

A Literature Review on Knowledge Management: Integrating Technology, Culture and Sustainability

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge Management (KM) catalyzes boosting organizational performance, encouraging innovation, and facilitating sustainable practices. This study employs a literature review-based approach to aggregate conclusions from key research on Knowledge Management practices, challenges, and impacts across diverse organizational contexts. The paper explores the influence of cultural dimensions on Knowledge Management, its role in innovation performance, and emerging trends such as Green Knowledge Management and digital transformation. Key findings reveal the importance of tailoring Knowledge Management frameworks to cultural and industrial settings, integrating Knowledge Management with sustainability goals, and the potential for technological advancements to enhance Knowledge Management practices. The research ends by offering suggestions for further studies to fill the gaps in KM implementation, digital integration, and sustainability.

Keywords: Digital transformation, knowledge management, green knowledge management, sustainability

Introduction

In the current ever-changing business landscape, KM has become a vital factor in achieving organizational success, fostering innovation, and gaining a competitive edge. By thoroughly capturing, sharing, and utilizing knowledge, organizations can enhance decision-making, foster collaboration, and sustain long-term growth. However, implementing effective KM practices remains a challenge, particularly in diverse cultural and industrial contexts where factors such as resource constraints, technological limitations, and organizational resistance impede progress.

The increasing emphasis on sustainability and digital transformation has further underscored the need for robust KM frameworks. Concepts such as Green Knowledge Management (GKM) are gaining traction as organizations recognize the role of KM in achieving environmental and social goals. Advancements in digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT), are revolutionizing the processes of knowledge creation, storage, and sharing, presenting fresh opportunities for innovation and development.

Despite significant progress in KM research, gaps remain in understanding its application across different contexts. Cultural dimensions, for example, play a key role in shaping the design and execution of knowledge management practices; however, current frameworks frequently do not sufficiently account for these differences. Furthermore, while KM has been extensively studied in large organizations, its role in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which face unique challenges, remains under-explored.

This paper utilizes a literature review methodology to examine the present landscape of knowledge management (KM) research, emphasizing its connections with culture, innovation, and sustainability. By integrating findings from various studies, it seeks to offer an in-depth understanding of KM practices, pinpoint significant gaps, and suggest directions for future inquiry.

Literature Review

Retna and Bryson [1] explore the interplay between knowledge management (KM) and the learning organization (LO), concentrating on their implementation in a Singaporean government organization. Their study stresses how cultural factors, such as high-power distance, collectivism, and Confucian values, hamper KM practices like open dialogue, experimentation, and team education. The study emphasizes that top-down hierarchies and the yearning to maintain "face" limit the effectiveness of Western KM and LO notions in non-Western contexts. The authors advocate for traditionally tailored KM strategies that align with local organizational standards. Limited focus on adapting KM frameworks for non-Western cultures and inadequate studies on the influence of specific cultural dimensions on KM outcomes are seen in this study. The lack of integration of cultural variables into KM and LO models indicates the need for long-term studies on culturally aligned KM practices.

Garousi Mokhtarzadeh et al. [2] investigate the role of networking capability (NC) in magnifying firm innovation performance (FIP) through the lens of the resource-action-performance structure. It emphasizes that inter-organizational knowledge mechanisms (IKM) and inter-organizational learning (IOL) assist as critical mediators in this relationship. Networking capability permits firms to select partners, coordinate efforts, resolve conflicts, and share resources, thereby facilitating knowledge sharing and co-learning. The study proves that IKM and IOL significantly contribute to the growth of innovation capabilities and competitive advantage in collaborative networks, especially in complex industries like automotive manufacturing. However, there is less empirical research on the combined impact of NC, IKM, and IOL on FIP. Scarce focus on the contextual factors, such as industry category and environmental uncertainty, affecting these relationships and an inadequacy of longitudinal studies to explore the dynamic effects of networking and learning on innovation performance. Future research should examine the role of culture, governance structures, and other arbitrators in strengthening these interactions.

The research paper by Mårtensson [3] provides a critical review of knowledge management (KM) as a management tool, spotlighting its importance for organizational survival and competitive advantage. It underlines KM as both a strategic and operational tool, crucial for retaining, developing, organizing, and utilizing employee competencies. The study outlines KM's role in converting tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge, fostering learning organizations, and aiding innovation. However, the paper also critiques KM as potentially overhyped and missing clear boundaries, particularly in distinguishing between information and knowledge. There is a deficit of investigation of how KM creates measurable organizational value as well as in defining KM and its boundaries with related concepts like intellectual capital. There is an absence of empirical research regarding the conversion of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge. Additionally, a greater understanding of the costs of knowledge management in relation to its perceived benefits is necessary.

