

Bridging Frameworks into Functionality: A Review of Diverse Releases on Knowledge Transfer

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Abstract

Knowledge transfer is a critical organizational process that enables the effective dissemination and application of information, skills, and expertise across individuals, teams, and organizational units. In increasingly dynamic and competitive environments, organizations rely on efficient knowledge transfer to support innovation, continuous learning, and sustained performance. This study presents an integrative empirical review of twenty-five (25) studies published between 2015 and 2022 in high-impact peer-reviewed journals, examining key methodologies, findings, and theoretical contributions related to knowledge transfer. To address gaps in prior reviews, the study categorizes knowledge transfer into three perspectives: Cognitive Exchange, Professional Competence, and Moral Development. By the very nature of this integrative empirical review, knowledge transfer emerges as a central theme, highlighting its significance in shaping organizational routines, professional practices, and theoretical advancements. Through this comprehensive synthesis, the study seeks to advance existing frameworks and identify recurring patterns and insights that contribute to the development of scholarly discourse on knowledge transfer.

Keywords: knowledge transfer, cognitive exchange, scoping review, moral development, empirical review

Introduction

Knowledge transfer is a critical driver of organizational learning, innovation, and sustained competitive advantage. It encompasses the processes through which knowledge—both tacit and explicit—is shared, absorbed, and applied across individuals, teams, and organizational units. It may be understood as the process through which the experience of one-unit (e.g., an individual, group, or department) influences another, thereby enabling learning and performance improvement (Giudice & Peruta, 2016). From a techno-centric perspective, knowledge transfer also enhances knowledge sharing and creation (Shu-Sheng et al., 2010). In contemporary organizations operating in fast-paced and complex environments, the ability to transfer knowledge effectively is essential for adapting to change and fostering continuous improvement.

Over the past decade, scholars have examined the mechanisms that enable or hinder effective knowledge transfer. These include social networks, organizational routines (i.e., repeated patterns of coordinated activities), personnel mobility, mentoring programs, and knowledge management systems. Informal relationships and interpersonal trust facilitate knowledge exchange, while formal structures—such as cross-functional teams and decentralized communication channels—support the flow of knowledge across organizational boundaries.

Despite growing interest in the field, challenges remain in measuring knowledge transfer and linking it to organizational outcomes. Variations in geographical contexts, organizational culture, sample populations, and methodological approaches limit the generalizability of findings. Previous reviews on knowledge transfer have often focused narrowly on specific mechanisms or industry contexts and have not adequately integrated the

cognitive, professional, and moral dimensions of knowledge transfer. As a result, there is limited understanding of how these three perspectives interact to influence knowledge creation, application, and organizational outcomes.

To address these challenges, researchers often employ proxy measures, indirect indicators used to represent complex and unobservable constructs. Nonetheless, recent empirical studies have deepened understanding of the factors that facilitate or inhibit knowledge movement within organizational systems.

This study addresses the existing gap by applying a three-perspective categorization—Cognitive Exchange, Professional Competence, and Moral Development—to systematically synthesize findings from empirical studies between 2015 and 2022. This approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of knowledge transfer, highlighting not only the mechanisms of transfer but also the ethical, cognitive, and professional competencies that underpin effective knowledge sharing.

This study focuses on the period 2015–2022 to capture recent empirical developments and emerging trends in knowledge transfer research. During this time, scholars have increasingly explored how knowledge is not only transferred but also actively sought through knowledge search mechanisms, including information systems and collaborative networks. Organizations that encourage employees to seek knowledge from both internal and external sources demonstrate greater adaptability and innovation. Examining the publications from the perspective of the employed methodology is the main goal of this evaluation. By categorizing knowledge transfer into the three perspectives, this review aims to clarify inconsistencies in prior findings, integrate fragmented literature, and provide actionable insights for both theory and practice.

Given these developments, a comprehensive review of the literature is necessary to synthesize current knowledge and identify gaps for future research. This study adopts a methodological lens to examine how knowledge transfer has been investigated across empirical studies, with particular attention to research design, variables, and analytical approaches. By doing so, it aims to clarify inconsistencies in findings and advance the field.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. The next section outlines the materials and methods, including the review procedure. This is followed by a presentation of the analyzed studies, a discussion of key findings and research implications, and a final section that concludes the review.

Materials and Methods

This study examined knowledge transfer through a comprehensive review of relevant empirical research and literature, aiming to identify key patterns, mechanisms, and contextual factors that influence effective knowledge exchange across organizational settings. Systematic reviews provide a rigorous, transparent, and replicable approach for synthesizing existing research through structured procedures for identifying, screening, and analyzing relevant studies (Tranfield et al., 2003; Schiehl et al., 2016).

To ensure methodological transparency, electronic databases including Scopus, Web of Science, and ABI/Inform were systematically searched. The search strategy used combinations of keywords, including “knowledge transfer,” “organizational routines,” “social networks,” “knowledge management,” and “network.” These terms were applied to article titles, abstracts, and author-defined keywords. Duplicate records were removed prior to screening. Titles and abstracts were initially reviewed, followed by full-text assessment based on predefined eligibility criteria.

