

## Say no to knowledge hiding: can ethical leadership help prevent it?

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### Article Information

#### Article history:

Accepted: July 2024

Approved: August 2024

Published: September 2024

#### Keywords:

knowledge sharing climate

knowledge hiding


ethical behavior

higher education

### Abstract

*This study was conducted due to the scarcity of literature examining the impact of knowledge sharing climate on knowledge hiding. In line with that, many previous studies have focused on positive ethical leadership as an antecedent of knowledge hiding. However, no one has tested the moderating role of ethical leadership in helping to prevent knowledge-hiding intentions. This study aims to examine the influence of knowledge-sharing climate in organizations on knowledge-hiding behavior in the higher education sector and to test the moderating effect of ethical leadership in strengthening the influence of knowledge-sharing culture on knowledge-hiding behavior in the higher education sector. Data were collected from 156 lecturers from various state and private universities in Indonesia through a survey method. Data analysis was conducted using the SEM-PLS technique. The results showed a negative influence of knowledge sharing climate on knowledge hiding. Ethical leadership was proven to moderate the relationship based on the perceptions of several sample groups, except for the sample group with the generation category. This study contributes theoretically to complement the still limited literature that reviews the impact of a knowledge-sharing climate in preventing the emergence of knowledge-hiding behavior. Practically, the results suggest the need to implement ethical leadership to minimize the knowledge-hiding behavior of lecturers in higher education.*

How to Cite: Mujib, M., & Ulfa, A. K. (2024). Say no to knowledge hiding: can ethical leadership help prevent it?. *Jurnal Penelitian Ekonomi Dan Bisnis*, 9(2), 129–140. Retrieved from <https://publikasi.dinus.ac.id/index.php/jpeb/article/view/11601>

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ISSN

2442-5028 (print) 2460-4291

(online)

DOI: [10.33633/jpeb.v9i2.11601](https://doi.org/10.33633/jpeb.v9i2.11601)



## INTRODUCTION

Society Era 5.0. requires individuals to have the ability to collaborate to support success in work and career, one of which is collaboration in sharing knowledge. Knowledge sharing is beneficial for individual employees and organizational continuity because it can increase organizational effectiveness and efficiency and encourage the creation of new knowledge, innovation, and organizational growth (Anand et al., 2022). However, not all individuals have the desire to share the knowledge they have. Instead, they carry out what is known as hiding knowledge. Knowledge hiding refers to the intention of withholding or hiding knowledge from others (Xia et al., 2022). Even though knowledge hiding is a low-intensity deviant behavior in the workplace, this unethical act must be avoided because it is dangerous for other organizational members and even for organizational performance (Ghani et al., 2020; Koay & Lim, 2022).

Research by Peng (2013) states that around 50% of employees intend to withhold, mislead, or hide knowledge from others. They mainly do this to protect their knowledge, maintain expertise dominance, and defensive awareness (Huo et al., 2016). It becomes ironic when it occurs in academic circles, which should act as the leading agents in transferring knowledge to students and society in general. The function of universities as institutions that accommodate scholars in collecting and disseminating knowledge will not run optimally if many academicians practice knowledge hiding. Knowledge hiding in higher education warrants investigation because it is not a trivial problem that will disappear simply by promoting knowledge sharing. However, knowledge-hiding behavior involves complex psychological motives and diverse organizational conditions (Ghani et al., 2020).

Investigation of knowledge-hiding behavior among higher education academics needs to be carried out to plan anticipatory steps to prevent it from hampering knowledge development. However, studies that focus on knowledge-hiding behavior in the higher education sector are still minimal, not as many as in other sectors such as knowledge management, the private sector, information technologies companies, and high technology and R&D firms (Anand et al., 2022; Ghani et al., 2020). Several studies in the higher education sector have been carried out, but there is still very little exploration of factors that have the potential to prevent the emergence of knowledge-hidden behavior, especially among lecturers. Demirkasimoglu's (2016) study only explored the relationship between personality traits among academics. Ghani et al. (2020) examined the role of interactional justice in the educational process between supervisors and students and the moderating role of professional commitment to knowledge-hiding. Research by Xu and Jiesen (2022) took students as objects in testing knowledge hiding in dual method learning on their performance. This study focuses on investigating knowledge hiding in the higher education sector, specifically using lecturers at universities in Indonesia as objects.

