



Generative AI Adoption, Knowledge Creation, and Innovation Performance: The Role of Human–AI Collaboration

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ABSTRACT

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is rapidly becoming embedded in organizational knowledge work, yet its contribution to innovation remains theoretically underexplained. This article develops a conceptual model linking GenAI adoption with organizational knowledge creation, human-AI collaboration, and innovation performance. Drawing on the knowledge-based view of the firm, organizational knowledge creation theory, absorptive capacity, and the automation-augmentation perspective, the article argues that GenAI creates value not merely through technological deployment but through the way employees interact with AI-generated outputs, combine them with tacit and explicit knowledge, and convert them into actionable organizational knowledge. Six propositions are developed. GenAI adoption is proposed to enhance both human-AI collaboration and knowledge creation; human-AI collaboration is expected to strengthen knowledge creation and innovation performance; knowledge creation is proposed to improve innovation performance and mediate the relationship between GenAI adoption and innovation outcomes. The model contributes to emerging research on GenAI by positioning knowledge processes and human-AI complementarity as central mechanisms through which organizations can translate AI capabilities into innovation

Keywords

Generative artificial intelligence, Knowledge management, Human-AI collaboration, Innovation performance, Organizational learning

1. INTRODUCTION

The use of generative AI has transitioned from a new and experimental technology to a more prominent part of organizational work. While most previous information systems were focused on information storage, retrieval, and analysis, GenAI systems can create text, code, ideas, summaries, explanations, and alternative solutions when prompted in natural language. Such a generative capability has broadened the scope of tasks where AI can engage and deepened management interest in the use of AI for knowledge tasks. Organisations are exploring the potential of GenAI to create and compose

documents, handle customer inquiries, build software, solve problems, conduct research, support decision-making and generate innovations, and retrieve internal information. GenAI is considered as a major milestone in the evolution of information systems as it has the capability to generate new content and engage with users in flexible and context-aware manners (Feuerriegel et al., 2024). Agrawal (2024) also highlights the importance of the use of the GenAI in organizational practices, organizational structures, and organizational contexts for the adoption of the technology.

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Meanwhile, GenAI is not likely to replace humans in knowledge work entirely. While AI systems can create

plausible outputs, humans are still crucial in problem framing, providing context, checking for accuracy, making judgments, and determining the use of generated content. This is part of a trend that is moving away from the perception of AI solely as automation and towards viewing it as an aid to human thinking. Jarrahi (2018) embraces this relationship as an interoperability between human and AI, hybrid intelligence is defined by Dellermann et al. (2019) as the fusion of human intelligence with AI capabilities to create an effect or a result that neither alone would be able to achieve as well. Raisch and Krakowski (2021) also state that automation and augmentation is a paradox: organisations can be using AI to automate some things but also make complementary human actions more important.

Although there is a growing body of research on GenAI, knowledge management, and human-AI interaction, there is still a lack of theory on the mechanisms that link GenAI adoption to innovation performance. Previous research tends to focus on one aspect of adoption (e.g., productivity) or another aspect (e.g., ethical concerns or business-model implications) without considering them together. For instance, Rana et al. (2024) relate GenAI adoption and ethical issues to organizational performance. Kanbach et al. (2024) analyse GenAI through a business-model innovation lens, and Korzynski et al. (2023) explore GenAI as a new context for management theories. There is still some value in explaining how GenAI can be integrated into organisational knowledge processes and how the involvement of humans changes the AI-generated content into knowledge that can help with innovativeness. To address this theoretical gap, the present study develops a conceptual framework that explains how GenAI adoption can influence innovation performance through human-AI collaboration and organizational knowledge creation. Accordingly, the study focuses on clarifying the pathways through which technological capabilities are transformed into meaningful organizational knowledge and innovation outcomes.

Objective of the Study

- To examine the effect of Generative AI

adoption on organizational innovation performance.