The inclusion criteria were as follows: (1) peer-reviewed journal articles; (2) empirical studies focusing on knowledge transfer; and (3) studies examining micro-level processes, including individual, team, or inter-organizational interactions. Conceptual papers, books, and book chapters were excluded to maintain a focus on empirically validated findings. This emphasis on micro-level analysis aligns with the study’s objective of understanding individual and dyadic mechanisms of knowledge transfer.

To ensure relevance to contemporary organizational practices, only studies published between 2015 and 2022 were included. This timeframe captures recent empirical developments and emerging trends while maintaining a focused and manageable scope for analysis.

Following the screening process, twenty-five (25) studies were retained from an initial pool of thirty (30) articles and were considered the final sample. These studies were published in high-impact journals indexed in the Clarivate Analytics Journal Citation Reports (2023), ensuring their scholarly credibility and influence.

The selected articles were drawn from reputable journals, including Organization Science, Journal of Technology Transfer, Academy of Management Review, Tourism Management, Journal of Knowledge Management, Research Policy, and others. This distribution reflects the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge transfer research across management, business, and organizational studies.

Table 1 presents the impact factors of the source journals. While impact factor is not a definitive measure of research quality, it serves as a widely accepted proxy for academic influence and relevance (Garfield, 2006; Hoeffel, 1998). The table indicates that the selected studies are drawn from journals with varying but generally strong citation metrics, supporting the robustness of the review.

Table 1

Journal Impact Factors of Source Journals

Journal Title	Journal Impact Factor
Organization Science	4.9
Journal of Technology Transfer	4.6
Academy of Management Review	19.3
Tourism Management	10.9
Journal of Knowledge Management	6.6
Research Policy	7.5
Cross Cultural & Strategic Management	1.9
Journal of International Management	5.9
Personnel review	3.3
Journal of International Business Studies	8.6
Journal of Business Research	10.5
Journal of Family Business Strategy	9.5
International Business Review	5.9
Knowledge Management Research & Practice	3.2
Industrial Marketing Management	7.8
Journal of Enterprise Information Management	7.4
International Journal of Project Management	7.4
Science and Public Policy	2.6

Table 1 presents the journal impact factor according to JCR Thomson Reuters' 2023 Clarivate Analytics Citation Reports. Two components make up a journal's impact factor: the denominator, which is the number of significant articles and reviews published in the same two years, and the numerator, which is the number of citations to items published in the current year (Garfield, 2006). Although the Impact Factor is not a perfect instrument for evaluating article quality, it is the best available and benefits from being an established method, making it a useful tool for scientific review (Hoeffel, 1998).

The articles were further organized according to publication year to examine trends in research development. As shown in Table 2, the studies were grouped into three periods: 2015–2018, 2019–2020, and 2021–2022. This categorization enables a clearer analysis of the evolution of methodological approaches and thematic emphases in knowledge transfer research over time.

Table 2

Sampled Articles

Journal Title	2015 to 2018	2019 to 2020	2021 to 2022	Total	%
Organization Science			1	1	4
Journal of Technology Transfer	1	3		4	16
Academy of Management Review	1			1	4
Tourism Management		1		1	4
Journal of Knowledge Management	4	1		5	20
Research Policy	1			1	4
Cross Cultural & Strategic Management	1			1	4
Journal of International Management	1			1	4
Personnel review			1	1	4
Journal of International Business Studies	1			1	4
Journal of Business Research	1			1	4
Journal of Family Business Strategy	1			1	4
International Business Review		1		1	4
Knowledge Management Research & Practice		1		1	4
Industrial Marketing Management	1			1	4
Journal of Enterprise Information Management	1			1	4
International Journal of Project Management			1	1	4
Science and Public Policy	1			1	4

Table 2 illustrates the distribution of sampled articles across journals and time periods. The variation in publication frequency across journals highlights the uneven yet growing scholarly attention to knowledge transfer, suggesting opportunities for further research in underrepresented areas.

Evaluation of Knowledge Transfer Literature

The twenty-five (25) empirical studies that were sampled are categorized according to the data source, sample sizes, geographic settings, statistical method used, and categorization perspective. The latter category is used to organize ideas and systematically understand the frameworks and literature in the subject articles. Furthermore, the author identified the factors that contributed to knowledge transfer and those that impacted it (precursor and consequence variables).

Table 3

Sources and Sample Size of Selected Articles

Title	Year	Author	Data Sources	Sample Sizes
The Mechanisms and Components of Knowledge Transfer: The Virtual Special Issue on Knowledge Transfer Within Organizations	2022	Linda Argote, Jerry Guo, Sae-Seul Park, & Oliver Hahla	Secondary	53
Knowledge transfer in university–industry research partnerships: a review	2019	Esther de Wit-de Vries, Wilfred A. Dolfsma, Henny J. van der Windt, & M. P. Gerkema	Secondary	26
Public policy measures in support of knowledge transfer activities: a review of academic literature	2016	Anna Kochenkova, Rosa Grimaldi, & Federico Munari	Secondary	80
Analysis of knowledge-transfer mechanisms in construction project cooperation networks	2019	Jian Sun, Xu Ren, & Chimay J. Anumba	Secondary	210
What's so special about intergenerational knowledge transfer? Identifying challenges of intergenerational knowledge transfer.	2017	Xenia Schmidt & Katrin Muehlfeld	Primary	21
A network perspective of knowledge transfer in tourism	2020	Hossein Raisi, Rodolfo Baggiob, Llandis Barratt-Pugh, & Gregory Willson	Secondary	166
A model of mobile technologies acceptance for knowledge transfer by employees	2017	Michal Kuciapski	Primary	22
Knowledge management, knowledge transfer and organizational performance in the arts and crafts industry: a literature review	2018	Vito Manfredi Latilla, Federico Frattini, Antonio Messeni Petruzzelli, & Martina Berner	Secondary	172

