the interviews by marking keywords for those representing the significant data about knowledge hiding. Although coding of data can be done by NVivo or Atlas.ti softwares, due to lack of software proficiency, we coded the collected data in Microsoft word by creating a table of different themes and titles and thus
grouping passages related to the theme with in that table. Then to refrain the coded data, we reflected it to the theoretical framework and remained with the most important data related to our conceptual model. Then these raw data related to the theoretical framework are presented in the empirical finding chapter. Further, we reflected, compared and analysed the findings to theory. In doing so, we compared the findings of this study with the previous studies and all the variables we outlined in the theory that affects knowledge hiding at individual level are measured again at team level. According to Yin (2014), data analysis comprises examination of the previous developed theories. Thus, in order to do so, we first categorized and structured the collected data of each unit (theme). Then, we analysed and compared the analysis of each unit with the theory in chapter two. This process classifies whether empirical data of each unit is parallel or against the theory. Finally, we compared all variables we used for measuring the empirical findings against the theory (Yin, 2014).

This is done in order to find out and compare the variables whether the findings are consistent with the theory or not. This helped us to decide if more development of the analysis is needed or not as well as if the conceptual framework should be changed or the same conceptual model should be adapted.

3.7 Reliability and validity
Reliability reduces possible mistakes in a study (Bryman & Bell, 2014). We are concerned with the ability to check the reliability of the data collected from the interviewees. In case when the answers were not clear, we asked interviewees to provide additional explanation. As the data collected was from the first-hand experiences and we can conclude that the data is reliable. In addition, during interview we took notes and made audio recording in order not to miss important information and check the information again if needed.

Moreover, since most of the interviews were done in Russian, the summary was translated from Russian to English and were sent to the respondent’s review and acceptance. This provided reassurance that all information was correctly summarized and interviewees provided all information. Finally, in order to guarantee reliability of the study the authors worked independently on interpretation of the empirical findings. Later, the findings were compared and a consistent analysis was derived.
Validity concerns about truthful information (Bryman & Bell, 2014). The validity of the data was checked by asking questions clearly which were based on the conceptual model. If the questions were not clear to the interviewees, we provided additional description of the question to ensure that the respondents understood the questions clearly. Also, we did not ask leading questions in order to minimize the biases in answering. Moreover, Yin (2014) classified validity in to two types, internal (which is all about causality and is not a concern for researchers) and external validity (which measures if a finding can be generalized). In this case the new findings need to be replicated in other study in order to test the theory. Otherwise the findings are limited to the sample interviewees in that particular company.

3.8 Ethical consideration
We obtained approval from the academic community (i.e. university’s professors) to conduct our qualitative study and we got approval with the aim and data collection method of the study. The respondents’ values, beliefs and rights should be respected (Creswell, 2013). In our study, the respondents were voluntary chosen to provide information. Further, we have followed ethical considerations by respecting, not abusing or making pressure on respondents. Also, we were not in a state of dependence on the respondents or company we study. In addition, the respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and how the collected information will be used.

We provided anonymity and we did not publish any personal data, unless respondents allowed us. No one asked to maintain confidentiality. The results of the findings will not be used for commercial purposes but published in scientific journals and books to diffuse the knowledge gained from this study. The details of ethical issues with respect to our study are attached in Appendix 1.

3.9 Limitations
It is obvious that this study is not immune to limitations. Generally qualitative researchers are concerned primarily with process, rather than outcomes or products (Berg, Lune & Lune, 2004). Ambiguities, which are intrinsic and unavoidable in human language, might be noticed in the analysis and finding parts for the interpretation of data largely relies on the interviewers/researchers (Bryman & Bell, 2014). Further, as Atieno (2009) stated another limitation is that, the findings in qualitative cannot be extended to wider populations with the same degree of certainty that quantitative analyses can. The same in this research also, the
findings might not represent a wider population. This is due to the reason that the findings of the study are not tested to find whether they are statistically significant or due to chance.

Moreover, in qualitative research while interviewing, contentious interaction might influence both the interviewee and interviewer (Wengraf, 2001). The researcher's presence during data gathering, which was personal interview, might affect the subjects' responses, adding the questions of confidentiality and anonymity can creat problems when presenting findings as well. To minimize this risk the authors, used a skype and telephone interview, which has its own limitation like missing facial expressions and emotions during the interview. Moreover, in qualitative research, its quality is heavily dependent on the skills of the researcher and more easily influenced by the researcher's personal biases and eccentricities (Ravitch & Riggan, 2016). In this study, the authors have done their best to avoid biases, though it is difficult to discard it completely. The authors interpreted the interviews separately and thus later compared it against each other, while working in the empirical findings.
Chapter 4. Empirical data

This chapter provides the empirical data with seven subtopics: (1) description of EY in Kazakhstan, (2) the role of knowledge in a team, (3) knowledge sharing process in a team (4) when and why team members refused to share knowledge, (5) how team members refused to share knowledge, (6) what type of knowledge team members refused to share and (7) knowledge hiding from perspectives of other team members.

4.1 Description of EY in Kazakhstan

EY is a company which sells and treat knowledge as the main resource for competitive advantage. EY is one of the biggest services company in the world and is known as one of the "Big Four" accounting firms. EY has approximately 231,000 employees worldwide as of 30 June 2016 and more than 700 offices in more than 150 countries. EY’s service lines include assurance, tax, advisory and transaction advisory services. (EY at a glance, 2016)

EY considers globalization as one of the defining issues in current years. Therefore, EY adopts to its influence by transforming organization in order to satisfy EY’s clients and people. EY’s structure consists of the executive and regions. The executive comprises of governing bodies and leadership, while regions are comprised of geographic areas, namely Americas, Europe, Middle East, Japan, Asia Pacific, India and Africa. Such structure provides ability to make quick decisions, provide exceptional client service and execute company’s strategy. Also, it provides access to right people and assemble highly professional teams to provide worldwide services. EY is not only a collection of national practices, but a global organization. (EY, 2017)

