

## Research Paper

# Identification and Prioritization of Factors Affecting Knowledge Concealment By Managers in Guilan University of Medical Sciences by AHP Hierarchical Method



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## ABSTRACT

**Background and Aim** Hiding knowledge in the organization is a new topic in the field of knowledge management. The purpose of this study is to identify and prioritize the factors affecting knowledge concealment by managers in Guilan University of Medical Sciences by AHP hierarchical method.

**Methods & Materials** The research is applied in terms of purpose and based on a qualitative-quantitative approach. The statistical population of the study included philosophical experts in the field of management and experimental experts of the University of Medical Sciences who were selected as a sample by purposive sampling method and snowball technique until the theoretical saturation was reached. The data collection tool was a semi-structured interview. After enumerating the indicators affecting knowledge concealment and then by hierarchical analysis (AHP) method and using Expert Choice11 software, the identified factors were prioritized.

**Ethical Considerations** In this research, prior to interviewing the experts, written consent was received from them regarding the confidentiality of the research (Code: IR.IAU.LIAU.REC.1401.002).

**Results** The research findings showed that among the 7 effective factors considered by experts, the power-seeking factor has the greatest impact on knowledge concealment by managers in the University of Medical Sciences and emotional intelligence has the least weight or importance.

**Conclusion** Accordingly, by reducing power-seeking, in addition to creating a transparent and reliable atmosphere, it is possible to establish knowledge sharing in the University of Medical Sciences.

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## Extended Abstract

### Introduction

**H**iding knowledge in the organization is a new issue in the subject of knowledge management. In many cases, the knowledge created due to the lack of detailed mechanisms remains hidden and is not exploited for the benefit of the organization. Thus, according to the opinion of many experts in this field, the hiding of knowledge mostly happens due to the lack of organizational facilities. Investigating the existence of deliberate efforts by organization members to hide knowledge and its roots in the organization is very important. Hiding knowledge, which is considered an obstacle to knowledge sharing, is one of the most complex obstacles in diagnosis, treatment, and countermeasures. The purpose of this research was to identify and prioritize the factors affecting knowledge concealment by managers in the Gilan University of Medical Sciences based on the hierarchical AHP method.

### Materials and Methods

This research has a mixed approach (qualitative-quantitative) and is consecutive, and it is also considered descriptive in terms of its purpose. The statistical population of the research included philosophical experts (professors and specialists in the field of public administration) and experimental experts (professors and faculty members and presidents of the University of Medical Sciences) of the whole country, who were selected as a sample by purposive sampling and based on the rule of theoretical saturation. Based on the paired comparison questionnaire, the elements of the model [12] were examined, and in the next step, the elements of the model were prioritized based on the hierarchical technique (AHP) and using the Expert Choice11 software. After an in-depth study in the area of knowledge concealment and creating the necessary knowledge and preparation in the researcher regarding the subject, a paired comparison questionnaire was distributed among the experts, and after collecting and creating a satisfactory map the dimensions and specifying the nature of the dimensions, the predominance that each set of items had as a dimension was determined based on the research literature. In the next step, using the hierarchical analysis, the questionnaire was distributed among 15 experts and assessed using the Expert Choice11 software.

### Results

After collecting the questionnaires and creating a satisfactory map of the dimensions and specifying the nature of the dimensions, the dominant aspect that each set of items had as a dimension was determined based on the research literature. In the next step, using a hierarchical analysis, the questionnaires were distributed among 15 experts, and using Expert Choice11 software, indicators were prioritized. The results of the questionnaires were obtained according to Table 2. According to the obtained results, from the experts' point of view, the component of emotional intelligence had the lowest priority with a weight of 0.135 and the component of seeking power had the highest priority with a weight of 0.561. In general, power-seeking means any form of action by operational officials that is considered an unauthorized or illegitimate use of power based on corporate laws. Power seeking is a tool, by which people try to dominate another person, group, or company in order to gain personal interest for themselves with the desired groups and also maintain personal power. By examining the relationship between moral climate, power-seeking, and leadership style, it was determined that power-seeking can greatly influence the change of leaders' styles and methods. Basically, political activity is inherent in all interactions. Therefore, it is considered one of the constituent elements of organizations.

### Discussion

High levels of political behavior in the organization harm the performance of the organization. As it is interpreted as an indicator of the existence of a problem with the leadership or management of the organization, it harms the social relations between the members of the organization, the relationship between the employees, and the management. It intensifies mistrust, damages social bonds in the organization, blocks communication channels, and causes a tendency to go beyond the job description and organizational citizenship behaviors in the organization. As a result, the commitment and performance of such an organization may decrease drastically.

Also, emotional intelligence has the least importance in hiding knowledge in this organization. This issue can be justified in this way that from the point of view of the experts of this organization, emotional intelligence as a capability in controlling and managing individual emotions does not play an important role in hiding knowledge. Thus, it can be said that emotional intelligence is not an important component for predicting the concealment of knowledge in the personal relationships of people at the Gilan University of Medical Sciences. According to the

weighting order, it was found that information protection and unfavorable norms leading to the emergence of secretive behavior in the field of knowledge development in this organization have more power after power-seeking. Also, the issue of information security and information preservation and the lack of correct knowledge of managers and agents of the Gilan University of Medical Sciences caused the removal of the information important for employees in the field of facilitating their work processes due to not having the right knowledge in the field of information filtering due to the lack of proper knowledge in the field of information filtering leading to the creation of an alien and outdated organizational structure.

## **Ethical Considerations**

### **Compliance with ethical guidelines**

In this research, prior to interviewing the experts, written consent was received from them regarding the confidentiality of the research (Code of ethics: IR.IAU.LIAU.REC.1401.002)

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### **Authors' contributions**

Conceptualization: All authors. Research and sampling method: Fereshteh Akbarzadeh; Data analysis: Fereshteh Akbarzadeh, text writing, and revision: all authors.

### **Conflicts of interest**

The authors of the article did not declare any conflict of interest.