The study by Wang and Yang [4] evaluates the achievement of KM in small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) using an adapted Jennex and Olfman (J&O) KM success model, which includes technological and human elements. The findings divulge that system, knowledge, and service quality are vital dimensions influencing KM use and user satisfaction, which lead to the net benefits derived from KM. The results stress that SMEs benefit from KM by enhancing decision-making, nurturing innovation, and improving operational efficiency. However, SMEs encounter distinct obstacles due to resource limitations and often lack methodical KM implementation. There is a lack of adequate empirical research on KM accomplishment in SMEs compared to large organizations and longitudinal studies to judge the long-term impacts of KM initiatives. A limited search of how SMEs' specific characteristics, such as informal management styles, impact KM practices are observed. Therefore, it is essential to validate KM success models further across various countries and industries.

The case study by Goswami [5] examines the application of KM at ICICI Bank via its KM portal, "Wiseguy." KM was introduced to cater to challenges such as knowledge retention amidst employee turnover, merging geographically dispersed teams, and improving decision-making. The "Wiseguy" portal captures tacit knowledge, codifies it, and helps knowledge sharing across the organization. Key features comprise employee engagement through leaderboards, recognition, and incentives, as well as a personalized learning matrix for skill advancement. The study emphasizes that KM fosters organizational learning, diminishes redundancy, improves employee empowerment, and enhances decision-making abilities. There is a lack of exploration regarding KM frameworks specifically designed for the distinct needs of Indian banks, along with a shortage of longitudinal studies that evaluate the long-term effects of KM systems such as "Wiseguy" on business performance. There is also limited use of integrating KM systems with other organizational tools to boost efficiency. Furthermore, a more thorough investigation into employee resistance to knowledge sharing and the strategies to address this issue is needed.

The research conducted by Fadaie et al. [6] investigates how Knowledge Management (KM) relates to job satisfaction (JS) and organizational performance (OP) among employees in the healthcare sector, utilizing structural equation modeling for evaluation. The findings indicate that KM practices—specifically in knowledge creation, retention, and application—foster both JS and OP. However, knowledge transfer did not show a notable association with JS, possibly due to factors such as task complexity, workload, and the prevailing organizational culture. The results highlight that effective KM can enhance employee engagement, boost performance, and contribute to overall success within healthcare organizations. Nonetheless, There is insufficient examination of mediating elements, such as organizational culture or leadership approaches, that may influence the success of knowledge management (KM). Furthermore, there is a shortfall in research focusing on barriers to knowledge transfer, including excessive workloads or time constraints, along with a lack of studies investigating the long-term impact of KM strategies on employee satisfaction and performance. These deficiencies highlight the necessity for additional research to verify these conclusions across various regions and industries.

Idrees et al. [7] systematically review the correlation between KM and New Product Development (NPD) in small and medium enterprises (SMEs). It underlines that KM is pivotal in aiding NPD through improved decision-making, innovation, customer interaction, and operational efficiency. The study recognizes organizational, individual, and project outcomes as key success aspects for KM in NPD. Using bibliometric analysis, it plots the trends and key themes in the KM study, along with knowledge-sharing practices, organizational learning, and innovation capabilities. There has been limited investigation into how KM contributes to practical innovation in new product development (NPD) for SMEs. Moreover, there is a lack of understanding regarding long-term strategies for the management of tacit and explicit knowledge in these organizations. Research focused on how digital transformation and information technology can improve KM practices for NPD in SMEs is still lacking. Additionally, there is a need for more comprehensive insights into the connection between KM and NPD within specific SME contexts across various industries.

The study conducted by Abubakar et al. [8] examines the connection between KM, decision-making approaches, and organizational performance (OP). It highlights that KM enablers, such as collaboration, T-shaped skills, IT support, and learning, stimulate the knowledge creation process, consequently enhancing OP. The study also proposes that intuitive and rational decision-making styles facilitate this relationship. Rational decision-making involves systematic assessment, while intuitive decision-making relies on the unconscious processing of knowledge. Both styles boost the impact of KM processes on OP, depending on the organizational framework. There is limited empirical evidence backing the proposed framework across different industries and geographical areas. Furthermore, there is a deficit of research examining how decision-making styles interact with knowledge management (KM) processes in ever-changing environments. There has been inadequate focus on the cultural and contextual elements that affect the merging of KM with decision-making. Additionally, longitudinal studies are needed to evaluate the long-term effects of KM enablers on OP.

