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An input-process-impact (IPI) model to manage and share knowledge in nonprofit organizations: A systematic literature review

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Abstract

This study presents a systematic literature review of knowledge management (KM) and sharing in nonprofit organizations. Guided by two research questions, following PRIMSA guidelines across seven databases: 1) Identify tools, systems, and mechanisms that support KM, and 2) the impacts on organizations. The findings reveal that nonprofits rely on a hybrid ecosystem of low-cost digital tools, formal information systems, and social mechanisms such as communities of practice, collaborative networks, and storytelling practices. The KM impacts were found to significantly enhance organizational performance, learning capabilities, decision-making processes, innovation, and social impact. The study contributes by developing an Input-Process-Impact (IPI) model for IS practitioners, nonprofit volunteers, and managers by highlighting the need for future research on scalable KM strategies, performance evaluation mechanisms, and sustainable knowledge practices within resource-constrained nonprofit environments.

Keywords: Knowledge management, knowledge sharing, nonprofit, organizations, impact, tools, systems.

Introduction

A nonprofit is an organization established to carry out a mission for public benefit rather than generating profits (Svensson et al., 2025). Nowadays, nonprofit organizations (NPOs) are operating in a more complex, resource-constrained environment where the effective use of information is crucial to achieve mission-driven outcomes (Mayer & Fischer, 2023). Unlike for-profit businesses, nonprofits typically depend on distributed expertise, volunteer participation, and collaboration networks. As a result, KM has become an important strategy for improving organizational performance (Granados et al., 2017; Hume & Hume, 2008; Illendula & El-Gayar, 2025; Lettieri et al., 2004), service delivery, and make informed decisions (Noor et al., 2015; Vakharia et al., 2018).

From a theoretical perspective, this study aligns with Socio-Technical Systems Theory (Bostrom & Heinen, 1977), which views the connections between technology systems, organizational structures, and human cooperation as a basis for organizational effectiveness. This perspective is mainly important in NPOs because KM relies not only on digital technologies and knowledge systems, but also on social interactions, communication practices, and collaborative networks. The study is conceptually grounded in the

Knowledge-Creation Theory (Nonaka, 1994), which explains how knowledge is continuously created and modified through socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization processes (SECI model). The Resource-Based View (RBV) (Halawi et al., 2005) further supports the concept of organizational knowledge as a strategic resource that can improve nonprofit effectiveness, innovation, and sustainability. Together, these theoretical perspectives provide a foundation for understanding how expanded KM and KS contribute to organizational and social impacts in NPOs.

With the increasing adoption of digital technology and data-driven initiatives in the nonprofit sector, knowledge creation, storage, and sharing have become a significant focus (Iverson & Burkart, 2007; Rath & Given, 2017). Over the past two decades, several studies have examined the impact of KM, particularly knowledge sharing (KS), in NPOs and identified tools, systems, and mechanisms that promote it. These include communication and collaborative platforms, KM systems, and organizational activities such as training, communities of practice (CoP), and interorganizational partnerships (Huck et al., 2011; Le & Tuamsuk, 2019; Rath et al., 2016).

The growing interest in KS in NPOs has focused on aspects such as tacit knowledge sharing, volunteer participation, and technology adoption (Mahasuar, 2023; Matzkin, 2008; Zapata Cantu & Mondragon, 2016) for an organizational outcome, like organizational learning and performance, but not on long-term impact (Fait et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2022; Kong, 2015). So, there is a need to understand KM infrastructure and the tools, systems, and mechanisms that support long-term impact within non-profits. To address this gap, this study conducts a systematic literature review (SLR) to review the existing studies on KM and KS in NPOs by answering the following research questions:

- **RQ1:** *What tools, systems, and mechanisms support knowledge management in nonprofit organizations?*
- **RQ2:** *What impact does knowledge management have on nonprofit organizations?*

By systematically identifying and analyzing relevant studies, this review makes two key contributions to the existing literature 1) It identifies the tools, systems, and mechanisms that support KM in NPOs 2) It develops an integrated Input-Process-Impact (IPI) model to highlight the relationships among KM infrastructure and its resulting impacts on NPOs. This review provides a systematic, evidence-based description of how knowledge-related inputs translate into value, offering a conceptual basis to guide future researchers, IS practitioners, nonprofit volunteers, and managers in improving knowledge practices within their respective organizations.

