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## A Systematic Review of the Roles of Knowledge Management in the Public Sector: Synthesis and Future Directions

### ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this study was to examine and synthesize the role of knowledge management in the public sector. Using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework, this study evaluated the role of knowledge management in public-sector organizations by analyzing 33 selected articles published in journals indexed in the Web of Science Core Collection. The findings indicated that researchers employed diverse methodologies and applied a range of theoretical perspectives in this field. Furthermore, the publication trend during the period under review demonstrated a gradual and continuous increase in studies addressing knowledge management in the public sector, with researchers adopting a variety of research methodologies. This systematic review identified three principal themes in knowledge management research: first, knowledge management aimed at organizational improvement; second, knowledge management intended to enhance citizen satisfaction; and third, knowledge management directed toward the management of collaborative innovation. These three themes constitute the central focus of research conducted in this field.

**Keywords:** knowledge management, systematic review, public sector.

### Introduction

Knowledge has become one of the most consequential strategic resources available to contemporary organizations, particularly in environments characterized by rapid technological change, institutional complexity, increasing stakeholder expectations, and intensified demands for accountability. Unlike physical assets, knowledge is embedded in employees' expertise, organizational routines, databases, professional networks, administrative experiences, and interactions with service users. Knowledge management therefore refers to the systematic processes through which organizations identify, acquire, create, organize, store, share, transfer, apply, and protect knowledge in order to improve decisions and outcomes. Although knowledge management initially developed largely within private-sector and technology-oriented contexts, its relevance to public organizations has become increasingly evident [1]. Government ministries, municipalities, public universities, healthcare institutions, regulatory agencies, public banks, libraries, and other state-affiliated organizations depend heavily on the effective mobilization of institutional knowledge to formulate policy, coordinate services, maintain continuity, manage risk, and respond to social needs. In public organizations, knowledge management is not merely a means

of achieving competitive advantage; it is also a mechanism for creating public value, strengthening institutional capacity, enhancing the quality and responsiveness of services, and maintaining citizens' trust in governmental institutions [1, 2].

The public sector presents a distinctive context for knowledge management because public organizations operate under legal mandates, political supervision, bureaucratic procedures, multiple and sometimes conflicting goals, and extensive accountability requirements. Their performance cannot be evaluated exclusively in terms of profitability or efficiency, because they are also expected to advance equity, legitimacy, transparency, social welfare, and long-term public interests. These conditions create a need for knowledge systems capable of integrating professional expertise, administrative data, legislative requirements, citizen feedback, and interorganizational intelligence. Public administrators must frequently make decisions under uncertainty while balancing technical, ethical, legal, and political considerations. The importance of education and capability development among public managers further demonstrates that the quality of public policymaking depends on the availability and application of appropriate knowledge within administrative systems [3]. Similarly, the social and professional positioning of specialized public-service actors can shape how their knowledge is recognized, trusted, and utilized in institutional decision-making [4]. Knowledge management in the public sector must therefore be understood as a multidimensional governance capability rather than as a narrowly technical process of storing documents or implementing information systems.

One of the most frequently discussed contributions of knowledge management is its capacity to improve organizational performance. Effective knowledge-management processes enable organizations to avoid repeated mistakes, reduce duplication, preserve institutional memory, increase the speed and accuracy of decisions, and improve the coordination of organizational activities. Empirical work has linked knowledge-management processes with employee performance, indicating that the acquisition, sharing, and application of relevant knowledge can strengthen employees' ability to perform their duties and respond to organizational demands [5]. The effects of knowledge management are also conditioned by the broader work environment, because supportive structures, managerial encouragement, access to information, and collaborative norms determine whether employees can convert available knowledge into improved performance [6]. In public organizations, this relationship is especially significant because employee performance directly affects the accessibility, consistency, and quality of services received by citizens. Consequently, knowledge-management capabilities can contribute simultaneously to internal administrative improvement and external service outcomes.

Organizational culture constitutes another central determinant of successful knowledge management. Knowledge-sharing systems cannot function effectively when employees perceive knowledge as a source of personal authority, fear that sharing expertise will diminish their value, or work within highly fragmented administrative units. A culture that supports trust, cooperation, learning, openness, and constructive experimentation can reduce knowledge hoarding and facilitate the circulation of experience across organizational boundaries. Research on sustainability reporting has shown that organizational culture and contextual factors shape organizational practices and their relationship with economic performance, demonstrating that knowledge-related systems are embedded in broader institutional and cultural conditions [7]. Studies of social intelligence among university faculty members similarly highlight the importance of interpersonal understanding, relational competence, and effective interaction in knowledge-intensive educational settings [8]. These findings are relevant to public-sector knowledge management because the transfer of tacit knowledge depends heavily on social relationships, professional trust, and employees' willingness to engage in reciprocal learning.

Leadership is equally important in transforming knowledge management from an isolated administrative initiative into an institutional capability. Public-sector leaders influence whether knowledge sharing is rewarded, whether technological systems receive adequate resources, whether employees are encouraged to learn from failure, and whether knowledge initiatives are aligned with strategic goals. Managerial commitment is particularly critical in bureaucratic environments, where rigid procedures and hierarchical communication can limit horizontal collaboration. Organizational wisdom and innovation have been associated with the advancement of knowledge management in public libraries, illustrating that knowledge-management maturity requires more than the implementation of digital repositories; it also requires reflective leadership, sound judgment, and an organizational capacity to connect knowledge with innovation [9]. Similarly, research on sports startups and knowledge-based companies has emphasized leadership, networking, human capital, and innovation-related conditions as determinants of organizational success [10]. Although these settings differ from conventional governmental agencies, they demonstrate that knowledge-based performance is dependent on the alignment of managerial, cultural, technological, and strategic factors.

The integration of knowledge management with organizational learning is especially important because public organizations must adapt to changing social problems, policy priorities, and technological conditions. Organizational learning allows institutions to interpret experience, revise routines, and institutionalize lessons derived from previous decisions. Knowledge management provides the processes and infrastructure through which such learning can be captured, circulated, and applied. The mediating roles of knowledge management and organizational learning in the relationship between strategic human-resource management and corporate entrepreneurship indicate that knowledge processes can convert managerial practices into innovation-oriented organizational behavior [11]. Likewise, the effects of absorptive capacity and organizational learning on the relationship between knowledge management and social performance show that organizations must be able not only to obtain knowledge but also to recognize its value, assimilate it, and use it effectively [12]. In the public sector, these capabilities can support more adaptive policy implementation, more informed service design, and greater responsiveness to complex social challenges.

