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Knowledge Management and Employee Performance: A Systematic Review of Evidence from Asia

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Abstract

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the role of Knowledge Management (KM) in enhancing employee performance through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). In the context of a growing knowledge-based economy, organizations are increasingly required to manage information and experience in a structured manner to foster innovation, improve efficiency, and sustain competitive advantage. This review adopts the SLR protocol proposed by Williams et al, selecting 12 peer-reviewed articles from the Scopus database based on inclusion criteria including Asian geographic focus, Q1/Q2 journal rankings, and relevance to the research variables. The findings reveal that KM significantly contributes to employee performance both directly and as a mediating factor in areas such as digital transformation, employee engagement, and innovation. KM processes—knowledge creation, storage, sharing, and application—were consistently linked to improved innovation capacity and long-term organizational sustainability. This review also aligns findings with the SECI Model and identifies research gaps, encouraging sector-specific and longitudinal studies.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Employee Performance, Systematic Literature Review, Organizational Strategy, Innovation

1. Introduction

Knowledge Management (KM) has long been recognized as a critical enabler of innovation in organizations (Mubarak et al., 2025). It involves systematic processes of acquiring, creating, sharing, and applying knowledge to improve both employee performance and innovation outcomes (Nonaka et al., 1995). In recent years, businesses have increasingly acknowledged that knowledge is not only essential for growth but also for their very survival in competitive markets (Kocjancic & Gricar, 2023).

Despite the acknowledged benefits of KM, there is still a pressing need to explore how organizations can optimize KM strategies across various industries (von Krogh et al., 2013). Many organizations struggle to measure the effectiveness of KM and to assess its true contribution to overall performance (Sobaih et al., 2025). The value of KM can often be evaluated by the outcomes it generates within organizational processes (Jyoti & Rani, 2017).

KM is widely regarded as a core strategic tool that supports knowledge creation, dissemination, and utilization—ultimately leading to greater efficiency, adaptability, and innovation. Its growing relevance across industries underscores its role in shaping organizational learning, enhancing decision-making processes, and supporting long-term sustainability (von Krogh et al., 2013). KM influences Employee performance through various pathways, including strategic human resource management, where leadership, learning orientation, and HR policies determine an organization's capacity to generate and retain valuable knowledge (von Krogh et al., 2013).

Employee performance, in this context, is defined as the continuous process of identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals and teams while aligning those outcomes with organizational goals (Dessler, 2017). KM contributes to this process by enabling training, performance evaluation, and knowledge-sharing structures that support the retention and effective use of organizational knowledge (von Krogh et al., 2013).

Academic interest in the relationship between Knowledge Management (KM) and employee performance has steadily increased in recent years. This trend is illustrated in Figure 1, which shows a significant rise in search frequency for the keywords "knowledge management" and "employee performance" on the Scopus Web database. The growing volume of research signals that both scholars and practitioners increasingly view KM as a critical driver of employee performance. This underscores the need for further investigation to obtain deeper insights and support the development of more productive and knowledge-oriented work environments.

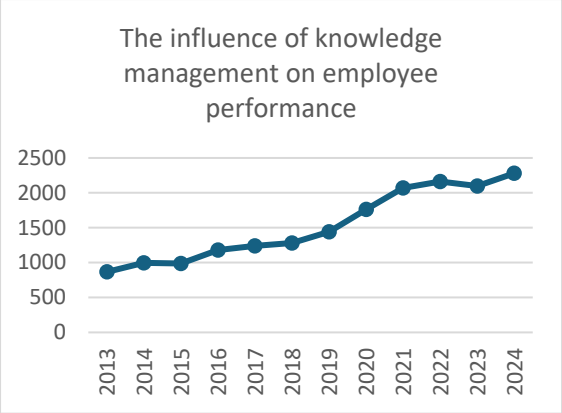

Figure 1: KM on Employee Performance

To address this need, the present study conducts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of existing research on the link between KM and employee performance. The review aims to consolidate fragmented knowledge, offer a holistic understanding of the current state of research, and identify knowledge gaps that can inform future inquiry. Accordingly, the researchers systematically reviewed studies that examine how KM practices influence employee outcomes.