Background and Related Work

KM is the process of creating, capturing, storing, sharing, and using knowledge to meet organizational objectives (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). KS is an important aspect of KM that involves the exchange of information, skills, experiences, and insights among individuals, employees, groups within and across organizations (Balasubramanian et al., 2019). Nonprofit organizations, in particular, are heavily dependent on KM and KS because they often rely on collaborative networks, volunteer contributions, and limited financial and technological resources to accomplish mission-driven objectives (Hume & Hume, 2008; Lettieri et al., 2004). But, for-profit organizations, the main focus is on competitive advantage and profitability, whereas NPOs emphasize social impact, service delivery, and community participation (Nordin et al., 2022).

KM research in NPOs has highlighted the importance of knowledge as a strategic organizational resource that improves organizational performance. Lettieri et al. (2004) suggested that nonprofits must effectively manage knowledge in resource-constrained situations to improve efficiency, service quality, and organizational excellence. Similarly, Ondari-Okemwa (2006) highlighted the importance of understanding how nonprofits acquire, share, and apply knowledge in their daily operations. In addition, studies have shown that many NPOs continue to rely heavily on informal knowledge-sharing mechanisms, such as face-to-face communication, socialization, mentoring, and collaborative practices, even when formal KM infrastructure is limited (Granados et al., 2017; Hume & Hume, 2016). Rathi & Given (2017) identified a range of KM techniques used in the nonprofit sector, including physical documents, websites, and intranet systems. In countries such as Canada, Thailand, and Australia, nonprofits further indicate that factors such as organizational culture, size, trust, and resources influence the adoption of KM technologies (Fairclough et al., 2012; Le & Tuamsuk, 2019; Rathi et al., 2016; Rathi & Given, 2017; Verma et al., 2025). Informal communication continues to play a critical role in facilitating knowledge exchange within NPOs (Anuyah et al., 2025) due to limited infrastructure and operational constraints. Which influences employees' and volunteers' willingness to share knowledge and contribute to organizational effectiveness (Quang & Tuamsuk, 2023; Zbucha et al., 2020). Furthermore, Iverson and Burkart (2007) examined the role of enterprise content management systems in NPOs and highlighted the potential of web-based document management and workflow systems to improve organizational collaboration and information accessibility.

Studies have also shown that social intelligence, authentic leadership, and organizational commitment significantly promote KS behaviors and organizational learning (Kong, 2015; Sharif et al., 2025). Psychological well-being has been found to be positively encouraging of KS practices (Fait & Sakka, 2021). According to the KM literature, employees use tools, systems, and mechanisms primarily to share knowledge rather than to store and apply it. As a result, there is still a need for an understanding of the inputs, the process, and the impacts through SLR. The remainder of the paper is organized into the following sections: methodology, results, findings, discussion, the proposed model, limitations, and conclusions.

Methodology

This SLR (Kitchenham & Charters, 2007) followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis) guidelines (Page et al., 2021). The databases used for the literature search included ACM Digital Library, Academic Search Premier, Business Source Premier, IEEE Xplore, ProQuest Research Library, ScienceDirect, and Web of Science. These databases were selected to cover both the theoretical and technical dimensions of KM and KS in NPOs. The search strategy focused on article abstracts using the keywords (“knowledge sharing” OR “knowledge management”) AND (“non-profit” OR “non-profit organizations” OR “nonprofit” OR “non-profit” OR “not for profit” OR “not-for-profit”). The timeframe covered studies published between 1970 and 2026, reflecting the historical development of KM concepts. Although the origins of KM can be traced to early discussions of knowledge work in the 1950s, KM emerged as a recognized field during the 1970s and 1980s, following the introduction of the term “knowledge worker” by Peter Drucker in 1959 (Uriarte Jr, 2008). All retrieved articles were filtered using predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria shown in the table below.