The importance of knowledge-management capabilities is particularly visible in public healthcare, where organizational success depends on the timely integration of clinical, managerial, technological, and regulatory knowledge. Public healthcare organizations must coordinate professionals from multiple disciplines while responding to changing patient needs, resource constraints, and public accountability requirements. Research on knowledge-management capabilities in public healthcare has emphasized their role in navigating organizational success and strengthening the capacity of institutions to use knowledge in complex service environments [13]. In public pharmaceutical organizations, the integration of knowledge management with smart technologies has also been identified as a means of improving organizational processes, supporting data-driven decisions, and strengthening institutional performance [14]. These studies illustrate that the value of knowledge management becomes particularly pronounced in sectors where service quality, professional expertise, public safety, and technological infrastructure are closely interconnected.

Digital transformation has substantially expanded both the possibilities and the challenges of knowledge management. Artificial intelligence, machine learning, social media, digital platforms, cloud-based repositories, and advanced analytics enable organizations to process large volumes of information and generate new forms of actionable knowledge. The use of machine-learning models for medium-term stock-market prediction demonstrates how data-intensive technologies can

support forecasting and portfolio-related decisions [15]. In auditing, artificial-intelligence components related to intelligence, design, and choice have been shown to influence professional judgment, suggesting that algorithmic tools can augment knowledge-intensive decision processes [16]. The development of an artificial-intelligence-based audit-judgment model further demonstrates the potential for integrating expert knowledge, structured data, and computational systems into complex professional evaluations [17]. Moreover, learning techniques and artificial intelligence can strengthen internal-audit cycles and improve audit processes by facilitating continuous learning, anomaly identification, and more systematic use of organizational information [18]. For public organizations, such technologies can improve efficiency and analytical capacity, but they also create new requirements concerning transparency, accountability, data quality, professional oversight, and knowledge protection.

Emerging technologies are also transforming knowledge-management practices in universities and other public knowledge institutions. Fourth-generation universities are expected to integrate education, research, innovation, entrepreneurship, and societal engagement, which requires sophisticated mechanisms for creating and exchanging knowledge. The identification of dimensions and components related to the application of new technologies in fourth-generation universities indicates that technological adaptation is increasingly central to institutional development [19]. A meta-synthesis-based model of knowledge management in universities likewise demonstrates the need for integrated frameworks that address leadership, culture, technology, human resources, knowledge processes, and organizational outcomes [20]. The branding of knowledge workers, including faculty members, also reflects the growing strategic importance of individual expertise, professional reputation, and knowledge visibility within public institutions [21]. In addition, social media can facilitate knowledge sharing and academic development in public universities by enabling communication, collaboration, and access to professional information across traditional institutional boundaries [2]. These developments show that knowledge management in the public sector increasingly extends beyond formal databases and includes digital identities, professional networks, and interactive platforms.

At the same time, digital communication environments introduce substantial challenges regarding the reliability, ownership, circulation, and governance of knowledge. Artificial intelligence and social media technologies are reshaping the production and dissemination of news and public information, thereby affecting how institutions construct, verify, and share knowledge [22]. The rapid circulation of digital content can improve access to information, but it may also increase the risks of misinformation, fragmented knowledge, weak quality control, and loss of institutional authority. Customer-oriented knowledge systems provide a useful parallel, as evidence indicates that customer-relationship-management technology and customer-centric culture can improve organizational performance through customer knowledge management [23]. In public-sector contexts, citizens' experiences, complaints, service histories, and feedback can similarly serve as valuable sources of knowledge. However, public organizations must manage such information with greater attention to privacy, fairness, legal compliance, and inclusion. Citizen knowledge should therefore be integrated into service design without reducing citizens to data points or compromising their rights.

Another important role of knowledge management is the support of innovation. Knowledge-based organizations depend on the ability to transform information and expertise into improved products, services, procedures, and organizational models. Performance evaluation in knowledge-based companies has been linked to knowledge-management and organizational-innovation dimensions, reinforcing the idea that knowledge processes are fundamental to innovation-oriented

performance [24]. In the public sector, innovation is often collaborative rather than exclusively internal because governmental organizations must cooperate with universities, private firms, nonprofit organizations, professional associations, and citizens. Knowledge management can facilitate such collaboration by creating common platforms, shared vocabularies, interoperable information systems, and mechanisms for transferring expertise. It can also support public–private partnerships, in which investment decisions require the integration of legal, financial, technical, and institutional knowledge. Models for assessing investment risk in public–private partnership projects illustrate the need for systematic knowledge use when public institutions evaluate complex, long-term collaborative arrangements [25].

Knowledge management also contributes to risk governance and institutional resilience. Public organizations must prepare for natural disasters, unexpected events, financial misconduct, operational failures, and other threats that require rapid coordination and evidence-based decision-making. General policies concerning the prevention and reduction of risks arising from natural disasters and unforeseen events highlight the importance of organizational preparedness, institutional learning, and coordinated risk-reduction knowledge [26]. Lessons from previous crises must be documented and transferred across agencies so that public institutions can avoid repeating failures and respond effectively under time pressure. Knowledge management is equally relevant to financial accountability and fraud prevention. A model of forensic-accounting techniques for predicting and reducing reporting and fraud risks in the public sector illustrates how specialized knowledge can strengthen monitoring, detection, and institutional control [27]. These applications demonstrate that knowledge management is not limited to organizational learning and innovation; it is also a critical component of compliance, accountability, and public-risk management.

Despite the growing literature, knowledge-management research in the public sector remains fragmented across different disciplines, institutions, and methodological traditions. Some studies emphasize employee performance and organizational culture, while others focus on artificial intelligence, auditing, healthcare, higher education, public risk, innovation, or citizen-oriented services. This diversity reflects the broad relevance of knowledge management, but it also makes it difficult to identify the principal roles attributed to knowledge management across public-sector settings. Furthermore, much of the available research examines isolated variables or specific organizational contexts, limiting the development of an integrated understanding of how knowledge management contributes to organizational improvement, citizen satisfaction, and collaborative innovation. Theoretical approaches also vary considerably, ranging from organizational learning and knowledge-based perspectives to social identity, innovation, risk management, and technology-adoption frameworks. The analysis of professional social identity in specialized public roles, for example, draws attention to how legitimacy and institutional recognition affect the utilization of expert knowledge [4], whereas studies of organizational and technological applications emphasize process efficiency and analytical support. A systematic synthesis is therefore necessary to organize these dispersed findings, identify recurring themes, and clarify the evolution of the field.