The relationship between organizational commitment, knowledge transfer and knowledge management maturity	2019	Juliano Martins Ramalho Marques, Jefferson Lopes La Falce, Fernanda Machado Fonseca Ramalho Marques, Cristiana Fernandes De Muylder, & Jersone Tasso Moreira Silva	Secondary	323
University research and knowledge transfer: A dynamic view of ambidexterity in British universities	2017	Abhijit Sengupta & Amit S. Ray	Secondary	129
Facilitating tacit knowledge transfer: routine compatibility, trustworthiness, and integration in M & As	2015	Rebecca Ann Ranucci & David Souder	Secondary	86
The translator as agent in management knowledge transfer.	2017	Susanne Tietze, Carole Tansley, & Emil Helienek	Primary	Not stated in the paper
University–industry collaboration: using meta-rules to overcome barriers to knowledge transfer.	2020	A. Alexander, Dominique Philippe Martin, C. Manolchev, & K. Miller	Primary	Not stated in the paper
Learning and knowledge transfer in Africa-China JVs: Interplay between informalities, culture, and social capital	2017	Abdoulkadre Ado a, Zhan Su, & Roseline Wanjiru	Primary	29
Knowledge sharing, knowledge transfer and SMEs: evolution, antecedents, outcomes and directions	2021	Amitabh Anand, Birgit Muskat, Andrew Creed, Ambika Zutshi, & Aniko Csepregi	Secondary	194
Organizational unlearning and knowledge transfer in cross-border M&A: the roles of routine and knowledge compatibility	2017	Xiangyang Wang, Yujuan Xi, Jingsi Xie, & Yingxin Zhao	Secondary	212
Knowledge transfer from international joint ventures to local suppliers in a developing economy	2015	Zaheer Khan, Oded Shenkar, & Yong Kyu Lew	Secondary	155
Factors influencing technology and knowledge transfer: Configurational recipes for Sub-Saharan Africa	2016	Ellis Osabutey & Zhongqi Jin	Secondary	66
Knowledge transfer in family business successions: Implications of knowledge types and transaction atmospheres	2015	Britta Boyd, Susanne Royer, Rong Pei, & Xiaolei Zhang	Primary	Not stated in the paper
Knowledge transfer	2020	Jun Jie Shaoa & Akram A.L.	Primary	Not stated

between self-initiated expatriates and their organizations: Research propositions for managing SIEs			Arissb		in the paper
Knowledge transfer and innovation through university-industry partnership: an integrated theoretical view	2019	Asha Thomas & Justin Paul	Primary	17	
Reverse knowledge transfer and subsidiary power	2015	Zhaleh Najafi-Tavani, Ghasem Zaefarian, Peter Naudé, & Axèle Giroud	Secondary	183	
Effect of transactive memory systems on team performance mediated by knowledge transfer	2018	Youying Wanga, Qian Huang, Robert M. Davison, & Feng Yanga	Secondary	61	
Organizational practices that enable and disable knowledge transfer: The case of a public sector project-based organization	2021	Anna Mahura & Gustavo Birollo	Primary	20	
Scientists' engagement in knowledge transfer and exchange: individual factors, variety of mechanisms and users	2018	Oscar Llopis, Mabel Sanchez-Barrioluengo, Julia Olmos-Penuela, & Elena Castro-Martinez	Secondary	1,295	

Table 3 summarizes the 25 empirical studies included in the review, showing the year of publication, authors, data source type (Primary = original data collected; Secondary = data from existing sources), and sample sizes. This overview provides insight into the diversity of study designs, geographical contexts, and research scopes used to examine knowledge transfer across organizations.

Data Sources

Data collection plays a very crucial role in statistical analysis. In research, there are different methods for gathering information, all of which fall into two categories: primary and secondary data (Douglas, 2015). This literature review identifies whether the data in the sampled literature were drawn from primary or secondary sources. As anticipated, primary sources constituted a notable portion of the data; however, secondary sources were more prevalent. Of the 25 data sources examined, 9 (36%) were primary sources, and 16 (64%) were secondary. This indicates a greater reliance on secondary data in the reviewed literature, which may be attributed to the ease of access, cost-effectiveness, and efficiency of using existing data. Nonetheless, the inclusion of primary data underscores the importance of first-hand data collection in supporting original research insights. Distinguishing between these two types of sources enhances the methodological transparency of the integrative review and supports a clearer understanding of the evidence base used in the analysis.