- To investigate the role of human-AI collaboration in linking Generative AI adoption with innovation performance.
- To explore how organizational knowledge creation contributes to the relationship between Generative AI adoption and innovation performance.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

2.1 The knowledge-based view and organizational knowledge management

The knowledge-based view offers valuable insights into the strategic significance of GenAI. According to Grant (1996), knowledge is an important organizational resource, and the key to competitive advantage lies in integrating specialized expertise. In the same way, Kogut and Zander (2008) highlight combinative abilities, the use of which involves the integration of knowledge accumulated and acquired by the firm into new applications. GenAI can boost these capabilities by making it easier to access explicit knowledge and by allowing for quick recombination of ideas across fields. The concept of knowledge management takes this one step further, with an emphasis on the creation, storage, transfer, and application of knowledge. Alavi and Leidner (2001) see knowledge management systems as tools that facilitate these processes; Gold et al. (2001) focus on the capability of the organization to know. Therefore, GenAI can be regarded as a part of the current-day knowledge infrastructure. et al., (2024) also demonstrate the impact of GenAI on the ways in which employees access organizational knowledge and the need to validate, attribute, and apply human judgment.

2.2 Organizational knowledge creation

Nonaka's theory of knowledge creation in organizations is a significant insight into the nature of GenAI. As Nonaka (1994) describes, the knowledge acquired by an organization comes from a combination of tacit knowledge (from experience and context) and explicit knowledge (codified and transferable). These processes take place in the form of socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization. Nonaka (2009) also points out that knowledge is created through

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the continuous interaction of people and organizational contexts. The importance of GenAI for externalization and combination is especially noteworthy, as it can aid employees to express ideas, organize information, and synthesize knowledge from various sources. But AI outputs must still be interpreted and contextualised. Absorptive capacity theory supports this view. Cohen and Levinthal (1990) propose that organizations need to be aware, absorb and utilize external knowledge in an effective way. However, GenAI will expand access to a variety of information, but organisational skills, knowledge and expertise along with human judgment will be necessary to turn that information into useful, innovation-relevant knowledge.

2.3 Human-AI collaboration and the automation-augmentation perspective

Human-AI collaboration illustrates the way that humans work with AI in the workplace. According to Jarrahi (2018), AI has its own strengths. AI can

handle large amounts of information and identify patterns, while humans can have contextual understanding and intuition, ethical judgment, and handle ambiguity. This combination is described by Dellermann et al. (2019) as hybrid intelligence, where human and machine capabilities are used to complement each other and produce better results. Also, Seeber et al. (2020) point to the increasing importance of AI as a “collaborative teammate”, and Shrestha et al. (2019) stress the need to establish the correct decision rights between AI and humans. Additionally, through the automation-augmentation paradox, Krakowski (2021) describes this connection, illustrating how AI can automate certain tasks while augmenting others. Therefore, the proper configuration of roles, accountability, and an employee's ability to interpret and evaluate the output of AI is essential to effective human-AI collaboration. Table 1 provides the theoretical foundation of the conceptual model.

Table 1: Theoretical Foundations of the Conceptual Model

Theoretical perspective	Core concept	Relevance to GenAI and the study	Key references
Knowledge-Based View	Knowledge is a strategic organizational resource, and competitive advantage depends on integrating specialized expertise.	GenAI may strengthen organizational knowledge integration by improving access to explicit knowledge and enabling the recombination of ideas across domains.	Grant (1996); Kogut & Zander (2008)
Knowledge Management	Knowledge management involves the creation, storage, transfer, and application of organizational knowledge.	GenAI can become part of organizational knowledge infrastructure by supporting knowledge search, summarization, synthesis, and application.	Alavi & Leidner (2001); Gold et al. (2001); Alavi et al. (2024)

