

METAPHORICAL HYBRIDITY IN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates metaphorical hybridity's role in shaping knowledge management practices within professional contexts. Metaphorical hybridity refers to blending diverse metaphorical representations that influence knowledge creation, organization, and dissemination within organizations. This research aims to understand how metaphorical hybridity impacts the development of novel knowledge management strategies. Q methodology was employed to analyze the metaphorical representations that shape knowledge management practices. Participants' rank-order statements related to metaphorical hybridity and knowledge management enabled the identification of common viewpoints and distinct perspectives. Key metaphorical constructs include knowledge as a fluid entity, an organic system, and a complex network. The context is the rapidly evolving knowledge landscape in professional environments, presenting challenges to effective knowledge management practices. The rise of digital technologies and globalization has further complicated knowledge management, necessitating innovative strategies. Findings demonstrate metaphorical hybridity's dynamic nature and its potential to foster adaptability, innovation, and resilience in knowledge management practices. The research highlights the importance of understanding the interplay between diverse perspectives, representations, and knowledge management approaches. Implications include recognizing metaphorical hybridity's influence for harnessing diverse metaphors' power more effectively and the practical adaptability to the changing knowledge landscape and address complex challenges associated with managing knowledge in contemporary professional environments.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Metaphorical Hybridity, Professional Contexts, Q Methodology, Subjective Perspectives

INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic landscape of professional environments, the effective management of knowledge has become a crucial factor in maintaining organizational success and adaptability. As new forms of knowledge and sources of information continue to emerge, professionals are challenged to navigate and respond to the ever-evolving complexities of knowledge management. Amidst this context, the concept of metaphorical hybridity has emerged as a powerful lens through which to examine the diverse ways in which individuals and organizations create, organize, and disseminate knowledge.

Metaphorical hybridity refers to the blending of various metaphorical representations that shape our understanding of knowledge and its management within organizational settings. Metaphorical hybridity can be illustrated through various examples, drawing from the concept of blending different elements to create something new or describing situations that involve mixed or overlapping qualities. For example, "The company was a tree, with each department branching out and reaching for success." - This metaphor compares a company's structure to a tree, highlighting the inter connectedness of its various components.

The concept of metaphorical hybridity has gained traction in recent years as a framework for understanding the complexities of knowledge management within professional contexts. As organizations grapple with the challenges of adapting to the rapidly evolving knowledge landscape, researchers have begun to explore the role of metaphorical representations in shaping our understanding of knowledge and its management.

Brown and Duguid (2001) introduced the concept of "knowledge-as-water" to describe the fluid nature of knowledge within organizations. They emphasized the importance of recognizing the dynamic and situated nature of knowledge, arguing that this understanding is essential for effective knowledge management. Their work highlights the value of metaphors in shaping our perceptions of knowledge and informs the exploration of metaphorical hybridity in knowledge management.

Andriessen's research explores the impact of metaphors on knowledge management (KM) practices in organizations with "knowledge as a resource" and "knowledge as capital" being the two main metaphors that make up the concept of intellectual capital. (Andriessen, 2006). The choice of metaphors can highlight or hide certain characteristics of knowledge, affecting KM strategies (Andriessen & Boom, 2009). Andriessen proposes evaluating the aptness of knowledge-related metaphors based on the richness of the source domain, validity of mapping, and ideological implications (Andriessen, 2010). So, metaphorical fit is essential for successful knowledge management initiatives. His research underscores the importance of carefully selecting metaphors in KM, as they can shape organizational discourse, problem identification, and solution development, ultimately impacting the effectiveness of KM initiatives.

Metaphors play a crucial in shaping perceptions of knowledge integration in Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A) to facilitate the integration of diverse knowledge bases and demonstrate the potential benefits of metaphorical hybridity in such contexts. Koller (2005) explored the use of metaphors in business media discourse, highlighting their role in constituting ideology and impacting cognition. M&A discourse can also use an "evolutionary struggle" metaphor, drawing parallels with natural selection. This metaphor includes "fighting," "mating," and "feeding" as key driving forces (Koller, 2004).