Knowledge hiding in the academic world can be influenced by motivational factors from three levels: individual, personal, and organizational (Zutshi et al., 2021). A knowledge-sharing climate can be an organizational condition that can prevent the emergence of knowledge-hiding intentions and behavior among organizational members. A culture of knowledge sharing is a prerequisite for successfully initiating knowledge management in organizations (Jasimuddin & Saci, 2022). A knowledge-sharing climate in an organization will naturally stimulate each individual to open up to each other and exchange their knowledge so that individuals will not be encouraged to engage in knowledge-hiding behavior (Ulfa et al., 2023). As far as we know, no studies have explored the effects of a knowledge-sharing climate in negating knowledge hiding. In this research, we propose a knowledge-sharing climate as a factor that is thought to prevent knowledge hiding from being tested empirically, according to the suggestions of Xiao and Cooke (2019).

Another condition that has the potential to minimize knowledge-hiding behavior is leadership practices. Leaders can lead their members to share knowledge to support innovation and organizational development, collaborating to exchange ideas, concepts, and knowledge, indirectly reducing the potential for knowledge-hiding intentions. Ethical leadership is considered appropriate for reducing knowledge-hiding intentions that conform to norms through individual actions and interpersonal relationships and promotes this behavior to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making (Yadi et al., 2022). Many studies place ethical leadership as an antecedent of knowledge hiding (Abdullah et al., 2019; Anser et al., 2021; Koay & Lim, 2022; Yadi et al., 2022), but no one has tested it as a reinforcing variable to prevent its emergence knowledge hiding. We assume ethical leadership as a moderator variable that strengthens the influence of the knowledge-sharing climate on knowledge hiding.

This study is built on the COR Theory developed by Hobfoll (1989) to understand more deeply why someone hides their knowledge. Based on COR Theory, individuals will try to obtain, maintain, protect, and defend resources that they consider valuable (Hobfoll, 2001). Individuals try to hide or defend valuable resources when facing threats from others (Hobfoll, 1989). These resources refer to objects, individual characteristics, conditions, or energy that are valuable in their own right or that are valuable because they facilitate the attainment or protection of valuable resources (Hobfoll, 2001). Knowledge as a resource is considered to be owned by others when someone shares it, leading them to adopt knowledge hiding as a resource-protecting strategy (Feng & Wang, 2019).

This research has two objectives. First, we examine the influence of the knowledge-sharing climate in the organization on knowledge-hiding behavior in the higher education sector. Second, we examine the moderating influence of ethical leadership in strengthening the influence of a knowledge-sharing climate on knowledge-hiding behavior in the higher education sector. Testing was also carried out in multigroups to determine the differences in moderation effects in sample groups from two different institutions, namely state and private universities in Indonesia. In summary, this research sheds light on the influence of organizational factors in the form of a knowledge-sharing climate in preventing the emergence of knowledge-hiding behavior. Furthermore, the research results will support the need to implement ethical leadership to minimize the knowledge-hiding behavior of lecturers in higher education.

Knowledge hiding refers to a person's efforts to withhold or hide knowledge from others (Connelly et al., 2012; Demirkasimoglu, 2016). It is different from a similar term, Knowledge Hoarding, wherein the concept of Knowledge Hoarding is that someone intentionally hides knowledge relevant to other people because they do not receive any requests from others (Evans et al., 2015). Even though knowledge hiding is considered the opposite of knowledge sharing, knowledge hiding is done consciously for particular purposes and because of certain factors (Xia et al., 2022). Knowledge-hiding behavior is indicated as evasive hiding, playing dumb, and rationalized hiding (Connelly et al., 2012). Evasive hiding means someone provides incorrect information or promises to provide a complete answer later, even though there is no intention to provide it or the intention is only to delay as much as possible (Anand et al., 2022). Playing dumb occurs due to a lack of intention to help and pretending not to understand what the other person is saying (Connelly et al., 2012; Xia et al., 2022). Rationalized hiding refers to a situation where a person rationalizes the justification for failure by not wanting to provide knowledge that others request (Anand et al., 2022; Zutshi et al., 2021). Oliveira et al. (2021) reporting various previously hidden knowledge of organizational factors (e.g., organizational justice, abusive supervision, ethical leadership, organizational culture), job-related factors (e.g., task autonomy), and personal factors (e.g., psychological ownership, personality, and work involvement).