EY first established its presence in Kazakhstan in 1992 and was the pioneer international company which provided assurance and advisory services. EY is promoting business, economic and social progress in Kazakhstan. 95% of EY’s employees in Kazakhstan are local nationals and EY’s strategy is to invest in their people and develop them. In 2016, 682 employees were trained by EY for approximately 23,000 hours. Career mobility is important for EY and over 35 Kazakhstani nationals have been placed in international locations (e.g. Canada, Australia, Germany, Poland, Russia, etc.). Moreover, EY shares knowledge by supporting key economic and investment forums, providing different events, international best practices and advising business community on market trends and regulations. Thought
leadership EY develops materials that provide support for sustainable businesses grow. (EY in Kazakhstan, 2017)

4.2 The role of knowledge in a team

Respondents described knowledge management as learning something new, managing own knowledge, transferring, receiving and proper dissemination of knowledge. In order to have a proper knowledge management, EY provided different trainings (e.g. web based trainings, best performing team, abroad trainings, trainings for newcomers, seniors, managers, senior managers, directors and partners). There are common trainings for all employees and some specific trainings for each industry (e.g. banking and financial sector or oil and gas sector). Further, EY established requirements which motivate employees to increase their knowledge, such motives include taking exams of Chartered Certified Accountant qualification (ACCA). For completion of ACCA the company provides study leaves, payment and lectures. Moreover, in the beginning of each year every employee creates his/ her own plan for the upcoming year and one of the goals is to pass some ACCA exams. If employees will fail the exam, they may not get promotion.

The plan always needs approval from counsellor (higher grade employee) and the progress is evaluated and checked on constantly basis by assigned counsellor. Moreover, EY has knowledge databases which include for example accounting standards, cases, questions and solutions. The use of such databases for self-study is very encouraged by the company. Employees’ acquire new knowledge each year. In addition, EY has the organizational culture based on the tasks delegations, employees always teach lower graded colleagues and learn from higher graded colleagues. Employees constantly discuss different standards, laws and experience within the company.

Respondents stated that almost all the time they work in a team basis. The efficiency of the team directly influences on the accomplishment of projects and the performance of the team. In a professional service company the knowledge is vital for the company’s survival and for individuals’ successful career. Respondents stated that knowledge provides competitive advantage in the market, because they have to compete with other international organizations, such as Pricewaterhousecoopers, Deloitte, KPMG, Grant Thornton in Kazakhstan. The knowledge of the company is kept in databases. Also, people who are working in the company are source of knowledge. The management of knowledge is one of the important strategies of
EY and knowledge sharing within a team is very important to provide the company’s services. Moreover, EY requires adaptation to new realities in the fast changing world and employees provide knowledge and creativity which enables it to adapt to these changes.

Usually, the team in EY consists of a partner, manager (and/or director/senior manager), a senior, an advanced staff, a staff and an intern. The number of each professional varies according to the project requirements. Further, the respondents stated that the leadership and delegation skills are very important. In particular, respondent D stated that:

“My position has a key role in transferring knowledge to junior staff. Usually upper grade employees are coaching lower grade employees, which is the better way of effective knowledge transfer.”

The leadership is very important for overall management of teams and correct allocation of people with right knowledge is essential for successful completion of the project, because projects varies within different industries (in EY people are allocated between different industries, e.g. banking sector, mining, oil and gas sector, etc.). Delegation skills play the most important role in knowledge dissemination and respondent B informed that:

“I always explain my team members that it is better to ask questions before the job is done if something is not clear. Otherwise, he/she might lose too much time on the wrong things.”

Also, other respondents supported respondent B that without proper explanation of the knowledge, team members can do the double job or complete tasks incorrectly, especially when there are different ranks of people in the team.

4.3 Knowledge sharing process in a team
The respondents informed that the knowledge sharing within the team occurred when team members discusses about the projects during internal team meetings. Further, the knowledge sharing occurred through delegation, that is when higher ranker individual in the team explained some particular tasks and during explanations he/she shared knowledge. Another important mechanism of knowledge sharing was through coaching. The coaching process in EY is done through allocation of lower ranked employees under each individual who is in management position, for example manager can have a senior as a protege or senior can have advanced staff, staff and/or intern as a protege.
In addition, respondent F informed that they developed soft materials to share knowledge, from her own words:

“We also have developed and documented procedures or ways which help newcomers to learn our processes.”

Moreover, two seniors (respondents B and D) informed that knowledge sharing is done through constant trainings and knowledge sharing is encouraged on annual round table (a process when employees are evaluated by management and seniors, on this process EY also decides whether to give promotion or layoff an employee).

Another important factor is friendly atmosphere within the team, especially atmosphere which creates asking questions freely, because some lower grade employees are afraid to ask questions which in turn prolongs the job and/or incorrect completion of the task. Friendly atmosphere makes subordinates feel comfortable to contact/communicate with other team members.

For the question, what employees would like to change in order to enhance knowledge sharing within the team, respondents informed that atmosphere, loyalty, mutual respect, should be enhanced. Also, respondent A stated that:

“It is important to have flexibility in a working hours and proper time management. It was very important for our team to share knowledge, because it influenced how fast we will finish the project.”

Some respondents wanted to have more lectures that should be provided by management of the company. Moreover, respondents desired more team buildings, because they state that team buildings create friendly atmosphere and allow newcomers to adapt faster in the team. In addition, higher ranked employees should always have “open doors” and interact with lower graded employees and create closer relationship with teams. Irrespective of the position, whether its manager, partner or senior, no one should be scared and can easily ask help from others. Respondents stated that proper explanation of tasks at each level of delegation is essential for successful completion of the task, it is not just simply delegating the work, but explaining the correct way of completing the task. Finally, respondents desired
to have trainings with other departments, for example tax department who focuses on taxes is more qualified than auditing department in tax related questions.