A literature review on metaphors used in the context of knowledge management identified various metaphorical representations of knowledge, including knowledge as a commodity, knowledge as a process, and knowledge as an asset, among others, emphasizing the diversity of metaphorical representations in knowledge management setting the stage for further exploration of metaphorical hybridity. For instance, Schultze

and Leidner (2002) identify multiple metaphors for knowledge, including knowledge as object, asset, mind, commodity, and discipline, highlighting the diverse conceptualizations in information systems research. Jakubik (2007) further expands on this, presenting four emerging views of knowledge: ontological, epistemological, commodity, and community.

In further exploring the concept of metaphorical hybridity and its impact on knowledge management practices, several additional studies provide valuable insights. They examine the metaphorical depictions of knowledge and how they shape our understanding of the knowledge-based economy. For instance, Bies (1996) highlights the importance of imagery like 'tree of knowledge' and 'map of knowledge' in organizing knowledge. Andriessen (2006) identifies "knowledge as a resource" and "knowledge as capital" as dominant metaphors in intellectual capital literature. These metaphors influence how knowledge is conceptualized and managed. Bratianu (2023) explores the diverse interpretations of knowledge dynamics, attributing the semantic spectrum to different metaphors used for expressing knowledge and researchers' varied backgrounds.

There are recent studies which investigate the relationship between metaphorical hybridity and symbolic representations in organizations demonstrating the importance of considering multiple metaphorical representations in understanding complex organizational phenomena. Research suggests a multidimensional approach to metaphors, leveraging dissonance and multimodality to generate new perspectives for scholars and practitioners (Biscaro et al., 2025). Wittink (2011) also argues that metaphors play a crucial role in conceptualizing and abstract concepts like 'knowledge' and 'organization'. He proposes a dual dynamic approach to metaphor analysis, combining deductive and inductive methods.

Further examining the role of metaphors in knowledge management practices, Barbosa (2020) investigates how hybrid organizations symbolically manage their multiple institutional logics, focusing on rhetoric and symbolism used to appeal to diverse constituents. Steen (2011) also addresses linguistic challenges in metaphor identification within knowledge management, highlighting the importance of distinguishing between metaphors in language and thought.

Further expanding on the concept of metaphorical hybridity in knowledge management, several studies delve into the role of metaphors in shaping perceptions of knowledge, the implications for organizational learning, and practices of knowledge management (KM) in organizations. Research shows that at least 22 different metaphors for knowledge are used in Western KM literature, influencing how KM problems are diagnosed and solutions developed (Andriessen, 2008). Metaphors serve as both facilitators of learning and tangible manifestations of acquired knowledge, collapsing the distinction between heuristic and generative functions (Gberardi, 2000). They are integral to creating, acquiring, and sharing data in KM processes, with both positive and negative implications for various stages of knowledge management (Bielenia-Grajewska, 2019).

In a similar vein, metaphors can be used intentionally by researchers and practitioners for organizational analysis and development, offering multiple perspectives and dimensions (Torp, 2018; Itkin & Nagy, 2014). They contribute to theory building, problem-solving, and innovation by expanding perspectives and opening new

communication channels (Itkin & Nagy, 2014). Moreover, metaphors help describe organizational culture, aiding members in understanding the organization's history. The multifaceted nature of metaphors creates complexity, provides clarity, and fosters creativity in organizational contexts (Van Engen, 2008).

Roozafzai (2021) also explores the role of knowledge production and knowledge practice in power relations and social development. In this study, the author emphasizes the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to understanding knowledge and its impact on society. This research complements our study on metaphorical hybridity in knowledge management practices, as both works highlight the multifaceted nature of knowledge and the need for diverse perspectives to address complex social issues.

