

Hiding in Plain Sight: A Bibliometric Systematic Literature Review Framework of Knowledge Hiding in Organizations

Pallavi Singh, Rinki Joshi, Prachi Pathak & Vaishali Aswal

This study critically evaluates the evolution and intellectual landscape of knowledge-hiding (KH) research in organizations from 2005 to 2024. Using a bibliometric and systematic literature review of 116 quantitative peer-reviewed articles and applying the PRISMA methodology, this study employs five bibliometric techniques via VOSviewer to map the field's social, conceptual, and intellectual structures. Guided by the TCCM framework, the findings highlight rapid KH growth post-2015, with key themes of trust, leadership, and psychological safety. Social Exchange Theory dominates the theoretical framework. This study identifies gaps in integrative models and underexplored contexts. It offers a data-driven, theory-informed agenda and practical HR insights for reducing KH and boosting innovation.

Pallavi Singh (E-mail: singhpallavi738@gmail.com) & **Rinki Joshi** (E-mail: Joshirinki85@gmail.com) are Research Scholars at the School of Management, Doon University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India. **Prachi Pathak** (E-mail: prachipathak@doonuniversity.ac.in) is an Associate Professor, and **Vaishali Aswal** (E-mail: vaishali_81284@rediffmail.com) an Assistant Professor, at the same School.

Introduction

In today's knowledge-driven economy, information is a key asset and a power source. Organizations require knowledge sharing for enhanced performance and creativity, but knowledge hiding (KH), or intentionally concealing sought information, defeats these objectives. Fear, rivalry, mistrust, and conflict are the fundamental causes of KH, which make teamwork difficult. KH is the deliberate action of withholding or hiding knowledge upon request from other people in the workplace. KH can disrupt organizational performance, damage trust among team members, and hinder learning and innovation. Its antecedents include interpersonal mistrust (Losada-Otálora et al., 2020), abusive supervision (Moin et al.,

2022), organizational injustice (Jahanzeb et al., 2020), and a lack of psychological safety. Similarly, emerging research suggests that KH may serve as a defensive or strategic mechanism, especially in contexts with high power distance or job insecurity (Nguyen et al., 2021; Zhao & Liu, 2021). Despite this growing body of research, the field remains fragmented, with limited efforts to synthesize knowledge, identify blind spots, and build integrated theoretical frameworks. Understanding its causes is essential for fostering Knowledge Sharing (KS) and organizational success. Synthesizing existing research is a critical step in advancing the KH field. Researchers have used only three bibliometric science mapping techniques to interpret the previous findings (Bernatoviæ et al., 2021). We present all five methods of science mapping with a systematic literature review which are grounded in the quantitative approach of bibliometric research. These practices are growing and are used to chart the framework and growth of knowledge-hiding areas and their related directions. Managers often expect employees to freely share their knowledge to enhance the organization's skills and productivity. Colleagues' proprietary knowledge is not "owned" by companies (Kelloway & Barling, 2000). staff members decide to keep their expertise to themselves (Connelly et al., 2019). Choosing to purposefully withhold information from other team members may result in trouble, making workers deal with disrupted professional relationships and reduced productivity. It also emphasizes how encouraging positive interactions among staff members can help regulate this phenom-

enon (Jahanzeb et al., 2020). Although interest in KH has surged, the field remains fragmented, with inconsistent theoretical development and limited synthesis across contexts. Previous reviews, such as (Bernatoviæ et al., (2021), focused primarily on co-citation and co-word analysis using a narrower time frame and limited methodological scope. Although insightful, these studies do not fully integrate bibliometric techniques with a structured future research agenda. By merging the TCCM framework, PRISMA-based systematic screening, and all five science mapping approaches, this study is the first to offer an exhaustive, on-paper informed approach to KH evolution. This research fills these gaps and extends our knowledge of how communication techniques, organizational memory, and global information sharing are affected by knowledge concealment. This thorough methodology identifies fundamental inconsistencies, understudied areas, and possible integrative frameworks, addressing the urgent need for a clearer and more significant understanding of KH in organizational contexts.

Research Objective & Questions

This study presents a theory-informed bibliometric-systematic literature review (B-SLR) of Knowledge Hiding (KH) research in organizational contexts from 2005 to 2024. This is the first study to apply all five core bibliometric techniques—co-authorship, co-occurrence, citation, co-citation, and bibliographic coupling—along with a systematic review (PRISMA). This study examines 116 peer-reviewed articles from Scopus

to illustrate the structural evolution, primary themes, intellectual foundations, and emerging patterns in KH research. This comprehensive methodology provides an overarching map and detailed insights into KH literature.

Research Questions

- RQ1: What theoretical frameworks, findings, and conceptual clusters define the KH literature?
- RQ2: How has KH research evolved in terms of publication trends, journals, and authors?
- RQ3: What patterns exist in citation, co-citation, co-authorship, and bibliographic coupling, and what do they reveal?
- RQ4: Which countries and institutions are the most influential in KH research?
- RQ5: What are the most productive and high-impact sources based on publications, citations, quartiles, SNIP, SJR, and h-index?
- RQ6: What are the most cited studies, and what gaps do they reveal?

This study offers a comprehensive overview of KH research trends, identifies thematic gaps, and proposes a future agenda based on the TCCM framework.

Theoretical Background

While the knowledge management (KM) field has traditionally focused on knowledge sharing (Ford & Staples, 2010), the dark side of knowledge be-

haviors, including withholding, hoarding, and strategic ignorance, has garnered increasing attention in recent years (Kang, 2014; Serenko, 2019). KH is now recognized as a psychologically and socially embedded behavior influenced by individual traits, interpersonal dynamics, organizational climates, and leadership styles.

The dominant theoretical lens in KH studies is Social Exchange Theory (SET), which frames hiding as a reaction to perceived inequities or risks in interpersonal exchanges (Connelly et al., 2011; Das & Chakraborty, 2018). However, the SET alone may not fully capture the moral, emotional, and situational complexities involved in KH decisions. Emerging studies have introduced complementary frameworks such as Psychological Ownership Theory, Moral Disengagement Theory, and Self-Determination Theory, highlighting how personal identity, autonomy, and moral reasoning shape knowledge behaviors (Moin et al., 2022); (Zhao & Liu, 2021). Despite the field's growth, its theoretical development remains fragmented. Studies often borrow theories without integrating them or examining their limits. For instance, while KH is typically viewed as dysfunctional, some research hints at its strategic or protective value in high-stakes environments (Gagné et al., 2019); (Peng., 2013). This raises important questions: Is KH always harmful? When might it serve adaptive or ethical functions? In addition, specific and cultural variations in KH are still unknown, which limits the range of suitable current models. This study fills these gaps by presenting a theory-in-

formed bibliometric synthesis. Our goal is to logically map the manner in which various theoretical approaches have impacted the study of KH over time, compared with descriptively collecting theories. Using the TCCM framework enables the identification of conceptual convergence, fragmentation, and opportunity areas. In doing so, we lay the groundwork for future theoretical integration, such as combining Affective Events Theory with Deontic Justice Theory, to better understand the emotional and moral dynamics underlying knowledge

hiding. The conceptual structure not only enhances KH scholarship but also sheds light on more general issues, such as recall systems, company openness, and interaction at work. In this manner, research advances our understanding of how hidden knowledge influences information flow at the macro level and relationships at the micro level.

Table 1 synthesis would signal originality for “theoretical development.”

