

Do Perpetrators of Knowledge Hiding Engage in Knowledge Sharing? A Moral Cleansing Perspective

Abdul Karim Khan¹, Samina Quratulain²

^{1,2} College of Business and Economics, United Arab Emirates University

Abstract

Drawing upon moral cleansing theory, we examined how and when individuals' evasive knowledge hiding results in knowledge sharing as a reparative action. In an experimental vignette study and a field study of employees in organizations in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), we examined the mediating influence of loss of moral credits and moral emotions (guilt and sympathy) between knowledge hiding and sharing. We also investigated the moderating role of individuals' moral identity. Specifically, we tested the association between knowledge-hiding behaviors and cognitive (loss of moral credits) and emotional outcomes (guilt and sympathy) in Study 1 (experimental vignette) and the complete theoretical model in Study 2 (field study). Both studies found a positive association between evasive knowledge hiding and loss of moral credit. We found no relationship between evasive knowledge hiding and sympathy in either of the studies. Loss of moral credits mediated the relationship between evasive knowledge hiding and knowledge sharing, but the mediating role of moral emotions was not established. Lastly, moral identity moderated the relationship between evasive knowledge hiding and loss of moral credits at the level of the individual's authority. However, it did not moderate the evasive knowledge hiding and moral emotions relationship (i.e., guilt and sympathy).

Keywords: Knowledge hiding; Knowledge sharing; Guilt; Sympathy; Moral identity