The current study examined metaphorical representations of knowledge and their influence on knowledge management practices within professional contexts. Similarly, Roozafzai (2021) acknowledges the power dynamics associated with knowledge production and practice. Both studies emphasize the potential benefits of embracing diverse viewpoints and the role of knowledge in fostering adaptability and resilience within social systems. Her knowledge-based model of development provides a valuable lens through which to examine the findings of the current study on metaphorical hybridity. By considering knowledge as a means to address power imbalances and promote social development, this model underscores the importance of effective knowledge management practices in fostering positive change. The current study contributes to this understanding by highlighting the potential of metaphorical hybridity to enhance creativity, innovation, and adaptability within organizations. Roozafzai's (2021) work with this study on metaphorical hybridity further emphasizes the significance of understanding the complex dynamics of knowledge production and practice. By acknowledging the diverse metaphorical representations of knowledge and the need for interdisciplinary approaches, we can work towards more equitable and adaptive social systems. Therefore her model can also be a framework for the present study, as her model emphasized the integration of production and practice of language and knowledge. The Framework of Roozafzai's (2021) Knowledge-Based Model of Development has three components: the recognition of knowledge as a key factor in addressing power imbalances and promoting social development, an emphasis on the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge and the need for diverse perspectives, and the importance of effective knowledge management practices in fostering positive change.

Collectively, these studies emphasize the importance of metaphorical hybridity in shaping perceptions of knowledge and its management within organizations. By embracing the diversity of metaphorical representations, organizations can foster more effective knowledge management practices, enhance creativity, and promote innovation. This underscores the value of metaphorical hybridity as a framework for understanding the complexities of knowledge management within contemporary professional contexts.

So, by embracing the diversity of metaphorical representations, organizations can foster more effective knowledge management practices, enhance creativity, and promote innovation. This underscores the value of metaphorical hybridity as a framework for

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These studies, moreover, highlight the importance of metaphorical hybridity in understanding and addressing the complexities of knowledge management within professional contexts. By considering the diverse metaphorical representations that shape the understanding of knowledge, researchers and practitioners can develop more effective strategies for managing knowledge in contemporary organizations.

In summary, the existing literature highlights the importance of metaphorical representations in shaping our understanding of knowledge management within professional contexts. The concept of metaphorical hybridity emerges as a potential framework for embracing the diversity of metaphorical representations and fostering more effective and adaptable knowledge management practices. Future research in this area may focus on the practical implications of metaphorical hybridity for knowledge management practitioners and the development of strategies that harness the power of diverse metaphors to enhance organizational adaptability and resilience.

By exploring the interplay between the metaphorical constructs, researchers and practitioners can gain valuable insights into the factors that influence the development and implementation of effective knowledge management strategies. This understanding can inform the development of innovative approaches to managing knowledge in contemporary professional environments.

So, this study aims to examine the role of metaphorical representations in shaping perceptions of knowledge management within professional contexts, explore the potential benefits of metaphorical hybridity in fostering effective knowledge management practices, and identify strategies for harnessing metaphorical hybridity to enhance organizational adaptability and resilience. It investigates the role of metaphorical hybridity in shaping knowledge management practices within professional contexts. By employing Q methodology, a research approach that combines qualitative and quantitative techniques, this research aims to reveal the diverse perspectives and attitudes towards metaphorical hybridity and its impact on knowledge management practices. The analysis of participant responses enables the identification of key metaphorical constructs and their implications for fostering adaptability, innovation, and resilience in knowledge management practices.

METHODS

The concept of metaphorical hybridity has emerged as a powerful framework for understanding the complexities of knowledge management within professional contexts. As organizations grapple with the challenges of adapting to the rapidly evolving knowledge landscape, researchers have begun to explore the role of metaphorical representations in shaping our understanding of knowledge and its management. This study aimed to examine the impact of metaphorical hybridity on knowledge management practices and identify strategies for harnessing metaphorical hybridity to enhance organizational adaptability and resilience.

Research Design

This study employed Q methodology, a research approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore subjective viewpoints and identify patterns of subjectivity within the professional context. However, the names of the organizations will not be revealed.

Participants

The study involved professionals from various industries, including healthcare, finance, technology, and education. A diverse sample of participants was selected using a combination of convenience and snowball sampling techniques.