Table 1. Dominant vs Emerging Theoretical Lenses in Knowledge Hiding

Dimension	Dominant Theoretical Lenses	Emerging/Underexplored Lenses
Primary Focus	Individual cognition and behaviour	Socio-material, affective, and systemic dynamics
Theories Used	- Social Exchange Theory - Theory of Planned Behaviour - Conservation of Resources Theory	- Practice Theory - Institutional Theory - Affect Theory - Paradox Theory
Unit of Analysis	Individual or dyadic (e.g., knowledge hider and seeker)	Teams, organizations, networks
Assumptions	Rational actors, resource protection, cost-benefit logic	Emotional, contextual, identity-based, and performative dynamics
Epistemological Stance	Positivist/post-positivist	Interpretivist, critical, constructionist
Methodological Approaches	Surveys, experiments	Ethnography, case studies, discourse analysis, longitudinal designs
Implications	Focus on antecedents and consequences of hiding at individual level	Highlights structural, cultural, and emotional enablers and disruptors

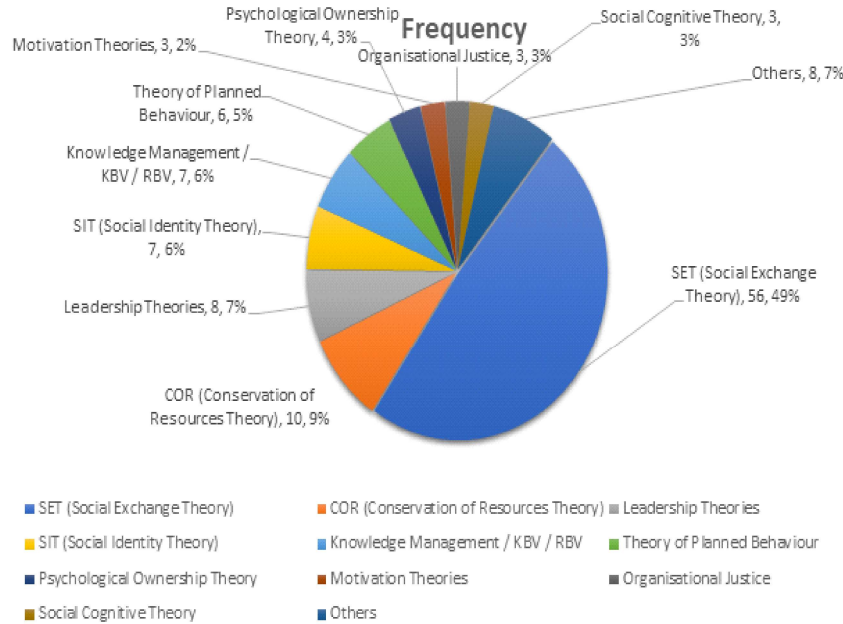
Source: authors' work

Theories in past studies: We analyzed 116 articles and found the most relevant theories frequently used in previous research. Fig.1 illustrates the detailed information on the theories utilized in KH's past work in the organization. Social exchange theory is the most employed theory in KH's organization, with 56 articles.

Research Design

This study employs a Bibliometric-Systematic Literature Review (B-SLR) to comprehensively map and evaluate the evolution of KH research in Organizational settings between 2005 and 2024. We combined two methodological approaches.

Fig..1: The most relevant theories



Source: author-created

- Systematic screening and reporting of literature
- A bibliometric analysis was conducted using all five science mapping techniques: co-authorship, co-occurrence (keyword analysis), citation, co-citation, and bibliographic coupling.
- Structuring future research agenda

This hybrid approach makes an in-depth study of the conceptual and cognitive origins of the area achievable, providing both depth (through theory-guided synthesis) and breadth (through bibliometric information mining and visualization). By arranging the theoretical evaluation according to scientific trends, this dual methodology raised the validity.

Data & technique

We implemented the course of action set by Zupic and Èater, (2014) to execute a bibliometric assessment. We used Scopus content as the bibliometric database because, in 2024, Scopus contained 97.3+ million records, including 28,300+ active journals, 368,000+ book titles, 2.33+ million preprints, 24.6+ million open-access items, and 16,000 conference events. It also features 19+ million author profiles and 94,000+ organization profiles(Scopus Celebrating 20 years, 2024). Using the “OR” search strategy, we carried out a comprehensive search across all the available source databases that Scopus provided (Èerne et al., 2016; Connelly et al., 2011; White et al., 1998), the most highly referenced appearance in the KH area,

and the definition of KH, which includes information hiding, were the primary sources of the search terms. The keywords used included “KH” OR “hiding knowledge” OR “knowledge withholding” OR “withholding knowledge” and “organizations” OR “Organisations”. To verify the reliability of the knowledge base, we restricted the search to English-language journal articles published between 2005 and 2024. Additionally, we focused on the discipline of “Business, Management, and Accounting” and refined article-form documents and journal sources to maintain research quality. This strict filtering process improved the dataset’s consistency and relevance to organizational knowledge behavior.

PRISMA Approach

The PRISMA flowchart (Fig. 2) visually outlines the step-by-step screening process used to ensure transparency and replicability, and the PRISMA approach was used to sort through the published research in the SCOPUS databases. The initial search yielded 298 articles that were screened. After applying the filters, the number was reduced to 185. We then reviewed the abstracts and excluded articles irrelevant to our

search criteria. Ultimately, we identified 116 primary articles published between 2005 and 2024. The total number of citations for the 298 articles was 9,710, with 9,262 citations, excluding self-references.

The usual number of citations per paper was 33.48 and the h-index rating was 54. We provide a PRISMA analysis of KH in organizational settings and explain the valuable findings from all the theories used in this area.

This process enhances replicability and reflects the best practices in systematic review research.

Bibliometric Technique Application

By applying these methods, we visualized the relationships among authors, institutions, theories, and concepts, highlighting the structural dynamics of the KH research landscape. This approach supports knowledge integration across fragmented studies.

Basis of Methods

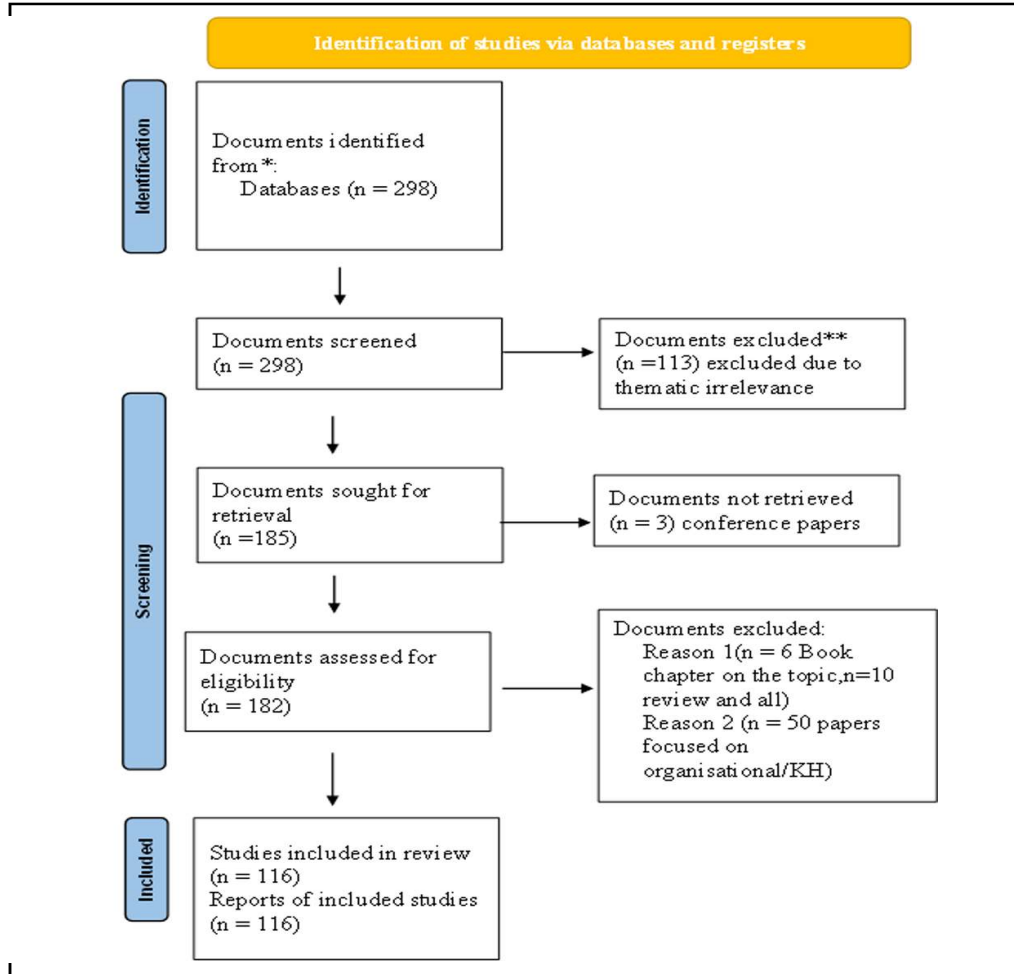
The combined approach has several benefits.

Table 2 All five core science mapping techniques (Donthu et al., 2021, Zupic & Èater., 2014), executed using VOSviewer

Technique	Purpose	Unit of Analysis
Citation Analysis	Identify influential documents and journals	Article, Source
Co-citation Analysis	Map shared intellectual foundations	References
Co-authorship Analysis	Explore collaboration networks	Author, Country
Co-occurrence (Keyword)	Identify core themes and emerging topics	Keywords
Bibliographic Coupling	Cluster recent work by shared citations	Documents

Source: author-created

Fig. 2: PRISMA Analysis



Source: author-created

- Based on the information and knowledge of the field’s foundation and growth, a bibliometric assessment is presented.
- PRISMA ensures objectivity and consistency in screening and validating articles.
- Combining both enables the identification of macro-level patterns (e.g., citation trends, author networks) and

micro-level gaps (e.g., theoretical inconsistencies, underexplored constructs).

