e-mentor

DWUMIESIĘCZNIK SZKOŁY GŁÓWNEJ HANDLOWEJ W WARSZAWIE

WSPÓŁWYDAWCA: FUNDACJA PROMOCJI I AKREDYTACJ KIERUNKÓW EKONOMICZNYCH

2025, nr 1 (108)

Popęda, P. (2025). The Inherent Relationship Between Knowledge, Communication, and Organisational Silos: A Review of Counteracting Silos. *e-mentor, 1*(108), 82–90. https://www.doi.org/10.15219/em108.1696

Piotr Popęda

The Inherent Relationship between Knowledge, Communication, and Organisational Silos: A Review of Counteracting Silos

Abstract

The author's motivation for undertaking research to address the problem of organisational siloing stems from the impact this problem has, namely the detrimental effect on organisational performance and the tangible threat to the achievement of performance objectives. Therefore, the primary aim of this article is to review strategies for counteracting silos using knowledge and through communication within organisations. The secondary objective is to identify silos in the context of organisational deficiencies in communication and knowledge across two dimensions: diagnosing silos and assessing their causes and conditions. The research methodology is based on a thematic literature review, and drawing the most relevant scientific conclusions. The most valuable contribution of this work is the identification of strategies, including actions, tools, and mechanisms to prevent or minimise the effect of silos and organisational siloing. Additionally, this work highlights the numerous links between siloing, knowledge, and communication.

Keywords: organisational silos, organisational silo, knowledge, communication, strategies

Introduction

Organisational siloing is a significant issue that appears both in academic literature and in business practice, exerting a multidimensional impact on organisations. It is closely linked to the concept of a *silo*' which refers to a storage container used for drying and storing grain or other agricultural or construction materials (PWN, n.d.). Regardless of their contents, the key characteristic of silos is that they are tightly sealed and isolated from one another, and it is due to this feature that the term *silos* in is used in management studies to refer to distinct, closed organisational structures. The term *siloing* denotes the tendency to create them. The key issues the author associates with siloing—both of which are crucial for internal organisational processes—are communication and knowledge. The former is increasingly recognised as an essential aspect of modern organisations, while the latter is the foundation [of an organisation] and is undeniably linked to it. In a sense, *knowledge* represents substantive content that can be transferred between different structures within an organisation, whereas *communication* ensures that it reaches all parts of the company and even its external environment. These processes are affected by siloing, which—as demonstrated in the following sections of this article—is unequivocally identified as a barrier that hinders efficient communication and the effective accumulation, dissemination, and impact of knowledge.

The main objective of this article is to review strategies that by increasing knowledge or improving communication, can prevent the formation of silos or mitigate the detrimental effect they have on an organisation. The secondary aim of this study is to explore the relationship between siloing, knowledge, and communication by addressing the following questions: why do deficiencies in knowledge and communication contribute to the emergence of silos, and what are the causes and conditions of silo formation in the context of knowledge and communication?

Piotr Popęda, University of Economics in Katowice, Poland, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7342-6024

The topic addressed in this article is important, as counteracting the emergence of silos is believed to help organisations become more efficient and effective while minimising the widespread tendency to create organisational silos. This article is a review study. The primary research tool used is a literature review based on academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Library of Science, and BazEkon, supplemented with the author's commentary derived from academic sources.

Research Methodology

The research approach and procedure were based on a standard literature review, performed in the following steps: identifying research gaps and objectives, searching for and collecting scientific data from electronic databases, assessing the relevance of the data in terms of scientific value and its relation to the research topic, conducting a qualitative data analysis, presenting the results, and identifying areas for further scientific exploration (Zdonek et al., 2016) due to the thematic breadth of the studied issue.

To achieve the objectives of this article, a review was conducted across two international databases: Scopus (Elsevier) and Web of Science (Clarivate Analytics) and two national databases: Library of Science and BazEkon. The selected international databases are some of the most scientifically important publication repositories, of proven validity for academic research (Wang & Waltman, 2016). The choice of national databases, on the other hand, was motivated by the desire to supplement the study with Polish language sources: Library of Science is the largest scientific database in Poland, while BazEkon is a valuable source of specialised publications on management and quality sciences. The research was conducted on 5 January, 2024 (international databases) and 22 July, 2024 (national databases). The international databases were reviewed in relation to the primary and secondary research objectives, whereas the national databases were examined with regard to the primary research objective.

