Personality as a Predictor of Knowledge Hiding Behavior: Case Study of Alpha Electronics

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Abstract : Employees' knowledge hiding behaviors can be detrimental to employees' interpersonal relationships and individual and organizational learning and creativity. However, to the best of the authors' knowledge, the literature on the contingencies, antecedents and outcomes of employees' knowledge hiding behaviors is still in its infancy. On the other hand, not everyone who hides knowledge hides it the same way, as individuals are different, so do their behaviors. This study explores the links between employees' personality traits and their knowledge hiding behaviors. By using a single case study as a research methodology and collecting data through 28 semi-structured interviews from employees working in Alpha Electronics (the pseudo name of the company to ascertain anonymity) operating in Pakistan, we foreground the patterns of relationships between employees' personality traits and knowledge hiding behaviors – rationalized hiding, evasive hiding and playing dumb. Our findings suggest that employees high on extraversion involve in evasive knowledge hiding; while employees low on extraversion (introverts) demonstrate rationalized hiding. Moreover, both extrovert and introvert employees involve in playing dumb in situations that involve risk for their jobs and careers. For instance, when knowledge is requested from their managers, both extrovert and introvert employees tend to play dumb, as in such cases, evasive and rationalized hiding can be harmful to their job and career-related interests and motives. Other than theoretical contributions, the study offers important implications for organizations faced with the challenges of shortage of skills and knowledge.
Keywords : knowledge hiding, personality, rationalized hiding, playing dumb, evasive hiding
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