4.4 When and why team members refused to share knowledge

When asked why and when team members hide or refuse to share knowledge, a lot of new disclosures emerged. Many respondents stated that since investing in transferring knowledge to other people will pay off in the future, most of the time they devote themselves in sharing their knowledge. Even though all the respondents agreed that they have personal goals and motives, almost all responded that team goals overweight personal goals and motives for completing a particular team task. They further specified that it is in their own interest to avoid knowledge hiding, because they have to complete the task correctly and in time. However, respondents indicated that they concealed knowledge in many occasions and the reasons behind why and when they concealed knowledge is going to be discussed below.

Generally, many respondents stated that risky and sensitive information was not shared within the team, especially to junior team members. For example, respondent H stated that

“I once concealed knowledge because of the type of the required knowledge was exceptional and sensitive, which I only shared with the manager”.

Further, majority of the respondents informed that knowledge hiding depends on team members’ attitude. They refused to share knowledge when team members did not want to learn and it was just a waste of time to teach them. Other negative emotions (e.g. dislike, having grudges) influences on knowledge hiding, team members just interacted (explained) less with individuals that they did not like. Nevertheless, some respondents stated that they did not withhold information from team members they did not like, because it influences the efficiency of the whole team and accomplishment of the project. If some person will complete task incorrectly because someone did not explain something, the whole team will be blamed for the mistake.

All respondents said that communication process was not an issue for knowledge hiding. In case when one subordinate did not understand some aspects of his/ her work, team member discussed the situation with his/ her counsellor to identify whether knowledge hiding occurred due to problems in communication process or not. In case it related to communication problem, team members tried to solve such pitfall. Moreover, the direction of communication
(e.g. top-down) and managerial communication were not hindrance for knowledge dissemination. Further, all respondents indicated that national culture, ethnic background, language, personal power, job security and status did not influence knowledge hiding. Respondents stated that it was important to have good relationships with people rather than career growth. In addition, respondents stated that they were not afraid of losing control over project, instead due to work overload they were happy to share their work and share their knowledge on how to do it. Moreover, unaware of organizational goals did not influence on knowledge hiding. All respondents stated that the company has clear organizational goals and objectives in which are followed by employees.

All the respondents stated that leadership within their teams is good. They always support each other and have clear goals established by their leaders who are professional and competent. Moreover, EY provides special devoted trainings for leadership. Further, they indicated that tolerance over mistakes and learning from them did not contribute in knowledge hiding. Instead, EY promotes culture to share mistakes openly and not being afraid to tell it. Also, all respondents indicated that EY’s structure is entitled to share task related knowledge without position based power, because EY is international company with one of best organizational practices.

All respondents prescribed that IT within EY is at high level and lack of trainings about IT’s possibilities, familiarisation and advantages did not contribute in knowledge hiding. Nevertheless, six respondents outlined that lack of IT systems and technical support played a role in knowledge hiding. They recalled when they were in another city and were asked by a team member to explain something, they just refused to explain, because it was time consuming and inconvenient. It was easier for them to work on knowledge seeker’s laptop rather than explain it from distance by chat or a call. Otherwise, respondents informed that resources and infrastructure for completion of the tasks were sufficient. Moreover, the respondents prescribed that EY offices in Kazakhstan has enough formal and informal spaces and the physical environment was good, thus it was not an issue for knowledge hiding, because employees could interact either on the kitchen or in the free rooms.

The nature of the work in EY is performed in teams and five respondents outlined that they once concealed knowledge from another team by giving incorrect information. This was in order to get competitive advantage over the other team in getting more benefits like financial
Two respondents stated that when knowledge was complex they did not want to explain it to other team members. But, the rest (majority) of respondents stated, they shared knowledge irrespective whether it was complex or simple. Moreover, all respondents described that knowledge sharing climate within the company is high and it did not influence on knowledge hiding. On top of that, majority of the respondents said that they did not hide knowledge because of the requested knowledge was not related to the task within the team. Because, they believed that if they help to one person, he/she will pay back in the future.

Further, respondent G expressed her experience in this way,

“if the knowledge I have is necessary for the completion of the project, I always feel responsible in sharing it. However, I concealed knowledge from my colleague who was a junior subordinate and was constantly competing with me in front of the manager”.

She said that she lost trust on that guy and refused to share knowledge with him. She further claimed that knowledge sharing process with that guy was really tiresome and time consuming which contributed to her decision to hide knowledge. Six other respondents attested that they concealed knowledge more than once because they did not trust those who were requesting knowledge which were mostly junior staffs. Further, respondent J stated her previous experience of knowledge hiding in this way:

“I was reluctant to share knowledge, because I did not trust the other person who requested knowledge. The reason for it was that I needed assurance that it would not be misinterpreted”.

Six respondents indicated that previous education has effect on how employees would learn, communicate and then share knowledge. Individuals who graduated abroad are more open minded. In international universities people are used to work in teams and for them it is easier to share knowledge, but people who were graduated from local universities have high tendencies of knowledge hiding, since they used to work alone. Respondents further indicated that age and gender has no effect on knowledge hiding. Size of the business (number of employers) influenced knowledge hiding, three seniors from the respondents outlined that after explaining and teaching the juniors within their teams, the management take them to another team and a new junior specialist is assigned to them. After spending much energy on the previous employees, teaching the same again and again was tiresome and at time they
were forced to hide knowledge. New members of the team sometimes were unprofessional and incompetent. Therefore, respondents preferred to work with people they were familiar.

Regardless of the fact that their work is mostly based on tacit knowledge and it prevailed over explicit, the respondents stated that it did not influence on knowledge hiding at all. Further, almost all respondents stated that motivation is very important for knowledge sharing, especially emotional motivation. They want to understand why they are doing it, where and whom they will become in the future. Even though that EY is a brand and worldwide company, few employees blamed on poor motivation in knowledge sharing. For example, respondent C stated that:

“I was discouraged to share my knowledge with other team members, because I believed that I was not appreciated for what I shared previously”.

