# Maximizing AI for Enhanced Knowledge Processes as Seen by Employees and Managers

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#### **Abstract**

The rapid development and dissemination of artificial intelligence (AI) is recognized as one of the defining trends of our time, offering new possibilities in many sectors. The field of knowledge management (KM) can be significantly affected by AI; in fact, the latest applications are deemed to provide opportunities to reshape KM activities. However, empirical studies examining the synergy between effective knowledge management processes (KMPs)—including the acquisition, documentation, sharing, and application of knowledge—and AI technologies remain scarce. This paper presents some preliminary insights from a study investigating how AI's potential to enhance KMPs is perceived within corporate environments. An online survey was collected from 378 employees and managers from organizations of varying sizes and industries. The results reveal that 95.51% of respondents expressed positive attitudes towards AI, strongly believing in its ability to benefit KMPs within organizational contexts. Additionally, the study highlights respondents' perceptions of the high importance of implementing AI tools in their organizations and their estimated levels of trust in these tools to support various KMPs. Preliminary findings also indicate that the participants believe AI can identify new business opportunities, improve navigation and search within knowledge repositories, and prevent recurring errors and mistakes. However, they exhibited a more skeptical stance regarding AI's ability to foster a positive knowledge-sharing culture. These findings underscore the transformative potential of AI in reshaping organizational knowledge dynamics. Future research should focus on conducting in-depth statistical analyses to explore how demographic and occupational variables influence perceptions of AI's benefits, thereby tailoring AI implementation strategies better to meet the diverse needs of various organizational stakeholders.

#### **Kevwords**

AI; Artificial Intelligence; Business Processes; Knowledge Management Processes; Online Survey; Organizations; Organizational Implementation

# Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities are poised to permeate nearly all aspects of organizational structures and activities, including knowledge management (KM) (Alavi et al., 2024; Anshari et al., 2023; Jarrahi et al., 2023). Within the intricate landscape of the digital age, the strategic integration of AI within KM emerges as a pivotal element of technology management (Nakash & Bolisani, 2024). As Generative AI (GenAI) tools bring KM to greater prominence within organizations (APQC, 2024), it is anticipated

that the capabilities of knowledge management systems (KMSs) will be further enhanced (Lei & Wang, 2020). Moreover, advancements in GenAI are ushering in a new and exciting, but also complex era of organizational KM (Alavi et al., 2024).

Previous studies have often examined KM and AI independently, overlooking their significant relationship (Alghanemi & Al Mubarak, 2022). However, these fields complement each other and are inextricably linked, as knowledge serves as the cornerstone and key element for both KM and AI (Alghanemi & Al Mubarak, 2022; Sanzogni et al., 2017). Specifically, AI is expected to transform how knowledge management processes (KMPs) are conducted, particularly in handling knowledge (Taherdoost & Madanchian, 2023). The pivotal role of AI technologies in enhancing organizational knowledge activities lies in their ability to improve organizational performance and bolster competitive advantages (Del Giudice et al., 2023; Olan et al., 2022).

The rapid development and dissemination of AI is considered one of the defining trends of our time. It does not bypass KM, presenting both new opportunities and challenges in its organizational implementation (Del Giudice et al., 2023; Obermayer & Tóth, 2021). However, there is a lack of research on how AI can be integrated with KM to provide business benefits (Jallow et al., 2020). Furthermore, previous studies discussing the intersection between KM and AI have been predominantly theoretical, lacking in-depth empirical research. Specifically, only a limited number of studies have explored the synergy between effective KMPs and AI technologies (Nakash & Bolisani, 2024). This paper aims to present some preliminary results of an empirical survey contributing to bridging this significant gap. Through an online questionnaire, we seek to uncover how employees and managers across various industries perceive the potential of AI to enhance KMPs.

Understanding these perceptions can provide valuable insights into the readiness and willingness of organizations to adopt AI technologies. Theoretically, the findings can deepen our understanding of how AI can transform organizational knowledge dynamics. Practically, the insights can guide the implementation of AI-driven KM initiatives, ensuring they are aligned with organizational needs and capabilities. Ultimately, the research can help foster a more effective and strategic use of AI in KM.