The authors of the selected publications employed interviews, observations, and surveys, as well as both fictional and realistic corporate business and organizational scenarios as tools. Among these instruments are Anova and Descriptive Statistics (De Wit-de Vries et al., 2019), Descriptive Analysis (Argote et al., 2022; Shao J. & Ariss A. 2020), Five-point Likert-type scale (Kochenkova et al., 2016; Raisi et al., 2020; Kuciapski M. 2017; Anucci R. & Souder D. 2015; Wang et al., 2017; Osabutey E. & Jin Z. 2016), Meta-regression Analysis & Pearson Correlations (Sun et al., 2019; Marques et al., 2019, Najafi-Tavani et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2018), Multiple Linear Regressions

& Likert-type Scales (Latilla et al., 2018; Anand et al., 2021; Llopis et al., 2018), Quasi-Bayesian Monte Carlo inference method (Sengupta A. & Ray A 2017), and Thematic and Case Analysis (Schmidt X. & Muehlfeld K. 2017; Tietze et al., 2017; Alexander et al., 2020; Ado et al., 2017; Khan et al., 2015; Boyd et al., 2015; Thomas A. & Paul J. 2019; Mahura A. & Birollo G. 2021).

Most of the data sources were drawn from various authors' papers on knowledge transfer. Most of the respondents, participants, and literature reviews are from sizable studies related to the topic. However, there are certain issues with first-hand data sources that must be addressed, such as inaccurate replies to manipulation checks (Zimmerman, 2016) and incomplete responses on important dependent variables (Asbahr, 2019).

Sample Sizes

This study modified the literature, focusing on the individual and organizational levels, to review empirical studies on knowledge transfer. Table 3 summarizes the number of participants across several studies on the subject, as shown in the following paragraphs. Additionally, the same table displays the authors, year of publication, and study title.

Ranging from seventeen (17) to one thousand two hundred ninety-five (1,295), the twenty-five (25) articles reviewed a report varying sample sizes. Excluding studies where the sample size was not disclosed or was reported in non-numerical terms, the remaining twenty (20) articles reflect an average sample mean size of approximately 177 participants that reflects the central tendency of the dataset and provides a general sense of the typical study size within the reviewed literature, while standard deviation of two hundred sixty-six (266.29), as indicated in Table 3 indicates a high level of variability in sample sizes. This wide dispersion suggests that while some studies employed relatively small sample sizes, others—such as the study with 1,295 participants—used significantly larger samples, thereby skewing the distribution. The large standard deviation highlights the heterogeneity in research designs and scales across the studies, an important consideration when synthesizing findings and drawing generalizable conclusions in an integrative review.

The data set's outlier count is average, as indicated by the standard deviation, which also shows that the data points are typically closer to the average value (Bansal, 2019). The credentials of participants in the sampling research may be a critical factor in determining the quality of the study, as knowledge transfer is examined through examples and tasks. As a result, both general experience and task experience can suggest that participants possess the task knowledge required for the review.

Geographical Settings

The literature review across various geographic locations was characterized in this study by analyzing empirical research conducted by researchers in the corporate sector. Table 4 shows the number of publications and the percentage distribution of the geographic locations of knowledge transfer among the chosen studies. Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America are the regions from which the researchers collected and evaluated data. One of the criteria established by the author is that only papers published in journals with a high Clarivate Analytics impact factor are examined, with the Clarivate Analytics Social Science Index serving as a significant conduit for publishers from North America and Europe (Mutuc et al., 2018).

Table 4*Distribution of Geographical Settings*

Settings	Number of Studies	Percentage (%)
Asia	6	24
Australia	2	8
Europe	11	44
North America	5	20
South America	1	4
Total	25	100

The majority of the selected research, 44% of the total studies, was conducted in Europe. It is also the scale that has guided the discipline in how knowledge transfer is measured, operationalized, and subsequently communicated to both researchers and professionals (Cohen et al., 2017). Furthermore, it might be beneficial to investigate knowledge transfer within organizations across various cultural contexts (Nolder and Riley, 2014).

Statistical Analysis of Knowledge Transfer

The statistical treatment applied to the empirical studies sampled in relation to knowledge transfer is evaluated and considered in this study. The following table shows the number of articles and the percentage of articles that applied statistical procedures for the topic.

Table 5*Statistical treatment of sampled articles*

Statistical Treatment	Number of Studies	Percentage (%)
Anova and Descriptive Statistics	1	4
Descriptive Analysis	2	8
Five-point Likert-type scale	6	24
Meta-regression Analysis & Pearson Correlations	4	16
Multiple Linear Regressions & Likert-type Scales	3	12
Quasi-Bayesian Monte Carlo inference method	1	4
Thematic and Case Analysis	8	32
Total	25	100

The most prevalent approach was thematic and case analysis, used in 8 studies (32%). This method underscores a substantial reliance on qualitative research techniques within the literature, suggesting that a significant portion of the studies sought to explore patterns, themes, or case-specific insights rather than purely numerical or statistical relationships. The second most used method was the five-point Likert-type scale, employed in 6 studies (24%). This indicates a marked preference for standardized instruments to quantify subjective data, particularly in

capturing attitudes, opinions, or perceptions. In contrast, meta-regression analysis and Pearson correlations were used in 4 studies (16%), indicating a moderate use of advanced statistical techniques to examine relationships between variables.

Additionally, multiple linear regressions, combined with Likert-type scales, were used in 3 studies (12%), suggesting a more sophisticated approach to examining multiple predictors in relation to dependent variables. Because of (a) reality restrictions, (b) the potential for dissonance among other cognitions, and/or (c) the discomfort or work involved in changing a particular cognition, some cognitions are less likely to be altered. Resistance to change may be influenced by cognitive importance, but these elements also highlight the complexity of dissonance reduction.