Organizational culture is the employee's perception of their work atmosphere and environment and reflects how employees describe how their organization affects their work (Kim & Park, 2020). The organizational culture of an organization reflects how the work atmosphere or climate supports the conduciveness and comfort of all members in working. Organizational climate plays a vital role in shaping member behavior and influencing their perceptions in knowledge management (Radaelli et al., 2011). Organizations must develop a knowledge-sharing climate to shape positive employee behavior in exchanging knowledge (Kim & Park, 2020). Knowledge-sharing climate refers to a set of organizational values, core beliefs, norms, and social rules that serve as common references in the process of creating, sharing, and applying knowledge (Ferreira et al. in Lei et al., 2019). Building an organizational climate where knowledge sharing is enhanced and encouraged will make members more likely to convey their knowledge to and learn from others (Song et al., 2015). Organizations need to focus on three things that encourage a conducive knowledge-sharing climate: fairness, innovation, and affiliation (Bock et al., 2014). Fair and just organizational policies will build trust among employees and can motivate employees to share knowledge (Al-Kurdi et al., 2020; Bock et al., 2014). Trust between members to share knowledge will be built if the organization values their creativity and innovation (Al-Kurdi et al., 2020). In addition, providing organizational resources as tools and instruments for the creation and exchange of knowledge is a form of support for creating an organizational knowledge-sharing climate (Radaelli et al., 2011).

Ethical leadership. Ethical leadership is a way of leading based on norms through personal actions and interpersonal relationships and promoting such behavior to its members through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making (Ko et al., 2018). Gea (2014) defines

ethical leadership as a term in which someone uses ethical considerations and makes them the basis for making a decision or action. It can be concluded that ethical leadership considers ethical values as the basis for decision-making, which is related to the primary responsibilities of a leader facing conflict between employees and can show how the exemplary leadership is to be carried out. Ethical leadership manifests in personality and moral behavior in personal life, which influences its members to uphold ethics and behave morally (Ko et al., 2018). A person is considered to be an ethical leader when he/she focuses on two things, namely moral person and moral manager. Moral person refers to the personality traits and characteristics possessed by the leader, while moral manager is the ethical behavior demonstrated by the leader in the workplace (Koay & Lim, 2022). This emphasis on moral standards and moral management distinguishes ethical leadership from other types of leadership, such as transformational, spiritual, and authentic leadership. (Ko et al., 2018). Ethical leaders demonstrate honesty, fairness, responsibility, and concern for their members' personal and professional needs (Brown et al., 2005). Several studies have found positive associations between ethical leadership and employee work attitudes and behaviors (e.g., subordinate ethical behavior, extra-role performance, and knowledge sharing) while preventing various negative outcomes (e.g., knowledge hiding, unethical behavior, and moral disengagement). (Abdullah et al., 2019; Anser et al., 2021; Koay & Lim, 2022; Rahaman et al., 2020).

Knowledge-hiding behavior among academics will slow down knowledge development in higher education institutions. The primary role of lecturers in teaching, research, and community service involves the dissemination and acceptance of high-level knowledge by various parties (e.g., colleagues, students, and the community) so that knowledge-hiding behavior will hinder the implementation of these roles (Zutshi et al., 2021). Based on COR Theory, individuals will try to acquire and maintain resources and protect them from the threat of loss in the work environment (Hobfoll, 2001). Moreover, if they face continuous competition and comparison with their colleagues, it will lead them to a lack of resources (Li & Chen, 2018). In the higher education workplace, each individual competes with each other to increase their knowledge resources. If they have limited knowledge resources and are faced with this competitive condition, it will encourage them to implement strategies to maintain their position by hiding their knowledge resources (Guo et al., 2021; Yao et al., 2020).

On the other hand, organizations can help their members develop their skills and contribute to increasing their knowledge (Lee et al., 2022). It is in line with one of the essential principles of COR Theory, namely the concept of the passage-ways, which states that "environmental conditions that support, maintain, enrich, and protect individual resources" can change the impact of resource loss and result in resource gain (Hobfoll, 2011). In the workplace of higher education institutions, this supportive environment can be developed by promoting a climate of knowledge sharing. Organizational culture is vital in shaping member behavior and influencing their perceptions of knowledge management (Radaelli et al., 2011). Organizations need to build a knowledge-sharing climate to shape positive employee behavior in knowledge exchange (Kim & Park, 2020). In such a climate, the intention of knowledge hiding will not be beneficial for hiders because they will lose the opportunity to develop competence and improve the quality of their knowledge by sharing knowledge with their colleagues (Černe et al., 2014). The development of this positive climate will build a perception among members of the organization that knowledge hiding is a negative behavior that prevents individuals from gaining mutual benefits through knowledge exchange (Černe et al., 2014)

