Call for Papers in

Journal of Organizational Behavior

UNDERSTANDING KNOWLEDGE HIDING IN ORGANIZATIONS

A special issue guest-edited by

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Understanding knowledge hiding in organizations

Many managers expect employees to share their knowledge with their coworkers (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002; Gagné, 2009), because effective knowledge management presents several benefits to organizations, including higher employee and organizational performance, greater innovation, and less duplication of efforts (e.g., Collins & Smith, 2006; Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Not surprisingly, many firms have invested significantly in systems and practices that are designed to facilitate knowledge transfer among employees (Wang & Noe, 2010). However, despite these efforts, a significant number of organizational members deliberately withhold knowledge from their peers.

This phenomenon first attracted the attention of organizational sociologists and anthropologists in the 1960s (e.g., Mechanic, 1962; Nieburg, 1963), and it remained a discussion point in the research literature (e.g., internal political coalitions) for many years (e.g., Galnoor, 1979). More recently, research has focused on knowledge hiding in an organizational context, where it has been formally defined as an intentional attempt to conceal or to withhold knowledge that others have requested (Connelly, Zweig, Webster, & Trougakos, 2012).

Knowledge hiding consists of three behaviors: rationalized hiding, where the hider provides an explanation for why the knowledge is not forthcoming; evasive hiding, where the hider stalls or provides less information than what was requested; and playing dumb, where the hider pretends not to have the knowledge (Connelly et al., 2012). As with several other organizational behavior concepts (e.g., OCB-I vs. OCB-O), there are instances where it is useful to examine the overall construct of knowledge hiding, and there may be instances where it is more appropriate to consider particular facets in isolation (e.g., rationalized hiding and evasive hiding may have different consequences). Thus far, knowledge hiding has been treated as separate from workplace bullying (Samnani & Singh, 2014) and employee silence (Knoll & van Dick, 2013), and it has been conceptually distinguished from counterproductive workplace behavior, deception, interpersonal aggression, social undermining, and incivility, but further research remains to be done to empirically establish its nomological net.

Research to date suggests that knowledge hiding diminishes the creativity of the hider (Černe, Nerstad, Dysvik, & Škerlavaj, 2014), correlates positively with interpersonal distrust and various characteristics of knowledge that has been requested (Connelly et al., 2012), and harms interpersonal relationships (Connelly & Zweig, 2015). Knowledge hiding is potentially damaging to organizations because the distrust among employees that it creates may lead to a negative spiral of retaliation (Černe et al., 2014).

Empirical research is necessary to establish the antecedents, consequences, and contingencies of knowledge hiding in organizations. This research may draw on empirical studies of related constructs such as delayed information exchange (e.g., Guenter, van Emmerik, Schereurs, 2014) deception (e.g., Levine & Schweitzer, 2015), employee deviance (Aquino, Lewis, & Bradfield, 1999), psychological ownership (e.g., Brown, Crossley, & Robinson, 2014; Peng, 2013), harassment (e.g., Hershcovis, 2011; Raver & Nishii, 2010), and silence (e.g., Brinsfield, 2013). Although the majority of the existing research on knowledge hiding has been conducted at the individual level and on dyadic interactions, knowledge hiding may also exist at
the team level, either within or between teams. Knowledge hiding has generally been studied with self-report scales, but it would be interesting to determine how individuals determine that knowledge hiding has taken place (e.g., what attributions are made when the knowledge hiding behavior is ambiguous)?

We welcome both quantitative and qualitative studies, and especially seek research that uses multiple sources of data, incorporates multiple levels of analyses, uses multiple methods, and is longitudinal. Some research questions of potential interest include but are not limited to:

- What are the effects of distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational (in)justice on knowledge hiding?
- What are the effects of perceived organizational support, organizational commitment, goal setting or motivational processes on knowledge hiding?
- How do different leadership approaches (e.g., transformational leadership, leader-member exchange, abusive supervision) predict knowledge hiding between coworkers and other employees?
- What is the role of individual differences (e.g., personality, self-efficacy) in predicting knowledge hiding, or in moderating the effects of other antecedents?
- What are the effects of knowledge hiding on a hider’s or target’s attitudes towards the hider, coworkers, and the organization?
- How does knowledge hiding affect a target’s job performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, counterproductive workplace behaviors, turnover, and well-being?
- What are the conditions under which knowledge hiding could be less detrimental and/or even beneficial to individuals, teams, or organizations?
- Do organizational or climate and rewards structures predict knowledge hiding or moderate the effects of other antecedents?
- Are there cross-cultural differences in how knowledge hiding is interpreted, or in how it affects interpersonal interactions?

Contributors should note:

- This call is open and competitive, and all submissions will be blind reviewed.
- All submissions must conform to the Journal of Organizational Behavior requirements, including those relating to originality, length, and formatting.
- The guest editors will select papers for the special issue, but submissions may be consideration for other issues in the journal.
- All manuscripts should be submitted via the Journal of Organizational Behavior website.
- The deadline for submissions is December 1, 2017.

If you have question, please contact:

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