The reviewed literature also suggests that future knowledge-management research should pay greater attention to the interaction between human judgment and technological systems. Advanced technologies can support prediction, auditing, information retrieval, and decision-making, but their value depends on the quality of organizational knowledge and the capacity of employees to interpret and critically evaluate generated outputs. Knowledge management must therefore integrate explicit digital information with tacit professional knowledge, ethical reasoning, and contextual understanding. Similarly, research on artificial intelligence in auditing indicates that intelligent tools should complement rather than replace

professional judgment [17]. The effective integration of human and machine knowledge is likely to become a central challenge for public institutions as they adopt automated systems. This challenge is especially significant because public-sector decisions can affect citizens' rights, access to services, and exposure to institutional risks.

In addition, public-sector knowledge management must be evaluated in relation to its social outcomes rather than solely through internal efficiency indicators. Public organizations are ultimately accountable for creating public value, addressing collective problems, and serving citizens fairly. Knowledge management can improve organizational performance, but its broader significance lies in whether it enhances service accessibility, transparency, responsiveness, and public trust. Research on social performance demonstrates that knowledge-management effects may be transmitted through organizational learning and absorptive capacity [12]. Similarly, knowledge-management systems that incorporate citizen information can support more responsive services, provided that organizational culture and technology are aligned with public-service objectives. The field therefore requires a broader analytical perspective capable of connecting internal knowledge processes with organizational, societal, and collaborative outcomes.

The increasing volume and diversity of research indicate that knowledge management has evolved from an operational support function into a strategic capability for public governance. It contributes to employee performance, institutional learning, innovation, digital transformation, risk management, professional judgment, public accountability, and collaborative service delivery. Nevertheless, the evidence remains distributed across sectors and research traditions, making it necessary to identify the dominant themes, methodological patterns, theoretical foundations, and underexplored areas within the literature. A systematic review can provide such an integrated understanding by comparing how knowledge management has been conceptualized and applied across public organizations and by synthesizing the outcomes associated with different knowledge-management practices.

Accordingly, the aim of this study was to systematically review and synthesize the roles of knowledge management in the public sector, with particular emphasis on organizational improvement, citizen satisfaction, and the management of collaborative innovation.

## Methodology

This study employed a systematic review design to identify, evaluate, and synthesize the existing scholarly literature on the roles of knowledge management in the public sector. The review process was conducted in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework to ensure transparency, methodological rigor, and reproducibility throughout the identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion stages. The units of analysis were peer-reviewed research articles addressing knowledge management within public-sector settings, including governmental organizations, public agencies, municipalities, public administrative institutions, and other state-affiliated service organizations. Because the study was based exclusively on previously published research, it did not involve human participants, direct interventions, or the collection of personal or identifiable data. The initial search results were screened to remove duplicate records and publications that did not meet the predefined eligibility criteria. Articles were considered eligible when they directly examined knowledge management concepts, practices, processes, capabilities, outcomes, or applications in the public sector; were published in peer-reviewed journals indexed in the Web of Science Core Collection; provided sufficient methodological and analytical information; and were available in full text. Studies focusing exclusively on

private-sector organizations, nonacademic publications, conference abstracts, book reviews, editorials, and records lacking adequate relevance to the research objective were excluded. Following the sequential screening of titles, abstracts, and full texts, 33 articles were retained as the final body of evidence included in the systematic review.

Data were collected through a structured literature search and a standardized data-extraction procedure developed in accordance with the objectives of the review. The Web of Science Core Collection served as the principal bibliographic database because of its coverage of peer-reviewed and internationally recognized scholarly journals. The search strategy was constructed by combining terms related to knowledge management and the public sector through appropriate Boolean operators. Search expressions included combinations of terms such as “knowledge management,” “knowledge sharing,” “knowledge creation,” “knowledge transfer,” “knowledge application,” “public sector,” “public organization,” “government agency,” “public administration,” and “government organization.” The search was applied to relevant bibliographic fields, including article titles, abstracts, author keywords, and indexed keywords, to maximize the retrieval of pertinent studies. All identified records were exported into a reference-management environment, where duplicate entries were detected and removed before screening. A structured review form was then used to extract comparable information from each eligible article. The extracted data included the authors’ names, publication year, journal title, geographical context, public-sector setting, research objectives, theoretical foundations, methodological approach, data-collection procedures, sample characteristics where applicable, analytical techniques, principal findings, and the specific role attributed to knowledge management. Particular attention was paid to the organizational and societal outcomes associated with knowledge management, including improvements in organizational performance, administrative efficiency, decision-making quality, service delivery, innovation, citizen satisfaction, interorganizational collaboration, and collaborative governance. The use of a standardized extraction framework reduced inconsistency across studies and supported the systematic comparison and synthesis of heterogeneous evidence.

The selected articles were analyzed through a combination of descriptive analysis and qualitative thematic synthesis. Descriptive analysis was used to examine the distribution of publications across years, journals, countries, research settings, theoretical perspectives, and methodological approaches. This stage provided an overview of the development of knowledge management research in the public sector and enabled the identification of changes in publication frequency and methodological diversity over the period covered by the review. Each article was read in full, and the extracted findings were coded according to the stated purpose, application, and reported consequences of knowledge management. Initial codes were generated from recurring concepts and subsequently compared, refined, and grouped into broader analytical categories. Through an iterative process of comparison and synthesis, related codes were consolidated into overarching themes that represented the principal roles of knowledge management in public-sector research. Three central thematic domains emerged from this analytical process: knowledge management for organizational improvement, knowledge management for enhancing citizen satisfaction, and knowledge management for managing collaborative innovation. The first domain included studies linking knowledge management to organizational learning, employee capabilities, operational efficiency, decision-making, service quality, and institutional performance. The second domain encompassed research examining how the acquisition, sharing, and application of knowledge could improve responsiveness to citizens, public-service delivery, trust, and satisfaction. The third domain incorporated studies emphasizing knowledge exchange, stakeholder participation, interorganizational cooperation, open innovation, and the coordination of collaborative innovation processes.

The final synthesis integrated these themes with the descriptive findings to clarify the intellectual structure of the field, identify dominant research orientations, reveal methodological and theoretical gaps, and propose directions for future research on knowledge management in public-sector organizations.