A knowledge-sharing climate can be built in three ways: justice, innovation, and affiliation (Bock et al., 2014). Fair organizational practices will build trust among employees and can motivate employees to share knowledge (Al-Kurdi et al., 2020; Bock et al., 2014). Innovativeness will build trust between organizational members because they believe that the organization values creativity and innovation (Al-Kurdi et al., 2020), encouraging individuals to collaborate by sharing knowledge. A knowledge-sharing climate is likely to reduce the possibility of knowledge-hiding behavior. The organizational climate will influence their decision to share or store their knowledge with others (Chatterjee et al., 2021); if the organization has a conducive climate, then they will be more open to exchanging the knowledge they have. So, we draw the following hypothesis:

COR theory argues that positive emotions and positive behaviors are contagious and transmitted from one person to another (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Based on this concept, ethical leadership traits – honesty, a sense of responsibility, and concern for others – can be transmitted from leaders to their followers (Anser et al., 2021). Furthermore, according to Anser et al. (2021),

employees who show concern for others and demonstrate a sense of responsibility towards their colleagues are more likely to demonstrate positive intentions to fulfill knowledge requests rather than withhold knowledge from them. Through the COR lens, we argue that ethical leader behavior can be understood as resource pathways that assist in obtaining new personal resources. It aligns with the premise of COR Theory, which states that supportive environmental conditions can modify the impact of resource loss and result in resource gain (Hobfoll, 2011). Ethical leaders will transmit positive behaviors in the form of respect, fair treatment, and assurance of personal and professional support, resulting in employees preserving and building new additional resources, both psychological (e.g., self-esteem) and personal (e.g., relationships) (Agarwal et al., 2022). The attention and encouragement received from ethical superiors allow employees to benefit from additional resources, thereby preventing unethical behavior such as knowledge hiding (Hobfoll & Shirom, 2000).

Ethical leadership has many benefits for both subordinates and the organization as a whole. Some empirically proven outcomes of ethical leadership practices include the ethical behavior of employees, employee work outcomes, and family life satisfaction to company-level outcomes (Ko et al., 2018). In the context of knowledge management in organizations, ethical leaders have also been shown to contribute to knowledge sharing within the organization. This leadership practice is carried out by removing structural barriers to knowledge sharing, fostering trusting relationships in the workplace, and developing employee anticipation of fair reciprocity for their contributions and sharing of resources (Bavik et al., 2018). Through a series of leadership actions, ethical leadership can also prevent members from engaging in knowledge hiding (Anser et al., 2021). To avoid knowledge-hidden behavior, organizational leaders must encourage creating a knowledge-sharing culture. The formation of a knowledge-sharing climate can also be encouraged through leadership practices by 1) developing a common language that can support knowledge exchange, 2) encouraging members to experiment and apply new ideas, and 3) treating mistakes as opportunities to learn, and 4) encouraging a more informal knowledge sharing culture among members (Lei et al., 2019). Ethical leaders can strengthen the knowledge-sharing climate among their members with their influence, ultimately eroding the intensity of hidden knowledge within individuals.

We assume that the influence of the climate of disseminating knowledge in the institutional environment of higher education in preventing the intensity of knowledge hiding among lecturers will be even more decisive with the example of ethical leaders. Furthermore, we assume that the level of strength of leadership influence will differ based on the perceptions of lecturers with varying backgrounds, such as age, the context of their institutional form, gender, and length of service. Therefore, we hypothesize:

- H1: Knowledge-Sharing Climate negatively affects Knowledge Hiding behaviour.
- H2a: Ethical Leadership moderates the negative influence of Knowledge Sharing Climate on Knowledge Hiding. This negative influence can be strengthened by the presence of high Ethical Leadership. The moderating effect of Ethical Leadership is higher in the group of lecturers from state universities
- H2b: Ethical Leadership moderates the negative influence of Knowledge Sharing Climate on Knowledge Hiding, this negative influence can be strengthened by the presence of high Ethical Leadership. The moderating effect of Ethical Leadership is higher in the group of lecturers from the millennial generation
- H2c: Ethical Leadership moderates the negative influence of Knowledge Sharing Climate on Knowledge Hiding. This negative influence can be strengthened by the presence of high Ethical Leadership. The moderating effect of Ethical Leadership is higher in the male lecturer group
- H2d: Ethical Leadership moderates the negative influence of Knowledge Sharing Climate on Knowledge Hiding, this negative influence can be strengthened by the presence of high Ethical Leadership. The moderating effect of Ethical Leadership is higher in the group of lecturers who have worked for less than five years