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Organizational Knowledge Creation	Organizational knowledge develops through interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge.	GenAI can support externalization and combination by helping employees articulate ideas, organize information, and combine knowledge from multiple sources.	Nonaka (1994); Nonaka (2009)
Absorptive Capacity	Organizations must recognize, assimilate, and apply valuable external knowledge.	GenAI can increase access to information, but employees still require expertise and judgment to transform AI-generated content into innovation-relevant knowledge.	Cohen & Levinthal (1990)
Human–AI Collaboration	Humans and AI possess different but complementary capabilities.	AI contributes processing and analytical capabilities, while humans provide contextual understanding, judgment, intuition, and interpretation.	Jarrahi (2018); Dellermann et al. (2019); Seeber et al. (2020); Shrestha et al. (2019)
Automation–Augmentation Perspective	AI can automate some tasks while augmenting human capabilities in others.	GenAI can support innovation when it complements rather than simply replaces human knowledge work.	Raisch & Krakowski (2021)

3. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND PROPOSITION DEVELOPMENT

The proposed model starts with the premise of enabling organizational capabilities through GenAI adoption and innovation performance as the main outcome. Organizational knowledge creation and human-AI collaboration serve as the process mechanisms that elucidate the human-AI technological adoption's potential to become innovative value. Human-AI collaboration and organizational knowledge creation are considered as process mechanisms that clarify how technological adoption can transform into

innovative value. The framework outlines six relationships: the first is that adoption of GenAI contributes to knowledge creation in the organization; the second, that human-AI collaboration facilitates knowledge creation in the organization; the third, that knowledge creation in the organization helps to improve the performance of innovation; the fourth, that human-AI collaboration strengthens the performance of innovation; and the fifth, that knowledge creation is a mediator between GenAI adoption and strengthening the performance of innovation.

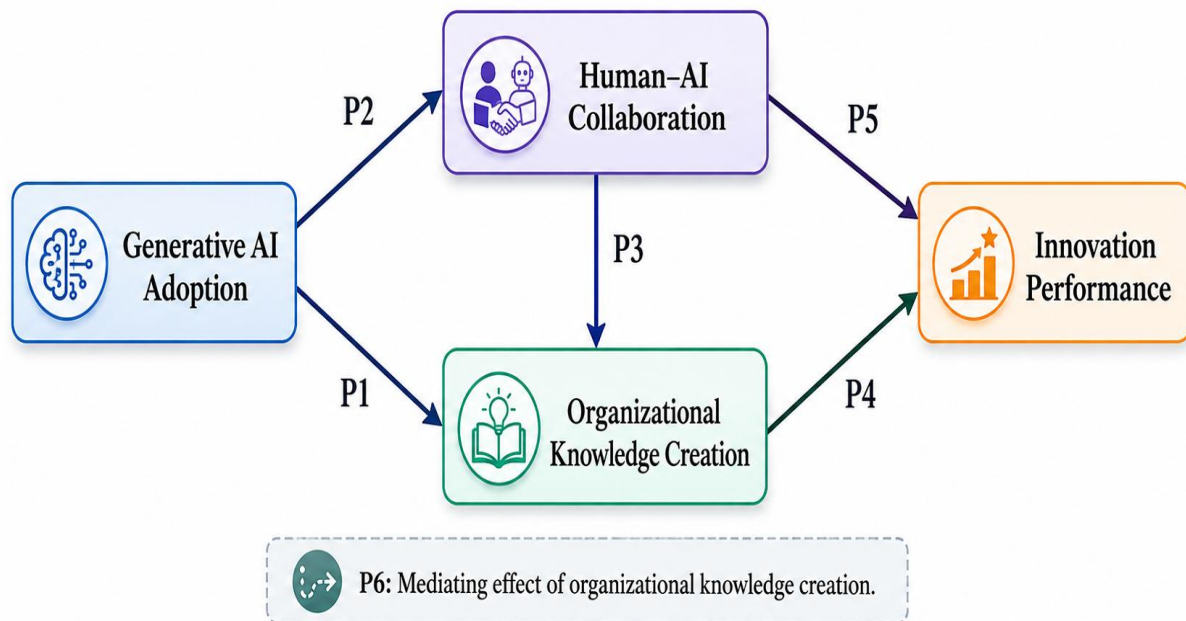


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Model

Figure 1 illustrates the proposed conceptual relationships among Generative AI adoption, human-AI collaboration, organizational knowledge creation, and innovation performance. GenAI adoption is expected to enhance both human-AI collaboration and organizational knowledge creation. Human-AI collaboration further supports knowledge creation and directly contributes to innovation performance. Organizational knowledge creation also positively influences innovation performance and mediates the relationship between GenAI adoption and innovation outcomes.