Table 1. Summarizes all the inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion criteria
- Peer-Reviewed Journal articles - Conference Proceedings - Full-text availability.	- Focus on for-profit, corporate, or private firms - Government-only focus without nonprofit relevance - No emphasis on KM/KS - If articles are technical without an organizational KM focus

- Articles focused on tools, mechanisms, and systems. - Organizational impacts focused articles.	- Focusing on sector-specific issues without KM - Schools/universities, unless nonprofit, KM-focused - Strategy/econometric studies without KM - Articles that focused on barriers to KM, factors that enable KS. - Literature reviews, book sections or chapters, duplicates, no full-text availability
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Results

The selection of articles followed the PRISMA guidelines as shown in Figure 1, 342 articles across the selected databases, including ACM Digital Library (n = 13), Academic Search Premier (n =17), Business Source Premier (n=24), IEEE Xplore (n = 12), ProQuest Research Library (n=56), ScienceDirect(n=51), and Web of Science (n=169). Before the screening process, duplicate articles were removed (n = 103). In the first stage of the screening process, all the articles were initially screened based on titles and abstracts to assess relevance and excluded literature reviews (n = 28), books and book sections (n =12), case descriptions (n =1), and in the second stage, articles were screened for full-text search and removed (n =7) for no full-text availability. In the fourth stage, the articles were assessed to ensure they met the inclusion and exclusion criteria, as shown in Table 1. A total of 178 articles were excluded during the full-text assessment stage for several reasons.

Studies focusing on for-profit, corporate, or private sector organizations (n = 25), as well as those limited to government contexts without nonprofit relevance (n = 16), were excluded. Articles that did not emphasize KM or KS (n = 21) or lacked an organizational KM focus despite being technical in nature (n = 21) were also removed. Studies that focused on sector-specific issues without any KM/KS analysis (n = 20), schools or universities without a KM perspective (n = 11) were also excluded. Strategy-oriented or econometric studies that did not include KM/KS (n = 15), and articles focused on KM barriers or KS enabling factors (n = 48), are excluded because we focused on the tools and their impacts, not on barriers or enabling factors. The final stage comprises 23 articles that specifically address KM and KS practices in NPOs, including tools, technologies, mechanisms, outcomes, and organizational impacts.

To ensure the quality of the included studies, a quality assessment was conducted during the selection process. Each article was organized and managed in Zotero for reference citations, then exported to Excel for further processing. A quality evaluation approach was applied to assess the reliability and consistency of the article selection process by independently evaluating the selected articles against the inclusion and exclusion criteria, with a focus on non-profits. To measure inter-rater reliability during the article section and data extraction stages, Cohen's Kappa was calculated. The analysis yielded a Cohen's Kappa value of 0.85, indicating near-perfect agreement between reviewers, consistent with the interpretation guidelines of Landis & Koch (1977).

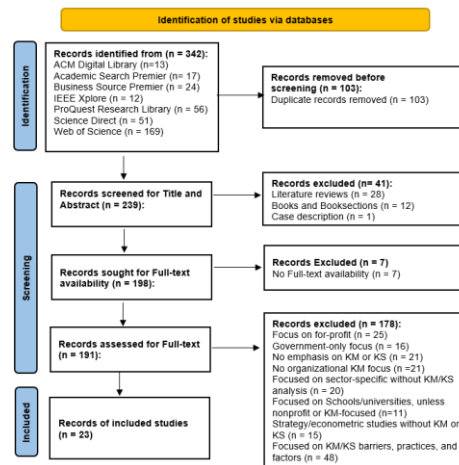


Figure 1. The PRISMA Flow Chart

Figure 2 below shows the distribution of the 23 selected articles across different academic databases, with the Web of Science contributing the most (15). In contrast, ACM Digital Library, Business Source Premier, and ProQuest Research Library each contributed 2 articles. ScienceDirect and Academic Search Premier contributed only 1 article each. Mainly, IEEE Xplore yielded no relevant articles, suggesting that KM and KS in NPOs are underrepresented in engineering- and technology-focused databases. Figure 3 demonstrates the distribution of selected articles on KM and KS in nonprofits between 2005 and 2025. The trend indicates a gradual increase in research between 2005 and 2010, with several years showing only one publication.