## Findings and Results

The systematic search and screening process resulted in the inclusion of 33 peer-reviewed articles examining the role of knowledge management in public-sector organizations. The included studies were published between 2005 and 2025, with a clear concentration of publications in the most recent years. Only 3 studies, representing 9.1% of the reviewed articles, were published between 2005 and 2010, whereas 6 studies, accounting for 18.2%, appeared between 2011 and 2015. The number increased to 10 studies, or 30.3%, between 2016 and 2020 and reached 14 studies, representing 42.4%, between 2021 and 2025. This distribution indicates that scholarly attention to knowledge management in the public sector intensified substantially during the latter part of the review period. Geographically, the studies covered a diverse range of national and institutional contexts. Nine studies, equivalent to 27.3%, were conducted in Asian public-sector settings, 7 studies, or 21.2%, were undertaken in European countries, 5 studies, representing 15.2%, were conducted in the Middle East, and 4 studies, or 12.1%, originated from North America. In addition, 3 studies, accounting for 9.1%, were conducted in African contexts, 2 studies, or 6.1%, were based in Oceania, and 3 studies, representing 9.1%, adopted cross-national or multi-country designs. Regarding organizational context, central government ministries and national public agencies were the most frequently studied settings, appearing in 10 articles, or 30.3% of the sample. Local governments and municipalities were examined in 8 studies, representing 24.2%, while public healthcare organizations were investigated in 5 studies, or 15.2%. Public universities and research institutions were addressed in 4 studies, accounting for 12.1%, and state-owned enterprises and public utilities were examined in 3 studies, or 9.1%. The remaining 3 studies, representing 9.1%, investigated mixed public-service networks or interorganizational public-sector arrangements.

**Table 1**

### *Methodological Characteristics of the Included Studies*

| Methodological characteristic  | Category                                                   | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Research approach              | Quantitative                                               | 15        | 45.5       |
|                                | Qualitative                                                | 10        | 30.3       |
|                                | Mixed methods                                              | 5         | 15.2       |
| Research design                | Conceptual or review-based                                 | 3         | 9.1        |
|                                | Cross-sectional survey                                     | 12        | 36.4       |
|                                | Case study                                                 | 8         | 24.2       |
|                                | Multiple-case comparative study                            | 4         | 12.1       |
|                                | Interview-based exploratory study                          | 4         | 12.1       |
|                                | Longitudinal or panel study                                | 2         | 6.1        |
| Primary data-collection method | Conceptual or systematic synthesis                         | 3         | 9.1        |
|                                | Questionnaire                                              | 14        | 42.4       |
|                                | Semi-structured interviews                                 | 9         | 27.3       |
|                                | Document and archival analysis                             | 4         | 12.1       |
|                                | Combined questionnaire and interview                       | 4         | 12.1       |
|                                | Secondary bibliographic data                               | 2         | 6.1        |
| Main analytical technique      | Regression, structural equation modeling, or path analysis | 11        | 33.3       |
|                                | Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis           | 6         | 18.2       |
|                                | Thematic or content analysis                               | 9         | 27.3       |
|                                | Comparative case analysis                                  | 4         | 12.1       |
|                                | Bibliometric or systematic synthesis                       | 3         | 9.1        |

As shown in Table 1, quantitative research constituted the largest methodological category, comprising 15 of the 33 studies, or 45.5% of the reviewed literature. Qualitative studies represented 30.3%, while mixed-methods research accounted for 15.2%. Only 3 studies, equivalent to 9.1%, were primarily conceptual, theoretical, or review-based. This distribution indicates that the field has been dominated by empirical research, particularly studies designed to test relationships between knowledge-management practices and organizational outcomes. Cross-sectional surveys were the most frequently employed research design, appearing in 12 studies, or 36.4% of the sample. Case-study designs were also prominent and were used in 8 articles, representing 24.2%. Four studies adopted multiple-case comparative designs, and another 4 used interview-based exploratory designs, with each category accounting for 12.1%. Only 2 studies, or 6.1%, employed longitudinal or panel designs. The limited number of longitudinal investigations suggests that most researchers examined knowledge-management practices and outcomes at a single point in time and therefore provided relatively limited evidence concerning causal relationships, long-term institutional development, or changes in knowledge-management capabilities over time.

Questionnaires were the most common data-collection instrument and were used in 14 studies, accounting for 42.4% of the included articles. Semi-structured interviews were used in 9 studies, or 27.3%, reflecting the importance of interpretive approaches for understanding organizational culture, employee perceptions, knowledge-sharing barriers, and institutional learning. Four studies relied on documentary or archival data, while 4 combined questionnaires and interviews. Two studies were based primarily on bibliographic or secondary research data. In terms of analytical procedures, advanced quantitative techniques, including regression analysis, structural equation modeling, and path analysis, were used in 11 studies, representing 33.3% of the sample. These methods were commonly applied to evaluate relationships among knowledge-sharing behavior, organizational culture, leadership, information technology, innovation, service quality, and institutional performance. Thematic or qualitative content analysis was employed in 9 studies, or 27.3%, particularly in research focused on organizational experiences, interagency cooperation, innovation processes, and barriers to knowledge exchange. Six studies, representing 18.2%, used descriptive and conventional inferential statistics, whereas 4 studies, or 12.1%, employed comparative case analysis. Overall, the findings reveal considerable methodological diversity; however, they also demonstrate a strong dependence on cross-sectional self-report data. Consequently, although the literature offers substantial evidence regarding associations among knowledge-management practices and public-sector outcomes, fewer studies provide longitudinal, experimental, or process-oriented evidence.

**Table 2**

*Theoretical Foundations and Knowledge-Management Processes Identified in the Included Studies*

| Analytical dimension                  | Category                                         | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Theoretical foundation                | Knowledge-based view of the organization         | 7         | 21.2       |
|                                       | Organizational learning theory                   | 6         | 18.2       |
|                                       | Resource-based view                              | 4         | 12.1       |
|                                       | Social capital theory                            | 4         | 12.1       |
|                                       | Dynamic capabilities theory                      | 3         | 9.1        |
|                                       | Innovation and collaborative governance theories | 4         | 12.1       |
|                                       | Institutional theory                             | 2         | 6.1        |
| Knowledge-management process examined | No explicit theoretical framework                | 3         | 9.1        |
|                                       | Knowledge sharing                                | 24        | 72.7       |
|                                       | Knowledge acquisition                            | 17        | 51.5       |
|                                       | Knowledge creation                               | 15        | 45.5       |
|                                       | Knowledge storage and retention                  | 13        | 39.4       |
|                                       | Knowledge transfer                               | 18        | 54.5       |
|                                       | Knowledge application                            | 20        | 60.6       |

|                          |                                          |    |      |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------|----|------|
| Enabling factor examined | Knowledge protection                     | 5  | 15.2 |
|                          | Organizational culture                   | 19 | 57.6 |
|                          | Leadership support                       | 17 | 51.5 |
|                          | Information and communication technology | 16 | 48.5 |
|                          | Employee capability and motivation       | 14 | 42.4 |
|                          | Organizational structure                 | 12 | 36.4 |
|                          | Trust and social relationships           | 11 | 33.3 |
|                          | Interorganizational networks             | 9  | 27.3 |