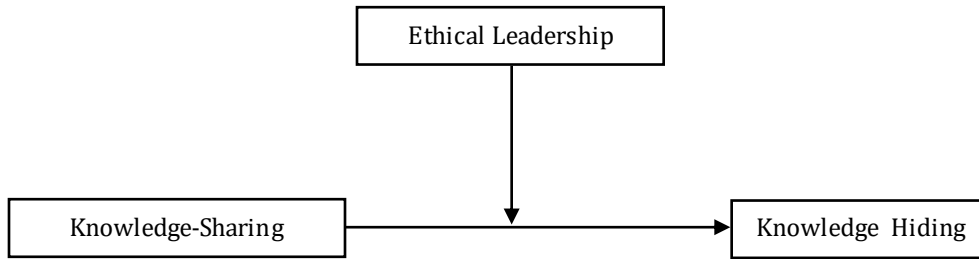


Figure 1. Research Framework

**METHOD**

This research was designed to test the influence of the independent variable (knowledge sharing climate) on the dependent variable (knowledge hiding) and the moderating role of ethical leadership in this relationship. The quantitative research data was obtained by distributing self-administered questionnaires to respondents. The sample was selected using probability sampling techniques from 156 lecturers at several private and state universities in Indonesia. This sample size meets the minimum requirements for data analysis using the SEM-PLS method according to the suggestions of Hair et al. (2010). The data was analyzed using the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) technique, which is usually used to analyze multiple variable models that involve the moderator variable, with the help of the WarpPLS 8.0 application.

All variables are measured on a 1-5 Likert scale, where 1 means strongly disagree, and 5 means strongly agree. The measurement of the knowledge-sharing climate variable adopts an instrument developed by Faraj and Sproull (2000), which consists of 4 items. The instrument from Peng (2013), which consists of 3 items, is used to measure the knowledge-hiding variable. The ethical leadership variable was measured using a 10-item instrument from Brown et al. (2005).

The samples obtained were dominated by 96 (61.6%) males and 60 (38.4%) females. Respondents' age group varied from 20 to 30 years (49.3%), 31 to 40 (35.9%), 41 to 50 (10.2%), and more than 50 (4.4%). They came from state universities (48 samples or 30.8%) and private universities (108 samples or 69.2%). Their working tenure ranged from <5 years (64.1%), 6 to 10 years (16.7%), 11 to 15 years (13.4%) and 16 to 20 years (5.8%). Most of their educational background is master's graduates (90.3%), followed by doctoral graduates at 9.7%.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**Validity and Reliability Testing**

Table 1 displays a summary of the model measurement results, and Table 2 shows a summary of the discriminant test results. All variables have Cronbach Alpha and composite reliability values greater than 0.7, indicating that all instruments have consistency (Hair et al., 2010). The results show that the loading factor value for all instrument items is above 0.7, and the AVE value is greater than 0.5, so there is no problem with convergent validity. All instruments do not have problems with discriminant validity, as indicated by the square root AVE value for each instrument, which is higher than the correlation with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 1. Measurement Model

| Construcs                 | Items | Factor Loadings | Cronbah's Alpha | Composite Reliability | AVE   |
|---------------------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------|
| Knowledge-Sharing Climate | KSC1  | 0.861           | 0.779           | 0.858                 | 0.601 |
|                           | KSC2  | 0.733           |                 |                       |       |
|                           | KSC3  | 0.778           |                 |                       |       |
|                           | KSC4  | 0.918           |                 |                       |       |
| Ethical Leadership        | EL1   | 0.912           | 0.946           | 0.954                 | 0.678 |
|                           | EL2   | 0.698           |                 |                       |       |
|                           | EL3   | 0.792           |                 |                       |       |
|                           | EL4   | 0.845           |                 |                       |       |

|                  |      |       |       |       |       |
|------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                  | EL5  | 0.865 |       |       |       |
|                  | EL6  | 0.788 |       |       |       |
|                  | EL7  | 0.786 |       |       |       |
|                  | EL8  | 0.833 |       |       |       |
|                  | EL9  | 0.856 |       |       |       |
|                  | EL10 | 0.895 |       |       |       |
| Knowledge Hiding | KH1  | 0.919 | 0.741 | 0.854 | 0.664 |
|                  | KH2  | 0.872 |       |       |       |
|                  | KH3  | 0.768 |       |       |       |