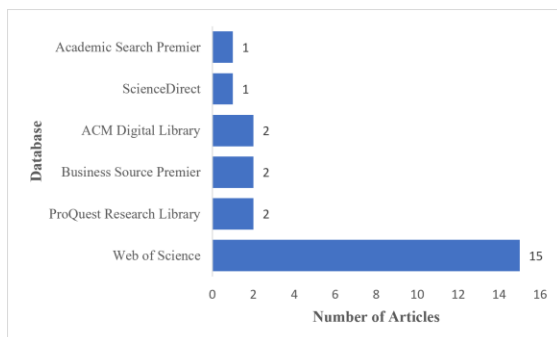


Figure 2. Database-wise Distribution

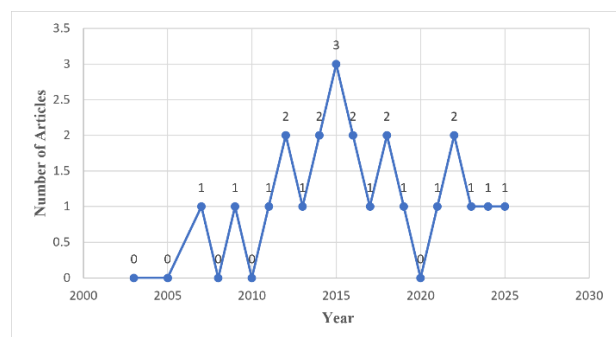


Figure 3. Year-Wise Trend

RQ1: What tools, systems, and mechanisms support knowledge management in nonprofit organizations?
 The literature review reveals that knowledge management in NPOs is supported by a range of tools, systems, and mechanisms, including low-cost platforms, formal business systems, and social processes. These elements collectively enable nonprofits to create, store, share, and apply knowledge despite growing in resource-constrained environments.

Tools

The literature identifies a wide range of tools that support KM in NPOs, with a significant focus on accessibility, affordability, and ease of use. Studies highlight the importance of social media and networking platforms as the key KM tools that facilitate both real-time and asynchronous KS through community interaction (Al-Busaidi et al., 2012). These platforms allow nonprofits to connect staff, volunteers, and external stakeholders while promoting collaboration and engagement. Web-based platforms, websites, and social media also serve as centralized knowledge repositories, where user involvement, trust, and perceived

value enable KS behaviors (Yu & Liang, 2025). In addition, nonprofits often use collaborative, low-cost tools such as wikis, blogs, and cloud-based platforms that support people in knowledge creation and sharing through participation (Bolisani et al., 2014). Such tools are particularly beneficial for nonprofits because they require limited financial investment while supporting organizational learning and communication. These tools are commonly integrated with lightweight communication technologies like email, messaging, and social media, which make it easier to coordinate, raise awareness, and informal KS, especially in securely structured, volunteer-driven, and resource-constrained environments (Nolte & Farzan, 2019).

Systems

At a more structural level, KM in NPOs is supported by formal systems that organize, store, and facilitate the flow of knowledge. Some nonprofits utilize enterprise-level systems, such as Enterprise Content Management (ECM), which provide centralized repositories for storing information, automate workflows, and distribute structured knowledge across the organization (Iverson & Burkart, 2007). These systems help nonprofits improve information accessibility, consistency, and organizational memory. Additionally, data-driven systems such as Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Project Implementation Management Systems (PIMS) play a significant role in supporting the KM process. These systems enable nonprofits to create, collect, and integrate knowledge generated through project activities into broader organization's learning processes (Ovcina & Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, 2024). Beyond internal systems, network-based structures also serve as systems of knowledge exchange, where knowledge flows are shaped by interorganizational relationships, collaborative networks, and partnerships rather than by standalone technologies (Albert et al., 2012). Together, these systems support the management of both structured and explicit knowledge across different organizational functions and operational levels.