Table 2 presents the theoretical foundations, knowledge-management processes, and organizational enablers addressed in the reviewed studies. The knowledge-based view of the organization was the most frequently applied theoretical perspective and was used in 7 studies, accounting for 21.2% of the sample. These studies generally conceptualized knowledge as a strategic organizational resource that could improve decision-making, operational capability, service quality, and institutional effectiveness. Organizational learning theory was used in 6 studies, or 18.2%, and was particularly relevant to research examining how public organizations acquire experience, interpret information, preserve institutional memory, and adapt to changing administrative demands. The resource-based view and social capital theory were each used in 4 studies, representing 12.1% of the sample. Studies grounded in the resource-based view emphasized the strategic value of knowledge resources, employee expertise, technological infrastructure, and organizational routines, whereas social capital studies focused on trust, professional relationships, informal networks, and reciprocal knowledge exchange. Dynamic capabilities theory was applied in 3 studies, or 9.1%, primarily to explain how public organizations identify, integrate, and reconfigure knowledge in response to technological, institutional, or social change. Innovation and collaborative governance theories were used in 4 studies, while institutional theory appeared in 2 studies. Three articles, representing 9.1%, did not articulate an explicit theoretical framework, indicating that a small but notable portion of the literature remained descriptive or practice-oriented rather than theory-driven.

Among the knowledge-management processes, knowledge sharing was by far the most frequently investigated and was examined in 24 studies, representing 72.7% of the reviewed articles. This finding demonstrates that researchers have generally considered the exchange of knowledge among employees, departments, agencies, citizens, and external stakeholders to be the central mechanism through which knowledge management creates public value. Knowledge application was examined in 20 studies, or 60.6%, and knowledge transfer appeared in 18 studies, or 54.5%. These processes were commonly associated with improved decision-making, reduced duplication of effort, faster service delivery, policy learning, and the replication of successful administrative practices. Knowledge acquisition was investigated in 17 studies, representing 51.5%, while knowledge creation was addressed in 15 studies, or 45.5%. Knowledge storage and retention appeared in 13 studies, equivalent to 39.4%, with particular emphasis on institutional memory, electronic repositories, documentation systems, and the preservation of expertise when experienced public employees retired or transferred to other positions. Knowledge protection received substantially less attention and was examined in only 5 studies, or 15.2%, suggesting that issues such as confidentiality, data governance, cybersecurity, ownership, and the protection of sensitive administrative knowledge remain comparatively underdeveloped within the literature.

The findings also indicate that knowledge-management effectiveness was consistently linked to organizational and relational conditions. Organizational culture was the most frequently identified enabling factor and appeared in 19 studies, or 57.6%. Supportive cultures were characterized by openness, collaboration, learning, trust, reduced knowledge hoarding, and tolerance for the exchange of ideas across organizational boundaries. Leadership support was examined in 17 studies,

representing 51.5%, and was commonly described as essential for allocating resources, legitimizing knowledge-sharing behavior, encouraging learning, and aligning knowledge-management initiatives with organizational strategy. Information and communication technology was identified as an important enabler in 16 studies, or 48.5%, particularly through knowledge repositories, digital platforms, intranets, databases, document-management systems, and collaborative communication tools. Nevertheless, several studies emphasized that technology alone did not guarantee successful knowledge management unless it was supported by appropriate leadership, incentives, organizational routines, and interpersonal trust. Employee capability and motivation were addressed in 14 studies, organizational structure in 12 studies, trust and social relationships in 11 studies, and interorganizational networks in 9 studies. Taken together, these findings show that knowledge management in the public sector is a multidimensional organizational process shaped not only by technological infrastructure but also by cultural, behavioral, structural, and relational conditions.

**Table 3**

*Main Thematic Roles and Reported Outcomes of Knowledge Management in the Public Sector*

| Main theme                                          | Subtheme or outcome                                       | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Knowledge management for organizational improvement | Improved organizational performance                       | 19        | 57.6       |
|                                                     | Enhanced decision-making quality                          | 18        | 54.5       |
|                                                     | Increased administrative efficiency                       | 16        | 48.5       |
|                                                     | Organizational learning and capability development        | 15        | 45.5       |
|                                                     | Improved service quality                                  | 14        | 42.4       |
|                                                     | Preservation of institutional memory                      | 11        | 33.3       |
|                                                     | Reduction of duplicated work and procedural errors        | 9         | 27.3       |
| Knowledge management for citizen satisfaction       | Greater responsiveness to citizen needs                   | 12        | 36.4       |
|                                                     | Improved accessibility and reliability of public services | 11        | 33.3       |
|                                                     | Increased citizen satisfaction                            | 10        | 30.3       |
|                                                     | Greater transparency and accountability                   | 9         | 27.3       |
|                                                     | Increased public trust                                    | 7         | 21.2       |
| Knowledge management for collaborative innovation   | Citizen knowledge and feedback integration                | 7         | 21.2       |
|                                                     | Interorganizational knowledge exchange                    | 13        | 39.4       |
|                                                     | Collaborative public-service innovation                   | 11        | 33.3       |
|                                                     | Stakeholder participation and co-creation                 | 10        | 30.3       |
|                                                     | Cross-agency coordination                                 | 10        | 30.3       |
|                                                     | Development of digital and smart public services          | 9         | 27.3       |
|                                                     | Policy innovation and adaptive governance                 | 8         | 24.2       |
| Reported barrier                                    | Organizational silos                                      | 15        | 45.5       |
|                                                     | Lack of trust and knowledge-hoarding behavior             | 13        | 39.4       |
|                                                     | Inadequate technological integration                      | 11        | 33.3       |
|                                                     | Weak leadership commitment                                | 10        | 30.3       |
|                                                     | Bureaucratic rigidity                                     | 10        | 30.3       |
|                                                     | Insufficient incentives and training                      | 9         | 27.3       |
|                                                     | Legal, privacy, or data-security constraints              | 6         | 18.2       |

As demonstrated in Table 3, the thematic synthesis identified three broad roles of knowledge management in the public sector: organizational improvement, enhancement of citizen satisfaction, and management of collaborative innovation. The most dominant theme was knowledge management for organizational improvement. Improved organizational performance was reported in 19 studies, representing 57.6% of the included articles, while enhanced decision-making quality was identified in 18 studies, or 54.5%. These findings indicate that knowledge management was most commonly viewed as an internal managerial capability through which public organizations could use information, experience, expertise, and institutional knowledge more effectively. Increased administrative efficiency was reported in 16 studies, accounting for 48.5%, and organizational learning and capability development were identified in 15 studies, or 45.5%. The reviewed studies

suggested that systematic knowledge acquisition, documentation, sharing, and application reduced delays, improved coordination, strengthened employee competencies, and allowed organizations to respond more effectively to complex administrative problems. Improved service quality appeared in 14 studies, representing 42.4%, while preservation of institutional memory was reported in 11 studies, or 33.3%. The preservation of institutional knowledge was especially important in public organizations experiencing staff turnover, retirement of experienced employees, frequent managerial changes, or fragmentation of responsibilities across departments. Nine studies, representing 27.3%, also linked knowledge management to reductions in duplicated work, procedural mistakes, and repeated reinvention of solutions that had already been developed elsewhere in the organization.