In summary, our methodology implies that our outcomes are not only comprehensive and replicable but also theoretically sound, which is consistent with our objective of providing fundamental advances to KH research instead of only descriptive analysis. KH is also placed

Table 3 Detailed SLR analysis of the top 10 articles

SN	Authors	Source title	Cited by	Industry	Theories	Variables	Finding
1	Peng, (2013)	<i>Journal of Knowledge Management</i>	370	R&D	SET, Knowledge-based View	Knowledge hiding, R&D team behavior, Interventions	The study finds that territoriality mediates the relationship between psychological ownership and knowledge hiding, with organizational justice moderating the effects of territoriality on various forms of knowledge hiding.
2	Zhao et al., (2016)	<i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>	263	General	SIT, Resource-based View	Territoriality, Task performance, Workplace deviance	This study finds that territoriality and KH negatively affect task performance, while positively influencing workplace deviance. KH mediates the relationship between territoriality, task performance, and deviance.
3	Singh, (2019)	<i>Journal of Business Research</i>	236	General	Emotional Theory, SET	Knowledge hiding, Guilt, Shame, Consequences	This study reveals that KH evokes guilt and shame, with evasive hiding and playing dumb causing stronger emotions. Guilt leads to organizational citizenship behavior, while shame triggers withdrawal, influencing work outcomes.
4	Gagné et al., (2019).	<i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i>	230	R&D	SIT	Knowledge Hiding, Social Psychology, R&D Team Behavior	The study finds that fostering a collaborative culture reduces KH in R&D teams, enhancing innovation; attitudes, norms, and perceived control significantly influence KH behaviors.

5	Škerlavaj et al., (2018)	<i>Journal of Knowledge Management</i>	216	Sales	SET	Knowledge Hiding, Sales Performance, Perceived Effects	The study finds that perceived KH positively affects individual sales performance but negatively impacts team viability, with social interaction and reward structures moderating these effects.
6	Huo et al., (2016).	<i>Journal of Knowledge Management</i>	186	Pharmaceutical	Planned Behavior	Knowledge sharing deterrents, Organizational barriers	The study identifies nine key deterrents to knowledge-sharing in pharmaceutical manufacturing, including high costs, IT limitations, knowledge-hiding, lack of trust, and time pressure, hindering effective knowledge absorption.
7	(Zhao et al., 2019)	<i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i>	175	General	Social Cognitive Theory	Top-down knowledge hiding, innovative work behavior, self-efficacy, local/foreign status	The study found that supervisor KH negatively affects innovative work behavior, with self-efficacy as a mediator. The impact is stronger for same-nationality supervisor-supervisee pairs.
8	Jiang et al., (2019)	<i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i>	172	Banking, Insurance, Audit, Data Solutions, Universities, Consultancy, Smart Industries	Big Five Personality Traits, Relational Models, Environmental Theory, Contextual Theory	Openness to Experience, Knowledge Hiding, Relational Climate, Communal Sharing Climate, Market Pricing Climate	The study found that personality (openness to experience) alone does not predict knowledge hiding. However, work climate moderates this relationship, with market pricing climate in Vietnam and communal sharing climate in the Netherlands influencing behavior.
9	Lin & Huang,	<i>Information and</i>	168	General	Dark Triad Personality	Dark Triad, Knowledge Hiding	The study found that the dark triad traits (Machiavellianism, narcissism,

(2010).	Management	Theory	and psychopathy) were positively linked to KH through a transactional psychological contract, with gender moderating narcissism and psychopathy's effects.
10	Kumar Jha & Varkey, (2018)	Service 162 Journal of Knowledge Management	Workplace ostracism is positively linked to evasive hiding and playing dumb in-service Organizations, with negative reciprocity beliefs and moral disengagement amplifying this effect, but not affecting rationalized hiding.
		SET, Ostracism Theory	Workplace ostracism, Knowledge hiding, Workplace behavior

Source: author-created

within larger academic debates on organizational communication systems, knowledge flows, and the limitations of this approach.

Findings

We present here the results of our integrated bibliometric and systematic literature review (B-SLR), analyzing 116 peer-reviewed articles on KH in organizational contexts published between 2005 and 2024. We used citation patterns, keyword clustering, co-authorship networks, and bibliographic coupling to reveal the intellectual structure, thematic trends, and geographic distribution of KH research. Where appropriate, we interpret patterns in theory, identify blind spots, and suggest directions for conceptual advancement. Each method offers a different layer of insight: citation analysis reveals influence, co-occurrence maps conceptual structure, and bibliographic coupling highlights current research frontiers.

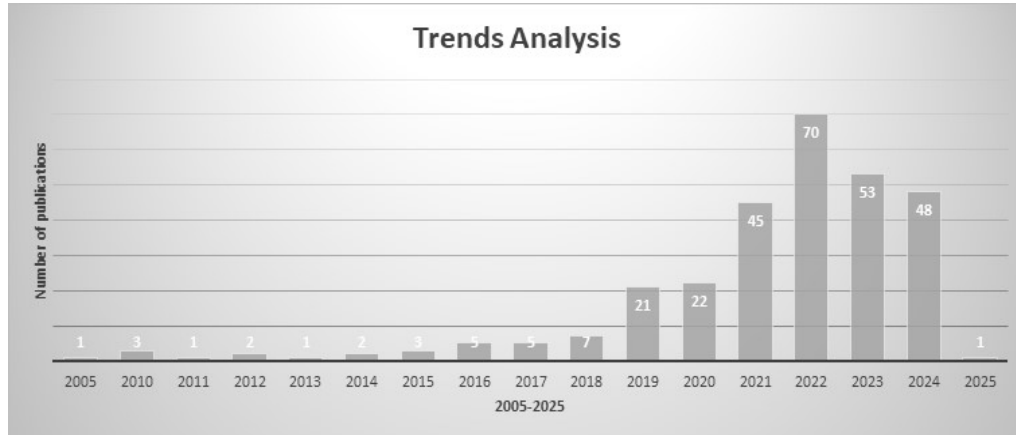
Publication & Citation Trends

KH research has grown rapidly, particularly since 2015. Between 2005 and 2015, publication output remained low, averaging one to three articles per year. However, a sharp increase began in 2016, peaking in 2022, with over 70 articles. This surge reflects the growing recognition of KH as a strategic and psychological barrier to organizational performance.

- Total citations (2005–2024): 9,710
- Average citations per article: 33.48
- Top-cited paper: Peng (2013) – 370 citations

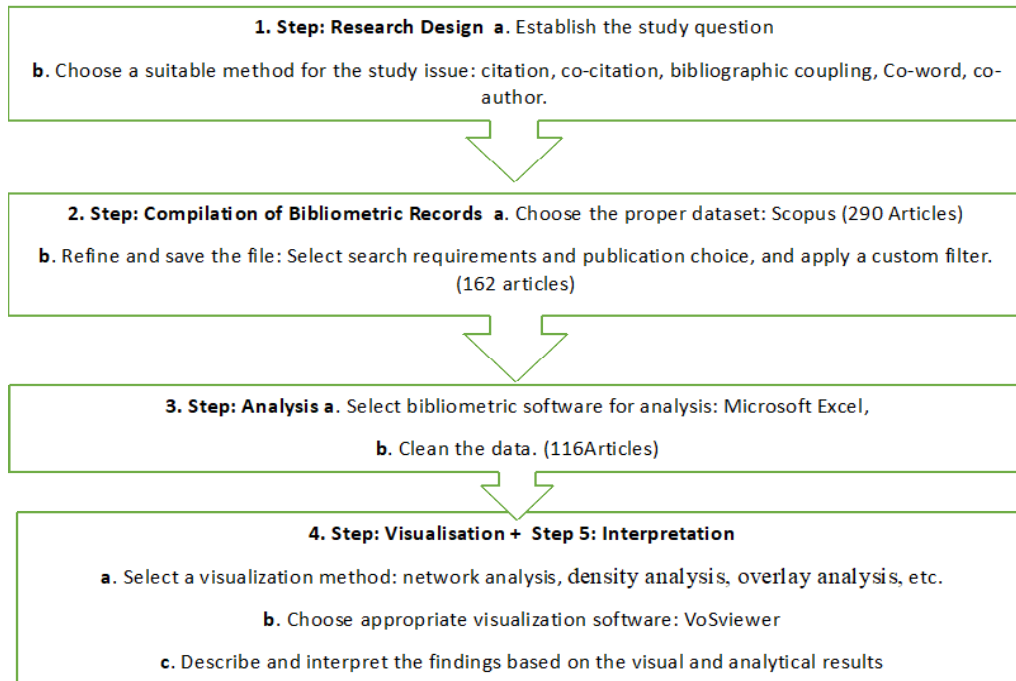
Notably, highly cited papers often introduce novel constructs (e.g., KH type), frameworks