The most discussed problem for knowledge hiding was lack of time. All respondents said that due to work overload they refused or simply forgot to share knowledge with their team members, because it takes a lot of energy and time. Especially since the time of the seniors in the team costs more than the time of the subordinates and thus the seniors do not have enough time to share each knowledge required and at this time hiding is a better option for them. Also, in case when individuals did not have time to share their knowledge to complete a task they delegated it to another team member.

Majority of the respondents stated that the ability to cooperate with others is very important in their work, either within the team or with client. Mostly, junior specialists had weakness to cooperate, but respondents said that they spent time to explain how everything worked and shared all necessary information even with team members who did not know how to cooperate efficiently. Respondent F informed that:

“EY always tries to retain experienced employees, because their job is based on knowledge of employees and the experienced employees are important members of a team. Also, EY always encourages experienced employees to share their knowledge with others, e.g. by seminars, trainings and delegation.”

Furthermore, some respondents stated that they did not share knowledge when they were not sure about the possessed knowledge, because they did not want to be seen silly by their team members. Also, another unique answer from our interviewee, one lady testified that she did
not want to spend any energy or pay any price in order to transfer knowledge to others. She confessed that she concealed knowledge many times out of laziness by simply telling those who requested a specific knowledge to dig out and learn by themselves. Moreover, team members refused to share knowledge when the knowledge seeking person can find information by himself, because people did not want to spend time on explaining of common knowledge which can be found in company’s database or internet source. Also, senior employees wanted junior specialists to learn by themselves in order to improve independency and critical thinking.

On top of the above reasons mentioned why and when employees hide knowledge, all the respondents who concealed knowledge ascribed that they felt sense of ownership for the knowledge they concealed and they also felt that that knowledge was in their terrain. The respondents further clarified that sense of ownership for the organization is high and the management takes different initiatives to enhance this feeling. However, at times the sense of owning the knowledge as personal properties overweight the sense of ownership of the organization.

4.5 How team members refused to share knowledge

In all of the questions related to the means our target interviewees used to hide or conceal their knowledge, many of them noticeably outlined their tactics. All of our respondents stated that in hiding their knowledge they pretended as if they did not have the required knowledge, e.g. some of them outlined that because they did not trust the new junior staffs they convinced them as if they did not have the required knowledge. Others also claimed that they were busy and lacked time to share the required knowledge and thus they had to convince those who were asking for knowledge that they did not have the required knowledge to those who asked. For example, respondent E outlined that: “When I did not want to share the knowledge, I just said that I do not know.” Or, respondent F said the following when someone requested for knowledge: “I just said sorry I do not remember.”

Further, the respondents indicated that there were occasions when they concealed knowledge by telling excuses to the knowledge seekers and promised them that they would share the knowledge next time, which actually did not happen. Some of them further explained, after sharing their knowledge two or more times to their colleagues before, but those who were seeking knowledge failed to show respect and at times did not even say “thank you”.

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Consequently, the respondents later concealed their knowledge by telling excuses though promised they would share in the future which never happened. For example, respondent C said that:

“He did not even say “thank you” when I helped him twice, at third time I just told him that I do not have the required file with me and promised him that I would share it next week, but I did not share at all.”

Some respondents stated that they refused to share knowledge with their team members by informing the knowledge seeker that he/ she does not need such knowledge or simply it was too difficult for him/ her to understand at his/ her level. For example, respondent F said the following to a knowledge seeker:

“I just explained to her that she will not understand the knowledge, it was too complex at her level.”

Moreover, three respondents stated that they refused to share knowledge by guiding other fellow employees to find information from different electronic resources or team members. However, the main reason behind their knowledge hiding was simply to teach the specialists to take their time by putting extra effort and make a research on their own in getting the required knowledge. For example, respondent H stated that:

“Time of the senior of the engagement cost more than the time of the subordinates. If other team member can share exactly the same knowledge to other team member or find it in the internet or database, why senior will spend his time on this?”

4.6 What type of knowledge team members refused to share

On the questions regarding the type of knowledge subject to hiding, excluding few respondents, many have similar experience. Generally, knowledge associated with professional skills that the company required in its daily activity within a team was subject to hiding. For example, respondent A stated “one team mate asked me to teach him a procedure to perform benchmarking analysis required for transfer pricing documentation. But I did not feel comfortable to transfer all my knowledge to him for he was trying to compete with me”.

One respondent stated that their team secure some own created working files with calculations on EY’s database. Even though some team members asked for access to such files in order to gain knowledge how to calculate some taxes or check formulas to apply them in their work...
in progress files, they were refused to be shared the files. Nevertheless, other respondents stated that they commonly shared any files.

Mostly all respondents stated that they shared all types of knowledge, irrespective whether it related to their personal interest or not. They stated that if the team member gets more knowledge the efficiency and effectiveness of the team in completing its task would be high and it would save time. Further, professionality within the team will increase which makes the job easier. Nevertheless, some respondents informed that due to time constraints they did not share some exceptional knowledge, because they believed that they could perform the task by themselves faster and it is just a waste of time to explain it to others.

4.7 Knowledge hiding from perspectives of other team members

Two respondents stated that they experienced knowledge hiding when their team members (higher ranked employees) concealed knowledge from them. For instance, respondent E said the following:

“One manager said that I have to keep knowledge as she did and not to share it with team members, because we are all competitors.”

Moreover, the respondent further described that the knowledge hider advised her that it was in her interest to keep some knowledge and not share with other team members, because one day a partner can ask the whole team about it and she will be the only one who provides correct answer, thus, it gives competitive edge over other team members in front of the top management. Moreover, she recalled what the knowledge hider told her that all team members are competitors and it is not good to share knowledge with other team members. Based on it, the knowledge hider concealed to share some working files as well as specific knowledge by simply stating that the knowledge seeker should learn herself.