In line with the study's objectives, several structured steps were undertaken. First, the authors identified relevant literature on KM and employee performance by employing a well-defined search strategy. Second, the selected studies were reviewed and their key findings evaluated. Third, a synthesis of the literature was conducted to assess the theoretical and practical implications of prior work. This analysis also revealed promising avenues for future research. Finally, the review culminates in a summary of key insights derived from the literature.

This study makes several contributions to the existing body of knowledge. It provides a deeper understanding of how KM relates to employee performance, presents a comprehensive analysis of over ten peer-reviewed articles, and delivers practical value to both scholars and practitioners. Furthermore, the study highlights emerging themes and theoretical directions that can shape future developments in the field of KM and human performance management.

This review explores a range of sectors, such as healthcare, manufacturing, and small-to-medium enterprises. Particular emphasis is placed on the healthcare field—especially hospitals and service providers—because of their dependence on knowledge-intensive activities and the vital influence of knowledge management on both operational efficiency and employee performance. The analysis is anchored in the SECI Model (Nonaka et al., 1995), which outlines the continuous interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge through the stages of Socialization, Externalization, Combination, and Internalization. This framework serves as a basis for understanding how knowledge management strategies foster improved productivity, innovation, and workforce outcomes across industries.

2. Research Methodology

To identify relevant empirical studies addressing the topic of interest, this study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, following the framework outlined by (Williams et al., 2021). According to these authors, an effective SLR is guided by four core principles: (1) a clearly defined research focus; (2) a structured and transparent plan for identifying and collecting relevant literature; (3) the application of predefined inclusion criteria to assess the relevance and quality of studies; and (4) a comprehensive synthesis of the collected knowledge to summarize findings and identify gaps in the literature.

This review applies the five-stage SLR protocol proposed by Williams et al. (2021), which includes the following phases: (1) planning, (2) identification, (3) execution, (4) analysis, and (5) reporting. Each of these stages consists of systematic steps designed to align with the research objectives, and they are described in more detail in the subsequent sections of this paper.

The overarching aim of this review is to systematically integrate and consolidate existing studies that explore the impact of Knowledge Management (KM) on organizational and employee performance. The process began by formulating the central research question: How does the existing literature describe the influence of Knowledge Management on employee performance? Drawing on the protocol developed by (Williams et al., 2021), a structured review process was established to ensure rigor, transparency, and replicability throughout each phase of the SLR.

Use of Criteria

To ensure that the selected literature aligned with the research objectives, this study applied several predefined inclusion criteria during the identification phase. Articles were included if they met all of the following conditions: (1) Conducted within the geographical context of Asia, (2) Published in peer-reviewed academic journals, (3) Focused on topics directly related to the key research variables—Knowledge Management and Employee Performance, (4) Written in English and conceptually aligned with the study's scope, (5) Indexed in the Scopus Web database, and (6) Published in journals ranked in Q1 or Q2 based on Scopus indexing. These criteria were designed to ensure that the literature selected for review was not only methodologically rigorous but also contextually relevant to the study's aim of examining KM's role in employee performance within Asian

settings.

Keyword Identification and Literature Review Search/Planning Stages

This study adopted the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to identify, evaluate, and synthesize relevant literature related to Knowledge Management and Employee Performance. The process commenced with a planning phase, during which a structured review protocol was developed based on the guidelines of (Williams et al., 2021). At this stage, the central research question was articulated: How does Knowledge Management influence Employee Performance? To ensure a focused and replicable review process, the researchers also defined specific inclusion and exclusion criteria that would guide the article selection phase. To maintain transparency and enable replication, only studies that met the established criteria were considered for analysis. These criteria required that the articles be peer-reviewed, written in English, aligned with the core research variables, and conducted within the geographical scope of Asia.