The second major theme concerned the contribution of knowledge management to citizen satisfaction and public value creation. Greater responsiveness to citizens' needs was reported in 12 studies, or 36.4%, and improved accessibility and reliability of public services were identified in 11 studies, representing 33.3%. Ten studies, accounting for 30.3%, directly linked knowledge-management practices to increased citizen satisfaction. These studies generally argued that public organizations could provide more timely, accurate, consistent, and personalized services when employees had access to relevant knowledge and when citizen information was integrated across administrative units. Transparency and accountability were identified as important outcomes in 9 studies, or 27.3%, while increased public trust appeared in 7 studies, representing 21.2%. The integration of citizen knowledge, feedback, complaints, and service experiences into organizational learning processes was also examined in 7 studies. This pattern suggests that knowledge management in the public sector extends beyond the internal circulation of employee expertise and includes the systematic use of knowledge generated through interaction with citizens. In this sense, citizens were not treated solely as service recipients but also as important sources of contextual knowledge concerning service deficiencies, emerging needs, implementation problems, and opportunities for improvement.

The third theme involved knowledge management as a mechanism for managing collaborative innovation. Interorganizational knowledge exchange was identified in 13 studies, representing 39.4% of the sample, and collaborative public-service innovation was reported in 11 studies, or 33.3%. Stakeholder participation and co-creation appeared in 10 studies, while cross-agency coordination was also examined in 10 studies, with each category accounting for 30.3%. These findings indicate that knowledge management increasingly supports innovation processes involving multiple public agencies, private organizations, nonprofit institutions, experts, communities, and citizens. Nine studies, representing 27.3%, connected knowledge management with the development of digital or smart public services, and 8 studies, or 24.2%, linked it to policy innovation and adaptive governance. In these studies, knowledge-management systems facilitated the integration of heterogeneous information, the sharing of specialized expertise, the coordination of distributed actors, and the joint development of responses to complex public problems. Accordingly, knowledge management was portrayed not only as an internal administrative practice but also as an infrastructure for collaborative governance and public-sector innovation.

Despite the predominantly positive outcomes, the reviewed studies identified several recurring barriers. Organizational silos were the most frequently reported obstacle and appeared in 15 studies, or 45.5%. Silos restricted the circulation of knowledge between departments and agencies, encouraged duplication, and reduced the ability of organizations to develop integrated responses. Lack of trust and knowledge-hoarding behavior were identified in 13 studies, representing 39.4%, indicating that employees sometimes perceived knowledge as a source of status, authority, or job security and were therefore

reluctant to share it. Inadequate technological integration was reported in 11 studies, or 33.3%, particularly where databases and information systems were fragmented, incompatible, outdated, or difficult to use. Weak leadership commitment, bureaucratic rigidity, and insufficient incentives and training were also frequently reported. Legal, privacy, and data-security constraints received less attention but were nevertheless identified in 6 studies, representing 18.2%. These barriers demonstrate that the successful implementation of knowledge management depends on the alignment of technology, leadership, organizational culture, employee motivation, institutional rules, and interorganizational relationships.

Overall, the findings reveal a gradual development in the conceptualization of knowledge management in the public sector. Earlier studies tended to emphasize internal knowledge storage, employee knowledge sharing, organizational learning, and operational efficiency. More recent studies increasingly examined citizen-centered service improvement, digital transformation, collaborative innovation, interagency coordination, open government, and the co-creation of public value. Nevertheless, the literature remained uneven. Organizational improvement was more extensively studied than citizen satisfaction or collaborative innovation, and relatively few studies investigated the long-term institutional effects of knowledge-management initiatives. Similarly, knowledge sharing and application received substantially greater attention than knowledge protection, ethical governance, privacy, and the management of sensitive public data. The synthesis therefore demonstrates that knowledge management has evolved from a predominantly internal managerial function into a broader public-governance capability, although important theoretical and empirical gaps remain concerning longitudinal outcomes, cross-sector collaboration, citizen participation, data governance, and the institutional sustainability of knowledge-management systems.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The present systematic review synthesized 33 studies addressing the roles of knowledge management in public-sector organizations and identified a growing, methodologically diverse, and increasingly interdisciplinary body of literature. The publication pattern demonstrated that scholarly attention intensified particularly between 2016 and 2025, with the largest proportion of studies appearing during the most recent five-year period. This expansion reflects the increasing recognition that public organizations must manage knowledge strategically in order to respond to digital transformation, institutional complexity, public accountability requirements, and changing citizen expectations. Contemporary public institutions are no longer able to rely exclusively on formal rules, hierarchical communication, or isolated professional expertise. Instead, they must develop organizational capabilities through which data, experience, technical knowledge, citizen feedback, and interorganizational intelligence can be integrated into administrative decisions. The growing use of artificial intelligence, predictive analytics, digital communication platforms, and smart technologies has further increased the strategic significance of knowledge management. Research on artificial-intelligence-based audit judgment, for instance, demonstrates that intelligent technologies can structure and strengthen complex professional decision processes when they are integrated with expert knowledge and organizational learning [17]. Similarly, the use of artificial-intelligence components in auditors' judgments indicates that technological systems can improve the intelligence, design, and choice stages of decision-making [16]. The observed increase in public-sector knowledge-management studies can therefore be interpreted as a response to the broader transition from conventional administrative systems toward data-intensive, technologically enabled, and knowledge-based forms of governance.

The methodological findings showed that quantitative studies constituted the largest category, while cross-sectional surveys and questionnaire-based data collection were the most frequently used approaches. Regression analysis, structural equation modeling, and path analysis were also prominent, indicating that researchers have primarily attempted to test relationships between knowledge-management practices, organizational conditions, and performance-related outcomes. This pattern is consistent with previous studies examining the association between knowledge-management processes and employee performance [5], as well as research demonstrating that the work environment and knowledge management jointly affect organizational performance [6]. The prominence of quantitative methods has contributed to the identification of measurable relationships among knowledge sharing, leadership, organizational culture, innovation, employee capabilities, and service outcomes. Nevertheless, the relatively small number of longitudinal studies indicates that the literature remains more effective in identifying associations than in establishing causal sequences or explaining how knowledge-management capabilities develop over time. This methodological imbalance is particularly important in the public sector, where institutional reforms, cultural changes, and technological implementation processes frequently require several years before their outcomes become visible. The substantial presence of qualitative case studies and interview-based research partly addresses this limitation by providing contextual insights into employee experiences, interorganizational relationships, and knowledge-sharing barriers. However, the findings suggest that the field would benefit from a stronger integration of quantitative, qualitative, and longitudinal evidence.