Another respondent stated that her manager concealed knowledge which was technical knowledge related to a project. She further explained that her manager left without sharing the full technical knowledge of a project which forced her to ask to another senior member for that knowledge. For instance, respondent I said the following:

“Manager usually delegated me a task with explaining partially about the requirements. She said that senior consultant will explain the rest. Moreover, senior consultant had to
take secondment leave to become an expert, as it was hard to work with manager who did not like to explain aspects of work.”
Chapter 5. Analysis and Discussion

This chapter provides analysis of the findings and is divided into the following subtopics: (1) the role of knowledge and knowledge sharing in a team (2) when and why team members refused to share knowledge, (3) how team members refused to share knowledge and (4) what type of knowledge team members hide.

5.1 The role of knowledge and knowledge sharing in a team

The team members analysed in the current study were part of the teams with a particular task completing a project. Such teams are identified by Wenger & Snyder (2000) as the project teams. All respondents stated that the company promotes all job through teamwork and motivate it with different trainings, coaching, delegation, leadership, software, files (including study materials) and annual goals. This is in line with Wong et al. (2015) knowledge management definition applied in our study, where knowledge management is the act of developing communication channels and facilitation of knowledge flow in a firm through teamwork.

Further, in order to facilitate knowledge sharing among employees, researchers stated that companies create different strategies, such as reward system, development of interpersonal relationships, social networks and corporate culture that support knowledge sharing (Bock et al., 2005; Kuvaas et al., 2012; Jarvenpaa & Majchrzak, 2008; Škerlavaj et al., 2010; Connelly & Kelloway, 2003; Muller et al., 2005; Fjellström & Zander, 2017). Our findings support this notion, EY has a well-developed knowledge sharing strategy which created friendly and knowledge sharing organizational culture with well-developed social networks and interpersonal relationships. Each member understood that the efficiency of the team effects on each team member (e.g. on promotion). Knowledge sharing provides company with competitive advantage in the Kazakhstani market, adaptation to market changes and it is very important for provision of services, because EY is the knowledge based firm.

As stated by Gruenfeld et al. (1996), Cumings (2004) and Stasser et al. (2000) knowledge sharing within teams includes familiarity and diversity of team members and their competences. Our findings support this proposition, each team consisted of different members with different competences which comply with project requirements, i.e. manager (or director/
senior manager), senior, advanced staff, staff and/or intern and a partner as a final reviewer on most of the engagements. Moreover, our findings suggest that delegation of tasks is very important for knowledge dissemination within a team context, because based on the delegation skills (including proper communication) the efficiency of the team and completion of the task is affected. Without proper delegation of tasks (explanation of the goals and required knowledge) a team member can do the job incorrectly which will follow to double job, because the higher graded team members always check the job after completion by lower graded employees.

Another most important factor which influences on knowledge sharing mostly is each team member’s attitude. Team members always expected to be proactive with desire to learn and improve themselves. Nevertheless, team members stated that they would improve some aspects in knowledge sharing strategy of EY, i.e. atmosphere, loyalty, mutual respect, flexibility in working hours, proper time management, more trainings and interaction with other departments. Indeed, the desire of the respondents to improve some aspects of the knowledge sharing process within the company supports the inclination given by Cabrera & Cabrera (2005) that in some situations team members resist to share their knowledge with the other team members. Therefore, the reasons why and when team members hide their knowledge will be analysed in the next section.

5.2 Why and when team members refused to share knowledge

Each reason of why and when team members concealed their knowledge is analysed through theoretical background which provided reasons or potential barriers of why and when individuals hide their knowledge. Our findings do not support that all the variables affecting knowledge hiding at individual level influence knowledge hiding at team level, because as Seers (1989) stated, individuals who are experiencing team-member exchange are sharing more information, knowledge, ideas within teamwork rather than at individual level. Moreover, one of the reasons why individuals share more knowledge within team is that as proposed by Pierce & Jussila (2010), they value team goals more than personal goals. Most of the individual barriers did not affect employees to hide knowledge within a team. The technological related barriers almost did not have influence on knowledge hiding at team level, only one variable which is poor integration of IT systems and poor technical support influenced on knowledge hiding at team level. The organizational barriers had a minor influence on knowledge hiding at team level, only competition between business units and
functional areas, size of the business and lack of rewards systems and motivation had effect of concealing of knowledge. The most significant knowledge hiding variables which influence on team level knowledge hiding related to personal aspects, e.g. lack of time, negative emotions, etc.

In addition, the authors in this study discovered new variables which cause why and when employees hide knowledge in a team and possible it can cause knowledge hiding at individual level. Our study found that team members were reluctant to share their knowledge when they did not want to be seen silly in front of the team members, i.e. they were afraid of losing status within the team. Other reasons included that team members were simply “lazy” to share the knowledge and they wanted other team members to learn by themselves. The summary of all variables affecting knowledge hiding at team and individual levels are described in table 5 below. It outlines variables affecting knowledge hiding at individual level only and team level only as well as variables which affect both at team and individual levels.
Table 5: Knowledge hiding at individual versus team level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables affecting knowledge hiding at individual level only</th>
<th>New variables affecting knowledge hiding at team level only</th>
<th>Variables affecting knowledge hiding both at team and individual levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• To fulfil own goals and motives;</td>
<td>• Did not want to be seen silly;</td>
<td>• When risky knowledge is communicated;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Limited benefits to others;</td>
<td>• Laziness;</td>
<td>• Negative emotions;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Certain direction of communication;</td>
<td>• Knowledge seekers should learn by themselves.</td>
<td>• Competition between business units and functional areas;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hierarchical structure and position-based power;</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Poor integration of IT systems and poor technical support;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• National culture and ethnic background (including language);</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Difference in experience, age, gender, education;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inaccurate physical work environment;</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Distrust of fellow employees;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of trainings about IT’s possibilities, familiarisation and advantages;</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Size of the business;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Poor compatibility between different IT systems and processes and requirements mismatch;</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack of rewards systems and motivation;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of interaction between knowledge sources and recipients;</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowledge is complex;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tolerance over mistakes and learning from them;</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack of time;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Personal power, job security, inequality in status;</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack of social network.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Loss of control;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Organizational goals are missing or unclear;</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of leadership and managerial communication;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of formal and informal spaces;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explicit versus tacit knowledge;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• When knowledge sharing climate (culture) in the company is low;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• When it is not related to task;</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Poor or lack of communication;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Retention of experienced employees is not a priority.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own created