## Literature review

In the current era, characterized by rapid technological advancements, effective KM is crucial for organizations to maintain competitiveness, foster innovation, and enhance decision-making processes (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2017; Bratianu & Bejinaru, 2019, 2020; Lei & Wang, 2020; Scarso & Bolisani, 2023). Implementing effective KMPs is recognized as vital for enhancing organizational learning, innovation, and competitive advantage (Areed et al., 2020; Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Taherdoost & Madanchian, 2023).

Numerous scholars have proposed diverse classifications of KMPs (Areed et al., 2020). However, four types of KMPs have been most prominently detected: acquisition, documentation, sharing, and application. These processes are interdependent, and

they can collectively contribute to the effective management of knowledge within an organization (Lei & Wang, 2020; Scarso & Bolisani, 2023).

- (1) Knowledge Acquisition: This refers to the process of obtaining knowledge from various sources. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), knowledge can be acquired through both explicit and tacit means. Novel ideas can originate from various sources, including internal research and development (R&D), business partners, collaborative networks, clients, external consultants, and competitors (Scarso & Bolisani, 2023). This process enables organizations to create the conditions necessary for adapting and innovating processes, products, and services (Areed et al., 2020).
- (2) Knowledge Documentation: Sometimes regarded as the most fundamental KMP (Taherdoost & Madanchian, 2023), this involves the systematic recording and storing of knowledge to ensure its availability and future use (Grant, 1996). Documentation encompasses lessons learned, guidelines, customer data, project reports, written procedures, and more (Scarso & Bolisani, 2023). This process often involves the use of databases, manuals, and other repositories. Proper documentation practices help in preserving organizational memory and facilitating knowledge transfer (Jarrahi et al., 2023).
- (3) Knowledge Sharing: This involves the mutual transfer and dissemination of knowledge across the members of an organization, ensuring that all employees are informed about the company's developments, thereby fostering team spirit and cooperation (Areed et al., 2020). Knowledge sharing is frequently hindered by temporal, spatial, and, more prominently, functional barriers. Consequently, in many organizations, knowledge sharing tends to be localized and fragmented (Jarrahi et al., 2023). Recent research underscores the role of digital systems in enhancing knowledge sharing, particularly in remote and hybrid work environments (Keppler & Leonardi, 2023; Valk & Planojevic, 2021).
- (4) Knowledge Application: This involves the practical use of knowledge after it has been generated, retrieved, or shared (Jarrahi et al., 2023). In other words, it is the process of utilizing acquired and shared knowledge to achieve organizational goals and embedding the company's knowledge pool into organizational outputs (Scarso & Bolisani, 2023). Grant (1996) argues that the true value of knowledge lies in its application. Recent studies highlight the importance of aligning knowledge application with organizational strategy to drive innovation and performance (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2017; Rehman et al., 2021).

Given the critical function of KMPs in KM, it is essential to understand how emerging technologies can further enhance their effectiveness (Obermayer & Tóth, 2021). As an academic discipline, AI was established prior to KM and has been rooted in the computing field for many decades (Sanzogni et al., 2017). AI refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines that are programmed to think and learn "like humans do." According to Russell and Norvig (2021), AI aims to create systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and language translation. Its tools leverage various methodologies to emulate human intelligence, including supervised machine learning, neural networks, and deep learning (Jarrahi et al., 2023).

AI has emerged as a transformative technology with significant implications, and its benefits are increasingly evident in everyday life (Alghanemi & Al Mubarak, 2022; Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2017; Chui et al., 2018). The rapid advancement and widespread adoption of new technological breakthroughs have driven exceptional growth in the field of AI, leading to its integration across a diverse array of industries (Alghanemi & Al Mubarak, 2022).

AI is increasingly recognized as a powerful tool that can aid companies in managing corporate knowledge and making informed decisions (Lei & Wang, 2020). Consequently, professionals specializing in KM advocate for technological transformations in this field and anticipate the development of AI-based automated mechanisms for KMPs (Nakash & Bouhnik, 2022). However, without complete trust in the technology, arising from its inherent "non-transparent" nature, KM practitioners may find it challenging to fully harness the potential of AI tools within their operational environment (APQC, 2024).