Source: primary data processed (2024)

**Tabel 2.** Discriminant Validity (Fornell & Lacker criteria)

|                           | 1            | 2            | 3            | 4      | 5      | 6      | 7      |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Knowledge Sharing Climate | <b>0.776</b> |              |              |        |        |        |        |
| Ethical Leadership        | 0.423        | <b>0.823</b> |              |        |        |        |        |
| Knowledge Hiding          | -0.420       | -0.238       | <b>0.815</b> |        |        |        |        |
| Age                       | -0.141       | -0.098       | -0.130       |        |        |        |        |
| Gender                    | 0.017        | 0.094        | -0.098       | -0.078 |        |        |        |
| Education                 | 0.088        | 0.162        | -0.111       | 0.434  | 0.055  |        |        |
| Work Tenure               | -0.071       | -0.001       | -0.062       | 0.777  | -0.022 | 0.232  |        |
| Institutional Origin      | -0.165       | -0.308       | 0.100        | -0.008 | -0.101 | -0.018 | -0.192 |

Note: The square root value of AVE is indicated in bold numbers. Source: primary data processed (2024)

The goodness of fit of a model is estimated using the SEM-PLS technique with WarpPLS software by the criterion suggested by Kock (2021). Several indicators indicate the goodness of the model; APC, ARS, and AARS values, all of which should be significant. It concluded to be a fit model if the value of AVIF and AFVIF is less than 5 and the GoF value is up to 0.36. Results show that APC, ARS, and AARS were significant; the AVIF value was 1,261, AFVIF of 1,769, and GoF of 0.445. All these data indicate that the model is fit. The summary of the model fit test results is shown in Table 3.

**Tabel 3.** Results test for Model Fit

| Indicators | Value    | Requirements  | Note         |
|------------|----------|---|--------------|
| APC        | 0.261*** | P sig.  | Accepted     |
| ARS        | 0.236*** | P sig.  | Accepted     |
| AARS       | 0.226*** | P sig.  | Accepted     |
| AVIF       | 1.140    | Accepted if $\leq 5$ , ideal value = $\leq 3.3$                                 | Ideal        |
| AFVIF      | 1.229    | Accepted if $\leq 5$ , ideal value = $\leq 3.3$                                 | Ideal        |
| GoF        | 0.416    | <i>Small</i> $\geq 0.1$ , <i>Medium</i> $\geq 0.25$ , <i>Strong</i> $\geq 0.36$ | Strong Model |

Note: \*\*\*P<.001, n= 156. Source: primary data processed (2024)

### Hyphotesis Testing

We tested the hypothesis by first testing the direct influence of knowledge sharing climate on knowledge hiding (H1). Moreover, a multigroup analysis technique was used to analyze the moderating role of ethical leadership on several sample groups (H2a-d). The sample groups analyzed include age, gender, institutional origin and work tenure.

Hypothesis 1 states that knowledge-sharing climate has a negative effect on knowledge hiding. The results show that the path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) is -0.444 with a significance of <0.001, so H1 is supported. This means that a more conducive climate of knowledge sharing built in an organization will reduce individuals' intentions to hide knowledge. In the context of a higher education institution's workplace, a sporty climate and upholding the exchange of knowledge will prevent lecturers from hiding their knowledge from colleagues because it is considered to be detrimental to the hider. Hypothesis 2a assumes that ethical leadership moderates the negative influence of knowledge sharing climate on knowledge hiding. The moderating effect of ethical leadership in the group of lecturers from state universities has a value of -0.228 with a p-value of 0.045, so H2a is

supported. This result means that the perception of organizational members towards their ethical leaders will strengthen the influence of the developing knowledge-sharing climate to inhibit members' knowledge-hiding intentions. The higher level of moderation effect in the sample group from state universities is likely due to the encouragement of Indonesian government regulations that require institutional leaders to act under the code of ethics that binds them, causing positive perceptions of lecturers towards their leaders. H2b, which assumes that the moderating effect of ethical leadership is higher in the group of lecturers from the millennial generation, is not supported because the results show a moderation effect value of -0.050, but the p-value is not significant. This finding probably occurred because the sample of lecturers from the millennial generation was not very interested in being open and sharing their knowledge with others because they had a stronger sense of territoriality, even though ethical leaders had encouraged them to build a climate of knowledge-sharing.

