1. Introduction

This literature review aims to present the phenomenon of knowledge hiding that has been gaining systematically more research in recent years. Knowledge hiding is generally viewed as harming organizations, and in this particular literature review the focus will be on knowledge hiding performed by employees in an organization. Most of the research aims to encourage managers and organizations alike to recognize the patterns of knowledge hiding and develop environments that facilitate knowledge sharing.

2. Literature review

An organization is like an organism whose flow of information is imperative for its functioning. Whether that flow is facilitated by informational systems or between the organization's workers, everything must be connected and shared at the right time. According to Anand and Hassan (2019), due to the volatility and uncertainty of the business environment, knowledge sharing is valuable because of the competitive advantage it can provide. However, as stated by Connelly and Zweig (2015), many workers are reluctant to share their knowledge with their colleagues despite the organizational benefits of knowledge sharing among employees.

As has been established, knowledge hiding is an intentional attempt by an individual to withhold knowledge (Connelly et al., 2012). Connelly and Zweig (2015) state that even though employees recognize it is advantageous to exchange information, a significant number of workers are reluctant to do it due to perceived personal costs it might have. Thus, Anand and Hassan (2019) summarize the three types of knowledge hiding which were recognized by Connelly et al. (2012): a) rationalized hiding, in which the employee provides justifications for the unavailability of information; b) evasive hiding, withholding essential information from another person; and c) playing dumb, i.e., showing a false lack of knowledge on the subject.

However, further research demonstrates that there are underlying factors that influence individuals' decision to conceal information. Connelly et al. (2012) establish that people are likely to hide knowledge from people they distrust, yet this behavior is also connected to the perception the perpetrator has about the context of the situation. For example, according to the paper by Connelly and Zweig (2015), although understandably, people are more likely to share knowledge when the organizational climate supports it, workers are more likely to be evasive when there is a complex problem or question. Furthermore, they established that knowledge hiding is not always intended to harm the individual or organization. They claim that it is a typical human response to a given situation. Moreover, Connelly and Zweig (2015) hypothesized that people who hid knowledge still viewed themselves as "honest, competent and altruistic" and did not credit their behaviors to the harm done to the interpersonal relationships within a team. Despite that, their field studies rejected that hypothesis. Perpetrators were consciously aware of the deceptive nature of knowledge hiding, but could justify it if there was a perceived personal gain. This claim was disputed in the study by Issac and Baral (2018), who stated that there actually exists a reluctance from the workers to trade required information even when rewarded for that behavior.

Most researchers agree that the organization's environment plays a massive role in people's willingness to share necessary information. A detailed up-close look at the environment that affects knowledge sharing has been done by Farooq and Sultana (2021), who have established a link between abusive supervisors and the employees' tendency to hide knowledge. Due to the mistrust and stress factors associated with abusive workplace environments, employees are more likely to reciprocate with negative behaviors. This study presents the idea that workers are willing to be open, improve their productivity and be more creative when their leaders are democratic. In contrast, when the employees see the management as toxic, they are more likely to hide information. They argue that it all depends heavily on the trust between supervisor and subordinate.

Furthermore, Zhao et al. (2016) examined the relationship between knowledge hiding and workplace ostracism. According to the dictionaries, ostracism refers to intentionally not including someone in a social

activity. Thus, Zhao et al. (2016) collected data from service workers and hypothesized that when individuals believe they are treated badly, they also respond negatively. Similarly, in such a situation, they start believing that ethical standards do not apply to them in the context. Thus, altogether they are most likely to participate in evasive hiding of information and playing dumb. The research done by Zhao et al. (2016) and Ruparel and Choubisa (2020) propose that there should be innovative ways to encourage transparency in organizations. According to Zhao et al. (2016), if employees feel ostracized, they should be given psychological counseling and integrated more into the organization's activities so that they do not feel the need to respond negatively when information sharing is required. Ruparel and Choubisa (2020) suggest that a low task interdependence and more individual ability to make decisions would allow employees to feel comfortable enough to be open in the workplace environment.

3. Conclusion

To conclude, the literature review presented an overview of prominent research in knowledge hiding. Overall, it is believed that psychological factors, individual perceptions, relationships with the supervisors and workplace environments are all sensitive factors that must be balanced to facilitate healthy knowledge sharing. Although, a weakness of the research lies in the generalization of the strategies presented. Thus, it is up to each organization to decide how they will integrate their employees and avoid knowledge hiding.

4. Resources:

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