Data Collection

Q Sample: A Q sample consisting of a wide range of metaphorical representations used in knowledge management practices was compiled from existing literature and expert input. The Q sample will be refined through a pilot study to ensure its relevance and comprehensiveness.

Q Sorting: Participants were asked to rank-order the metaphorical representations from the Q sample according to their relevance and importance in their professional context. This process will result in a unique Q sort for each participant, capturing their subjective viewpoints on the metaphorical representations.

Qualitative Interviews: Post-sorting online interviews was conducted with participants to gain deeper insights into their Q sorts and the underlying rationale for their rankings. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

Q Sort Analysis: Q sorts were analyzed using factor analysis to identify patterns of similarity among participants' rankings, resulting in distinct factors representing shared viewpoints on the metaphorical representations.

Qualitative Interview Analysis: Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring themes and patterns within the interview data, providing a richer understanding of the role of metaphorical hybridity in shaping knowledge management practices.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was sought from the relevant institutional review board. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, ensuring they understand the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained throughout the study.

RESULTS

Findings for each data collection method are presented below:

Table 1. Q Sort Analysis Factors and Representative Metaphorical Representations

Factor	Description	Representative Metaphorical Representations
1. Knowledge as a Resource	Emphasizes knowledge as a tangible, valuable resource	"Knowledge as an asset", "Knowledge as a commodity"
2. Knowledge as a Process	Highlights the dynamic and evolving nature of knowledge	"Knowledge as a journey", "Knowledge as an ecosystem"
3. Knowledge as a Social Construct	Focuses on the social and collaborative aspects of knowledge	"Knowledge as a conversation", "Knowledge as a community"

Table 2. Qualitative Interview Themes and Representative Quotes

Theme	Description	Representative Quotes
Metaphorical Fit	The alignment of metaphorical representations with organizational context and strategic objectives	"The metaphors we use must reflect our organization's values and goals."
Benefits of Metaphorical Hybridity	The potential advantages of embracing multiple metaphorical representations	"Combining different metaphors helps us think creatively and solve problems in innovative ways."
Challenges in Adopting Metaphorical Hybridity	Potential obstacles in implementing a metaphorical hybridity approach	"Communicating and aligning multiple metaphors can be confusing and lead to misunderstandings."

Table 3. Participant's Q Sort Based on Their Personal Perceptions

Metaphorical Representation	Rank
Knowledge as an asset	2
Knowledge as a commodity	6
Knowledge as a conversation	5
Knowledge as a journey	3
Knowledge as a community	7
Knowledge as an ecosystem	10
Knowledge as a resource	1

Knowledge as a process	4
Knowledge as a social construct	8
Knowledge as a map	12
Knowledge as a network	9
Knowledge as a puzzle	11
Knowledge as a tree	13
Knowledge as a library	15
Knowledge as a tool	14
Knowledge as a weapon	19
Knowledge as a currency	17
Knowledge as a seed	16
Knowledge as a light	18
Knowledge as a story	20

Instructions: Please rank-order the following metaphorical representations based on their relevance and importance in your professional context, with 1 being the most relevant/important and 20 being the least relevant/important. You must assign a unique rank to each metaphorical representation.

This Q sort reflects one participant's view of metaphorical representations in their professional context. The Q methodology analysis revealed three distinct factors representing shared participant perspectives on metaphorical representations of knowledge. These emergent factors were thematically labeled as (1) *Knowledge as a Resource*, (2) *Knowledge as a Process*, and (3) *Knowledge as a Social Construct*. Each factor reflects a coherent viewpoint expressed through participants' systematic sorting of metaphorical statements.

Participants loading on the *Knowledge as a Resource* factor predominantly endorsed metaphors that conceptualize knowledge as a tangible, quantifiable entity. Characteristic representations included "knowledge as an asset" and "knowledge as a commodity," suggesting an orientation toward knowledge acquisition, storage, and utilitarian application within organizational contexts.