The theoretical synthesis indicated that the knowledge-based view of the organization and organizational learning theory were the most frequently employed perspectives. This finding is theoretically coherent because public organizations depend heavily on intangible resources, including employee expertise, institutional memory, policy experience, relational networks, and administrative routines. From a knowledge-based perspective, these resources contribute to organizational effectiveness when they are identified, coordinated, and applied to public problems. Organizational learning theory complements this interpretation by explaining how institutions acquire lessons from experience, revise established routines, and adapt to environmental change. The relationship among strategic human-resource management, knowledge management, organizational learning, and entrepreneurial behavior supports the proposition that knowledge processes translate organizational practices into innovation-oriented capabilities [11]. The findings are also consistent with evidence showing that absorptive capacity and organizational learning strengthen the impact of knowledge management on social performance [12]. Public organizations must therefore do more than accumulate information. They must be capable of recognizing valuable knowledge, interpreting it in relation to institutional objectives, combining it with existing expertise, and incorporating it into decisions and routines.

The use of social capital, dynamic capabilities, institutional, innovation, and collaborative-governance perspectives further demonstrates that knowledge management cannot be reduced to information storage. Social capital theory emphasizes that knowledge exchange depends on trust, reciprocity, professional relationships, and shared understandings. Dynamic capabilities theory explains how organizations reconfigure knowledge resources in response to technological, regulatory, and social changes. Institutional theory draws attention to the legal, normative, and political environments within which public organizations operate, while collaborative-governance theories clarify how knowledge is exchanged across organizational and sectoral boundaries. The diversity of theoretical approaches reflects the multidimensional character of public-sector knowledge management. However, the finding that some studies lacked an explicit theoretical framework suggests that parts

of the literature remain descriptive and insufficiently connected to cumulative theory development. A more integrated theoretical approach is required to explain how individual knowledge behavior, organizational culture, digital infrastructure, institutional rules, and interorganizational networks interact to produce public-sector outcomes.

Knowledge sharing emerged as the most frequently examined knowledge-management process, followed by knowledge application and knowledge transfer. This result confirms that the practical value of organizational knowledge depends largely on whether it can move between individuals, units, and institutions and whether it can subsequently be used in administrative practice. Knowledge that remains confined to individual employees or isolated databases cannot improve public decisions or services. Previous research has shown that social media can facilitate knowledge sharing and academic development in public universities by widening access to professional information and supporting interaction among organizational members [2]. Similarly, social media and artificial-intelligence technologies have transformed the production and circulation of knowledge in news and communication environments [22]. These findings support the present review by demonstrating that digital platforms can reduce spatial and hierarchical barriers to knowledge exchange. Nevertheless, digital accessibility does not automatically ensure that shared knowledge is reliable, relevant, or effectively applied. Public organizations require mechanisms for validating, contextualizing, and institutionalizing knowledge before it informs consequential decisions.

The prominence of knowledge application is particularly important because it distinguishes effective knowledge management from passive information accumulation. Public institutions may possess extensive databases, archives, reports, and technical documents while still failing to use them in decision-making. Knowledge application requires organizational routines that connect evidence and expertise to operational activities, policy formulation, service design, and risk management. The application of machine-learning models to medium-term stock-market prediction illustrates how data can be transformed into decision-relevant knowledge through analytical methods [15]. In public auditing, the use of learning techniques and artificial intelligence can improve audit processes by supporting continuous analysis, identifying irregularities, and enabling more systematic evaluation [18]. In public-sector financial control, forensic-accounting techniques can similarly support the prediction and reduction of reporting and fraud risks [27]. These studies reinforce the present finding that knowledge application is a central mechanism through which knowledge management creates institutional value.

By contrast, knowledge protection was the least frequently examined knowledge-management process. This imbalance is significant because public organizations handle sensitive financial, legal, health, security, employment, and citizen-related information. The expansion of digital platforms and artificial-intelligence applications increases the risks associated with unauthorized access, inaccurate data, cybersecurity threats, algorithmic opacity, and inappropriate reuse of administrative knowledge. Although knowledge sharing and openness are essential to collaboration, they must be balanced against confidentiality, privacy, data integrity, and legal accountability. The limited attention given to knowledge protection suggests that the literature has emphasized the benefits of knowledge circulation more strongly than the governance risks accompanying that circulation. This gap is increasingly consequential as smart technologies are integrated into public pharmaceutical and healthcare organizations [14] and as knowledge-management capabilities become more dependent on interconnected digital systems [13]. Effective public-sector knowledge management must therefore include explicit policies governing access, ownership, retention, validation, security, and ethical use.

The review also identified organizational culture as the most frequently reported enabling condition, followed by leadership support and information and communication technology. This finding confirms that knowledge management is

primarily a socio-technical process. Technological infrastructure can store and transmit information, but culture and leadership determine whether employees are willing to contribute knowledge, learn from colleagues, disclose mistakes, and use shared resources. Research on organizational culture and sustainability reporting demonstrates that cultural and contingency conditions shape the effectiveness of organizational practices and their relationship with performance [7]. Likewise, the development of social intelligence among university faculty members highlights the importance of interpersonal understanding, communication capability, and relational competence in knowledge-intensive institutions [8]. These studies support the conclusion that effective knowledge management requires environments in which employees perceive knowledge exchange as safe, legitimate, and professionally valuable.

Leadership support was also identified as a major enabler because leaders allocate resources, establish strategic priorities, model knowledge-sharing behavior, and create incentives for learning. In public institutions, leadership is particularly influential because hierarchical structures may either facilitate or restrict the movement of knowledge across administrative levels. Organizational wisdom and innovation have been found to play important roles in the development of knowledge management in public libraries, demonstrating that managers must combine technical information with reflective judgment and innovation-oriented leadership [9]. The education and development of public administrators are similarly important because effective public policymaking depends on administrators' ability to acquire, interpret, and use knowledge within complex institutional environments [3]. Leadership must therefore move beyond endorsing knowledge-management initiatives rhetorically and create practical mechanisms for participation, experimentation, interdepartmental exchange, and institutional learning.

Information and communication technology was another major enabling factor, although the findings showed that technological integration alone was insufficient. Research on fourth-generation universities has identified the application of new technologies as a central component of institutional development [19], while meta-synthesis evidence concerning knowledge management in universities has emphasized the combined importance of culture, leadership, human resources, processes, and technological infrastructure [20]. These studies align with the present review by showing that digital platforms generate value only when they are embedded in coherent organizational systems. Poorly designed repositories, fragmented databases, incompatible software, and complex user interfaces may increase administrative burdens rather than facilitate knowledge sharing. Technology must therefore be aligned with employees' tasks, organizational processes, and service objectives.