3.1 GenAI adoption and organizational knowledge creation

The use of GenAI can help open the door to more access, processing, and combination of knowledge within organizations. Traditional knowledge systems usually demand that the user has to know where information is kept, know the structure of the databases or search by pre-defined categories. GenAI facilitates a more conversational interaction, for instance enabling workers to pose questions in natural language and seek elaboration, summarise content, make comparisons and rearrange information for a specific purpose. This can reduce the amount of effort needed to interact with explicit organizational knowledge. Generative is more

importantly a capability that can assist recombination.

Often innovation arises out of the integration of existing knowledge, not out of the creation of new knowledge in isolation. Kogut and Zander (2008) argue that it is the firm's combinative capacities that are important, and March (2008) also separates exploration of new potentials from exploitation of existing knowledge. Both processes can be supported by GenAI. It can help in exploitation by summarising procedures or by converting knowledge into useful forms, and it can help in exploration by suggesting alternatives, analogies, scenarios or unusual combinations. AI-based knowledge management research further indicates the capability of AI to enhance the knowledge aspects of decision-making processes. Leoni et al. (2024) offer empirical evidence of how AI can impact knowledge mobilization for decision making in organizations, which further confirms that AI can play a role in organizations' knowledge mobilization processes. GenAI enhances these processes with an interactive generative component. However, its role needs to be seen as “enabling” rather than “determinative”. The technology produces candidate content, and employees decide its relevance, accuracy, and organization of meaning.

Accordingly:

Proposition 1: Generative AI adoption is

positively associated with organizational knowledge creation.

3.2 GenAI adoption and human-AI collaboration

Adoption is the technique and organisation that allows for the possibility of multiple human-AI interactions. GenAI tools can be integrated into workflows where employees can use these tools as assistants for brainstorming, drafting, coding, explanation, analysis, and decision support. Organizational GenAI adoption extends beyond merely granting individual access to GenAI tools and involves the integration of technology into organizational environments in general (Prasad, 2024). This integration enhances the chances for employees to cultivate interaction patterns and understand the areas where AI is most and least beneficial. GenAI is also unlike a number of previous workplace technologies in that it is an iterative interaction. Users can question an answer, offer alternative answers, clarify a prompt, add detail, and make changes.

This forms a feedback loop such that human output influences AI output and AI output influences human thinking. The human-AI relationship is therefore not only evolving, but evolving as a result of use. Staff are taught to identify tasks, check their results, and determine when human input is more important than the machine's suggestions. The cooperative ability of AI is in line with the concept of hybrid intelligence (Dellermann et al., 2019) and the notion of 'AI as a teammate' (Seeber et al., 2020). Effective collaboration does not mean that humans and machines are equal. Humans are still responsible for decision making in organizations, and AI is a computational colleague that provides results to be understood. Shrestha et al. (2019) demonstrate that in the era of AI, decision structures need to be appropriately allocated. In this way, when coupled with clear task allocation, user competency, and governance, organizational adoption can facilitate collaboration.

Accordingly:

Proposition 2: Generative AI adoption is positively associated with the development of human-AI collaboration in organizational knowledge work.

3.3 Human-AI collaboration and organizational

knowledge creation

AI-generated content isn't a part of organizational knowledge. A generated response might be informative, inaccurate, generic, or out of the context of the organization. When organizational members evaluate, relate, and adjust this content, and share it and use it in meaningful activities, knowledge emerges. Human-AI collaboration is, therefore, a transformation mechanism between the information produced by the machines and the knowledge in the organization. This argument is consistent with that of Nonaka (1994) who emphasized on interaction in knowledge creation. Tacit knowledge can then be exported by employees by providing the AI system with problems to solve, asking the AI system to organize and compare information and opinions, and editing the output.