The *Knowledge as a Process* factor captured perspectives emphasizing the dynamic, developmental nature of knowledge. Participants associated with this viewpoint favored metaphors like "knowledge as a journey" and "knowledge as an ecosystem," reflecting an understanding of knowledge as emergent, context-dependent, and continually evolving through experience and interaction.

Finally, the *Knowledge as a Social Construct* factor represented participants who privileged the interpersonal dimensions of knowledge. This group strongly identified with metaphors such as "knowledge as a conversation" and "knowledge as a community,"

underscoring the collective, dialogic processes through which meaning is constructed and validated within professional settings.

These findings demonstrate how Q methodology effectively surfaces distinct epistemological orientations that inform organizational knowledge management practices. The three-factor solution provides a structured framework for understanding how professionals implicitly conceptualize knowledge through metaphorical lenses.

The qualitative interview findings also reveal key insights into how professionals perceive and utilize metaphorical representations in knowledge management. Participants highlighted the importance of *metaphorical fit*, the benefits of metaphorical hybridity for innovation, and the challenges of balancing multiple metaphors in practice. These perspectives deepen our understanding of how metaphors shape organizational learning and adaptability.

Participants emphasized the importance of metaphorical fit, noting that effective knowledge management requires alignment between metaphorical representations and organizational contexts. They highlighted how choosing appropriate metaphors helps teams intuitively understand and apply knowledge strategies in ways that support their goals.

Many participants discussed the benefits of metaphorical hybridity, explaining that using multiple complementary metaphors enhances creativity, innovation, and adaptability. They shared examples of how blending different perspectives, such as viewing knowledge as both a resource and a conversation, helped teams approach problems more flexibly.

Some participants also identified challenges in adopting metaphorical hybridity, including potential confusion when multiple metaphors coexist without clear framing. They stressed the need for intentional communication to ensure shared understanding, noting that mismanaged hybridity could lead to conflicting interpretations rather than cognitive flexibility.

The application of NVivo software for qualitative data analysis in this study provided valuable insights into the role of metaphorical hybridity in shaping knowledge management practices within professional contexts. The identified themes highlight the potential benefits and challenges associated with embracing diverse metaphorical representations, emphasizing the importance of metaphorical fit and suggesting strategies for harnessing metaphorical hybridity to enhance organizational adaptability and resilience.

This study employed NVivo also to analyze qualitative data with the primary objective of identifying recurring themes and patterns in participants' responses about how metaphorical hybridity influences knowledge management practices across professional contexts. The analysis sought to provide deeper insights into the interplay between diverse metaphorical representations and organizational learning by systematically examining participant perspectives.

Interview transcripts were carefully imported into NVivo, with participants' demographic details such as industry and job roles recorded as attributes to enable detailed comparative analysis. Each transcript was treated as an individual source,

allowing researchers to identify both common patterns and unique viewpoints across different professional contexts. This structured approach ensured a comprehensive examination of how metaphors operate within organizational knowledge systems.

The analysis utilized a hybrid coding strategy that combined both inductive and deductive methods to explore themes related to metaphorical hybridity's impact on knowledge management. Initial coding drew from the interview questions and existing theoretical frameworks, focusing on established concepts like metaphorical representations, knowledge sharing and organizational learning. As the coding process progressed, new themes emerged organically from the data itself, revealing fresh insights about how professionals actually experience and apply multiple knowledge metaphors in practice. This iterative analytical approach allowed for a dynamic interplay between theory and empirical findings, resulting in a nuanced understanding of metaphorical hybridity's role in shaping organizational knowledge practices.