AI introduces advanced techniques for knowledge modeling, knowledge processing, and problem-solving (Mercier-Laurent et al., 2021). AI enhances relevance, personalization, and semantic understanding, thereby improving user experience and facilitating more informed decision-making (Adelakun, 2024). Additionally, AI can identify redundancies within business processes and propose optimal resource utilization strategies to enhance performance (Olan et al., 2022).

Before the advent of AI, KM was perceived through two contrasting lenses. One perspective was predominantly techno-centric, emphasizing the capacity of technologies to handle vast amounts of explicit knowledge. The other perspective was human-centric, acknowledging the unique human ability to process knowledge, the significance of tacit knowledge manipulation, and the importance of sharing and mutual learning (Sigala & Chalkiti, 2015). Today, similarly to what happened in the emergence of Social Media applications, the idea is that AI can help reconcile the two sides of KM. On the one hand, with AI, humans can no longer be the sole source of knowledge (Alghanemi & Al Mubarak, 2022). On the other hand, humans can be helped to process and share tacit content with the support of AI.

However, the impact of AI on KM remains underexplored. There is still a lack of clear research on the relationship between AI and KM (Jallow et al., 2020), and it is especially important to understand what real prospects this connection can have for the business. As we advance towards a future driven by data and insights, we must investigate how this relationship can be leveraged to utilize AI more effectively for KM (Del Giudice et al., 2023; Taherdoost & Madanchian, 2023).

# Methodology

## Research approach and procedure

As mentioned, this study aims to provide insights into how the potential of AI to enhance KMPs is perceived in the business environment. Given that, in the end, employees and managers will be the first to be asked to apply AI in their KMPs, it is

important to understand their view. Here, we present the preliminary results of a survey-based investigation.

Four dependent variables were included in an online questionnaire, each representing one of the four KMPs: knowledge acquisition, knowledge documentation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge application. Each variable was measured using five distinct statements presented on a Likert scale. This scale required respondents to select one of six values indicating their level of agreement, ranging from 1 (definitely not) to 6 (definitely yes). A series of items related to the use of AI in these KMPs was proposed to respondents. **Table 1** provides four selected examples from the 20 statements, categorized according to the relevant KMP.

Table 1. Key examples of likert scale statements, categorized by the four KMPs

KMP Type	Example Question
Knowledge Acquisition	Comparative analysis of competitors' status and generation of new
	knowledge about the organization's competitive advantage will be
	enabled through AI
Knowledge	The human effort required for classifying knowledge items in
Documentation	organizational systems will be reduced through AI
Knowledge Sharing	Employees will automatically receive relevant knowledge in a
	personalized manner thanks to the use of advanced AI algorithms
Knowledge Application	Employees will receive advice from AI-based robots on how to
	utilize the existing knowledge in an organization for their routine
	work tasks

Authors' contribution

Demographic and employment data about the respondents were also collected through closed multiple-choice questions, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the sample's background. Participation in the survey was entirely voluntary, with strict adherence to anonymization protocols and the non-disclosure of sensitive business information to protect respondents' privacy. Additionally, an open-ended question, defined as optional, allowed respondents to articulate their views on the phenomenon under study in their own words, offering richer qualitative insights. The questionnaire underwent rigorous reliability and validity testing to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data collected. It is important to note that the findings presented in this paper are derived from an initial analytical analysis. In-depth statistical tests, including the identification of correlations and significant relationships between the different variables, are planned for the next phase.

# Descriptive statistics

378 respondents completed our questionnaire, comprising 178 men and 199 women, spanning various age groups. A minority of the sample were non-academics, with 7 having a high school education or lower and 17 holding post-secondary education or vocational certificates. Among the academics, 47 held a bachelor's degree, 38 had a master's degree, and 6 possessed a doctoral degree. Regarding employment roles, 166 respondents were employees without managerial responsibilities, 174 were mid-level managers, and 38 were senior managers. The respondents represented organizations of various sizes (small, medium, and large) across different sectors (such as the public sector, industry, and services) and divisions (such as digital and information, R&D, strategy, and headquarters). There was also diversity in the respondents' seniority

within their organizations, with 140 respondents having 10 or more years of experience. This range of backgrounds and experiences provides a comprehensive overview of the demographic and professional characteristics of the sample, ensuring a robust analysis of the data collected.