Fig. 3 Annual publication trend in KH research (2005–2024),



Source: author-generated

Fig. 4 Flowchart for Bibliometric Analysis for Science Mapping

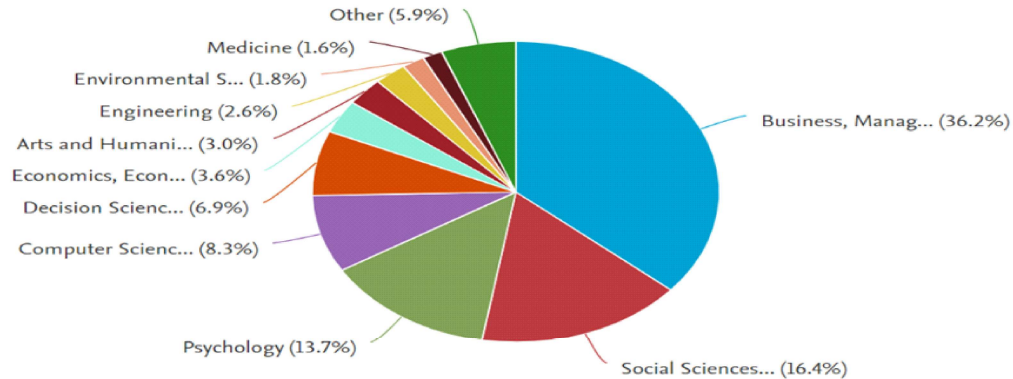


Source: author-created

(e.g., Social Exchange Theory), or methodologies (e.g., experiments and longitudinal data).

Subject-wise progress Analysis of 298 Scopus articles reveals dominant research in business (36.2%), social sci-

Fig. 5: Subject-wise progress Source: Scopus



ences (16.4%), and psychology (13.7%), with notable contributions from technology, humanities, and interdisciplinary fields. This disciplinary spread reflects the cross-functional impact of KH in knowledge-intensive work environments.

Bibliometric Citation Analysis

Citation analysis results: A basic approach for mapping scientific research is referred to as citation analysis. It works on the premise that citations reflect the rational linkages that emerge when two articles indicate the same idea (Appio et al., 2014). Although several methods (such as network metrics) are used to evaluate a publication’s significance in a subject of examination, its citation count is a more quantitative and immediate measurement of its influence (Pieters & Baumgartner, 2002; Stremersch et al., 2007). In the citation analysis, we analyzed the units of analysis, documents, and sources.

- Unit of analysis: documents and sources
- Minimum citations per document: 1
- Documents analyzed: 101
- Connected items in the largest set: 97

The network visualization of the bibliographic citation analysis created by VOSviewer shows a complex web of linked authors and publications, defined by many colors and clusters. Each point denotes an author, and the size reflects the impact and citation volume. Key nodes, such as “Peng (2013)”, “Gagné (2019)”, and “Zhao (2016)”, form intellectual anchors in the field.

Document Citation Analysis: Documents of citation analysis are specific research outputs, encompassing books, reports, journal articles, and conference papers. The level of productivity, reference count, and research impact of particular articles, authors, or institutions are frequently evaluated using document analysis. Fig. 4 depicts a network visual-

ization of the citation evaluation of the 116 files. The smallest possible number of citations per document was one, and 101 documents fulfilled the criteria. The total number of citation ties was determined for each of these 101 releases. Papers with the most connections were selected. Moreover, some of the 101 items were not connected.

It includes 97 associated items in the largest collection of items. The network visualization of the bibliographic citation analysis created by VOSviewer shows a complex web of linked authors and publications, defined by many links and clusters. Each point denotes an author, along with its extent, which reveals both the impact and volume of their citations. Major nodes such as “Peng (2013),” “Gagne (2019),” “Zhao (2016),” and “Singh (2019)” highlight writers who have made significant contributions in their fields. The broad range of connectivity among these core nodes indicates that many different studies have included their work. Better citation relationships

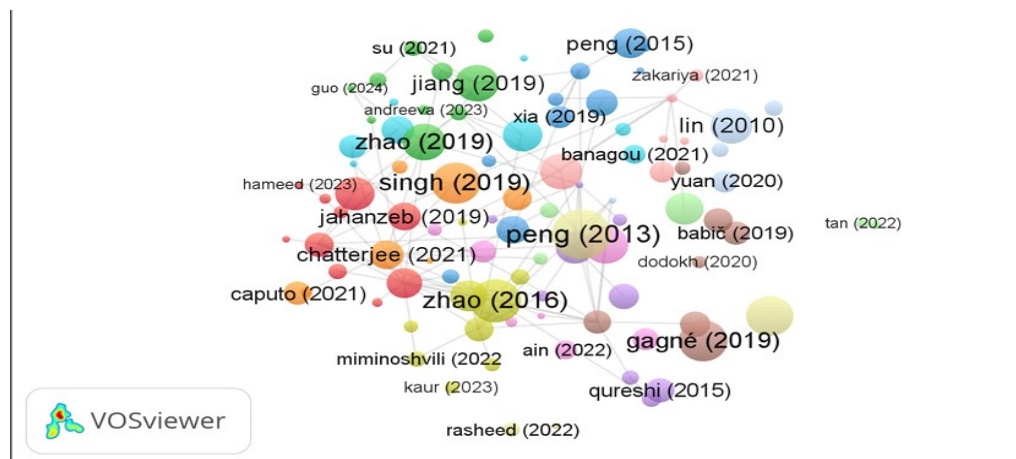
are represented by stronger lines connecting nodes (edges). Color-coded clusters represent conceptual or occupational groupings of the participants. A cohesive research group with significant amounts of mutual referencing, for example, could be indicated by the red cluster involving the names “Singh (2019),” “Jahanzeb (2019),” and “Chatterjee (2021)”.

The field’s trajectory mirrors the shift from early conceptual development (2005–2015) to empirical expansion (2016–2024); however, few efforts have synthesized these phases into an integrated theoretical narrative. This lack of synthesis presents an opportunity for future meta-analyses and theoretical unifications.

Our citation and co-citation analyses revealed core “intellectual anchors” in KH:

- Foundational papers: Connelly et al. (2011), Peng (2013), and Cerne et al. (2014)

Fig. 6: A citation analysis with Network visualization mode based on the document unit



- Dominant theories: Social Exchange Theory (in 56+ articles), Resource-Based View, Self-Determination Theory

Co-citation clusters reveal that most KH literature draws heavily from organizational psychology, with limited bridg-

ing to ethics, leadership, or cultural studies.

The field risks a theoretical monoculture. There is a strong dependence on SET, which may overlook the moral, cultural, or emotional dimensions of hiding behavior.

Table 4 The top 5 most-cited works on the KH

Rank	Documents	Citations	Links
1	Peng (2013)	370	55
2	Zhao (2016)	263	41
3	Singh (2019)	236	25
4	Gagne (2019)	230	3
5	Skerlavaj (2018)	216	1

Source: author-created

These studies serve as conceptual cornerstones, shaping later empirical designs and topic clusters.

Bibliometric Relationships: Source Unit of Analysis of Citation Analysis:

Journals, conferences, or publications where the contents are published are usually referred to as sources. Sources are reviewed in bibliometric research to evaluate the relevance and impact of various pathways on the transmission of knowledge. The impact factor or journal h-index, which assesses the average volume of citations to journal articles, is frequently used in source analysis. This makes it easier to find significant publications or journals that play a major role in a certain field of study. In this analysis:

- 47 sources were found,

- 40 met the threshold (1 minimum document and 1 citation per source),
- Of these, 37 had the largest connected groups.

This analysis provides insight into which journals shape the academic discourse on KH.

KH research has primarily appeared in top-tier management and psychology journals, with the Journal of Knowledge Management and Journal of Business Research leading in both publication count and citations. While journals focus on applied organizational behavior and knowledge systems, few publications appear in leadership or ethics-specific journals, a potential gap given KH's moral and managerial implications.