The proposed H2c that the moderating effect of ethical leadership is higher in the male lecturer group is supported by the results of data analysis ( $\beta = -0.175$ ,  $p = 0.038$ ). This means that the perception of ethical leadership will strengthen the influence of a knowledge-sharing climate in reducing the intention of knowledge hiding, which is more felt by male samples. This could be because male lecturers find it easier to assess ethical leaders as role models who arouse their interest in not wanting to hide knowledge. H2d states that the moderating effect of ethical leadership is higher in the group of lecturers with less than five years of service. The results show that the value of the moderating effect of ethical leadership in the group of lecturers with less than five years of service is higher ( $\beta = -0.184$ ,  $p = 0.028$ ) than in the group of lecturers with more than five years of service ( $\beta = -0.170$ ,  $p = 0.090$ ), thus H2d is supported. This shows that the longer a person works in an organization, the more they will experience ethical leadership practices from their leaders, increasing the reinforcement level for not doing knowledge hiding. A summary of the hypothesis test results is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Summary of Hypotheses Test Result

| Path                            | Hypotheses | SE    | $\beta$ | P value | Remarks       |
|---------------------------------|------------|-------|---------|---------|---------------|
| KSC → KH                        | H1         | 0.073 | -0.444  | <0.001  | Supported     |
| KSC → KH*EL                     |            |       |         |         |               |
| <i>Institutional type group</i> | H2a        |       |         |         | Supported     |
| state universities              |            | 0.132 | -0.228  | 0.045   |               |
| private universities            |            | 0.093 | 0.126   | 0.089   |               |
| <i>Generation group</i>         | H2b        |       |         |         | Not Supported |
| gen X                           |            | 0.106 | 0.209   | 0.206   |               |
| gen millennial                  |            | 0.086 | -0.050  | 0.281   |               |
| <i>Gender group</i>             | H2c        |       |         |         | Supported     |
| male                            |            | 0.097 | -0.175  | 0.038   |               |
| female                          |            | 0.016 | 0.298   | 0.006   |               |
| <i>Work tenure group</i>        | H2d        |       |         |         | Supported     |
| <5 years                        |            | 0.095 | -0.184  | 0.028   |               |
| >5 years                        |            | 0.126 | -0.170  | 0.090   |               |

Source: primary data processed (2024)

The results of data analysis support the first hypothesis, namely that knowledge sharing climate has a negative effect on knowledge hiding. These findings confirm the research results of Radaelli et al. (2011) and Chatterjee et al. (2021), who found a negative influence of knowledge sharing climate on knowledge hiding. This result aligns with the passage-way point view of COR Theory, where environmental conditions that support, maintain, enrich, and protect individual resources will change the impact of resource loss and result in resource acquisition (Hobfoll, 2011). A supportive environment in an organization can be demonstrated by helping its members develop skills and contributing to increasing their knowledge (Lee et al., 2022) so that they will not intend to hide their knowledge because they will get replacement resources in the form of new experiences, skills, and knowledge that they will receive from their colleagues. The climate of knowledge sharing as a supportive condition can be formed from fair organizational practices in exchanging information that will build trust among employees to share knowledge. Innovation carried out by members will build their trust because they believe that the organization values creativity and innovation (Al-



Kurdi et al., 2020). Apart from that, knowledge management in organizations to counter knowledge-hiding behavior can be built by prioritizing a "knowledge-centered culture" and a collaborative culture at the organizational level (Lei et al., 2019). It will encourage individuals to collaborate and increase the intensity of knowledge sharing. Furthermore, an organizational climate that supports collectivity and collaboration to share knowledge between members will encourage organizational learning by encouraging fellow members to discuss their ideas (Kim & Park, 2020). In other words, the more conducive a culture of knowledge sharing that develops in an organization, the lower the intention of its members to carry out knowledge hiding.

