Dilemma Between ‘It’s My or It’s My Organization’s Territory’: Antecedent to Knowledge Hiding in Indian Knowledge Base Industry

Sonali Bhattacharya, Symbiosis International University, Pune, India
Pooja Sharma, Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Pune, India

ABSTRACT

In this research article, the authors attempted to compare how and to what extent knowledge base psychological ownership (KBPO), organization based psychological ownership (OBPO) and territoriality predict knowledge hiding behavior in different knowledge base industries in India. A sample of 429 employees from four knowledge base industries - Audio & Video, Machinery Manufacturing, Pharmaceutical and Telecom - was surveyed on the four constructs. A Hierarchical Regression method was used to determine whether KBPO and OBPO had direct effects on knowledge hiding, or indirect effects via Territoriality. The authors also tested whether OBPO moderated the indirect positive effect of KBPO on knowledge hiding. It has been found that KBPO has indirect effect on knowledge hiding behavior which is mediated by Territoriality in various knowledge base sectors except the Telecom Industry. Territoriality is antecedent to knowledge hiding in all knowledge base industries in India. OBPO does not have any direct or indirect effect on knowledge hiding but moderates positively the relationship between KBPO and knowledge hiding in the Machinery Manufacturing industry.

KEYWORDS

India, Knowledge Base Psychological Ownership, Knowledge Hiding, Organization Based Psychological Ownership

INTRODUCTION

Though knowledge sharing has been a known phenomenon, the knowledge hiding construct has drawn the interest of academics and practitioners only in recent years.

Though knowledge hiding and knowledge sharing sound as anomalies, but the antecedents of the two constructs can be different. Lin (2007) found that tacit knowledge sharing is affected indirectly by distributive justice, procedural justice, and cooperativeness via organizational commitment. It is also impacted by instrumental ties, and expressive ties via trust in co-workers. In another context, Geofroy and Evans (2017) opined that knowledge hiding could substantially be reduced by developing

DOI: 10.4018/IJKM.2019070102
an environment of teamwork, trust, and organizational commitment, all of which were components of Emotional Intelligence. Trust, which has three components—competence, integrity and benevolence—affects knowledge sharing positively (Usoro et al., 2007). Fang and Chiu (2009) found that dimensions of justice impacted dimensions of trust, which, in turn, determined altruism and conscientiousness. Altruism and conscientiousness impacted knowledge sharing continuance in virtual communities of practice. Cummings (2004) argued that value of external knowledge sharing increased when work groups were more structurally diverse in terms of organizational affiliations, roles or positions, and possession of unique knowledge. Twom-Darko and Harker (2017) studied through the lens of Action Network Theory the organizational factors that lead to knowledge sharing behavior. They opined that management support and participatory decision making, right from problem identification to mobilization lead to knowledge sharing.

Knowledge sharing is defined as exchange of task information, know-how, and feedback regarding a product or procedure (Hansen 1999). This includes both verbal communication about the task, the exchange of tangible artifacts, and implicit coordination of expertise (Faraj and Sproull, 2000) and information about who knows what in the group (Rulke and Galaskiewicz, 2000). It includes providing task information to a client and receiving feedback on a project from senior managers. The sources of knowledge for any given work group may range from customers and organizational experts to members themselves (von Hippel, 1988). It is a process of eliciting new ideas and insights from different sources of knowledge (Ancona and Caldwell, 1992, Hansen, 1999). Organizations invest significant effort and expense in developing knowledge management systems that facilitate transfer of knowledge (e.g., Wang & Noe, 2010). Organizational efforts include: developing reward systems (e.g., Bock et al., 2005; Swap et al., 2001); enhancing social networks and interpersonal relationships (e.g., Jarvenpaa & Majchrzak, 2008; Kankahalli et al., 2005; Kuvaas et al., 2012; Škerlavaj et al., 2010); and facilitating organizational cultures that support knowledge sharing (Connelly & Kelloway, 2003; Jarvenpaa & Staples, 2001; Muller, Spiliopoulos, & Lenz, 2005). However, individuals resort to concealing or partially sharing knowledge. Serenko and Bontis (2016) opined that knowledge hiding and knowledge sharing belonged to unique yet possibly overlapping constructs. Barriers to knowledge sharing have been identified as lack of trust, poor communication skills and time unavailability of knowledge seekers (Cleveland and Ellis, 2015). Employees’ rating of their own knowledge hiding behavior was significantly lower than the ratings their co-workers gave them (Serenko and Bontis, 2016). The availability of knowledge management systems and knowledge policies has no impact on intra-organizational knowledge hiding. There are extrinsic and intrinsic motivating factors that determine if the employees will share knowledge or not (Todorova and Mills, 2018). Existence of a positive organizational knowledge culture significantly reduces intra-organizational knowledge hiding. Job insecurity motivates knowledge hiding and knowledge hiding promotes voluntary turnover.

Knowledge hiding refers to the intentional attempt by an individual to conceal or withhold knowledge that has been requested by another person (Connelly et al., 2012). It may be aimed at protecting the privacy of individuals possessing the knowledge or business secrets that would allow the business’ competitors to gain advantage. Sometimes, a group of organizations attempts to gain knowledge, by collectively mining their own datasets of similar activities that they typically conduct. A common set of knowledge patterns are identified, some of which are codified by data owners as sensitive as they reveal business secrets (Gkoulas- DIVANIS and Verykios, 2008). Thus, prior to sharing their data, data owners seek to conceal such sensitive knowledge from other parties. To accomplish that, a knowledge hiding algorithm is employed. The goal of these methodologies is to create sanitized -dataset which achieves to identify all the frequent patterns of data available in the organization and protect the sensitive ones. According to Connelly et al. (2012), the knowledge hiding construct has three components -evasive hiding, rational hiding and playing dumb. Each component is predetermined by evidence of distrust between members. For example: Zhang and Chen (2018) found in their study of employees from Chinese firms that both affective and cognitive trust impacts sharing of explicit and tacit knowledge, with cognitive trust having a stronger impact.
[www.igi-global.com/article/self-efficacy-software-developers/4025?camid=4v1a](http://www.igi-global.com/article/self-efficacy-software-developers/4025?camid=4v1a)