These journals play a central role in legitimizing KH research and signal where future studies are most likely to be published and cited.

Fig. 7. Citation network of KH sources (threshold e”1 citation)

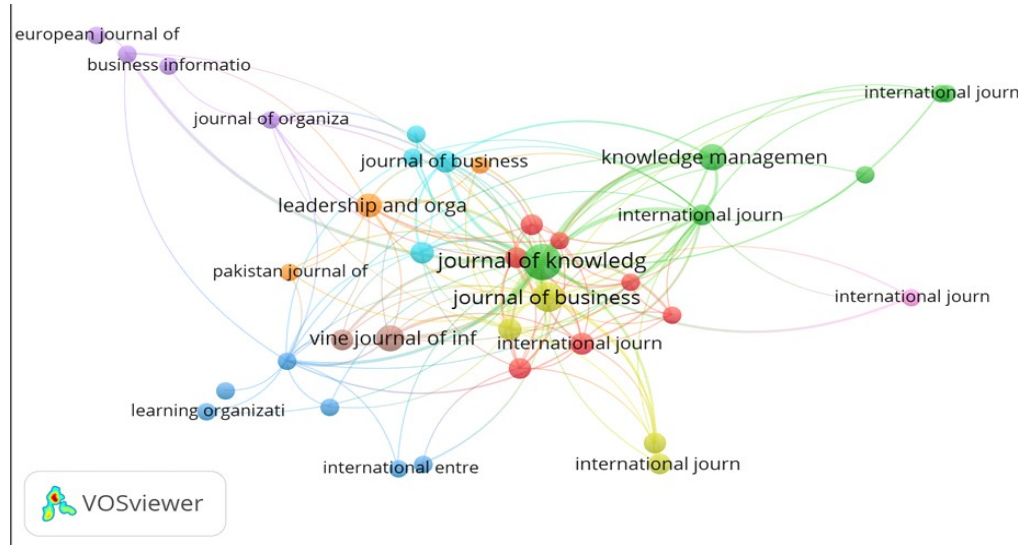


Table 5 Source Title and number of publications

Journal	Articles	Citations
Journal of Knowledge Management	31	1,878
Journal of Business Research	10	796
VINE Journal of Information and Knowledge Management	6	324

Source: author-created

Fig. 8 A co-citation analysis with Network visualization mode

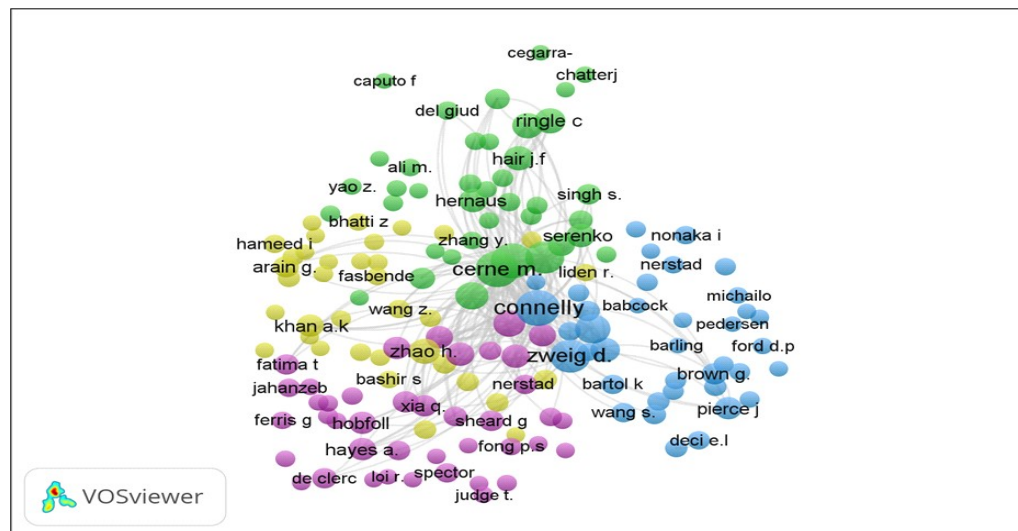


Table 6 The top 10 most productive sources with citation data, publication counts, impact factors, SNIP, SJR, and h-indices.

Rank	Source	Publication	Citations	Cite Score 2023	Quartile	Impact Factor	SNIP	SJR	h-Index
1	<i>Journal of Knowledge Management</i>	30	1878	13.7	Q1	8.5	2.243	1.793	140
2	<i>Journal Of Business Research</i>	12	796	20.3	Q1	10.5	3.128	3.128	265
3	<i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i>	3	577	10.5	Q1	6.2	2.633	3.187	217
4	<i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>	2	317	16.9	Q1	9.1	2.196	2.843	126
5	<i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>	3	280	12.8	Q1	5.9	2.841	2.624	253
6	<i>Information and Management</i>	1	168	17.9	Q1	8.2	2.808	2.594	191
7	<i>International Journal of Information Management</i>	1	141	53.1	Q1	20.1	5.825	5.775	177
8	<i>Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology</i>	2	127	8.9	Q1	4.9	2.388	2.529	137
9	<i>Journal of Managerial Psychology</i>	2	114	5.5	Q1	4.5	1.359	1.337	99
10	<i>“European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology”</i>	2	97	8	Q1	5.8	1.732	1.799	92

Source: Authors' work

Bibliometric Co-citation Analysis

References or cited articles are usually used as the unit of analysis in co-citation analysis within bibliometric research. This approach uses the frequency with which articles are connected by future publications to establish relationships between them. The analysis shows the cognitive structures of individuals within a field of research, highlights key works, and defines research areas.

The topmost productive source details with publication, citation, quartile, impact factor, publisher, SNIP, SJR, and h-index: The citation analysis of the top ten sources in this topic discusses the most significant journals that contribute to our understanding of KH in Organizations.

Bibliometric Co-authorship Analysis

We examined three units of analysis: Author collaboration, organization-level collaboration, and country-level collaboration

Authors: This analytical unit focuses on individual researchers, identifying significant contributors and their networks of colleagues. These networks are visualized by VOSviewer, which also highlights the key players in the field and emphasizes groups of authors who frequently publish together.

These authors serve as key intellectual contributors and trendsetters in KH scholarship

Countries: This analysis highlights the trends of international collaboration at the national level, identifying countries that contribute most extensively and frequently.

- 50 countries were found,
- 32 met the threshold (2+ documents and 2+ citations),
- 31 nations had strong connectivity in co-authorship,

KH research is dominated by emerging economies, particularly in Asia. This

Fig. 10. Regional hubs of KH research, particularly in Asia and the UK.

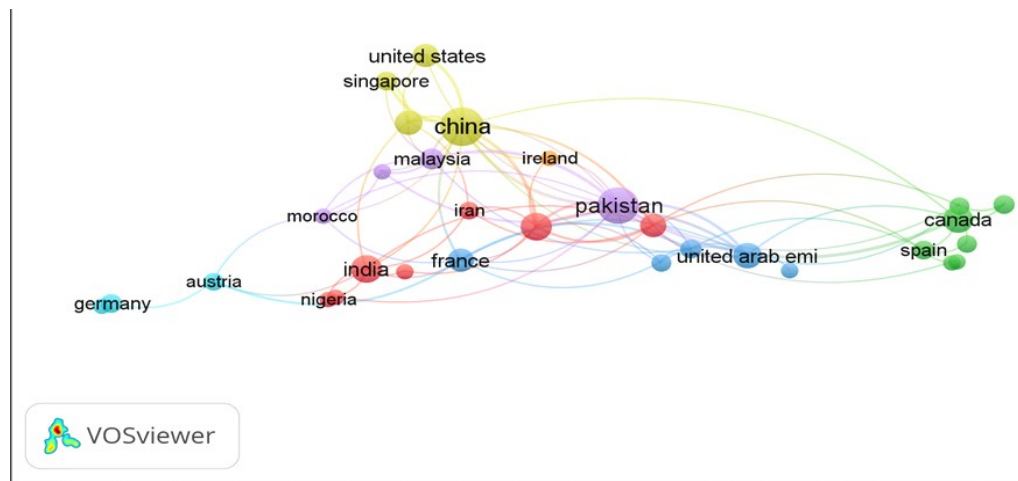


Table 8: Top 5 Countries by Productivity and Citations

Rank	Countries	Publications	Citations
1	China	35	2416
2	Pakistan	28	642
3	India	12	335
4	United Kingdom	12	519
5	Canada	11	517

Source: author-created

geographical concentration may shape how KH is conceptualized (e.g., in hierarchical vs. egalitarian cultures); however, few studies have explicitly explored these differences. These countries reflect the global spread of KH research and signal emerging centers of theoretical and empirical development

Bibliometric Co-occurrence Analysis

Co-word assessment is a unique bibliometric approach that develops similarity metrics using actual words (Zupic & Èater 2014). Co-word assessment

looks for keywords, titles, and entire articles to create a meaning map of the subject and to emphasize the key concepts that underlie both current and historical research. Callon’s (1986) landmark article on co-word analysis highlighted the power of words and outlined the field’s theoretical underpinnings. In this analysis, we studied all keyword units

of analysis, and out of 521 keywords, 31 met the threshold with a minimum of three keywords, as shown in Fig. 11.