The process can help to bring implicit assumptions to light. This combination could also be supported by GenAI, which could assist in synthesizing explicit content and employees in context and validate the content. Internalization can take place when the staff member(s) have learnt from the explanation produced and made it part of their practice. Yet human oversight is very much the backbone of GenAI outputs, due to various reasons, including the fact that they may contain inaccuracies or inaccurately represent the data. There is also knowledge sharing to be considered. Wang and Noe (2010) demonstrate that knowledge sharing is dependent on individual conditions, interpersonal conditions, and organizational conditions. While GenAI can alleviate certain communication challenges by making it easier for employees to convey complex information into comprehensible information or by summarizing information, it will not eliminate them entirely. However, trust, motivation, and context are still crucial for effective sharing. Human-AI collaboration could be used to support knowledge creation, for example, by articulating and recombining knowledge, while maintaining human judgement.

Accordingly:

Proposition 3: Human-AI collaboration is positively associated with organizational knowledge creation.

3.4 Organizational knowledge creation and innovation performance

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The ability to create and use new knowledge is essential to innovation. By bringing together technological, market, operational and experiential knowledge, firms develop new products, services, processes and business practices. Darroch (2005) connects KM, innovation, and firm performance, and argues that the effective management of knowledge helps the organization to convert information and knowledge into innovative products. Cohen and Levinthal (1990) also tie learning capacities to innovation by highlighting the value of identifying and leveraging valuable knowledge.

There are several ways Knowledge creation can enhance innovation performance. First, it can expand the spectrum of ideas that can be explored. Second, it can cross the functional boundaries to link ideas together, allowing organizations to find new combinations. Third, it can speed up the learning process from feedback and failure. Fourth, it can facilitate problem-solving by bringing related knowledge to the forefront. These mechanisms are particularly relevant in situations of fast technological and market evolution. According to Mikalef and Gupta (2021), the capability of AI is linked to organizational creativity and firm performance. Their findings build upon a larger body of work that suggests the usefulness of AI is tied to organizational attributes that transform technological potential into higher-level, more desirable results. One of these capabilities is the ability to convert knowledge into the present model. While GenAI can enhance the volume and variety of ideas generated, it is the ability of organisations to transform these concepts into explored and relevant knowledge that drives innovation performance and provides a basis for development and implementation.

Accordingly:

Proposition 4: Organizational knowledge creation is positively associated with innovation performance.

3.5 Human-AI collaboration and innovation performance

Human-AI collaboration can have a direct impact on innovation performance as well. Innovation work requires exploring alternatives, synthesizing ideas, considering trade-offs, and prototyping solutions. GenAI can expand the search space by rapidly producing numerous options, and humans

can evaluate novelty, feasibility, ethics, strategic fit, and customer relevance. This cognitive division of labour can promote faster and broader innovation activities. When human intuition and contextual intelligence are brought together with the analytical capabilities of AI, human-AI symbiosis can enhance decision-making, as stated by Jarrahi (2018). Raisch and Krakowski (2021) propose that augmentation can also be a value-enhancing mechanism beyond merely substituting for tasks, as it can augment human capabilities. Noy and Zhang (2023) and Brynjolfsson et al. (2025) also show that workers can gain a significant amount from the assistance of generative AI, although the benefits differ in size and nature between different tasks and workers. These benefits can, in contexts of innovation, free up time for higher-order activities or allow for more options within the same resources. But teamwork is an issue. If not programmed properly, the use of AI might diminish critical thinking or bring in poor-quality concepts to innovation processes. The expected positive relationship is based on the premise of working together, but not simply accepting outputs generated.

Accordingly:

Proposition 5: Effective human-AI collaboration is positively associated with innovation performance.