Simpler statistical techniques, such as descriptive analysis and ANOVA with descriptive statistics, were used in 2 (8%) and 1 (4%) studies, respectively, reflecting the continuing importance of foundational methods for data analysis. Notably, the quasi-Bayesian Monte Carlo inference method was employed in only one study (4%), indicating its limited use in the reviewed sample. Overall, the data reflect methodological diversity within the sampled literature, with a notable predominance of qualitative and mixed methods approaches, alongside a smaller but significant use of quantitative statistical methods. This range of statistical treatments underscores the breadth of methodologies employed to address research questions across various domains of study.

Perspective in Explaining Knowledge Transfer

The reviewed articles examined knowledge transfer in a broader context; thus, very few of them clearly described their understanding of the topic. Therefore, the author categorized the diverse concepts of knowledge transfer, as described by the scholars of the sampled articles, to the best of their knowledge. Table 6 displays the general categories of knowledge transfer as described in the sampled studies.

Table 6

Distribution of Perspectives in Explaining Knowledge Transfer

Categories	Number of Studies	Percentage (%)
Cognitive Exchange Perspective	9	36
Professional Competence Perspective	10	40
Moral Development Perspective	6	24
Total	25	100

It highlighted that when there is an inconsistency (dissonance) between attitudes or behaviors, something must be done to resolve it. In terms of the discrepancy between attitudes and behavior, it is most likely that attitudes will change to accommodate behavior (Festinger, 2002). In line with this, Hogg and Vaughan (2005) made it clear that consistency is what people seek; people always want to act in ways that align with their beliefs, and they want to ensure that their beliefs and values are always right.

This perspective provides valuable insights into how individuals and groups within organizations acquire, process, and transfer knowledge. It advances the theoretical understanding of knowledge transfer by unpacking the cognitive mechanisms and structural enablers that influence how knowledge is internalized and shared. These mechanisms are not merely structural but reflect how cognitive load, attention, memory, and sense-making processes shape the way knowledge is interpreted and transmitted across organizational levels.

The presence of a knowledge transfer prompt was found to improve cognitive performance. Consequently, Harmon-Jones (2002) explained that such situations might be brought about by at least four (4) causal factors: 1)

First, the logic of ideas, arguments, or reasoning that contradict one another is known as logical inconsistency. 2) The second factor is cultural values; people from one culture are likely to think differently from people from another. 3) Forced Compliance Behavior is the third piece of the dissonant causal chain, wherein an individual is compelled to act contrary to their beliefs; this conduct takes place. 4) Lastly, one's experience is the final consideration; a person will experience this dissonance if their thoughts and feelings are not in harmony.

A state that frequently follows a decision is known as an action-oriented state (Beckmann & Irle, 1985; Gollwitzer, 1990; Heckhausen, 1986; Kuhl, 1984). A person's ability to carry out decisions is improved when they are action-oriented. By combining these concepts with dissonance theory, Harmon-Jones (2002) suggested that the action-oriented state that follows decision-making is comparable to the state in which dissonance reduction and dissonance motivation take place. They postulated that the degree of dissonance reduction should be affected by experimentally varying the level of action orientation experienced after deciding.

In addition, the degree of dissonance felt before and after ethical judgments may be influenced by an individual's moral development, as well as by the apparent coherence between internal and external norms. Managers frequently must make choices that may conflict with their personal beliefs to further their enterprises' interests. Managers with high moral development do not experience cognitive dissonance when they make ethical decisions and sacrifice personal gain, according to a study by Lii (2001) that examined the relationship between moral development and knowledge transfer before and after ethical decisions were made. Consequently, these individuals are more inclined to make moral choices than immoral ones. As a result, cognitive exchange is employed to understand the psychological causes of moral disputes in organizations and how moral development influences people's propensity to make choices based on self-interest.

The study underscores the dynamic interplay among mechanisms and the fundamental components of knowledge transfer, including the nature of knowledge itself, the characteristics of the individuals involved (both sources and recipients), and the broader organizational context in which knowledge exchange occurs. This perspective indicates that informal relationships, interpersonal trust, and robust social networks are integral to facilitating effective knowledge dissemination, particularly in enhancing professional competence across organizational levels. Furthermore, established organizational routines and standardized processes institutionalize knowledge-sharing behaviors, embedding them in the fabric of daily operations. The mobility of personnel is also identified as a critical enabler, allowing for the diffusion of tacit knowledge, innovative practices, and domain-specific expertise across functions and teams.

The research highlights the role of organizational design, emphasizing that decentralized structures tend to foster greater autonomy, collaboration, and knowledge flow. Moreover, search mechanisms—such as knowledge repositories and digital platforms—are essential in granting individuals timely and efficient access to relevant information, thereby supporting informed decision-making and professional development.

The study concludes that organizations aiming to cultivate professional competence and drive continuous improvement should prioritize developing a knowledge-sharing culture, integrating knowledge transfer into routine organizational activities, facilitating strategic personnel mobility, and investing in comprehensive knowledge management systems. Collectively, these practices not only enhance the internal flow of information but also contribute to increased organizational learning, innovation capacity, and sustainable performance.