Mechanisms

The literature further indicates that nonprofits do not rely exclusively on advanced technologies; instead, they employ a hybrid approach that combines traditional and digital mechanisms, including documents, websites, cloud platforms, and content management systems, often influenced by organizational size and resource limitations (Rathi & Given, 2017). This hybrid approach reflects the adaptive nature of nonprofits as they balance technological capabilities with practical constraints. Across the reviewed studies, human-centered and social mechanisms such as storytelling, community involvement, face-to-face interactions, and communities of practice (CoP) remain essential for making KS work and for turning tacit knowledge into useful organizational knowledge (Given et al., 2013; Huck et al., 2011). These mechanisms strengthen trust, collaboration, and experimental learning, which are critical components of KM in nonprofits. Overall, these findings suggest that KM in nonprofits is supported by a multi-layered ecosystem comprising digital technologies, collaborative platforms, enterprise and data-driven systems, network-based structures, and socio-technical and human-centered mechanisms. Rather than relying on a single technology or system, nonprofits use flexible, low-cost hybrid approaches that integrate technological tools with human and social interactions to support effective KM and KS practices.

The table below addresses RQ2 by examining the articles and their impact on the nonprofits.

Table 2. Impact of KM and KS on non-profits

Type of Impact	Outcome of the Impact	Authors {Ref.,}
Impact on Organizational Performance		
Direct & Indirect Performance Effects	KM and KS enhance performance by increasing efficiency, effectiveness, and service results.	(Kim et al., 2022; Paoloni et al., 2023)

Service Quality	Improves service quality and evaluation outcomes. Social media improves communication with stakeholders through KM processes	(Albert et al., 2012; Best et al., 2016; Given et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2022)
Innovation-Driven Performance and Efficiency Gains	Performance enhancements are achieved indirectly through innovative capabilities, improved processes, knowledge reuse, and unlearning of outdated practices.	(Delshab et al., 2021; Iverson & Burkart, 2007; Nolte & Farzan, 2019; Vivas & Sequeira, 2014)
Organizational Effectiveness	KS predicts both internal and external organizational performance. KM improves coordination, transparency, implementation, workflow organization, and operational management effectiveness.	(Iverson & Burkart, 2007; Nolte & Farzan, 2019; Noor et al., 2015; Ovcina & Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, 2024)
Long-Term sustainability	Enhances staff and volunteer retention and manages knowledge and relational capital.	(Bontis & Serenko, 2009; Given et al., 2013; Huck et al., 2011)
Type of Impact	Outcome of the Impact	Authors {Ref.,}
Impact on Decision-Making & Strategy		
Reduced Bias, Strategic Planning, and Implementation Challenges	More data-driven, inclusive decision-making that strengthens planning and organizational direction, and difficulty in converting knowledge into action.	(Iverson & Burkart, 2007; Ovcina & Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, 2024; Rossi et al., 2015)
Learning & Adaptation	Improves the ability to adopt new techniques and adapt to change. Organizational adaptation through knowledge internalization, exchange, transparency, and collaborative learning mechanisms.	(Fisher et al., 2018; Nolte & Farzan, 2019; Ovcina & Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, 2024; Vivas & Sequeira, 2014)
Impact on Learning & Innovation		
Internal Learning	Increases communication and knowledge exchange within organizations. KM systems improve internal knowledge sharing, volunteer knowledge retention, and internal capability development.	(Downes & Marchant, 2016; Huck et al., 2011; Ovcina & Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, 2024)
External Learning, collaboration & Networks	Improves access to external knowledge and resources, strengthens partnerships and knowledge networks.	(Albert et al., 2012; Given et al., 2013; Rathi et al., 2014; Yu & Liang, 2025)
Knowledge Renewal and Unlearning	Continuous renewal of information improves performance, and removing old knowledge increases effectiveness.	(Delshab et al., 2021; Vivas & Sequeira, 2014)
Social Impact		