3.6 The mediating role of organizational knowledge creation

One of the key ideas of the model is that the presence of GenAI is not enough to generate innovation. Rather, GenAI delivers new information processing and generative functions which need to be translated into organizational knowledge. This implies that there is an intervening factor in the process of knowledge creation. This logic is consistent with that of the knowledge-based view. Technology becomes strategically valuable when it is used to help integrate and apply knowledge (Grant, 1996). While GenAI tools have the potential to expand the supply of ideas and information, the transformation of these inputs into knowledge relies on the skills of the knowledge creators. If not, GenAI could be limited to being a one-off productivity hack rather than a driving force for innovation. This mediation argument also matches the argument of Alavi and Leidner (2001) that

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information technologies are facilitators of knowledge processes and not replacements. The same applies to GenAI, where distinguishing between retrieved and generated knowledge becomes significant, as pointed out by Alavi et al. (2024). Therefore, the innovation effect of GenAI should be greater if organizations have practices that take the generated content and make it shared and actionable.

Accordingly:

Proposition 6: Organizational knowledge creation mediates the positive relationship

between Generative AI adoption and innovation performance.

Table 2 summarizes the six proposed relationships linking GenAI adoption, human–AI collaboration, organizational knowledge creation, and innovation performance. It also presents the theoretical rationale and key supporting references for each proposition. Overall, the table highlights how technological adoption is expected to generate innovation through collaborative, knowledge-based organizational mechanisms and processes effectively.

Table 2: Summary of Proposed Relationships

Proposition	Proposed relationship	Theoretical rationale	Supporting references
P1	GenAI adoption → Organizational knowledge creation	GenAI improves access to organizational knowledge, supports information synthesis, and facilitates the recombination, exploration, and exploitation of existing and new knowledge.	Kogut & Zander (2008); March (2008); Leoni et al. (2024)
P2	GenAI adoption → Human–AI collaboration	Organizational adoption creates opportunities for employees to integrate GenAI into brainstorming, drafting, analysis, decision support, and other knowledge-intensive activities.	Agrawal (2024); Dellermann et al. (2019); Seeber et al. (2020); Shrestha et al. (2019)
P3	Human–AI collaboration → Organizational knowledge creation	Human interpretation, validation, contextualization, and refinement help transform AI-generated information into meaningful organizational knowledge.	Nonaka (1994); Wang & Noe (2010)
P4	Organizational knowledge creation → Innovation performance	Creating and applying new knowledge enables organizations to generate new ideas, products, services, processes, and solutions and improve innovation outcomes.	Cohen & Levinthal (1990); Darroch (2005); Mikalef & Gupta (2021)

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P5	Human–AI collaboration → Innovation performance	Combining AI capabilities with human judgment, intuition, and contextual expertise can strengthen idea generation, problem solving, experimentation, and innovation-related decision making.	Jarrahi (2018); Raisch & Krakowski (2021); Noy & Zhang (2023); Brynjolfsson et al. (2025)
P6	GenAI adoption → Organizational knowledge creation → Innovation performance	Organizational knowledge creation mediates the relationship between GenAI adoption and innovation performance by transforming AI-generated information and technological capabilities into shared and actionable organizational knowledge.	Grant (1996); Alavi & Leidner (2001); Alavi et al. (2024)

4. DISCUSSION

The proposed model is useful in three aspects of research. First, it shifts the focus from GenAI being a technology to GenAI being a component of an organizational knowledge system. The model combines the knowledge-based view with organizational knowledge creation theory, highlighting not only the adoption of GenAI but its ability to generate, recombine, and effectively utilize knowledge. Second, the model suggests that human-AI collaboration is a core organizational mechanism. Using AI is not to be confused with autonomous machine capabilities. The automation-augmentation paradox refers to how AI can be used to replace and augment human tasks (Raisch & Krakowski, 2021). Complementarity is especially relevant in the knowledge-intensive area of work, where the knowledge of the organization is socially and contextually bound. Strategic value has been discussed before in terms of efficiency, automation, or adoption, but these cover just part of the story (Agrawal, 2024). Employees bring tacit knowledge, experience, judgment, and strategic perspective. As such, human-AI collaboration is a crucial avenue for the contribution of GenAI to organizational knowledge creation and innovation. Third, the model connects the emerging research on GenAI with the existing theory of innovation. Kanbach et al. (2024) show how relevant GenAI is for

business-model innovation, and Korzynski et al. (2023) explain how the context of GenAI provides a new context for management theories. This framework builds upon these approaches by suggesting that GenAI can help drive innovation through human–AI collaboration and the creation of organizational knowledge. It therefore offers a process-centred rationale for the translation of technological capabilities to innovation performance.