The research by Kumar [9] offers a thorough conceptual exploration of Knowledge Management (KM), detailing its principles, processes, and dimensions. It positions KM as an essential organizational tool for

effectively managing intellectual assets, enhancing competitiveness, and achieving strategic business objectives. The study categorizes knowledge into explicit, tacit, and implicit forms while elaborating on KM processes such as data collection, organization, summarization, analysis, synthesis, and decision-making. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of KM strategies, systems, and organizational culture in fostering knowledge sharing, driving innovation, and ensuring the efficient utilization of knowledge assets. The study primarily focuses on conceptual frameworks and theoretical perceptions of KM. However, it lacks empirical evidence and industry-specific applications of KM practices. Future research could explore the practical execution of KM frameworks across different organizational settings, industries, and cultural settings to provide actionable insights and validate the theoretical models discussed.

Kumar and Kalva [10] review KM, emphasizing its importance as integral to organizational competitiveness and sustainability. It explores KM processes such as knowledge creation, storage, sharing, and utilization, highlighting their role in enhancing organizational performance and achieving strategic objectives. The study delves into the evolution of KM, its sources (both internal and external), barriers to effective implementation, and successful practices observed in organizations. Additionally, it underscores the need to integrate KM into organizational strategies to drive innovation and secure a sustainable competitive advantage. While the paper provides a strong conceptual and theoretical foundation, it lacks empirical evidence and industry-specific case studies to illustrate KM's practical applications. Future research could focus on assessing the implementation of KM systems across diverse sectors, identifying challenges, and uncovering best practices within different cultural and organizational contexts.

Idrees et al. [11] offer a systematic review of KM in the context of NPD projects, highlighting KM's pivotal role in enhancing organizational efficiency, innovation, and competitiveness. Using bibliometric analysis, the study maps research trends and identifies gaps, showcasing how KM contributes to organizational, individual, and project-level outcomes. It explores the interplay between KM and NPD, highlighting key success aspects such as knowledge exchange, the fusion of internal and external insights, and effective team collaboration, all of which foster innovation and enhance operational efficiency, especially in SMEs. The study underscores the need for a deeper exploration of KM's role in fostering practical innovation within SMEs, especially in digital and technology-driven environments. It also emphasizes the need for further research to explore the impact of digital transformation on knowledge management practices and strategies aimed at retaining organizational memory over the long term. Additionally, it underscores the significance of examining socio-cultural elements that influence knowledge management and new product development results in various organizational settings.

Chang and Lin [12] examine the influence of organizational culture on the Knowledge Management (KM) process, focusing on dimensions such as results-oriented, job-oriented, tightly controlled, and professional-oriented cultures. It reveals that results-oriented and job-oriented cultures significantly enhance knowledge creation, storage, transfer, and application intentions among employees. Conversely, tightly controlled cultures negatively affect these KM processes, hindering knowledge-sharing and innovation. The study highlights the essential requirement to cultivate an organizational culture that promotes knowledge-sharing and collaboration to improve KM performance and drive organizational success. The study identifies a lack of longitudinal research to study how shifts in organizational culture impact KM processes over time. Furthermore, the study does not adequately consider how cultural differences at national or regional levels might influence the connection between organizational culture and knowledge management (KM) practices. Future investigations could explore these factors to develop a more thorough comprehension of the relationship between culture and KM.

Rana and Goel [13] explore the implementation of Enterprise Global Knowledge Management (EGKM) at Havells India Ltd., a prominent electrical equipment manufacturer. It highlights how Havells adopted KM practices such as After-Action Reviews (AAR), Communities of Practice (CoP), and Share Portals to effectively capture, store, and share both tacit and explicit knowledge across its global operations. The EGKM model integrates socio-technical environments with organizational learning processes, driving innovation, enhancing employee competencies, and improving operational efficiency. The study further evaluates the effectiveness of KM initiatives using the "Four R" metrics—Recognition, Reaction, Return, and Results—providing a

comprehensive framework for assessing KM performance. The research primarily focuses on the EGKM application within Havells India and its inner processes but lacks exhaustive understanding into the cross-industry applicability and scalability of the model. Furthermore, the responsibility of peripheral stakeholders, such as suppliers and customers, in KM processes is not widely explored. Subsequent research could focus on these deficiencies by probing EGKM frameworks in different industries and including external alliance dynamics.