The findings in this study confirm that employees’ psychological ownership for the organization will debilitate the impacts of territoriality. Pierce & Rodgers (2004) stated that employees with a strong psychological ownership feeling for the organization will make them believe that they are important, worthy, and treasured to the company, and then form a solid organization-based confidence and self-esteem. Similarly, the respondents have clarified that the more they feel that the organization is a “home”, the less they hide knowledge.
Even though many of the components affecting individuals hiding knowledge did not influence our samples in a team, based on the factors affecting knowledge hiding the authors observed that there is a positive relationship between knowledge-based psychological ownership and knowledge hiding. The study provides that the ownership feeling over knowledge is more contiguous variable for prediction of knowledge hiding. The findings clarify that if a team member feels that the knowledge is her/his personal property, it is more likely that the team member will be reluctant to share that knowledge. Regardless of the fact why they concealed knowledge, the employees who experienced knowledge-based psychological ownership normally created a solid connectivity to the knowledge (Peng, 2013).

Further, in current study we applied territoriality perspectives in order to deploy psychological ownership-knowledge hiding. The knowledge, information, files and ideas created and hold by the respondents were inclined as their own possessions. Normally what have been produced by the mind are intimately known by the person who created and hold it. Thus, these knowledge, information, files and ideas, that the employees created and hold are possibly to be treated as his or her territories. Most of the team members who confessed that they highly felt sense of ownership on the knowledge they had and less on the organizational psychological ownership, they felt that the knowledge required lies on their territory. This is in line with the literature that those who are having more knowledge-based psychological ownership, will gesture and defend their knowledge from others and more sense of territoriality will be experienced.

Territoriality mediates the relationship between knowledge-based psychological ownership and knowledge hiding (Peng, 2013), this is possible because once employees feel knowledge based psychological ownership, they will feel also that the knowledge lies in their territory and as a result they will hide knowledge. Webster et al. (2008) stated that territoriality have been almost ignored by researchers and proposed using this approach in a knowledge management study. The current study supports that territoriality plays mediating role in knowledge based psychological ownership and knowledge hiding.

Moreover, the current study provided that organization-based psychological ownership may weaken the knowledge-based psychological ownership on knowledge hiding through territoriality perspectives in team context. When team members feel a strong psychological
ownership feeling for the company, the effect of knowledge-based psychological ownership on knowledge hiding is not considerable. This is in line with research of Peng (2013) who stated the same, but on individual basis.

5.3 How team members hide knowledge

The first cluster of our respondents has enclosed that they concealed knowledge by explaining to the knowledge seekers the reasons behind withholding their knowledge. Connelly & Zweig (2015) and Connelly et al. (2012) disclose that when a knowledge hider tries to justify his/her act of knowledge hiding either by providing a reason of how difficult it is to share knowledge or by blaming others for his/her failure as a rationalized hiding. In this case, some of our respondents have used the complexity of the knowledge to be shared as a reason. Some also claimed that the only way the knowledge seekers can grow professionally was, if the they spent considerable amount of time and energy in finding out and make research on their own. Thus, the knowledge hiders used rationalized hiding by referring the knowledge seekers a source where they can search for the required knowledge.

Virtually all our respondents have clarified they concealed knowledge by pretending as if they did not have the required knowledge. Some of the respondents did not have time to share and others did not trust the knowledge seekers and thus they had to convince them that they did not have the required knowledge. Scholars specified that “playing dumb” is the term used for the deliberate act of knowledge hiding by pretending as if you do not have the required knowledge (Zhao, Xia, He, Sheard, & Wan, 2016; Connelly & Zweig, 2015).

The last group of respondents confessed that they used different technique than the above mentioned in hiding their knowledge. Some of the respondents explained that they just promised the knowledge seekers that they would share their knowledge in the future, though they had no intention of sharing for they were not happy with the knowledge seekers previous behaviour. The literature clarified that if a person communicates wrong information, or promises to share the requested knowledge in the future though no commitment of doing so at all, then he or she is supposed to be categorized under the evasive hiding strategy (Anand & Jain 2014; Zhao et al., 2016; Connelly et al., 2012). In line with the literature, at times the respondents tried to use this technique by trying to convince the knowledge seekers that the knowledge required is simple (while it is actually quite complicated) (Anand & Jain 2014) or share only a small portion of the knowledge required or promised that knowledge would be
shared in the future (Connelly & Zweig, 2015). We can propose that this technique of knowledge hiding is less transparent than the other two techniques.

Based on the above, team members concealed knowledge by using evasive hiding, playing dumb and rationalized hiding methods.

5.4 What type of knowledge team members hide
In this part, we are going to analyze what type of knowledge do employees hide within a team from fellow team members or from members of another team. The literature identified that knowledge can be classified as tacit/explicit and key/common (Connelly et al., 2012; Connelly & Zweig, 2015; Smith, 2001).

At first, team members concealed knowledge that related to technical skills or know-how which refers to tacit knowledge (Smith, 2001). Secondly, respondents concealed explicit knowledge (Smith, 2001) which was codified in files and easily to transfer. Further, in analysing types of knowledge subject to hiding, as the literature suggests using the broad classification tacit and explicit is not enough (Li et al., 2015). Therefore, in this study we analysed whether the knowledge related to core interests or not. The findings suggest that team members were willing to share common knowledge slightly more than key knowledge, but the key knowledge was more related to some risky information or complex knowledge and was concealed mainly due to distrust between team members and lack of time to explain the knowledge. However, when respondents were asked to share their experience in knowledge hiding of team members, we can propose that the key and common knowledge in some cases was not shared within the team by more experienced employees, in particular managers, because they believed that there is a competition between members of the team, thus common and especially key knowledge should not be shared or shared partially only.

Based on the above, we can conclude that the team members concealed all the four types of knowledge, i.e. tacit and explicit as well as key and common knowledge.

