

Doctoral Dissertation

An Inquiry of Knowledge-Based Behavior in the Workplace

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(Summary of Dissertation)

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Organizational knowledge, created in a continuous process of individual and group interactions, is considered a key strategic resource for success. Thus, in recent decades, researchers and practitioners of organizational knowledge have emphasized studying successful knowledge sharing and transfer. However, regardless of continuous effort, successful knowledge sharing is difficult to achieve in practice. Researchers have indicated how individuals face different dilemmas in sharing knowledge when they associate cost in contributing their knowledge. Moreover, researchers have shown that counterproductive knowledge behavior, such as knowledge hiding, hinders positive organizational outcomes and deters knowledge sharing.

Connelly et al. (2012) define knowledge hiding as “an intentional attempt by an individual to withhold or conceal knowledge that has been requested by another person” (p.65). They argued that knowledge hiding is not merely the opposite of knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing and knowledge hiding happen due to different focus (other vs. self) and motivational sources (pro-social vs. anti-social). Knowledge hiding has started to gain attention, as it has only recently been established as a separate construct and research field. Researchers suggest that there is a lack of studies on knowledge management failure-related issues, such as knowledge hiding. Therefore, researchers call for more investigation into this area, together with knowledge sharing, to successfully promote knowledge transfer in organizations. Therefore, the objective of this research is to explore various theoretically important but empirically unexplored factors through which organizations can minimize knowledge hiding and promote knowledge sharing—two crucial knowledge-based behaviors.

Through the theoretical lens of self-determination theory (SDT) and cognitive motivational relational (CMR) theory of emotion, this study is my attempt to understand the influence of different organizational, job-related, and interpersonal and individual-related antecedents on knowledge hiding individually and comparing to knowledge sharing. Based on SDT, human beings have three innate psychological needs: the need for autonomy, the need for competence, and the need for autonomy. In the three empirical studies, I explored how the need satisfaction of all three needs, or the need satisfaction and need frustration of singular needs, affects knowledge hiding and knowledge sharing. SDT may provide an understanding of what drives knowledge hiding and knowledge sharing, but it may not enlighten us regarding the underlying process that leads to knowledge hiding. Thus, CMR theory might be an important tool to explain the underlying process.

I began this study by exploring the influence of knowledge-based human resource management (KBHRM) practices and different knowledge management strategies on knowledge hiding and knowledge sharing. According to SDT, KBHRM shows the possibility of how an organization can simultaneously decrease knowledge hiding and enhance knowledge sharing. This is because, based on SDT, KBHRM is expected to satisfy all three needs of employees and enhance autonomous motivation, which is essential to decreasing knowledge hiding and enhance knowledge sharing. Further, based on the ability-motivation-opportunity framework, Knowledge management strategies can make these relationships stronger. As there have been no studies exploring the relationship between these and knowledge-based behavior, I test this proposition by conducting two studies following a cross-sectional survey and an experimental vignette method. Based on

the results of cross-sectional data collected from employees working in China, I found that KBHRM is positively related to both knowledge sharing and knowledge hiding. The results based on the experimental data collected from employees in the US support the positive influence of KBHRM on knowledge sharing only. One possible explanation for why KBHRM may enhance both knowledge hiding and sharing is that the rewards for knowledge sharing offered in KBHRM practice may enhance the need for competence satisfaction but diminish the need for autonomy. Therefore, overall autonomous motivation may diminish, and controlled motivation might be stronger. Controlled motivation has been found to enhance both knowledge hiding and knowledge sharing in previous studies.

In the second study, addressing a research gap found as mixed results in the previous literature, I explored the underlying mechanism of the relationship between time pressure and knowledge-based behavior. Based on previous studies, time pressure is expected to increase knowledge hiding behavior. One explanation behind this could be the frustration of the need for autonomy and satisfaction of the need for competence, which may lead to knowledge hiding. Alternatively, another explanation can be made based on the strength model of self-control. According to the model, I propose that time pressure influences knowledge hiding positively and knowledge sharing negatively due to ego depletion. I also propose job autonomy as a solution for how the relationship between time pressure and ego depletion can be weakened, because job autonomy restores the frustrated need for autonomy. To test these propositions, I collected data utilizing the daily diary method for 10 days from employees working in Myanmar. The results suggest that perceived time pressure enhances employees' ego depletion, which lowers knowledge

sharing. However, time pressure enhances knowledge hiding for reasons other than ego depletion. This unexpected result can also be explained by SDT. Even though time pressure frustrates the need for autonomy, it satisfies the need for competence. It might be possible that the need for competence might be more influential in employees' knowledge hiding.

In continuation of the findings based on the last two studies, in the third study, I explored different antecedents based on the need for competence satisfaction or frustration (perceived organizational incentives, perceived retention of knowledge power, and job security). In addition in this study, I also included antecedents based on the need for relatedness satisfaction and frustration (affective-based trust, organizational ostracism, and organizational norm), as this has not been exclusively focused in the last two studies. I conducted a randomized conjoint analysis by randomly varying the need for competence-based components and relatedness-based components as different organizational contexts. The objective of this study was to assess the organizational context in which people show more knowledge hiding intention. The results based on the experimental data collected from the employees in the US suggest that perceived organizational incentives from hiding knowledge and the possibility of perceived retention of knowledge power by hiding knowledge increase the chance of showing more knowledge hiding intention. Therefore, the third study's findings also suggest the possibility that the need for competence might be a more influential reason behind employees' manifestation of knowledge hiding.

In the fourth study, I aimed to understand the overall psychological process behind employees' knowledge-hiding behaviors in organizations, based on a literature review

study. Therefore, I synthesized previous studies ($n = 88$) on knowledge hiding through a systematic literature review. I used the CMR theory of emotion to create a framework for the studies' findings. Based on the framework, the psychological process behind knowledge hiding is considered to have two stages—personal goal generation and the knowledge-request event appraisal process, each of which contains its own CMR process. In the first stage, an individual's internal and external attributes related to the organization shape their personal goals. In the second stage, an individual appraises the features of a knowledge-request event in terms of both their personal goal and the internal and external attributes that create the goal. If the knowledge request is appraised as harmful to the personal goal, emotion arises and leads to the manifestation of knowledge hiding. Through this study, I contribute to the knowledge management literature, as, to my knowledge, it is the first to propose a CMR theory-based framework to understand the overall psychological process behind knowledge hiding.

The results of the four studies can be synthesized as follows. In this dissertation, I conducted three empirical studies based on SDT to explore why knowledge hiding happens. Moreover, the fourth study integrates the findings of all previous studies on knowledge hiding and explains the underlying psychological process behind knowledge hiding through CMR theory. Based on the study results, which were in many cases contradictory to what I expected, I suspect that when knowledge hiding satisfies the need for competence, employees might be more motivated to manifest knowledge hiding. Based on the results of the three empirical studies and the CMR-based framework, any situation or knowledge

request encounter, creating an obstacle or facilitation of the need for competence, may provoke emotions, which might be the underlying reason behind knowledge hiding.

Through this dissertation, I contribute to the literature by filling the potential gaps in organizational, job-related, interpersonal, and individual-level determinants of knowledge-based behavior. In doing so, this dissertation also contributes to the theories utilized by extending their application in the context of knowledge-based behavior. I also discuss the managerial and theoretical implications of the findings of the studies. Lastly, I conclude the study by addressing its limitations as opportunities for future research directions.