The paper by Wiig [14] examines the evolution, foundations, and future trajectory of Knowledge Management (KM), defining it as the systematic management of knowledge assets to enhance organizational effectiveness and success. The study underscores KM's role in converting tacit and explicit knowledge into actionable strategies through robust infrastructure, governance, and cultural alignment. Key strategies outlined include intellectual asset management, knowledge creation, transfer, and sharing, highlighting their importance for fostering organizational competitiveness and innovation. Additionally, the paper addresses the challenges of implementing comprehensive KM systems and anticipates the seamless integration of KM into routine business operations. The paper primarily focuses on the conceptual and strategic facets of KM, lacking empirical evidence or case studies demonstrating the real-world implementation of KM frameworks in diverse organizational contexts. Additionally, it does not broadly address how KM practices can be adapted to the swiftly evolving technological landscape or the specific role of emerging technologies like AI in enhancing KM processes.

Schmitt [15] assesses a novel decentralized Personal Knowledge Management System (PKMS) intended to enhance conventional Organizational Knowledge Management Systems (OKMS), using the ISO 30401:2018 Knowledge Management System standard as a reference point. The PKMS focuses on personalization, mobility, and minimizing information chaos, setting itself apart from traditional systems by encouraging grassroots, bottom-up collaboration and knowledge sharing. The research demonstrates that ISO 30401 offers a versatile framework that can support unconventional KM methods, enabling organizations to develop customized systems that emphasize individual empowerment and learning while aligning with larger organizational goals. Despite their potential, there has been limited empirical research on Personal Knowledge Management Systems (PKMS) within actual organizational settings, indicating a need for more investigation into their real-world applications. Furthermore, there is a necessity for longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term viability and scalability of various PKMS frameworks. The relationship between PKMS and current Organizational Knowledge Management Systems (OKMS) remains underexplored, pointing to a lack of understanding regarding how these systems can effectively integrate. In addition, scant research has addressed the cultural and social factors that affect the adoption and performance of PKMS, which may be crucial for their success.

Hashemi et al. [16] assess the ISO 30401:2018 Knowledge Management System (KMS) standard, exploring its relevance as a benchmark for value creation and KM research. It highlights that ISO 30401 effectively consolidates various studies into a globally recognized practical framework. The standard offers comprehensive guidelines for designing, certifying, and implementing robust KM systems, with a focus on knowledge retention, sharing, and application within organizations. The main findings suggest that ISO 30401 promotes organized Knowledge Management (KM) practices, which improve an organization's capability to systematically oversee knowledge and contribute to long-term value creation. Empirical research validating ISO 30401 across various industries and cultural contexts is sparse, limiting the understanding of its universal relevance. Moreover, insufficient investigation into the standard's adaptability for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) or unconventional organizations presents a gap in its wider application. There is also a need for longitudinal studies that assess the lasting effects of ISO 30401 on organizational performance, highlighting another area for future research. Additionally, the integration of ISO 30401 with emerging technologies should be examined to enhance KM practices and improve overall effectiveness.

Wang et al. [17] say organizations must acquire knowledge from suppliers, employees, and consumers. The company's sustainable development ensures economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Organisations must implement green management and produce green products while achieving a green environment to ensure organizational sustainability. Environmental sustainability can be achieved by ensuring clean air and water and reducing the use of natural resources, especially non-renewable ones. Organizations must

produce environmentally friendly products and also reduce harmful gas and liquid emissions. Waste control, recycling, and pollution reduction are of utmost importance. Green Knowledge Management (GKM) ensures the environmental, social, and economic sustainability of organizations. GKM's role in the Company's Sustainable Development (CSD) has hardly been researched.

Kosklin et al. [18] learned that Knowledge Management is largely unused in healthcare settings probably because healthcare is directly related to life and death. There are legal, ethical, and moral responsibilities. Knowledge Management can be used in management, financial aspects, organizational operations, solving legal issues, clinical work, patient safety, and quality, as well as sharing and learning. More research should also be done on storing knowledge.