5.5 Conceptual model
Based on the findings of this study, the conceptual model that has been presented by the authors has been slightly amended, in particular three new knowledge hiding variables were added. The assumptions broadly given in all of the arrows are adapted reflects the same
framework. Although many variables affecting knowledge hiding at individual level are found to be without effect at team level and three new variables that affect knowledge hiding among employees in a team are found, all these variables lie under the broad category of why and when employees hide knowledge. The figure 2 below represents the conceptual model, which is based on the findings of this study.

Figure 3: Adapted conceptual model - Knowledge hiding

Source: Own created
Chapter 6. Conclusion

This chapter provides the conclusion of the current research. It begins with answering to the research questions. Further, it provides theoretical contribution and managerial implications. Also, this chapter provides limitations of the study, future research directions and personal reflection on the study.

6.1 Answering research questions

The purpose of this study was to enrich knowledge hiding phenomenon within knowledge management, in particular knowledge hiding among project team members in consulting industry, in EY Kazakhstan. Through a qualitative and inductive research approach we developed conceptual model which guided us through the study of the knowledge hiding phenomenon among team members. The sample of our research included team members from two departments (assurance and tax departments), in particular one manager, four seniors and six consultants (junior specialists).

The first step of this study was to investigate whether project team members hide knowledge in consulting industry. The evidence of the research provide that project team members hide knowledge, but the level of knowledge concealing is lower than at individual level, because team goals overweight personal goals and individuals are willing to share their knowledge more in teams.

Depending on whether project team members hide knowledge, the second step was to analyse what type of knowledge team members hide and thus to answer the first research question of “What type of knowledge (tacit and/or explicit and key and/or common) do project team members hide”? 

The results showed that project team members concealed all types of knowledge, namely, tacit/explicit and key/common knowledge. Concealed knowledge related to personal interests and team members wanted to either have some advantage over colleagues or felt that knowledge was too sensitive to share, since it was confidential knowledge about clients.
Investigating why, when and how project team members hide knowledge and thus answering the second research question “How, why and when project team members hide knowledge”? was the final step of this study.

By applying the methods of knowledge concealing, the result of the study shows that team members used evasive, rationalized hiding as well as “playing dumb” method to conceal their knowledge. Further, we applied variables related to why and when individuals hide knowledge and tested them at team level. The results show that technological and organizational knowledge sharing barriers had minor effect of knowledge hiding among project team members. Although most of the variables are individual barriers but still with lesser effect than at personal level. Moreover, we found new variables which affected on knowledge hiding at team level which are fear of having the image of being “silly” in front of team members, laziness and more experienced team employees wanted their less experienced employees to spend more time of self-study.

6.2 Theoretical and societal contributions

The theory has mostly considered on the development of knowledge sharing phenomenon and paid less attention on counterproductive knowledge behaviour, i.e. knowledge hiding. Moreover, most of the theory focused at individual level. Therefore, our study contributes to the knowledge management literature by exploring antecedents of knowledge hiding among team members. At first, the current study supports Pierce & Jussila’s (2010) and Peng (2013) notion that knowledge based psychological ownership is predictor for concealing knowledge at team level. This study showed that collective psychological ownership weakens individual psychological knowledge ownership on knowledge hiding through territoriality perspectives. The collective psychological ownership leads to knowledge sharing among team members due to the reason that team’s tasks and success is valued higher than individual goals (Pierce & Jussila, 2010). Further, the current study supports that territoriality is a mediating tool between knowledge hiding and psychological knowledge ownership at team level.

Finally, in addition to the knowledge hiding variables found by previous scholars (e.g. Wittenbaum et al., (2004); Peng (2013); Pierce et al., (2003); Riege (2005); O’Dell & Grayson (1998), etc.) the current study provides additional knowledge sharing barriers of why and when team members hide knowledge which can be tested at individual level. Therefore, this study contributes to the theory by finding new variables affecting knowledge hiding at team
level and possibly at individual level. Moreover, this study affirms that many of the variables playing a key role in hiding knowledge at individual level are found to be without effect at team level which can be tested in companies at different industries and countries.

It is clear that knowledge is an extremely intricate and more than ever significant. On top of that, this study has also shown how knowledge hiding can be devastating in the growth and competitiveness of a company, thus this study can greatly contribute to the existing theory of knowledge hiding with new insights at project teams. It will also fill the gap in the literature of knowledge hiding at project teams.

The societal contribution of this study is for the employees in organizations who actively and deliberately hide knowledge from their colleagues. Considering the findings of this study, they should be careful and thoughtful about hiding knowledge from their fellow workers. Our study shows the knowledge seekers might not be motivated to share knowledge with those who concealed knowledge in the future. This in turn affects the creativity of those who concealed knowledge, the organization and the overall creativity of the society.

**6.3 Managerial implications**

From practical point of view, the current study draws attention of team design in companies. In order to create or improve knowledge sharing culture in organizations, besides individual and other relevant organizational factors, management is encouraged to nurture team environment, because teams are proximal social context where employees frequently interact with each other (Fulk, 1993). Managers should establish cohesive teams where each member trust one another. Team member might feel obliged to share their knowledge with other team members due to pressure from team cohesion, trust and common goals.

Findings of this study are useful for human resource managers. Human resource practices that highlight employee’s feeling over teamwork can encourage knowledge sharing, especially sharing tacit and key (core) interest related knowledge. Managers should consider not only in improving motivation and reward system, but encourage teamwork and increase team cohesion. Teamwork and promoting the collective knowledge ownership might decrease individual’s perception of possessed knowledge, thus encouraging knowledge sharing. Further, the current study found that territoriality mediates between psychological ownership
of knowledge and knowledge hiding. Therefore, managers might consider decreasing territoriality perspectives by increasing social bonds (e.g. outing, team buildings, etc.).