Identification of Relevant Studies

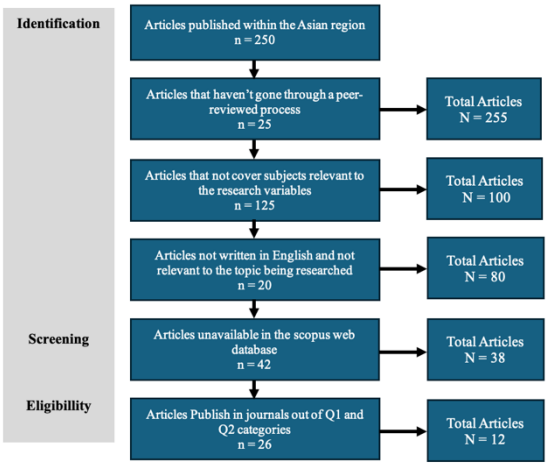

Figure 2: Flowchart of Searched, Screened, and Included Studies

During the identification phase, the literature search was conducted using the Scopus Web database, accessed through the institutional affiliation of the researchers. The keywords "Knowledge Management" and "Employee Performance" were used in the search query. This initial search yielded 250 articles that appeared relevant to the research topic. A systematic screening process was then applied to filter out studies that did not meet the established inclusion criteria. Specifically: (25) articles were excluded for not being peer-reviewed, (125) articles were excluded for lacking relevance to the core research variables, (20) articles were removed because they were not written in English, and (42) articles remove for not available in Scopus, and (26) articles although indexed in Scopus, were excluded due to outside Q1 and Q2 categories. After this screening process, a final set of eligible studies was retained for further review and analysis.

Article Selection and Screening

Following the initial screening, the eligible articles were subjected to in-depth analysis and synthesis. The selected studies were then categorized into several key themes, including: (1) the impact of Knowledge Management on employee productivity, (2) the effectiveness of knowledge-based training programs, and (3) organizational factors influencing the implementation of KM to improve employee performance. A qualitative synthesis approach was employed, in which findings from the selected studies were compared and integrated into a broader conceptual framework. This method allowed the researchers to identify dominant research trends, uncover gaps in the existing literature, and propose directions for future research in the domain of Knowledge Management and Employee Performance (Williams et al., 2021).

Data Extraction Process

After the article selection phase, relevant information from the twelve eligible studies was systematically extracted into a structured spreadsheet. The data extracted included author names, article titles, year of publication, research sectors, methodologies, and key findings. This structured extraction ensured consistency, minimized errors, and facilitated thematic synthesis across the selected studies.

Quality Assessment

The quality of the included studies was assessed using predefined criteria, including journal ranking (Q1/Q2 in Scopus), peer-review status, and methodological rigor. Studies that did not meet quality benchmarks were excluded during the screening phase. The evaluation focused on ensuring that the selected articles were credible, methodologically sound, and directly aligned with the research objectives of this review.

Risk of Bias Assessment

To mitigate potential bias, the review process followed a transparent and replicable protocol. Independent screening of the initial search results was conducted using predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Although only one database (Scopus) was used, this database was selected due to its comprehensive coverage of high-quality peer-reviewed journals. Publication bias and language bias were minimized by including only peer-reviewed English-language articles published in Q1 and Q2 journals.

Reporting of Results and Conclusion

The final stage of this SLR involved the transparent documentation of the entire research process—including the search strategy, article selection, and data synthesis (Williams et al., 2021). The findings of this review provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between Knowledge Management and employee performance, while also identifying critical gaps in the literature that warrant further investigation. Through its systematic and replicable approach, this study aims to serve as a credible reference for both scholars and practitioners seeking to understand and leverage the strategic role of Knowledge Management in enhancing employee performance.

3. Result and Discussion

After the quality assessment process, twelve eligible articles were selected for data extraction. This step was conducted with the aim of minimizing human error and reducing potential bias, as recommended by (Tranfield et al., 2003). Relevant data were systematically compiled into an Excel spreadsheet, capturing key details such as author names, article titles, year of publication, and summarized research findings (see Table 1). The data extraction was carried out with precision to ensure that all information aligned with the research objectives and contributed meaningfully to the synthesis and interpretation phases of the review.

From the twelve studies reviewed, as summarized in Table 1, two concentrate on knowledge management (KM) practices within healthcare environments, particularly hospitals and healthcare service providers, while the remaining studies examine sectors like manufacturing, SMEs, and digital transformation efforts. The studies related to healthcare emphasize the critical role of knowledge creation, sharing, and utilization in streamlining clinical processes, improving operational effectiveness, and boosting employee engagement.