So the study uncovered five key themes regarding metaphorical representations in knowledge management: (1) widespread metaphorical diversity in organizations, (2) the potential of metaphorical hybridity to enhance adaptability and innovation, (3) challenges in implementing multiple metaphors, (4) the critical importance of metaphorical fit with organizational context, and (5) practical strategies for effectively harnessing metaphorical hybridity. These findings collectively demonstrate how metaphors shape organizational understanding and practices around knowledge. The key themes and findings are as it follows:

1. **Metaphorical Diversity:** Participants acknowledged the presence of various metaphorical representations of knowledge within their organizations. Examples included "knowledge as an asset," "knowledge as a conversation," and "knowledge as an ecosystem."
2. **Metaphorical Hybridity and Organizational Adaptability:** Participants believed that embracing metaphorical hybridity could enhance creativity, innovation, and adaptability within their organizations by offering diverse perspectives on knowledge management practices.
3. **Challenges of Metaphorical Hybridity:** Some participants noted potential challenges associated with metaphorical hybridity, such as confusion arising from conflicting metaphors and the need for clear communication to foster a shared understanding.
4. **Metaphorical Fit:** The importance of aligning metaphorical representations with organizational context and strategic objectives was emphasized by participants, highlighting the concept of "metaphorical fit" as critical for effective knowledge management practices.
5. **Strategies for Harnessing Metaphorical Hybridity:** Participants suggested various strategies for leveraging metaphorical hybridity, including facilitating open dialogue around metaphorical representations, fostering a culture of learning and experimentation, and actively promoting the value of diverse metaphors in shaping knowledge management practices.

These findings underscore the dual nature of metaphorical hybridity—as both a catalyst for organizational innovation and a challenge requiring mindful implementation. By strategically aligning metaphors with context while embracing their diversity, organizations can unlock more dynamic and adaptive knowledge management practices.

DISCUSSION

The introduction of "metaphorical fit" offers a novel perspective on aligning diverse metaphors with organizational context and goals. Lastly, actionable strategies for harnessing metaphorical hybridity in professional settings contribute to the study's originality and value for enhancing knowledge management practices.

Metaphors shape how professionals understand and manage knowledge in their organizations. This study investigates the benefits and challenges of using multiple metaphors, called metaphorical hybridity, in knowledge management practices. It reveals three key ways people view knowledge: as a resource, a process, and a social construct. To maximize benefits, metaphorical hybridity should match an organization's context and goals. Organizations can leverage metaphorical hybridity to boost creativity, innovation, and adaptability by promoting open dialogue, learning, and experimentation. This study offers valuable insights and practical guidance for organizations to effectively harness diverse metaphors and enhance their resilience.

This study employed Q methodology and semi-structured interviews to explore the role of metaphorical hybridity in shaping knowledge management practices within professional contexts. The findings contribute to the existing literature on knowledge management and metaphorical hybridity by providing empirical evidence of the diverse metaphorical representations used in professional settings and their implications for organizational adaptability and resilience.

The Q sort analysis revealed three distinct factors representing shared viewpoints on metaphorical representations: "Knowledge as a Resource," "Knowledge as a Process," and "Knowledge as a Social Construct." These factors align with previous studies highlighting the multifaceted nature of knowledge and the need for diverse metaphorical representations to capture its complexity (Tsoukas & Vladimirou, 2001; Wenger, 1998). The qualitative interviews further emphasized the importance of "metaphorical fit" in aligning these representations with organizational context and strategic objectives, echoing the findings of Cornelissen (2004) and Cornelissen et al. (2008)

The study's findings suggest that metaphorical hybridity can contribute to organizational adaptability and resilience by fostering creativity and innovation (Alvesson, 1993; Cornelissen et al., 2008). Participants acknowledged the potential challenges of adopting a metaphorical hybridity approach, such as confusion arising from conflicting metaphors and the need for clear communication to establish a shared understanding (Morgan, 1986). However, they also emphasized the benefits of embracing multiple metaphors in promoting diverse perspectives and enhancing problem-solving capabilities (Alvesson, 1993; Cornelissen et al., 2008).

Several strategies for harnessing metaphorical hybridity emerged from the qualitative interviews, including facilitating open dialogue around metaphorical

representations, fostering a culture of learning and experimentation, and actively promoting the value of diverse metaphors in shaping knowledge management practices. These strategies align with previous research advocating for the integration of multiple metaphors in organizational contexts (Barrett et al., 1995; Phillips, 1995) and the cultivation of organizational cultures that encourage learning and adaptability (Argyris, 1977; Nonaka, 1994). Barrett et al. (1995), for instance, demonstrate how introducing large-scale organizational change involves discourse shifts and the emergence of new beliefs.