Table 9 presents the cluster-wise breakdown of keywords. Using co-word analysis, we identified three dominant conceptual clusters based on the co-occurrence of keywords.

Fig. 11: The occurrence analysis (min 2) with overlay visualization mode

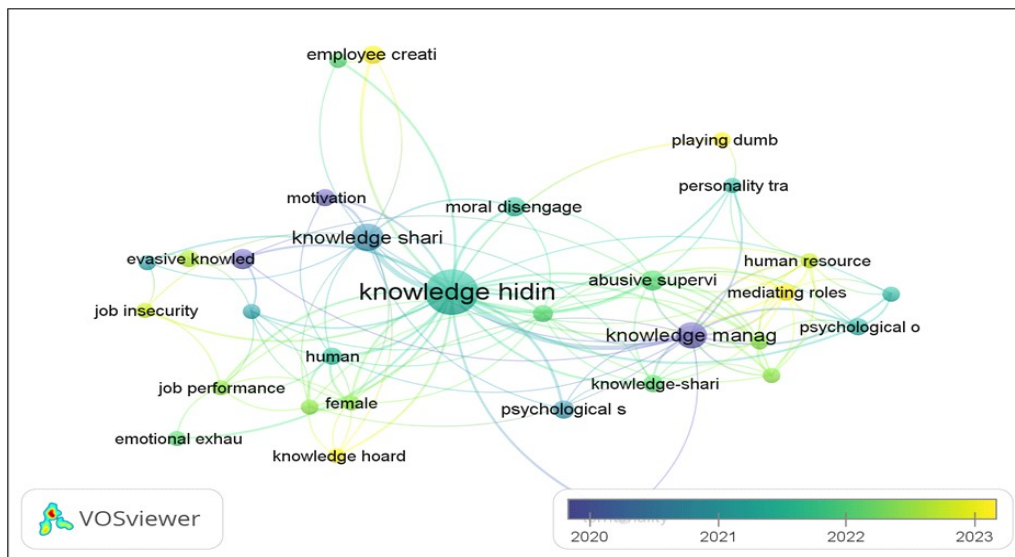


Table 9 Clusters Based on Keyword Co-occurrence

Cluster	Keywords	Thematic Focus
1. Knowledge Dynamics and Exchange	KH, KM, KS interplay	Central constructs and their in
2. Leadership and Supervision	Abusive supervision, power, LMX	Role of leadership in fostering or mitigating KH
3. Employee Psychology and Behavior	Psychological safety, moral disengagement, creativity	Affective and cognitive antecedents of KH

Source: author-created

While individual-level predictors have been well studied, the interactions between leadership, climate, and employee traits remain fragmented, presenting an opportunity for integrative

theory-building (e.g., blending Affective Events Theory with Leadership theories). According to a bibliometric study of keywords, significant subjects and concepts are grouped into clusters in

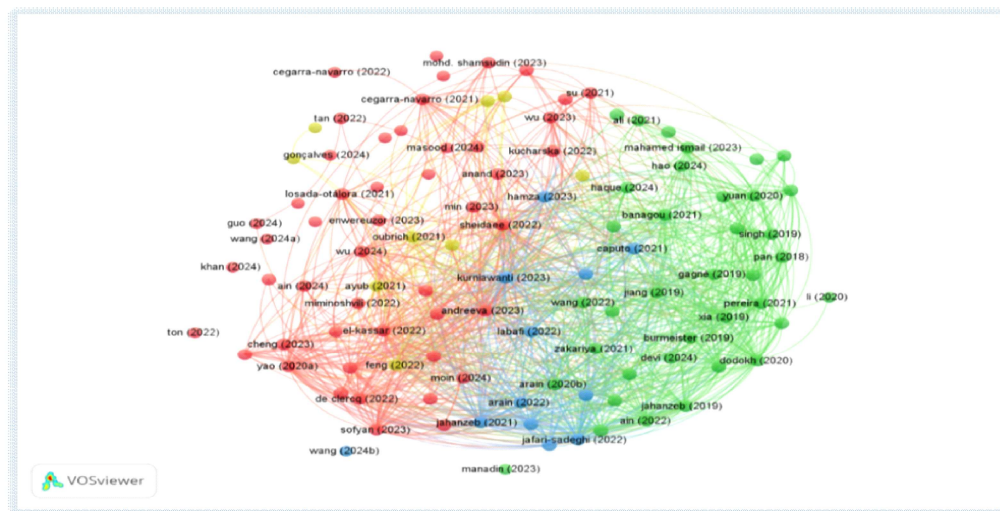
Table 9, which shows particular subjects in the literature.

Bibliographic coupling

In the final phase, we evaluated the KH context using bibliographic coupling. Bibliographic coupling continues to be a valuable resource for placing recent contributions to the sub-

ject, although it is a challenge for future studies using current patterns Ferreira (2017). We conclude that the context is appropriate for carrying out bibliographical coupling using a brief period of the previous 14–15 years (Zupic & Èater, 2014). As mentioned earlier, For KH, we uncovered 116 pertinent articles, 108 of which were released within the last seven years (2018-2024).

Fig. 12: A bibliographic coupling with overlay visualization mode



Articles

By applying bibliometric coupling analysis (Fig. 12) based on the 108 articles, documents featuring the same references were found and clustered together, highlighting their relationships by clusters. The components of analysis in the present context are documents organized according to their overall number of citations and connection strengths. Various clusters indicating analytical or subject clusters in the literature are highlighted in the figure. Articles such as

Mohd. Shamsudin (2023), Masood (2024), and Cegarra-Navarro (2022) show high interrelationships through mutual citations and indicate high coupling in the red cluster. Emerging research patterns are highlighted by the cluster’s perceived inclusion of more recent studies.

Recent articles (2018–2024) cluster around emerging issues such as:

- Cross-cultural KH (e.g., Wang et al., 2024)

- Digital and remote work settings
- Power dynamics and moral disengagement

However, these newer studies remain siloed, with limited cross-references to foundational literature or theory development. Emerging empirical

themes must be connected to theoretical debates to ensure that KH research evolves conceptually, not just descriptively.

Table 10 lists the top five rankings of quantitative and qualitative article citations to the KH area:

Table 10 Highlights prominent studies on KH in Organizations, ranked by citation count.

S.No.	Title	Cited by	Year	Authors
1	KH in Organizations	1194	Jan-12	Catherine Connelly
2	“What Goes Around Comes Around: KH, Perceived Motivational Climate, and Creativity”	711	Feb-14	Matej Cerne
3	“Why and when do people hide knowledge?”	495	May-13	“He Peng”
4	“Understanding counterproductive knowledge behavior: antecedents and consequences of intra-Organizational KH”	477	Oct-16	Alexander Serenko
5	“How perpetrators and targets construe KH in Organizations”	469	Dec-14	“Catherine Connelly”

Discussion & Implications

From description to meaning, a fresh examination of knowledge hiding: s study reveals that KH has emerged as a rich but fragmented field, growing rapidly since 2015 across management, psychology, and organizational behavior. Using a combined bibliometric-systematic approach, we uncovered dominant patterns in publication, citation, and co-authorship, as well as underlying conceptual blind spots and

underexplored intersections. Most KH studies are rooted in Social Exchange Theory (SET), positioning KH as a reactive behavior shaped by perceived reciprocity, trust, and fairness. While this has provided valuable insights, especially regarding the role of abusive supervision, interpersonal conflict, and leadership, the theoretical scope remains narrow. Important constructs such as moral reasoning, emotional regulation, and identity dynamics remain peripheral, despite the evidence that KH is not merely strategic but often psychological, cultural, and even ethical. Furthermore, although many studies identify contextual factors (e.g., culture, team structure, organizational climate), few integrate them into multilevel frameworks that connect individual behavior to organizational

Most KH studies are rooted in Social Exchange Theory (SET), positioning KH as a reactive behavior shaped by perceived reciprocity, trust, and fairness.

outcomes. Similarly, while bibliometric clusters highlight emerging themes such as digital work, psychological safety, and strategic KH, these remain disconnected from theoretical development. The field is maturing empirically but is still conceptually fragmented. It needs to move beyond thematic catalogues toward integrated, explanatory models of KH.