Stakeholder Engagement, organizational resilience, relationship building	Enhances resilience, stakeholder involvement, and funding.	(Al-Busaidi et al., 2012; Best et al., 2016; Given et al., 2013; Huck et al., 2011; Vakharia et al., 2018)
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Organizational Performance

KM and KS practices have a wide-ranging impact on organizational performance in nonprofit organizations by improving efficiency, service quality, and overall program effectiveness. KS initiatives enhance organizational performance by improving evaluation outcomes, strengthening service quality, and by facilitating mutual learning among stakeholders (Kim et al., 2022; Paoloni et al., 2023). Research also shows that KM techniques can improve service quality by enhancing evaluation results and fostering better communication with stakeholders through collaborative and social media-based knowledge processes (Albert et al., 2012; Best et al., 2016; Given et al., 2013). Furthermore, KM and KS practices contribute to innovation-driven performance and operational efficiency. Knowledge reuse, innovative skills, process improvement, and the renewal of outmoded processes benefit organizations, helping nonprofits to adapt more effectively to changing contexts (Delshab et al., 2021; Iverson & Burkart, 2007; Nolte & Farzan, 2019). The literature further indicates that KM and KS improve overall organizational effectiveness via improved collaboration, transparency, implementation processes, workflow structure, and operational management. Knowledge sharing enables stronger collaboration and information flow across networks and stakeholders, supporting both internal and external organizational performance (Iverson & Burkart, 2007; Nolte & Farzan, 2019; Noor et al., 2015; Ovcina & Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, 2024). In addition, improved staff and volunteer retention, relationship management, and the development of organizational and relational capital contribute to long-term organizational sustainability (Bontis & Serenko, 2009; Given et al., 2013; Huck et al., 2011). Collectively, these findings suggest that KM and KS function as strategic organizational competencies that enhance nonprofit performance, adaptability, and sustainability over time.

Decision-Making & Strategy

KM and KS strategies play a crucial role in enhancing decision-making and strategic capabilities in NPOs. The analyzed studies demonstrate that KM processes help organizations to acquire, organize, and use information more efficiently, thereby supporting more data-driven, inclusive, and informed decision-making. Through improved information flow and collaborative knowledge processes, nonprofits are better positioned to strengthen strategic planning, organizational direction, and implementation activities (Iverson & Burkart, 2007; Ovcina & Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, 2024; Rossi et al., 2015). At the same time, several studies highlight that translating knowledge into actionable strategies remains a challenge, particularly for nonprofits with limited resources and implementation capacity. The literature also suggests that KM and KS improve organizational learning and adaptation, which are crucial for strategic responsiveness and long-term sustainability. Mechanisms include organizations adopting new methodologies, responding to environmental changes, and improving organizational flexibility (Nolte & Farzan, 2019; Ovcina & Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, 2024; Vivas & Sequeira, 2014). These learning-oriented approaches support continuous adaptation by embedding new knowledge into both operational and strategic processes. Therefore, KM and KS extend beyond information management functions and act as strategic organizational competencies that support planning, adaptation, and evidence-based decision-making in nonprofits.

Learning & Innovation

KM and KS play a crucial role in supporting organizational learning and innovation within nonprofit organizations. The literature suggests that KM systems promote internal communication and knowledge sharing, which, in turn, lead to improved internal learning, greater knowledge retention among volunteers, and the development of organizational capabilities (Downes & Marchant, 2016; Huck et al., 2011; Ovcina & Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, 2024). These practices help nonprofit organizations to continually learn, enhance

service delivery, and adapt to changing organizational and environmental conditions. The findings also show that KM and KS improve external learning by increasing access to external knowledge, resources, partnerships, and collaborative knowledge networks (Albert et al., 2012; Given et al., 2013; Rath et al., 2014; Yu & Liang, 2025). Through collaboration and interorganizational learning, nonprofits gain opportunities for innovation, collaborative problem-solving, and collective learning. When the continuous renewal of knowledge and the elimination of outdated practices contribute to greater organizational effectiveness and innovation capability (Delshab et al., 2021; Vivas & Sequeira, 2014). Taken together, these findings suggest that KM and KS processes enhance innovation, strengthen organizational learning, and support nonprofits' long-term adaptability and knowledge sustainability.