TABLE I
DATA EXTRACTION

No.	Authors	Research Title	Methodology	Key Finding
1	Kusa, Suder, Duda, et al. (2024)	Does knowledge management mediate the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance?	PLS-SEM & fsQCA	KM mediates the link between entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance, enhancing knowledge sharing and innovation.
2	Al-Emran et al. (2025)	Role of perceived threats and knowledge management in shaping generative AI use in education and its impact on social sustainability	Survey (Quantitative)	Generative AI adoption and social sustainability are strengthened through KM processes in higher education settings.
3	Kusa, Suder, & Duda (2024)	Role of entrepreneurial orientation, information management, and knowledge management in improving firm performance	Survey (Quantitative)	Entrepreneurial orientation and KM improve firm performance, especially in SMEs through effective information management.
4	Cabrilo et al. (2024)	Synergy between multi-dimensional intellectual capital and digital knowledge management: Uncovering innovation performance complexities	fsQCA (fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis) + Survey (Quantitative)	Focus on the synergy between Intellectual Capital (IC) and Digital KM to improve innovation performance with four causal recipes.
5	Khan et al. (2024)	Green knowledge management: A key driver of green technology innovation and sustainable performance in the construction organizations	Survey (Quantitative), SEM (AMOS) with PROCESS macro	Green Knowledge Management (GKM) significantly improves Green Technology Innovation (GTI) and sustainable performance. Green Intellectual Capital (GIC) mediates the relationship between GKM and performance, while Artificial Intelligence (AI) moderates the impact of GKM on green human capital.
6	Voordeckers et al. (2025)	Director knowledge, shared leadership, and board service performance	Survey (Quantitative)	Director knowledge and shared leadership improve board service performance via effective KM and decision-making.
7	Hafeez et al. (2025)	Knowledge management and SMEs' digital transformation: A systematic literature review and future research agenda	SLR (Systematic Literature Review)	KM supports SMEs' digital transformation and performance, emphasizing technology adoption and knowledge sharing.
8	He et al. (2024)	Does green knowledge management build successful green ventures in the presence of innovative practices and knowledge-sharing behaviour	Survey (Quantitative)	Knowledge storage significantly impacts green ventures; knowledge-sharing behavior mediates innovative practices.
9	Zhang (2025)	Moderating effect of knowledge entrepreneurship in the relationship between knowledge management process and entrepreneurial success	Survey (Quantitative), SEM (AMOS), Cross-sectional Design	KM subsystems (acquisition, conversion, utilization, protection) significantly affect entrepreneurial success (ENS). Knowledge entrepreneurship (KNE) strongly moderates these relationships, enhancing

No.	Authors	Research Title	Methodology	Key Finding
				the impact of KM processes on ENS, especially in technology-driven environments.
10	Mubarak et al. (2025)	Strategic foresight, knowledge management, and open innovation: Drivers of new product development success	SEM (Quantitative)	Strategic foresight and KM drive open innovation and new product development in technology-based firms.
11	Ali et al. (2024)	Weaving a greener future: The impact of green human resources management and green supply chain management on sustainable performance in Bangladesh's textile industry	SEM (Quantitative)	Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) and Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM) positively affect employee and environmental performance, improving textile sustainability.
12	Yu et al. (2022)	Green knowledge management: Scale development and validation	Mixed Methods (Scale Development)	Developed and validated a 5-dimension scale for green knowledge management (acquisition, sharing, storage, application, creation).

Those articles also reveals that Knowledge Management (KM) plays a significant role in enhancing both organizational and employee performance, either directly or indirectly. Most studies confirm that the effective implementation of KM processes—such as knowledge creation, acquisition, storage, sharing, and application—is closely associated with improvements in productivity, operational efficiency, innovation capacity, and organizational adaptability.

Several articles identify KM as an independent variable that directly influences employee performance, especially within sectors such as healthcare, education, manufacturing, and technology. Other studies emphasize KM's function as a mediating or moderating factor that links organizational constructs such as employee engagement, digital transformation, ambidexterity, and innovation success to overall performance outcomes.