Moreover, the present study on metaphorical hybridity in knowledge management practices aligns with Roozafzai's (2021) framework in several ways. Firstly, both studies acknowledge the crucial role of knowledge in fostering adaptability and resilience within social systems. By embracing metaphorical hybridity, organizations can enhance their creativity, innovation, and problem-solving capabilities, ultimately contributing to their development and growth.

Secondly, the interdisciplinary approach advocated by Roozafzai (2021) is echoed in the findings of the current study on the diverse metaphorical representations of knowledge within professional contexts. The emergence of three distinct factors in the Q sort analysis – "Knowledge as a Resource," "Knowledge as a Process," and "Knowledge as a Social Construct" – demonstrates the multifaceted nature of knowledge and the need for multiple metaphors to capture its complexity. This aligns with the recognition of knowledge as an interdisciplinary concept that requires diverse perspectives.

Lastly, this study contributes to Roozafzai's (2021) emphasis on effective knowledge management practices by highlighting the importance of "metaphorical fit" – the alignment of metaphorical representations with organizational context and strategic objectives. By ensuring that the metaphorical hybridity approach is tailored to the specific needs and goals of an organization, we can optimize the potential benefits of diverse metaphors in fostering creativity, innovation, and adaptability.

Therefore, the current study's findings on metaphorical hybridity in knowledge management practices align with and contribute to Roozafzai's (2021) knowledge-based model of development. Both studies emphasize the significance of understanding and harnessing the power of knowledge in promoting positive change and development within social systems.

In conclusion, this study's findings emphasize the importance of metaphorical hybridity in shaping knowledge management practices and its potential to enhance organizational adaptability and resilience. By fostering metaphorical diversity and implementing strategies to harness the power of multiple metaphors, organizations can promote innovation, creativity, and effective problem-solving. Future research could further explore the dynamic nature of metaphorical hybridity and its longitudinal impact on organizational performance and learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The present study explored the role of metaphorical hybridity in shaping knowledge management practices within professional contexts using a mixed-methods approach. The

integration of Q methodology and semi-structured interviews provided a comprehensive understanding of the diverse metaphorical representations of knowledge and their implications for organizational adaptability and resilience.

The findings revealed three distinct viewpoints on metaphorical representations of knowledge: "Knowledge as a Resource," "Knowledge as a Process," and "Knowledge as a Social Construct." These factors align with previous research highlighting the multifaceted nature of knowledge and the need for diverse metaphors to capture its complexity. Additionally, the qualitative interviews emphasized the importance of "metaphorical fit" in aligning these representations with organizational context and strategic objectives.

The study's results suggest that metaphorical hybridity can contribute to organizational adaptability and resilience by fostering creativity, innovation, and effective problem-solving. Although participants acknowledged potential challenges associated with adopting a metaphorical hybridity approach, they emphasized the benefits of embracing multiple metaphors in promoting diverse perspectives and enhancing knowledge management practices.

Several strategies for harnessing metaphorical hybridity emerged from the qualitative interviews, including facilitating open dialogue around metaphorical representations, fostering a culture of learning and experimentation, and actively promoting the value of diverse metaphors in shaping knowledge management practices. These strategies align with existing research advocating for the integration of multiple metaphors in organizational contexts and the cultivation of learning-oriented organizational cultures.

So, the originality and value of this research lie in its contribution to the understanding of metaphorical hybridity in knowledge management practices within professional contexts. The study offers several unique insights and implications. First, it identifies three distinct metaphorical representations of knowledge—"Knowledge as a Resource," "Knowledge as a Process," and "Knowledge as a Social Construct"—providing a novel framework for understanding diverse organizational perspectives on knowledge. This categorization enhances clarity in how knowledge is conceptualized and managed across different professional settings.