Theoretical Implications

This review reveals several critical theoretical opportunities.

- **Integrative Theorizing:** There is room to combine SET with frameworks such as Affective Events Theory, Deontic Justice Theory, and Psychological Ownership Theory to explain how emotional, moral, and power-related processes shape KH decisions.
- **Conceptual Clarification:** Overlapping terms “*knowledge hoarding*, *ignorance*, *non-sharing*” are often used interchangeably. Clear distinctions and boundary setting are essential for improving theoretical precision.
- **Contextual Sensitivity:** Most studies ignore the cultural, gendered, or institutional differences that shape KH behavior. For example, high-power-distance cultures may normalize KH differently than egalitarian cultures.

“KH research needs a second wave of conceptual development where interdisciplinary theories help explain *why* hiding occurs, not just *when*.”

Practical & Managerial Implications

From a managerial perspective, the insights from this review are critical.

- **Leadership Development:** Abusive, self-serving, or neglectful leadership is a consistent trigger of KH. Training programs must prioritize ethical, inclusive, and emotionally intelligent leadership to reduce defensive behaviors.
- **Organizational Culture:** Environments lacking psychological safety, fairness, or acknowledgement can foster knowledge concealment. It is essential to promote a culture of trust, openness, and recognition.
- **Remote Work and Technology:** As hybrid and virtual work become the norm, KH may evolve into new forms. Digital workflows and surveillance can create new anxieties regarding information control, making KH more subtle yet prevalent.

Additionally, managerial awareness should extend to the ethical and cultural nuances of KH, especially in diverse or virtual teams

“Addressing KH is not about forcing sharing but creating conditions where hiding is unnecessary.”

Research Implications: A TCCM-Oriented Agenda

To guide future KH scholarship, we propose a research agenda aligned with

the TCCM framework (Theory, Context, Characteristics, Methodology), which is detailed in the next section. Key priorities include:

- T (Theory): Expand beyond the SET and integrate moral, affective, and identity-based theories.
- C (Context): KH across cultures, sectors (e.g., healthcare, education), and work modalities (remote vs. on-site).
- C (Characteristics): Clarify hiding strategies (e.g., playing dumb, evasive hiding), motivations (strategic vs. defensive), and outcomes (innovation, burnout).
- M (Methodology): Mixed-methods, longitudinal, and experimental techniques were used to investigate KH motion over time and among teams.

Summary of Contribution

This study makes several significant contributions.

1. **Comprehensive Scope:** This study is the first to apply all five bibliometric techniques to KH literature, enabling a multidimensional understanding of the field.
2. **Conceptual Integration:** The TCCM framework is used to organize gaps and propose a future research agenda, advancing KH theorization.
3. **Empirical Base:** It offers beginners in the KH area a scientific basis by integrating highly referenced articles, journals, and authors.

4. **Practical Value:** These findings provide managers with helpful guidance, especially when creating knowledge-sharing programs and rules that foster trust.
5. **Interdisciplinary Relevance:** The study bridges knowledge management, Organizational behavior, and communication studies — making it suitable for broader scholarly and practitioner audiences

Future Research Directions: A TCCM Framework

Building on the insights from this review, we outline a structured research agenda using the TCCM Framework. This framework not only identifies the location of research gaps but also guides how to address them systematically and impactfully.

T – Theory: Broadening and Deepening Theoretical Foundations: Despite the dominance of Social Exchange Theory (SET), the complexity of KH behavior demands a more pluralistic and layered theoretical base. Future research should:

- **Integrate Complementary Theories:** Combine SET with Affective Events Theory, Psychological Ownership Theory, Deontic Justice, and Self-Determination Theory to unpack the emotional, moral, and identity-driven dimensions of KH.
- **Develop Process Models:** Move beyond static predictors to dynamic models that explain how KH unfolds

over time in response to changing relational or environmental cues.

- **Examine Paradoxes and Dualities:** Investigate KH as a phenomenon with dual valence—sometimes defensive, sometimes strategic—and explore how ethical reasoning and Organizational politics influence this tension.

First: Theoretical innovation will enable researchers to explain why people hide knowledge, not just when and how.

C – Context: Embedding KH in Diverse Organizational Settings

Most current studies adopt generic organizational settings, limiting the contextual relevance of their findings. Future work should:

- **Diversify Organizational and Sectoral Contexts:** Study KH in high-stakes domains such as healthcare, education, government, and technology, where knowledge asymmetries have critical consequences.
- **Explore Cultural and Institutional Influences:** Examine how national culture, power distance, gender norms, and legal environments shape the acceptability and expression of KH.
- **Adapt to Evolving Work Modes:** Investigate KH in remote, hybrid, and AI-mediated work environments, where anonymity, surveillance, and fragmented communication may increase the desire to hide.

Second, Context-sensitive insights yield more actionable theories and inter-

ventions tailored to specific workplace realities.

C – Characteristics: Refining the Nature of KH as a Construct

The conceptual terrain surrounding KH remains crowded and is often conflated with adjacent behaviors. Future research should:

- **Clarify and differentiate constructs:** Distinguishing between knowledge hiding, knowledge hoarding, ignorance, and non-sharing, both conceptually and operationally.
- **Examine Hiding Strategies and Motivations:** Disentangle forms such as evasive hiding, playing dumb, and rationalized hiding, and analyze the motives behind them, whether defensive (fear-driven) or strategic (competitive).
- **Investigate Outcomes Across Levels:** Study the consequences of KH on individual burnout, team learning, and organizational innovation, and how these vary by hiding strategy and motive.

Third, a refined understanding of KH's forms, motives, and outcomes can lead to more precise theorizing and intervention design.

M – Methodology: Expanding Research Designs & Analytical Rigor

Methodological homogeneity has limited the explanatory depth of the field. Most studies are cross-sectional, survey-

based, and restricted to a single country. Future research should:

- Adopt Longitudinal and Experimental Designs: Capture the temporal and causal dynamics of KH, including its evolution in response to leadership change or organizational shocks.
 - Leverage Mixed Methods: Combine qualitative (e.g., ethnography, interviews) and quantitative (e.g., SEM, network analysis) approaches to uncover hidden logics and behavioral patterns.
 - Utilize Digital Trace Data: Investigate KH in digital environments using data from communication platforms, knowledge systems and enterprise social media.
 - Enhance Diversity and Replicability: Conduct multicountry, cross-cultural studies with robust sampling and transparent reporting standards to increase external validity.
- Fourth, a more rigorous and diversified methodological toolkit will deepen insights into the mechanics and meaning of KH across settings.

Table 11 Future Research Agenda on KH Using the TCCM Framework

Dimension	Future Research Directions	Key Questions and Opportunities
T – Theory	Integrate interdisciplinary frameworks (e.g., Affective Events, Deontic Justice, Psychological Ownership) Develop dynamic and process-oriented models Explore paradoxes (e.g., protective vs. strategic hiding)	Why do individuals choose to hide knowledge beyond reciprocity norms? How do emotions, ethics, and identity shape KH? How does KH evolve over time in teams and Organizations? Under what conditions does KH serve protective vs. manipulative purposes?
C – Context	Examine KH across diverse sectors (e.g., healthcare, education, public administration) Investigate cultural, gendered, and institutional factors Study KH in digital, hybrid, and AI-mediated work environments	How does industry context influence the drivers and impacts of KH? How do power distance, gender norms, or institutional trust shape KH behaviors? How does technology influence the form, visibility, and detection of KH?
C – Characteristics	Clarify distinctions between KH, hoarding, ignorance, and non-sharing Examine motivations (defensive vs. strategic) and hiding strategies Explore outcomes at individual, team, and Organizational levels	What are the unique cognitive and behavioral features of KH? How do motivations affect the type and frequency of KH? How do different forms of KH impact innovation, morale, and performance?
M – Methodology	Employ longitudinal and experimental research designs Use mixed-method and multilevel approaches Leverage digital trace data and real-time analytics	What are the causal effects of leadership, culture, or incentives on KH over time? How can we integrate qualitative insight with quantitative validation? What can platform-based behaviors reveal about KH in virtual teams?