The framework also has implications for managers. First of all, the implementation of GenAI shouldn't be treated just like a technology deployment project. If innovation is the goal, managers should combine GenAI with organizational knowledge processes. This involves identifying the sources of knowledge that AI has access to, verifying the output of the system, and integrating the insights into routines and decision-making processes and activities of innovation. Second, organizations need to build the capacity for human–AI collaboration. Workers must have access to the tools of GenAI and more. They should be able to pose problems, offer relevant context, ask relevant questions, assess outputs, detect inaccuracies, and know when to seek expert reviews. Employees need to be trained to think with AI, not think for it, so the training should include AI literacy, domain knowledge, and critical thinking. Third, effective governance is required in

order to ensure that knowledge quality is maintained within an organisation. AI support can have varied impacts on workers, as demonstrated by Brynjolfsson et al. (2025), which should be taken into account when studying organizational outcomes. While Excessive reliance can lower staff's critical thinking about knowledge, whilst GenAI can generate plausible but inaccurate information. Rana et al. (2024) highlight the ethical implications of how the use of GenAI affects organizational performance. A clear policy on privacy, intellectual property rights, sensitive information, accountability, and validation, therefore, should be drawn up by the managers. Governance must allow for experimentation whilst maintaining reliability and responsible use.

5. BOUNDARY CONDITIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

A number of boundary conditions need to be studied in the future. The impact of AI literacy on employee interactions with GenAI and assessing its output could be profound. Another aspect of knowledge-sharing culture is the extent to which insights based on AI are shared across the whole organization. Another factor is the characteristics of the task -GenAI may be more suited to codified knowledge and idea generation than to tasks that rely on deep experiential judgment. The governance of organisations and employee expertise can also influence the results of GenAI. Good governance can enhance the quality of trust and knowledge, but too tight a control might stifle experimentation. Employees' experience could be a factor in determining their capacity to detect errors and evaluate the effectiveness of AI-generated material. These proposed relationships could be tested in an empirical study through surveys, longitudinal research, case studies, and experiments in the future. Future research could test the relationships between the different aspects of GenAI adoption, collaboration between humans and GenAI, knowledge creation in organizations, and innovation performance. Possible negative outcomes should also be incorporated into future research. GenAI can also generate low-quality or repetitive content, leading to information overload rather than knowledge. An overemphasis can also reduce tacit knowledge development. Thus, the impact of GenAI on innovation may not be consistently positive.

Organizational learning and innovation can be improved by purposeful and well-governed use, but may be impaired by indiscriminate use, resulting in poor-quality knowledge and a diminished capability of the organization in the long term.

6. CONCLUSION

Generative AI is rapidly emerging as a key component of modern knowledge work in the organization. It is more than just an ability to automate tasks or create content in a blink: its value is in the capacity to reshape how employees' access, articulate, recombine, and apply knowledge. The study proposes a conceptual model to guide the understanding of the potential of GenAI to affect innovation performance through human-AI collaboration and the creation of organizational knowledge. The model suggests that GenAI adoption is a promoter of knowledge creation and promotes human- AI collaboration. Human-AI collaboration, in turn, has the ability to bolster knowledge creation by enabling employees to convert the knowledge generated into contextually meaningful organizational knowledge. The results indicated that collaboration and knowledge creation would both help to drive innovation performance, and that knowledge creation would act as a mediating variable between GenAI adoption and innovation outcomes. What the core theoretical implication is, is that the value of GenAI is not in the technology itself. It comes from organizational processes that link technological capacities to human skills and expertise.

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