Social Impact

KM and KS help nonprofits make a greater impact on society by making it easier for them to deliver value to communities and stakeholders. Research suggests that KM improves service quality and creates value by ensuring that the nonprofit's knowledge aligns with its stakeholders' needs (Best et al., 2016). The impact of KM is often indirect, occurring through mechanisms such as innovation, service quality improvement, and knowledge regeneration, which together improve outcomes for beneficiaries (Delshab et al., 2021). In addition, KM and KS facilitate collaboration, share information, and learn new things, helping nonprofits to address complex social problems more effectively. These collaborative knowledge processes enhance nonprofits' ability to respond to community needs, strengthen stakeholder engagement, and improve overall social value creation. Overall, the findings indicate that KM and KS are essential organizational capabilities that support sustainable social impact and long-term community value.

Discussion

The results of this SLR provide evidence that KM and KS in NPOs are facilitated by a broad hybrid ecosystem of technological and social mechanisms. There is strong agreement among the 23 selected studies that organizations rely on low-cost, accessible, and easy-to-use digital tools, such as social media platforms, collaborative technologies, and cloud-based systems. These tools are combined with formal systems, including content management systems, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and organizational repositories, to support structured storage and retrieval.

The results further highlight the importance of socio-organizational mechanisms such as communities of practice, storytelling, and interpersonal interactions that are essential for enabling tacit knowledge exchange, indicating that KM in nonprofits is fundamentally socio-technical rather than exclusively technological. The improvements in organizational performance, including enhanced operational efficiency, service quality, and program effectiveness, can be achieved by encouraging innovation, supporting knowledge reuse, and enabling nonprofits to adapt more effectively to changing environments and emerging community needs. In addition, the analysis also finds that KM practices support strategic planning and evidence-based decision-making. By improving access to organizational and stakeholder knowledge, KM reduces information gaps and decision-making bias, while enhancing collaboration and informed planning. The findings also reveal broader social and community-level impacts, as KM practices help align organizational knowledge with stakeholder and community needs, strengthen engagement, and improve service delivery outcomes. These results are very important to key groups, such as nonprofit managers and practitioners, demonstrating the importance of investing in both technological and social KM infrastructures and social KS practices to achieve long-term results for organizations and society.

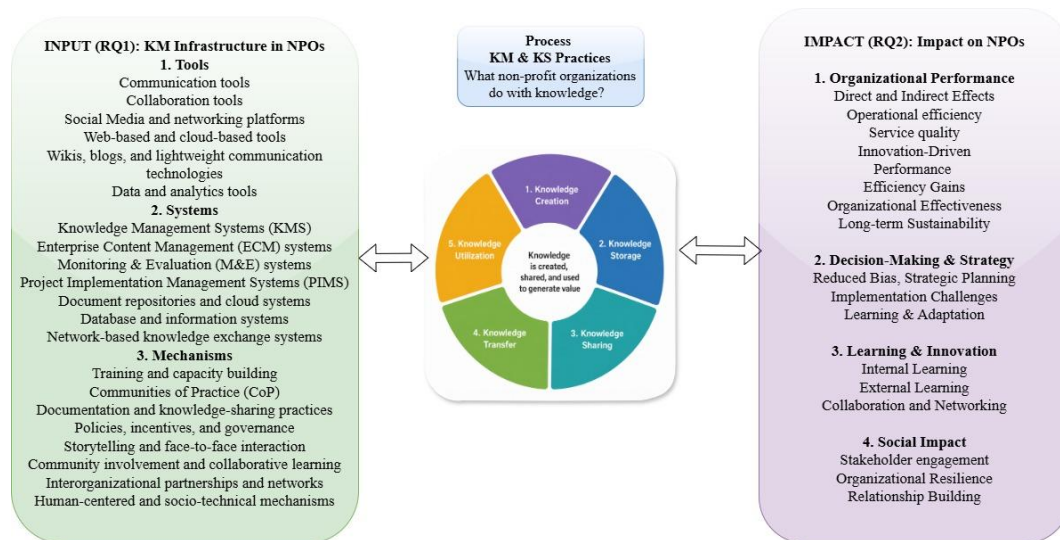


Figure 4. An Input-Process-Impact (IPI) Model for Knowledge Management and Sharing in Nonprofit Organizations