This perspective significantly enriches our understanding of the mechanisms underlying knowledge transfer within organizations, not only from a functional standpoint but also regarding the ethical responsibilities associated with knowledge sharing. It advances theoretical discourse by offering a comprehensive analysis of how knowledge flows through various channels—such as social networks, organizational routines, personnel mobility, structural design, and information search processes. These mechanisms are not merely operational tools but also reflect the ethical climate and values embedded in an organization's culture. By illuminating these pathways, the study underscores

the imperative for organizations to structure themselves in ways that not only optimize efficiency and innovation but also promote transparency, inclusiveness, and the equitable distribution of knowledge—hallmarks of moral organizational behavior.

Central to this analysis is the exploration of three critical components that shape the efficacy of knowledge transfer: the characteristics of the knowledge itself, the attributes of those who share and receive it (sources and recipients), and the organizational context in which this exchange occurs. From a moral development standpoint, recognizing these dimensions reinforces the importance of fostering a culture of mutual respect, trust, and ethical responsibility in facilitating meaningful knowledge exchange. The study contends that when organizations intentionally nurture these components, they create environments that support informed decision-making, collective learning, and socially responsible action.

Importantly, the study outlines implications for future research, particularly in areas such as digital transformation, globalization, and evolving organizational models. These domains not only affect how knowledge is exchanged but also raise new ethical considerations regarding access, equity, and the protection of intellectual assets. Addressing these challenges is essential for fostering morally sound and socially responsible knowledge ecosystems.

Ultimately, the study affirms that in an increasingly knowledge-based economy, the ability to transfer knowledge effectively is a source of strategic advantage. However, when viewed through the lens of moral development, this capability also becomes a marker of ethical maturity. Organizations that embed knowledge-sharing practices within a framework of fairness, mutual accountability, and continuous learning are better positioned to innovate, adapt, and sustain long-term competitive advantage while contributing positively to their internal and external communities. Thus, the study offers both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of knowledge management, underscoring the moral dimensions of knowledge as a shared and transformative organizational resource.

Precursor of Knowledge Transfer

Figure 1 presents a conceptual overview of how knowledge transfer is examined across the twenty-five (25) reviewed studies. The figure is organized into three components: (1) precursors (antecedents) of knowledge transfer, (2) knowledge transfer processes, and (3) consequences of knowledge transfer.

The first component outlines the key precursors of knowledge transfer, which are categorized into three perspectives identified in this review: cognitive exchange, professional competence, and moral development. These perspectives provide a structured framework for understanding the underlying drivers of knowledge transfer.

The second component of the figure represents knowledge transfer as the central process linking these antecedents to organizational outcomes. The third component highlights the consequences of knowledge transfer, including improved work quality, self-accountability, enhanced skeptical judgment, moral development, improved professional judgment, and increased cognitive performance.

Figure 1

Outline of how knowledge transfer is used in the twenty-five (25) reviewed articles

Precursor of Knowledge Transfer			Knowledge Transfer	Consequences of Knowledge Transfer
Cognitive Exchange Perspective	Decision-making	Argote et al., (2022)		1. Quality of work (Thomas A. & Paul J., 2019)
	Action orientation	De Wit-de Vries et al., (2019)		2. Self-accountability (Tietze et al., 2017)
	Dissonance Reduction Strategy	Marques et al., (2019)		3. Skeptical judgment (Alexander et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2015; Boyd et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2018)
	Self-concept	Sengupta A. & Ray A. S. (2017)		
	Self-criticism	Tietze et al., (2017)		
	Networking	Anand et al., (2021)		
Professional Competence Perspective	Implementation of decisions	Kochenkova et al., (2016)		4. Moral development (Wang et al., 2017)
	Accountability	Sunet al., (2019)		5. Improve professional judgment (Osabutey E. L. & Jin Z., 2016)
	Reasoning	Raisi et al., (2020),		6. Predictor of cognitive performance (Mahura A. & Birollo G., 2021)
	Neutrality & Presumptive doubt	Kuciapski (2017); Latilla et al., (2018)		

Moral Development Perspective	Human behavior and principle	Schmidt X. & Muehlfeld K. (2017)		
	Self-justification	Ranucci R. A. & Souder D. (2015); Ado et al., (2017)		
	Ethical value	Osabutey E. L. & Jin Z. (2016); Mahura A. & Birollo G. (2021)		

Note: Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between the precursors, processes, and consequences of knowledge transfer in a unified framework derived from the reviewed studies.

In terms of cognitive exchange, Figure 1 displays the identified precursors of knowledge transfer. Argote et al. (2022) found that knowledge transfer applies to all social situations involving the formation and change of human attitudes and is particularly pertinent to decision-making. De Wit-de Vries et al. (2019) integrated these ideas with dissonance theory to propose that this action-oriented state that follows decision-making is equivalent to the state in which dissonance motivation operates and dissonance reduction occurs. Thus, Marques et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of dissonance reduction, noting that it can be reduced in a multitude of ways, not necessarily by addressing the discrepancy directly. It explains the different reduction techniques that have been studied and the models proposed to understand how a person uses them.