The results show that the moderation hypothesis played by ethical leadership in strengthening the influence of the knowledge-sharing climate on knowledge hiding is supported in the sample groups of institution type, gender, and tenure. Different results were obtained in the sample group of generations, where no mediation role was found in the relationship between knowledge-sharing climate and knowledge hiding. This finding complements the results of previous studies that have provided empirical evidence of the relationship between ethical leadership and knowledge hiding (i.e., Abdullah et al., 2019; Anser et al., 2021; Koay & Lim, 2022). Unlike previous studies that place ethical leadership as an antecedent of knowledge hiding, this study proposes ethical leadership as a moderator variable. It implies that ethical leadership will strengthen an organizational culture that supports knowledge sharing and reduce the intention of members of the organization to hide knowledge. The moral characteristics demonstrated by leaders by emphasizing honesty, fairness, and responsibility will be a model for members to follow to build an ethical organizational culture. This underscores the significant role of leaders in shaping an ethical organizational culture, inspiring a sense of positivity in employees' minds, fostering good relationships, and encouraging knowledge sharing and other experiences (Mohsin et al., 2021). Another reinforcement that can be done by leaders to avoid potential employee knowledge hiding behavior is to encourage a more informal knowledge sharing climate among employees (Lei et al., 2019). This finding also confirms the premise of the COR theory that positive emotions and behaviors will cross over and be transmitted from one person to another (Hobfoll et al., 2018). The attention and encouragement of ethical leadership transmit positive employee attitudes, one of which is wanting to share the knowledge they have (Hobfoll & Shirom, 2000).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study aimed to examine the effect of the knowledge-sharing climate in organizations on knowledge-hiding behavior in higher education institutions. The study results provide empirical evidence of the negative influence of the sharing climate on knowledge hiding with samples of lecturers at universities in Indonesia. These findings indicate that organizations need to strive to create a work environment that supports an atmosphere of knowledge sharing among its members, which will reduce the intention of each individual to engage in knowledge hiding. This study also achieved the second research objective by supporting the hypothesis stating the moderating role of ethical leadership in the negative influence of knowledge sharing climate and knowledge hiding. Of the four derived moderation hypotheses proposed, only one hypothesis was rejected: the moderating effect of ethical leadership in the relationship in sample groups of different generations. It means that ethical leadership is perceived to strengthen the conducive effect of a knowledge-sharing climate in negating the knowledge hidden by most sample groups.

The findings of this study have several theoretical and practical implications. First, these findings enrich the knowledge management literature by examining potential factors that inhibit the emergence of knowledge hiding in individual members of an organization in the form of a knowledge-sharing climate. It can be a new insight that complements the results of previous studies that are still minimal in exploring the antecedents of knowledge hiding in the context of organizational support, such as those conducted by Radaelli et al. (2011). Second, this study is the first to compare organizational members' perceptions of ethical leadership played by their leaders with different sample group backgrounds. The results show interesting insights from each group in perceiving the influence of ethical leadership combined with a knowledge-sharing climate in preventing members from hiding knowledge. Third, this study confirms the model proposed by Oliveira et al. (2021) by providing empirical evidence that a knowledge-sharing climate serves as organizational motivation associated with knowledge hiding.

For managerial practice, this study opens up new insights into how the phenomenon of knowledge hiding occurs in higher education institutions, an ironic thing that should not be practiced by lecturers as knowledge carriers in the central circle where knowledge is collected and shared. Therefore, leaders of higher education institutions need to eliminate the barriers to knowledge exchange by creating a conducive climate for knowledge exchange and fostering them to act as leaders who always prioritize ethics and morals. It also needs to be strengthened by regulations from national-level higher education managers, especially in Indonesia, which regulates standard operational procedures for creating a culture of knowledge sharing in higher education environments, both in state and private institutions. In addition, HRM managers in other business sectors also need to ensure that their employees do not hide knowledge by facilitating a climate of knowledge sharing to gain benefits in the form of ever-increasing knowledge resources.

This study has several limitations, including the low response rate of the research sample. Due to the thousands of higher education institutions registered with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, the generalization of the study results will be more robust if the sample is increased and expanded from universities with different formats through more appropriate sampling techniques. Moreover, this study only involves two variables tested as antecedents of knowledge hiding. Including more variables studied will provide abundant insight into the factors that are potentially used to inhibit the emergence of knowledge hiding from employees. Finally, this study was conducted with cross-section data based on employee perceptions so that it cannot capture more deeply how the climate of knowledge sharing has been running and the quality of ethical leadership practiced in each institution. Further research is suggested to use time series data to reveal more accurately the reality of the phenomena that occur in these topics, especially in the variables of leadership and organizational culture.

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