6.4 Reflection

The study has been conducted based on a professional firm which operates in a consulting industry, whereby the knowledge based view of the firm is explored. In addition, to fulfil the aim of the study which was knowledge hiding among team members, employees from different teams were selected. Those interviewees were selected based on their seniority and position, namely a manager, seniors and juniors. The authors did their best in selecting proper interviewees which gave us complete data which enabled us to achieve the aim of the research. The interviews have been conducted both in English and Russian languages. This study is a qualitative research which focused on knowledge hiding among team members. The study concluded that, although many of the variables which affect why and when employees hide knowledge at individual level also affects at team level, many are also found to be without effect on knowledge hiding in a team. Further new variables which might require additional research are also found at team level.

The opportunity to investigate knowledge hiding in a team was the most treasured experience in conducting this research. Although there were time constraints on this study, the authors have been exceedingly rewarded by taking an organization which was cooperative and constantly prepared to offer assistance. Upon the completion of this project, the authors evaluated that if more time was given, the research could have been stretched by reaching out to a more dynamic sample size, for example, incorporating more companies of different firm sizes and sectors from different countries or geographical locations. Although the authors were based in Stockholm, Sweden, they did not have any trouble in reaching the sample chosen for the interview either by phone or skype calls. Therefore, on top of the gentleness and cooperative behaviour of the interviewees, current communication technologies must be profoundly credited in facilitating the interviews. Overall, leading this study is not only a prized academic project but also personally pleasing experience.

Moreover, reflecting on this research, it can be considered that the authors reached the aim of this study and were able to answer all the research questions. The study adapts previous variables that affect individuals in hiding knowledge and also found some new variables affecting knowledge hiding at team level as well. Overall, with the findings the authors
reached their aim of answering the three research questions and contributed with findings to the academic society.

6.5 Limitations

The fact that data have been collected from a single organization can be considered as the fundamental limitation of this study. It would have been more beneficial to expand and increase the scope of the study by increasing the number of interviewees from different companies and industries. However, due to the constriction of time the authors were not able to consider expanding the scope and thus gaining access to other companies operating in different sectors. Therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized, consequently there is no guarantee that it can be applicable to other industries especially on the resource based firms. In addition, qualitative researches are concerned primarily with process, rather than outcomes and ambiguities, which are intrinsic and unavoidable in human language, might be noticed in the analysis and finding parts. The main limitation of qualitative data, as stated by Atieno (2009), the findings in this qualitative research might not be extended to wider populations.

Another limitation is the data collection process of this study which was through semi structured interviews. This can be seen as a limitation, due to the fact that the authors cannot guarantee the same outcomes can be collected if an identical research would be carried out or taking into account longitudinal study which can provide different results in the future. The findings are explicit for this study and the interviewees which participated in this study. Further, the atmosphere during the interview process was more of conversation way rather than strictly following the interview questions. For this reason, the study is also limited to the data collection strategy.

Further, the number of respondents could not guarantee the legitimacy and validity for overall results. The sample of our study included only one manager, several senior and junior specialists. We did not get access to the top management (e.g. directors, partners, senior managers) who would provide additional insights to the research area, because they are more experienced. Moreover, translation and interpretation of the results from Russian language to English could be affected by authors’ perception and ability to interpret the data correctly and accurately, although the authors have done their best to minimize it.
6.6 Future research directions

As this study was limited to only one company in one country, it can be recommended for further research to focus on the same field, but with focus on different industries, and countries. Across the study’s findings on why and when employees in a team hide knowledge, it would have been interesting also if a quantitative study is done in the future. Many employees from different teams in different organizations could be taken as a sample which will enable the findings to be generalized and increase the reliability and validity of the research. Moreover, further research is needed to test the three variables found in the current study which affect employees to hide knowledge in a team. These variables include mainly, afraid of being seen silly, laziness and self-study. Also, these variables can be tested at individual level. Finally, future research with in the field of knowledge hiding could focus on the effects of interpersonal injustice on knowledge hiding on each part (i.e. on hider or target), motivational process on knowledge hiding/sharing, and if there are any cross-cultural differences of how knowledge concealing is interpreted.
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethical concerns

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Thank you for your contribution to our master thesis.

Our study topic aims at investigating knowledge hiding phenomenon within a team, in particular how, why, when and what type of knowledge team members hide.

The interview consists of two sections and is guided with questions below. The interview will last approximately one hour.

Ethical concerns:
1. Your name will be anonymous, unless you allow us to disclose it. Please state YES or NO.
2. We will send you transcribed answers in order to get your approval on our understanding. If we do not receive your reply within five working days after the transcript is sent, we will treat it as approved.
3. The results of the findings will not be used for commercial purposes but may be published in scientific journals and books to diffuse the knowledge gained from this study.
Appendix 2: Interview questions

Date and time of interview, beginning:
Date and time of interview, ending:

Section 1: Interviewee profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee’s name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Department/ Position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work experience within the company</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Section 2: Knowledge hiding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>What is knowledge management for you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>How does your company manage knowledge?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>When do you work in a team?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>How do you share knowledge with your team members?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>What do you think needs to be improved in order to enhance knowledge sharing within your team?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Did you refuse to share knowledge with your team members?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>What type of knowledge did you refuse to share with your team members?</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>What have you done when you did not want to share the knowledge with the team members?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Why and when did you not want to share knowledge with your team members?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Did you experience that your team members did not want to share knowledge?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>What type of knowledge and how your team members did not want to share knowledge?</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>What measures does your company take to avoid knowledge hiding among employees?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Do you think that organizational culture is conducive for promoting knowledge sharing? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Do you think that the communication system within your team is supportive enough to minimize knowledge hiding?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>How does the size of your company in general and the size of your team in particular affecting knowledge hiding?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Do you compete with other teams in your company? Did you refuse to share knowledge with other teams? if yes, why and what type of knowledge?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>How does difference in experience, age, gender, education, national culture and ethnic background influence knowledge hiding?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Do you feel sense of belongingness in the company and does the company take initiative to maximize the employees sense of belongingness in the company?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Do you feel that the knowledge used in work is your personal property? Why do you feel so?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>