Source: author-created

Conclusion: Toward a More Integrated, Contextual, and Impactful KH Research Agenda

Taken together, the TCCM-guided roadmap advocates for a second generation of knowledge-hiding research that moves beyond descriptive patterns toward integrative theory-building, context-sensitive exploration, construct refinement, and methodological innovation. This type of work is important for increasing research knowledge and directing leaders', teams', and policymakers' strategies for dealing with knowledge obstacles in modern workplaces.

Challenges: The study has numerous challenges, but it is an important step in studying the effects and key actors in the sector. Although we sought to convey an in-depth study of the shifting concept of KH in organizations, it is fundamental to acknowledge these limitations. Additionally, we narrowed our choice of papers to those indexed in Scopus, bypassing associated documents that have been left out of that list. Future research could benefit from the inclusion of additional databases to broaden the discussion. We also limited our analysis to papers published in English and excluded unpublished articles and doctoral and master's theses, which could provide valuable insights for future work. Our findings indicate that developing countries contribute the least to this work. However, the majority of inquiries across advanced countries argue that more studies from developing regions are required to help create a network of cooperation and gain a more profound knowledge of

the area. Although our research shows the complex and interdisciplinary nature of KH in organizations, its exact significance remains somewhat vague, which is an area for future researchers to explore.

References

- Appio, F. P., Cesaroni, F., & Di Minin, A. (2014), "Visualizing the structure and bridges of the intellectual property management and strategy literature: a document co-citation analysis". *Scientometrics*, 101(1). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-014-1329-0>
- Bernatovi , I., Slavec Gomezel, A., &  erne, M. (2022), "Mapping the knowledge-hiding field and its future prospects: a bibliometric co-citation, co-word, and coupling analysis", *Knowledge Management Research and Practice*, 20(3): 394–409. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14778238.2021.1945963>
- Callon, M. (1986), "The Sociology of an Actor-Network: The Case of the Electric Vehicle", in *Mapping the Dynamics of Science and Technology: Sociology of science in the real world*, London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-07408-2_2
-  erne, M., Ka e, R., &  kerlavaj, M. (2016), "Non-technological innovation research: Evaluating the intellectual structure and prospects of an emerging field", *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 32(2). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2016.02.001>
- Connelly, C. E.,  erne, M., Dysvik, A., &  kerlavaj, M. (2019), "Understanding knowledge hiding in organizations", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 40(7): 779–82. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2407>
- Connelly, C. E., Zweig, D., Webster, J., & Trougakos, J. P. (2012), "Knowledge hiding in organizations", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 33(1), 64–88. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.737>

- Donthu, N., Kumar, S., Pandey, N., Pandey, N., & Mishra, A. (2021), "Mapping the electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) research: A systematic review and bibliometric analysis", *Journal of Business Research*, 135. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.07.015>
- Ferreira, F. A. F. (2018), "Mapping the field of arts-based management: Bibliographic coupling and co-citation analyses", *Journal of Business Research*, 85. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.03.026>
- Ford, D. P., & Staples, S. (2010), "Are full and partial knowledge sharing the same?" *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 14(3): 394–409. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13673271011050120>
- Gagné, M., Tian, A. W., Soo, C., Zhang, B., Ho, K. S. B., & Hosszu, K. (2019), "Different motivations for knowledge sharing and hiding: The role of motivating work design", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 40(7). <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2364>
- Hansen, M. T. (1999), "The Search-Transfer Problem: The Role of Weak Ties in Sharing Knowledge across Organization Subunits" *Quarterly* 44,(1): 82–111.
- Huo, W., Cai, Z., Luo, J., Men, C., & Jia, R. (2016)., "Antecedents and intervention mechanisms: a multi-level study of R&D team's knowledge hiding behavior", *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 20(5). <https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-11-2015-0451>
- Jahanzeb, S., Clercq, D. De, & Fatima, T. (2020), "Bridging the Breach: Using Positive Affectivity to Overcome Knowledge Hiding after Contract Breaches", *Journal of Psychology: Interdisciplinary and Applied*, 154(3): 249–72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.2019.1705235>
- Jiang, Z., Hu, X., Wang, Z., & Jiang, X. (2019), "Knowledge hiding as a barrier to thriving: The mediating role of psychological safety and moderating role of organizational cynicism.", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 40(7). <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2358>
- Kang, S. W. (2016), "Knowledge withholding: Psychological hindrance to the innovation diffusion within an organization", *Knowledge Management Research and Practice*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.1057/kmrp.2014.24>
- Kelloway, E. K., & Barling, J. (2000), "Knowledge work as organizational behavior", *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 2(3): 287–304. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2370.00042>
- Kumar Das, A., & Chakraborty, S. (2018), "Knowledge Withholding Within an Organization: The Psychological Resistance to Knowledge sharing Linking With Territoriality", *Journal on Innovation and Sustainability*. 9(3): 94. <https://doi.org/10.24212/2179-3565.2018v9i3p94-108>
- Kumar Jha, J., & Varkkey, B. (2018), "Are you a cistern or a channel? Exploring factors triggering knowledge-hiding behavior at the workplace: evidence from the Indian R&D professionals", *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 22(4). <https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-02-2017-0048>
- Lin, T. C., & Huang, C. C. (2010), "Withholding effort in knowledge contribution: The role of social exchange and social cognitive on project teams.", *Information and Management*, 47(3): 188–96. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2010.02.001>
- Losada-Otálora, M., Peña-García, N., & Sánchez, I. D. (2021), "Interpersonal conflict at work and knowledge hiding in service organizations: the mediator role of employee well-being", *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJQSS-02-2020-0023>
- Moin, M. F., Omar, M. K., Ali, A., Rasheed, M. I., & Abdelmotaleb, M. (2024), "A moderated mediation model of knowledge hidin", *Service Industries Journal*, 44(5–6): 378–90. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02642069.2022.2112180>

- Nguyen, T. M., Malik, A., & Budhwar, P. (2022), "Knowledge hiding in organizational crisis: The moderating role of leadership", *Journal of Business Research*, 139: 161-72. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.09.026>
- Peng, H. (2013), "Why and when do people hide knowledge?", *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 17(3). <https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-12-2012-0380>
- Pieters, R., & Baumgartner, H. (2002), "Who talks to whom? Intra- and interdisciplinary communication of economics journals", *Journal of Economic Literature*, 40(2). <https://doi.org/10.1257/jel.40.2.483>
- Scopus Celebrating 20 years. (2024), Scopus – Abstract and citation database – Celebrating 20 years of innovation, <https://doi.org/https://www.elsevier.com/products/scopus/20-years-of-discovery>
- Serenko, A. (2019), "Knowledge sabotage as an extreme form of counterproductive knowledge behavior: conceptualization, typology, and empirical demonstration.", *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 23(7), 1260–88. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-01-2018-0007>
- Singh, S. K. (2019), "Territoriality, task performance, and workplace deviance: Empirical evidence on role of knowledge hiding.", *Journal of Business Research*, 97. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.12.034>
- Škerlavaj, M., Connelly, C. E., Cerne, M., & Dysvik, A. (2018), "Tell me if you can: time pressure, prosocial motivation, perspective taking, and knowledge hiding", *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 22(7). <https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-05-2017-0179>
- Stremersch, S., Verniers, I., & Verhoef, P. C. (2007), "The quest for citations: Drivers of article impact.", *Journal of Marketing*, 71, 3). <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.71.3.171>
- Üsdiken, B., & Pasadeos, Y. (1995). "Organizational Analysis in North America and Europe: A Comparison of Co-citation Networks", *Organization Studies*, 16(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/01708406950160306>
- White, H. D., & McCain, K. W. (1998), "Visualizing a discipline: An author co-citation analysis of information science, 1972-1995", *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 49(4). [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1097-4571\(19980401\)49:4<327::AID-ASI4>3.0.CO;2-W](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1097-4571(19980401)49:4<327::AID-ASI4>3.0.CO;2-W)
- Zhao, H., & Liu, W. (2022), "Employee perceptions of corporate hypocrisy and knowledge hiding: roles of moral identity and organization-based self-esteem.", *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 26(8). <https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-03-2021-0216>
- Zhao, H., Liu, W., Li, J., & Yu, X. (2019), "Leader-member exchange, organizational identification, and knowledge hiding: The moderating role of relative leader-member exchange", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 40(7). <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2359>
- Zhao, H., Qingxia, He, P., Sheard, G., & Wan, P. (2016), "Workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding in service organizations", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 59. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2016.09.009>
- Zupic, I., & Èater, T. (2014), Bibliometric Methods in Management and Organization. <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2267251> Electroniccopyavailableat:<https://ssrn.com/abstract=2267251> Electroniccopyavailableat:<http://ssrn.com/abstract=2267251>