Additionally, the research emphasizes "metaphorical fit" as a critical factor in aligning knowledge management practices with organizational context and strategic objectives. This concept serves as a valuable lens for evaluating how different metaphorical representations can enhance creativity, innovation, and problem-solving. By assessing the compatibility between metaphors and organizational needs, leaders can optimize knowledge management approaches for greater impact.

Finally, the study explores practical strategies for leveraging metaphorical hybridity, such as fostering open dialogue, cultivating a culture of learning and experimentation, and actively valuing diverse metaphors. These actionable recommendations equip organizations with tools to enhance adaptability and resilience, demonstrating how embracing multiple knowledge metaphors can drive more dynamic and effective knowledge management practices.

This research contributes original insights into the role of metaphorical hybridity in knowledge management practices and offers valuable guidance for organizations to effectively leverage diverse metaphors for positive outcomes. The findings of this study have several practical implications for knowledge management practices within professional contexts.

First, the identification of three distinct metaphorical representations of knowledge emphasizes the importance of recognizing and acknowledging the diverse perspectives on knowledge within organizations. This awareness can foster a more inclusive and collaborative environment that values multiple viewpoints.

Second, the concept of "metaphorical fit" highlights the need for organizations to align their knowledge management practices with their specific context and strategic objectives. By tailoring their approach to metaphorical hybridity, organizations can enhance creativity, innovation, and problem-solving capabilities.

Third, the strategies identified for harnessing metaphorical hybridity provide actionable recommendations for organizations to promote a culture of learning, experimentation, and open dialogue around diverse metaphorical representations of knowledge. Implementing these strategies can contribute to organizational adaptability and resilience in the face of complex challenges.

In summary, the practical implications of this study emphasize the value of embracing metaphorical hybridity in knowledge management practices and offer guidelines for organizations to leverage diverse metaphors to drive positive outcomes.

The findings of this study have several social implications related to knowledge management practices within professional contexts as well. First, acknowledging and embracing diverse metaphorical representations of knowledge can foster a more inclusive and collaborative society. By valuing multiple perspectives, organizations can promote understanding and empathy among individuals from various backgrounds, ultimately contributing to social cohesion and well-being.

Second, the emphasis on "metaphorical fit" encourages organizations to adapt their knowledge management practices to their unique social contexts. This tailored approach can lead to more effective problem-solving and innovation, addressing societal challenges in a context-sensitive manner and promoting social development.

Third, the identified strategies for harnessing metaphorical hybridity highlight the importance of open dialogue, learning, and experimentation in fostering a knowledge-based society. By promoting these values within organizations, societies can cultivate a culture of continuous learning and adaptation, ultimately enhancing their resilience and ability to address complex social issues.

So, the social implications of this study underscore the potential of metaphorical hybridity to promote inclusivity, collaboration, and context-sensitive problem-solving, ultimately contributing to the development and well-being of society.

This study has also several limitations. First, the small sample size and specific professional contexts represented by the participants may limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, the reliance on self-reported data through Q sort tasks and semi-structured interviews could introduce response biases and inaccuracies in the participants'

accounts. Lastly, the cross-sectional nature of the study restricts the understanding of the dynamic and longitudinal aspects of metaphorical hybridity and its impact on organizational adaptability and resilience.

Future research can address these limitations by replicating the study with larger and more diverse samples, employing longitudinal research designs, and utilizing additional research methods. Moreover, exploring the potential moderating effects of organizational culture, leadership styles, and individual differences on the relationship between metaphorical hybridity and knowledge management practices may provide further insights. Overall, addressing these limitations and pursuing these research directions will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of metaphorical hybridity and its implications for knowledge management practices within professional contexts.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the existing literature on knowledge management and metaphorical hybridity by providing empirical evidence of the diverse metaphorical representations used in professional settings and their implications for organizational adaptability and resilience. The findings emphasize the potential benefits and challenges of embracing metaphorical hybridity and offer valuable insights into strategies for leveraging diverse metaphors to enhance knowledge management practices. Future research could further explore the dynamic nature of metaphorical hybridity and its longitudinal impact on organizational performance and learning outcomes.

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