Self-concept was also identified as an antecedent of knowledge transfer, emphasizing its role in the arousal of dissonance by drawing attention to expectancies regarding the self (Sengupta & Ray, 2017). On the other hand, Tietze et al. (2017) describe how the network, rather than increasing attention to misstatements, potentially inhibits knowledge transfer under common conditions through self-criticism, and the importance of efforts to encourage professional judgment in the industry, as it is less likely to be naturally induced by the audit ecology.

Similarly, Grenier (2016) demonstrated that in the absence of clear risk indicators, specialists' reliance on prior knowledge and pattern recognition may constrain aspects of professional judgment. Collectively, these findings position decision-making, action orientation, self-concept, self-criticism, and networking as central precursors of knowledge transfer within the cognitive exchange framework.

The same figure demonstrates that knowledge transfer may be a prelude to professional competence. The implementation of decisions helps translate behavioral commitment or intention into effective action. Motivational processes should be activated as the individual works to successfully implement the new commitment. (Kochenkova et al., 2016).

Sun et al. (2019) found that knowledge transfer is a necessary but not sufficient condition for good judgment, indicating that personal accountability drives most knowledge transfer. Relatively, reasoning was also considered as the study examined the relation between knowledge transfer and normatively correct reasoning about testing the truthfulness of management's assertions (Raisi et al., 2020).

Consequently, Kuciapski (2017) & Latilla et al. (2018) study that there are two prevailing perspectives of skeptical judgment: neutrality and presumptive doubt. Employees are impartial and neither support nor oppose client

management. Unless there is proof to the contrary, they believe that management is dishonest to some extent. This study examines which of these viewpoints best describes employees' skeptical assessments and choices in higher- and lower-control-environment risk circumstances.

Moreover, Figure 1 also indicates that knowledge transfer may have a moral development perspective as an antecedent. Schmidt and Muehlfeld (2017) explained that human behavior and principles play a vital role in knowledge transfer, with cognitive exchange having important implications in many real-life situations, mainly in decision-making, forced compliance, and selective exposure to information, to ensure that a person's actions and attitudes are in harmony.

Ranucci and Souder (2015) and Ado et al. (2017) view self-justification through drawing attention to expectancies regarding the self. According to the researcher, dissonance is aroused when a person engages in a behavior that is inconsistent with their sense of self. To reduce dissonance, a person engages in self-justification. Through this process, an individual maintains a self-concept that is stable, predictable, competent, and morally good.

On the other hand, Mahura and Birollo (2021) studied knowledge transfer to examine how business ethics decisions affect organizational environments in which employees naturally seek alignment between their ethical values and their company's ethical culture. Thus, employees who work hard to uphold their own ethics would expect strong backing from upper management for their moral actions, a positive ethical environment within their companies, and a clear connection between moral behavior and professional success.

Consequences of Knowledge Transfer

In the assessment of twenty-five (25) empirical studies, knowledge transfer has been shown to predict a range of organizational and individual outcomes. Across diverse organizational contexts, effective knowledge transfer is consistently associated with improved work quality, enhanced decision-making, and increased accountability.

For example, prior research suggests that when individuals are aware that their outputs will be reviewed or evaluated, they are more likely to apply relevant knowledge carefully, thereby improving the overall quality of work (Thomas & Paul, 2019). While such findings are often illustrated in professional service settings, they reflect a broader principle applicable across industries where performance evaluation and knowledge application are closely linked.

Similarly, Tietze et al. (2017) examine the relationship between knowledge transfer and accountability, demonstrating that formal evaluation processes and role expectations can strengthen individuals' responsibility for applying knowledge effectively.

Consistent with Alexander et al. (2020), individual characteristics—such as traits, motivation, and prior experience—play a critical role in shaping how knowledge is interpreted and applied in practice. These attributes, alongside training and incentives, influence judgment and decision-making outcomes. In this regard, knowledge transfer extends beyond information exchange to include the development of critical thinking and evaluative capabilities.

Furthermore, moral and cognitive factors also contribute to knowledge transfer outcomes. The degree of knowledge application may be influenced by an individual's level of moral development and the alignment between internal values and external expectations (Wang et al., 2018).

Knowledge transfer has also been linked to improved professional judgment and the ability to consider alternative solutions (Osabutey & Jin, 2016). Additionally, Mahura and Birollo (2021) highlight the role of skepticism and personality traits as predictors of effective knowledge transfer, suggesting that individual differences can shape how knowledge is processed and utilized.

Overall, the reviewed studies indicate that knowledge transfer contributes not only to technical performance outcomes but also to broader cognitive and behavioral improvements, including reduced bias, enhanced critical evaluation, and more informed decision-making. These findings reinforce the importance of knowledge transfer as a multidimensional process with implications across various organizational contexts.

Discussion

Mechanisms of Knowledge Transfer

Recent literature underscores the multifaceted nature of knowledge transfer within organizations, emphasizing several key mechanisms that facilitate effective knowledge exchange. Social networks, comprising informal relationships and interpersonal connections among employees, serve as essential conduits for knowledge dissemination across organizational levels. The strength of these networks, characterized by trust, reciprocity, and frequent interaction, significantly enhances knowledge sharing (Zhou et al., 2022). This finding directly supports the study's objective of identifying mechanisms that enable effective knowledge transfer.