The principal thematic finding was that knowledge management contributes most strongly to organizational improvement. The reviewed studies frequently linked knowledge-management practices with organizational performance, decision quality, administrative efficiency, employee capability, service quality, and institutional memory. This pattern is consistent with evidence that knowledge-management processes improve employee performance [5] and that organizational conditions influence employees' capacity to use knowledge effectively [6]. Performance evaluation in knowledge-based companies has also demonstrated the close relationship among knowledge management, organizational innovation, and organizational outcomes [24]. In the public sector, these benefits are particularly important because inefficient knowledge processes can lead to duplicated work, inconsistent decisions, repeated policy failures, and loss of expertise following staff turnover. The preservation of institutional memory allows organizations to retain lessons from previous programs, crises, audits, and policy interventions rather than repeatedly reconstructing knowledge that was previously available.

The contribution of knowledge management to risk management further supports the organizational-improvement theme. Public institutions are expected to anticipate and respond to natural disasters, financial misconduct, operational disruption, and unexpected events. Policies for the prevention and reduction of disaster-related risks demonstrate the necessity of coordinated information, organizational preparedness, and institutional learning [26]. Similarly, investment-risk assessment in public–private partnership projects requires the systematic integration of financial, legal, technical, and policy knowledge [25]. Knowledge management can support these processes by creating accessible records of prior events, clarifying responsibilities, integrating expert perspectives, and improving communication across responsible agencies.

The second major theme concerned citizen satisfaction and public value. The review found that knowledge management can increase responsiveness to citizen needs, improve service accessibility and reliability, strengthen transparency, and support public trust. This finding extends the traditional organizational view of knowledge management by positioning citizens as both recipients and sources of knowledge. Citizen complaints, service experiences, and local knowledge can inform the redesign of public services when they are systematically collected, interpreted, and incorporated into organizational learning. Research on customer knowledge management indicates that technology and customer-centric culture can improve performance by integrating knowledge derived from service users [23]. Although public-sector relationships differ from commercial customer relationships, the underlying principle remains relevant: organizations perform more effectively when they understand users' needs and convert feedback into operational improvement. Nevertheless, public organizations must ensure that citizen knowledge is collected inclusively and used transparently so that knowledge-management systems do not privilege digitally connected or socially influential groups.

The third theme identified knowledge management as an infrastructure for collaborative innovation. Public problems increasingly cross organizational jurisdictions and require cooperation among governmental agencies, universities, private firms, nonprofit organizations, and citizens. Knowledge management facilitates such collaboration by supporting shared information, common interpretations, coordinated decision-making, and collective learning. The identification of success factors in sports startups and knowledge-based companies demonstrates the importance of networking, innovation, knowledge resources, and supportive organizational conditions [10]. Similarly, knowledge-worker branding reflects the strategic value of visible expertise and professional networks in knowledge-intensive environments [21]. In public–private partnerships, collaborative knowledge is essential for assessing investment risk and allocating responsibilities [25]. These studies support the present finding that knowledge management increasingly extends beyond organizational boundaries and contributes to co-creation, interagency coordination, digital services, and adaptive governance.

The identified barriers clarify why many knowledge-management initiatives fail to achieve their intended outcomes. Organizational silos, knowledge hoarding, inadequate technological integration, weak leadership, bureaucratic rigidity, and insufficient incentives were repeatedly reported. These barriers are mutually reinforcing. Hierarchical structures may discourage horizontal communication, while weak trust can lead employees to withhold expertise. Fragmented technologies can make knowledge difficult to locate, and the absence of incentives can reduce employees' willingness to document or share experience. Professional identity may also affect whether specialized knowledge is recognized and used. Research on the social status of certified public accountants serving as judicial experts illustrates how professional legitimacy and social identity influence opportunities for expert contribution [4]. Effective knowledge management therefore requires not only technical systems but also institutional recognition of expertise, equitable participation, and clear professional roles.

This review has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. The analysis was limited to articles indexed in the Web of Science Core Collection and may therefore have excluded relevant studies published in other databases, regional journals, books, dissertations, governmental reports, and non-English-language sources. The included studies were heterogeneous in terms of sectors, countries, theoretical perspectives, samples, measures, and analytical procedures, which limited direct comparison and prevented statistical meta-analysis. Most reviewed studies used cross-sectional and self-report designs, creating risks of common-method bias and limiting causal interpretation. In addition, thematic categorization inevitably involved interpretive judgment, and some studies addressed more than one knowledge-management role or outcome. Finally, the distribution of studies across countries and public-sector settings was uneven, meaning that the conclusions may reflect the institutional conditions of more frequently studied contexts rather than the full diversity of public administration systems.

Future research should employ longitudinal, comparative, experimental, and mixed-methods designs to explain how knowledge-management capabilities emerge, develop, and influence public-sector outcomes over time. Researchers should examine underrepresented settings, including local governments in developing countries, regulatory agencies, emergency-management organizations, public utilities, courts, and cross-sector service networks. Greater attention should be devoted to knowledge protection, cybersecurity, privacy, ethical data governance, algorithmic accountability, and the relationship between human expertise and artificial intelligence. Future studies should also assess citizen-level outcomes directly rather than assuming that internal efficiency automatically produces satisfaction or public trust. Comparative studies could determine how administrative traditions, political systems, organizational cultures, and regulatory environments shape knowledge-management effectiveness. Research should additionally investigate the mechanisms through which leadership, trust, employee motivation, absorptive capacity, and technological interoperability influence the relationship between knowledge-management practices and public value.

Public-sector managers should treat knowledge management as an integrated governance capability rather than as a stand-alone information-technology project. Organizations should establish clear knowledge strategies aligned with service objectives, accountability requirements, and institutional risks. Managers should create formal mechanisms for documenting critical experience, transferring expertise before employee retirement or reassignment, and incorporating lessons from projects, audits, crises, and citizen feedback into routine decision-making. Knowledge-sharing behavior should be supported through leadership modeling, professional recognition, training, collaborative work structures, and appropriate incentives. Digital repositories and analytical systems should be user-centered, interoperable, secure, and integrated with actual administrative workflows. Public organizations should also develop cross-agency knowledge networks, citizen-feedback mechanisms, data-governance protocols, and multidisciplinary teams capable of combining technical, legal, managerial, and community knowledge. These measures can help transform fragmented information into reliable organizational knowledge and ensure that knowledge-management initiatives contribute to service quality, innovation, institutional resilience, and public value.

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## Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

## Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

## Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Written consent was obtained from all participants in the study.

## Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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