The model developed in this study is grounded in the systematic literature review and directly aligns with the research questions that guide the analysis. The model follows a dynamic, process-based structure that shows how KM infrastructure in nonprofit organizations enables knowledge-related practices, which, in turn, lead to organizational outcomes. The model specifies tools, systems, and organizational procedures that support KM at the input level (RQ1). The model identifies the foundational KM infrastructure that helps nonprofits to manage, organize, and activate knowledge effectively. These structured approaches include training programs, documentation practices, communities of practice, digital platforms such as knowledge management systems, and communication and collaboration tools. Together, these elements form the basic infrastructure that supports knowledge-intensive activities within nonprofits.

The central process layer underscores the dynamic, evolving nature of knowledge in NPOs. Instead of treating knowledge as static information, the model shows that knowledge is continuously created, stored, shared, transferred, used, and updated through continuous KM systems. As organizations begin to learn, interact, and respond to changing internal and external environments, these interrelated KM processes become more efficient over time. This highlights that managing knowledge in a nonprofit is not a one-time activity but a continuous cycle of knowledge creation, refinement, adaptation, and reuse that supports ongoing organizational innovation and performance (Li & Gao, 2003). At the outcome level (RQ2), the model shows how KM influences nonprofits, resulting in multiple organizational and social outcomes. The findings indicate that effective KM practices improve organizational effectiveness, operational performance, and long-term sustainability (Halawi et al., 2005). In addition, the model highlights the role of KM in improving decision-making and strategy planning by initiating learning, adoption, and implementation processes.

Limitations

This study is limited to peer-reviewed journals and conference proceedings available in the selected academic databases. It focuses primarily on nonprofits and excludes studies that are entirely focused on for-profit or public-sector organizations. Additionally, as shown in the database distribution analysis (Figure-2), a larger number of articles are from a single database. Year-wise publication trends (Figure-3) indicate

that the body of literature on KM and KS in nonprofit organizations is limited and spread out over time, with only a few publications over several years. This study focused mainly on knowledge sharing and management rather than on the entire KM process, which includes creating, storing, applying, and sharing. With fewer articles on the impacts and infrastructure, we found fewer impacts.

Conclusion

This SLR demonstrates that meaningful knowledge is essential for improving NPOs' effectiveness, strengthening organizational learning, and enhancing social impact. The findings show that effective KM in NPOs does not depend on a single technology, tool, or system, but rather on the interaction between technological infrastructures, organizational processes, collaborative practices, and human-centered knowledge-sharing behaviors. This review reinforces a socio-technical perspective on knowledge management, where organizational effectiveness emerges from the integration of digital resources, organizational culture, leadership support, trust, and interpersonal collaboration. In nonprofit environments, where resources are often limited, and knowledge is heavily dependent on individuals and informal interactions, successful KM requires adaptable, resource-efficient approaches that balance technological solutions with social and organizational capabilities. From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that nonprofits should adopt integrated KM strategies that combine digital platforms and communication technologies with collaborative learning environments, communities of practice, leadership support, and relationship-based processes for creating, storing, sharing, and applying knowledge. Future studies should focus on developing standardized models, implementing artificial intelligence tools such as chatbots and agents (Chintalapudi et al., 2025, 2026) to assess KM performance in nonprofits, and on investigating the scalability of KM techniques across diverse organizational contexts. Conducting quantitative research to describe the connections between KM strategies and organizational outcomes and impacts, investigating the role of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, in enhancing knowledge management systems, is a potential route for future research. This study contributes to both IS researchers and nonprofit organizations.

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