Organizational routines also play a vital role by establishing consistent practices through which both tacit and explicit knowledge can be transferred. When aligned with strategic objectives, these routines enhance organizational learning and efficiency (Huang et al., 2021). Personnel mobility further facilitates knowledge diffusion by exposing individuals to diverse roles and perspectives. Training and mentoring programs complement this process by institutionalizing the transfer of expertise (Wang & Noe, 2020).

Organizational design, particularly decentralized structures and cross-functional teams, promotes more frequent and open knowledge exchange. In contrast, rigid hierarchies may hinder communication (Lee, 2020). In addition, knowledge search mechanisms, defined as deliberate efforts by employees to acquire information from internal and external sources, support innovation and problem-solving. These mechanisms, often enabled by digital knowledge management systems, ensure timely access to critical information (Park & Ghosh, 2019).

Contextual and Individual Factors

Beyond structural mechanisms, individual and contextual factors significantly influence knowledge transfer outcomes. The characteristics of knowledge sources and recipients—such as expertise, motivation, and openness—play a crucial role. The nature of knowledge itself is also important: tacit knowledge, which is experiential and context-specific, requires trust and interaction for effective transfer, whereas explicit knowledge can be more easily codified and shared (Li & Hsieh, 2017).

Organizational culture further shapes knowledge dynamics. Cultures that promote openness, trust, and collaboration are more conducive to sustained knowledge exchange. External factors, such as market pressures and regulatory changes, can also act as catalysts for improving knowledge practices (Martins & Meyer, 2023). These findings collectively address the study's objective of identifying contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of knowledge transfer.

Methodological Challenges and Limitations

Despite these insights, the literature reveals several methodological challenges. Many studies rely on case-based or task-based approaches, which may result in superficial or context-limited responses. This raises concerns about the validity and generalizability of findings, particularly when respondents provide incomplete or socially desirable answers.

However, the review indicates that careful research design—such as improved data collection instruments, rigorous testing, and the removal of outliers—can enhance data reliability. This suggests that future studies should prioritize methodological rigor to produce more robust and generalizable conclusions.

Implications for Practice and Developing Contexts

The findings also have important implications for practice, particularly in developing country contexts such as the Philippines. Understanding knowledge transfer within these settings requires consideration of local cultural values, organizational practices, and institutional conditions. In such contexts, social relationships and informal networks may play an even more significant role in facilitating knowledge exchange.

This highlights the need for context-sensitive approaches to knowledge transfer, as strategies that are effective in developed economies may not be directly applicable in developing environments. Integrating cultural and organizational nuances can enhance the effectiveness of knowledge transfer initiatives globally.

Future Research Directions

The review further identifies gaps and inconsistencies in the literature, particularly regarding the application of knowledge transfer in professional practice. Conflicting findings suggest that employees do not always meet expectations in knowledge-sharing behaviors, indicating a need for deeper investigation into underlying causes (Nelson, 2009).

Future research should adopt integrative frameworks that examine cognitive, behavioral, and organizational dimensions simultaneously. Such approaches can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the determinants of knowledge transfer and help reconcile inconsistencies across studies.

Summary

Overall, this discussion demonstrates that knowledge transfer is shaped by the interaction of organizational mechanisms, individual characteristics, and contextual influences. By aligning these dimensions, organizations can develop resilient knowledge systems that support continuous learning, innovation, and long-term competitiveness, thereby fulfilling the central objectives of this study.

Conclusion

A wide range of ideas and concepts is used in this literature review to explain knowledge transfer. This study systematically synthesized empirical findings to provide a structured understanding of the mechanisms, contextual factors, and theoretical perspectives that shape knowledge transfer across organizational settings. The findings suggest that knowledge transfer remains a multidimensional and evolving construct, indicating the need for continued scholarly attention despite existing contributions on its causes and effects.

This review identified several key factors influencing knowledge transfer and examined them from multiple perspectives, including professional ethics, action orientation, cognitive capacity, and skeptical judgment. These perspectives highlight the complexity of knowledge transfer processes and underscore the need for integrative approaches that consider both individual and organizational dimensions.

The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by linking knowledge transfer with organizational behavior and business ethics, emphasizing its role in shaping professional practices and decision-making processes. The reviewed literature also underscores the importance of addressing cognitive dissonance in knowledge transfer, particularly regarding organizational networks and performance outcomes. The action-based model of dissonance suggests that individuals are motivated to resolve inconsistencies between attitudes and behaviors, thereby enhancing commitment, productivity, and accountability.

Based on the identified gaps, several recommendations for future research are proposed. First, future studies should adopt longitudinal and mixed-method approaches to better capture the dynamic nature of knowledge transfer over time. Second, there is a need to develop more robust and standardized measures to improve the validity and comparability of findings. Third, further research should explore knowledge transfer in diverse cultural

and organizational contexts, particularly in developing countries, to enhance the generalizability of existing theories. Finally, examining the effectiveness of intervention programs, such as training, professional development, and knowledge management systems, can provide practical insights into improving knowledge transfer in real-world settings.

In conclusion, advancing knowledge transfer research is essential for strengthening organizational learning, innovation, and long-term competitiveness. A deeper, more integrated understanding of its underlying mechanisms and contextual influences will enable both scholars and practitioners to design more effective strategies for managing and leveraging knowledge in an increasingly complex, knowledge-driven world.

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