#### Results and discussion

The results reveal that 95.51% of respondents (n=361) expressed positive attitudes, indicating that AI can significantly benefit KMPs within an organizational context (see Figure 1). This finding is consistent with prior research, which highlighted the transformative potential role of AI in enhancing knowledge flow to support business operations (Alghanemi & Al Mubarak, 2022; Alavi et al., 2024; Anshari et al., 2023; Jarrahi et al., 2023; Taherdoost & Madanchian 2023). As one respondent in our study, a master's degree holder working as a mid-level manager in customer service at a medium-sized organization, noted: "There are a tremendous advantages to using AI in KM!".

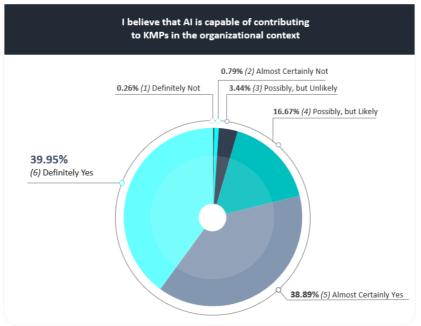


Figure 1. Assessing the Ability of AI Technologies to Benefit the Improvement of KMPs (Authors' contribution)

Organizations acknowledge the crucial role of AI in ensuring the success of their strategic plans for the coming years (Alghanemi & Al Mubarak, 2022). In line with their optimistic outlook regarding the potential of AI, more than half of the respondents (n=202, 53.44%) attributed high or very high importance that their organization will implement AI applications (see **Figure 2**). This sentiment is consistent with the broader industry trend toward AI adoption as a means to optimize operational processes and decision-making (Chui et al., 2018).

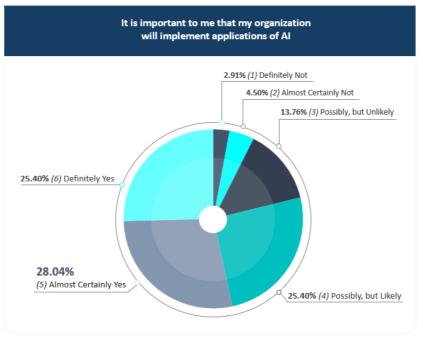


Figure 2. Assessing the Importance of Implementing
AI Technologies in Organizations
(Authors' contribution)

High results were also observed regarding the respondents' inclination to rely on AI applications for various KMPs in the workplace. Specifically, the perceived trust level in AI tools for knowledge documentation received the highest average (M = 5.01, SD = 1.10). This finding underscores the belief that "AI will save the duplication of already known knowledge, and without realizing it, we recreate it instead of simply using it." This extends the work of Davenport and Prusak (1998), who emphasized the importance of efficient knowledge documentation for leveraging organizational knowledge. While Davenport and Prusak focused on traditional methods and structured documentation, our results highlight the growing trust in AI tools to streamline this process further.

Regarding knowledge acquisition, an overwhelming 91.53% of the sample (n=346) clearly supported the idea that new business opportunities would be identified through AI. This finding aligns with previous works, which emphasized the role of AI in identifying and leveraging new opportunities through advanced data analysis and pattern recognition (Lavenda, 2019; Taherdoost & Madanchian, 2023). Specifically, AI's ability to process and analyze vast amounts of data can uncover trends and patterns that might be overlooked by human analysts (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2017).

Regarding knowledge documentation, the findings reveal that only a minimal percentage of respondents (n=5, 1.32%) completely disbelieved that navigation and search within organizational knowledge repositories would be improved by AI capabilities. This minimal skepticism is consistent with the broader consensus in the literature that AI enhances the efficiency, accuracy, and speed of knowledge retrieval and navigation (Adelakun, 2024; Taherdoost & Madanchian, 2023; Russell & Norvig, 2016).

However, concerning knowledge sharing, 12.96% of respondents (n=49) were skeptical about AI fostering a positive knowledge-sharing culture. In this context, a master's degree holder working in research and development at a large public sector organization stated: "A knowledge-sharing culture is primarily created and instilled by people, and a significant part of it is based on tacit knowledge, which no AI tools can manage or persuade others to share. Other incentives will be required." This perspective is echoed in the literature, where it is acknowledged that while AI can facilitate explicit knowledge sharing, the sharing of tacit knowledge remains a challenge (Jarrahi et al., 2023; Olan et al., 2022; Sanzogni et al., 2017). Indeed, being inherently personal and context-specific, tacit knowledge often requires social interactions and trust-building (Nakash, 2024), which it seems that AI tools alone cannot fully replicate.