Basten and Haamann [19] review approaches for organizational learning (OL) and link them to OL theories, producing 18 practical methods across three domains: people, processes, and technology. OL is recognized as essential for converting individual knowledge into collective knowledge, enhancing adaptability, and improving long-term performance. Key tactics include mentoring, job rotations, communities of practice (CoPs), and knowledge repositories, which align with OL theories such as Nonaka's knowledge creation model, single- and double-loop learning, and Garvin's five building blocks. The study underlines that combining multiple approaches is more effective than trusting a single one, as no single method fully supports all OL theories. However, insufficient empirical validation of the effectiveness of combined OL approaches and inadequate focus on contingencies, such as organizational size and culture, in defining suitable OL methods remains. The absence of longitudinal studies evaluating the sustainability of organizational learning (OL) initiatives and the limited exploration of how technology contributes to complex OL processes like double-loop learning present opportunities for additional research.

According to (King et al., 2006), KM emphasizes crucial processes such as knowledge generation, acquisition, refinement, storage, transfer, sharing, and application. These processes underpin organizational functions related to innovation, personal learning, group learning, and collaborative decision-making.

Research Methodology

This research utilizes a methodology based on reviewing existing literature to integrate results from various studies regarding KM and its related themes, such as cultural aspects, organizational learning, innovation outcomes, and sustainability. The chosen research articles were thoroughly examined to uncover similarities, discrepancies, and emerging patterns. The literature assessed encompasses a range of industries, geographical areas, and contexts, revealing important insights into KM practices, challenges faced, and potential future pathways.

Through the examination of theoretical models, empirical research, and case studies within the current body of literature, this study provides a holistic view of knowledge management's influence on organizational effectiveness, innovation, and cultural flexibility. This approach facilitates a thorough comprehension of the subject and highlights areas for additional empirical confirmation and practical implementation.

Results

1. Cultural Influence on KM Practices: Studies like Retna and Bryson [1] demonstrate that cultural factors (e.g., power distance, collectivism) significantly shape KM practices. KM frameworks designed in Western contexts often fail in non-Western settings due to cultural misalignment.
2. KM and Innovation Performance: Networking capabilities (Garousi Mokhtarzadeh et al. [2]) and organizational learning (Basten and Haamann [19]) strongly influence innovation outcomes. KM fosters collaboration, decision-making, and co-learning, especially in SMEs and high-tech industries.
3. KM Success Models: Research by Wang and Yang [4] highlights key enablers (system quality, knowledge quality) for KM success in SMEs, emphasizing the need for context-specific KM implementation strategies.

4. KM's Role in New Product Development (NPD): Idrees et al. [7, 11] identify KM as a driver of innovation but note the limited research on digital transformation's impact on KM practices for NPD.

5. Sustainability and Green KM: Wang et al. [17] and others emphasize the importance of KM in supporting environmental sustainability through Green KM (GKM).

Significance

The findings underscore the following:

- **Theoretical Contributions:** This paper integrates diverse studies to offer a consolidated view of KM's multidimensional impact on organizational performance, innovation, and cultural adaptability.
- **Practical Implications:** It provides actionable insights for organizations implementing KM frameworks tailored to specific cultural and industrial contexts. For example, businesses in resource-constrained environments (e.g., SMEs) can leverage findings on KM's role in fostering innovation.
- **Policy Implications:** Governments and policy-makers can use this research to promote KM strategies for sustainable development, particularly in industries focusing on environmental sustainability.

Scope of future research

1. **Cultural Adaptations:** Longitudinal studies on culturally aligned KM frameworks are needed to evaluate their effectiveness across diverse organizational and cultural contexts [1, 3, 12].
2. **Digital Transformation:** It is essential to examine the impact of digital technologies, such as AI and IoT, on knowledge management practices and innovation in both SMEs and large enterprises. [11, 14].
3. **Sustainability:** Future studies could focus on operationalizing Green KM (GKM) frameworks and their integration with sustainability strategies [17].
4. **Barriers to KM Adoption:** Factors such as employee resistance, limited resources, and in-formal management styles should be examined in greater detail [4, 6, 10].

Conclusion

This review highlights Knowledge Management (KM) as a critical enabler of organizational learning, innovation, and sustainability. While KM frameworks and practices show immense potential, cultural, technological, and resource constraints limit their effectiveness. The integration of KM with digital technologies and sustainability initiatives presents a promising avenue for future research.

To achieve practical and impactful outcomes, organizations must align KM strategies with cultural and industrial contexts, supported by empirical validation and longitudinal studies. This research underscores the need for tailored KM frameworks that address organizational challenges and contribute to long-term competitive advantages.

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