The findings also highlight that specific KM capabilities—namely digital competence, organizational learning, and openness to innovation—are critical in strengthening the relationship between KM and desired performance metrics. Some studies propose new evaluative models or measurement frameworks designed to assess KM in dynamic and complex environments.

Notably, sectors such as hospitality, healthcare, and green industries emerge as prominent contexts in which KM is strategically integrated into sustainability initiatives and digital transformation agendas. Across all studies, there is broad consensus that the successful implementation of KM depends heavily on managerial support, a knowledge-sharing organizational culture, digital literacy, and continuous learning practices.

4. Conclusion

Based on a systematic review of twelve peer-reviewed scholarly articles, this study confirms that Knowledge Management (KM) plays a vital and multifaceted role in improving employee performance across various industrial sectors, particularly in Asian and developing country contexts. KM processes—such as knowledge creation, storage, sharing, and application—are consistently linked to improved efficiency, innovation, collaboration, and sustainable performance outcomes.

The findings align with the SECI Model (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995), which emphasizes the dynamic interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge. This framework highlights how socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization processes collectively drive continuous knowledge creation and enhance employee performance and organizational innovation.

Moreover, several studies demonstrate that KM not only directly impacts performance but also acts as a mediating factor in relationships involving employee engagement, entrepreneurial orientation, and digital transformation. However, its effectiveness depends on contextual factors such as organizational culture, technological infrastructure, and managerial support.

This review underscores the strategic value of KM and offers practical insights for organizations aiming to leverage knowledge as a key driver of employee performance and long-term competitiveness. Future studies are encouraged to expand the analysis across more diverse sectors and geographic regions to provide a broader understanding of KM practices.

Interpretation of Key Findings

This review confirms that Knowledge Management (KM) processes—namely knowledge creation, storage, sharing, and application—play a pivotal role in enhancing employee performance across multiple sectors, including healthcare, manufacturing, and SMEs. Among the twelve reviewed studies, KM was frequently identified as both a direct driver of employee performance and as a mediating factor linking organizational constructs such as employee engagement, digital

transformation, and innovation outcomes.

Theoretical Contributions

The findings align with the SECI Model (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995), which illustrates the continuous conversion of tacit and explicit knowledge through the processes of Socialization, Externalization, Combination, and Internalization. For example, healthcare studies emphasize Socialization through collaborative clinical practices, while manufacturing studies highlight Externalization and Combination via the codification of technical and operational knowledge into standardized procedures. This reinforces the Knowledge-Based View (KBV), which treats knowledge as a strategic resource for sustainable competitive advantage.

Practical Implications

From a managerial perspective, KM should be positioned as a core strategic capability that directly affects employee productivity and adaptability. Organizations, especially in healthcare and SMEs, should invest in digital KM systems, training programs, and knowledge-sharing cultures that align with SECI principles. Encouraging both formal and informal knowledge flows can strengthen collaboration and foster innovation at the employee level.

Research Gaps

The synthesis of existing studies also reveals gaps that future research could address. Few studies have examined the longitudinal impact of KM practices on employee performance, and sector-specific analyses—particularly within healthcare sub-sectors such as pharmaceutical companies and medical equipment providers—remain limited. Moreover, cross-country comparative studies are scarce, leaving cultural and policy-related influences underexplored.

Limitation

This review has certain limitations. The analysis is limited to articles indexed in the Scopus database, which may exclude relevant studies from other repositories or gray literature. The geographic focus on Asia may limit the generalizability of findings to other regions, and only English-language publications were considered. Additionally, the review primarily synthesizes secondary data, without empirical validation of the proposed frameworks.

Future Research Direction

Future studies could explore sector-specific KM practices, particularly in healthcare sub-sectors such as hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, and medical equipment providers, to capture more nuanced insights. Cross-country comparative analyses are recommended to identify cultural and policy-related factors influencing KM's effectiveness. Longitudinal studies and mixed-methods approaches could further validate the long-term impact of KM strategies on employee performance and organizational competitiveness. Finally, integrating additional theoretical perspectives beyond the SECI Model—such as dynamic capabilities or the resource-based view—may provide a richer understanding of KM's strategic role.

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