Regarding knowledge application, nearly half of the respondents (n=188, 49.74%) agreed to varying degrees that preventing recurring errors and failures would be possible through the analysis of accumulated knowledge by AI. Indeed, AI can play a crucial role in this process by providing real-time insights and recommendations (Alghanemi & Al Mubarak, 2022; APQC, 2024). This finding is significant as it underscores the potential of AI in enhancing organizational learning and fostering continuous improvement.

# **Conclusions and future work**

This study's findings underscore AI's significant potential in enhancing KMPs within organizational contexts. The overwhelmingly positive attitudes of respondents towards AI's role in KMPs, as evidenced by 95.51% expressing favorable views, highlight the transformative impact AI can have on business operations. As AI continues to evolve, its role in KM will likely expand, offering new opportunities for organizations to manage their knowledge resources effectively.

While AI offers numerous benefits to organizations, the challenges of effectively implementing business knowledge and optimizing available resources continue to pose significant difficulties (Patnaik, 2015). Despite the predominantly positive outlook that revealed in the present study, it is crucial to acknowledge the limitations and challenges associated with AI implementation in KMPs. For instance, data privacy and security concerns, the need for substantial initial investments, and the requirement for continuous training and updates to AI systems are significant barriers that contemporary organizations must address (Adelakun, 2024; Ransbotham et al., 2017). Additionally, Chui et al. (2018) identify foundational barriers such as the difficulty in integrating AI with existing systems, the shortage of skilled talent, and the complexity of managing AI-driven change within organizations. Furthermore, previous work presents a more cautious view on the effectiveness of AI in KM. For example, research by Smith and Anderson (2018) highlights the potential for AI to perpetuate biases present in training data, which can lead to skewed or suboptimal decision-making.

It is essential that future researchers will delve deeper into understanding the barriers and challenges associated with the implementation of AI technologies in KMSs within organizations. Future research should focus on developing strategies to overcome these obstacles and maximize the benefits of AI in KM. This includes exploring

advanced AI techniques that can enhance data privacy and security, reducing the costs associated with AI implementation, and creating comprehensive training programs to upskill employees. Additionally, further studies should investigate the integration of AI with existing systems and the management of AI-driven change to ensure seamless transitions and optimal performance. Moreover, addressing the ethical implications of AI in KM is essential, particularly concerning bias and fairness. Future work should aim to develop frameworks and guidelines that ensure AI systems are transparent, accountable, and equitable. By addressing these issues, organizations can harness the full potential of AI in KM, leading to more efficient and effective KMPs.

The broader implications of this study are significant. By elucidating the perceived practical benefits of integrating AI into KM, the research can inform policy-making, strategic planning, and the development of best practices. It can also contribute to the academic discourse by providing empirical evidence that supports the theoretical frameworks surrounding AI and KM. In doing so, this study not only advances our understanding of the intersection between these two fields but also offers actionable insights that can drive innovation and competitiveness in the digital age.

Furthermore, it is essential to examine how demographic and occupational variables might influence perceptions related to the benefits of AI in enhancing KMPs. For instance, variations in perceptions based on age, gender, job role, industry sector, and organizational size can provide a more granular understanding of the factors that drive or hinder AI adoption in KM. This detailed analysis, which can inform the design of targeted interventions and training programs that address the specific needs and concerns of diverse employee groups, will be the goal of a future research agenda.

Tailoring AI implementation strategies better to meet various stakeholders' diverse needs and expectations is crucial for successfully integrating AI in KM. This approach will ensure that AI-driven KM initiatives are not only effective but also equitable and inclusive. Organizations can foster a culture of acceptance and collaboration around AI technologies by considering the unique perspectives and requirements of different demographic and occupational groups. Ultimately, this comprehensive and strategic use of AI in organizational contexts can lead to more robust and resilient KMSs, enhancing organizational learning, innovation, and competitiveness in an increasingly digital and data-driven world.

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