As part of the research procedure, several trial searches were conducted within each database to determine the most effective search strategies, retrieve academic texts strictly related to the research topic, and simultaneously limit the results to documents of academic value and research relevance. Since the initial search attempts did not yield satisfactory results (as the retrieved information lacked conceptual coherence), a final literature review was conducted using the following contextual search fields and operators:

- 'article title, abstract, keyword' in Scopus (operator: *organisational silos* AND *knowledge* OR *communication*),
- 'topic' in Web of Science (operator: *organisational silos* AND *knowledge* OR *communicatio*n),
- 'szukane słowa' [searched words] in Library of Science (operators: *silosowość* [siloing] and *silosy organizacyjne* [organisational silos]),
- 'temat' [topic] in BazEkon (operator: *silosy* [silos]).

To further refine the research procedure and extract relevant and closely related studies, thematic filters were applied: *Business, management and accounting*, *Social sciences*, *Psychology*, and *Arts and humanities* for Scopus, and *Management* and *Business* for Web of Science.

As a result of the database searches, 29 records were retrieved from Scopus, two from Web of Science, 12 from Library of Science, and three from BazEkon. Given the small number of results, no additional filtering was applied. A critical analysis of the texts was carried out, including a detailed review of abstracts, followed by a thorough reading of selected academic papers, which were analysed to extract key scientific conclusions. Additionally, to enrich the research material, selected bibliographic sources from the retrieved academic texts were also analysed, particularly those that were highly interesting from an academic standpoint and could contribute valuable insights. The document analysis primarily aimed to extract data or information that identified tools and strategies for counteracting siloing tendencies and to examine the cause-and-effect relationships between siloing, knowledge, and communication based on prior research and academic expertise.

Interestingly, Polish researchers had a relatively significant output in terms of strategies for counteracting silos compared to international scholars. Ultimately, 14 of the analysed publications were used to achieve the primary research objective, while 21 publications were utilised to address the secondary research objectives. Furthermore, to systematically present information on anti-siloing strategies and fulfil all of the aspects of the primary research objective, these strategies were compiled into a table. The remaining records were also examined for their scientific value; while they helped to gain a broader understanding of siloing, they were not included in the final study. This was due to either insufficient relevance to the topic or making no significant scientific contribution. From the overall analysis of the scientific material, two research questions were formulated as a methodological supplement to the study.

Diagnosis of Organisational Siloing

To identify the research gap concerning silo mentality in the context of knowledge and communication, one must first comprehend not only the phenomenon itself but also its broad cause-and-effect relationships with knowledge and communication. Although each of these concepts has been adequately defined, in the literature there are no comprehensive studies and analyses that integrate them and explain the reciprocal effects. This gap leads to the first research question: What are the relationships between organisational siloing, knowledge, and communication?

Moving to the fundamental characteristics of organisational siloing, a *silo* is an isolated unit within an

organisation—whether a department or a team—that operates individually and independently from the rest of the company (Cilliers & Greyvenstein, 2012). It is the end result of the siloing process, creating an enclosed, more or less isolated organisational space for knowledge, typically with limited or difficult external communication. Siloing, in turn, is the tendency to isolate different parts of an organisation—departments, units, and individuals—due to separate goals, communication barriers, or other differentiating factors, ultimately leading to the formation of silos.

The concepts of knowledge and communication are inherently linked to human activity. This is because knowledge is created by individuals. However, organisations play a crucial role by supporting these individuals and fostering an environment in which knowledge and communication can be developed as effectively as possible (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Knowledge-sharing and effective communication depend on the integration and combination of diverse knowledge states among people (Te'eni, 2006). Knowledge deficits arising from siloing stem from an unwillingness—whether intentional or not—of organisation members to share knowledge with others within the same organisational structure via communication processes (Mohapeloa, 2017). The concept of *knowledge* is a broad one, encompassing truths and beliefs, perspectives and concepts, judgements and expectations, methodologies and know-how (Wiig, 2004). Communication, on the other hand, serves as a vehicle for knowledge, allowing it to move between recipients, both within and beyond an organisation.

Silos, as a complex concept, can be categorised based on functional properties (Ludwig, 2017) or structural properties (Abernathy, 2008). From a functional perspective, silos do not have the coordination that is not only sufficient but necessary for the behaviours of agents in functional areas or departments to interconnect within the organisation (i.e., be interdependent). Another variation of functional siloing is the existence of silo barriers, which obstruct not only coordination and information flow but also collective behaviour within an organisation. According to this view, organisational silos are perceived as structures that hinder employee productivity because the structure itself requires reorganisation. This interpretation of siloing is typical of the Weberian model of administration, which is now considered outdated.

Siloing is a tendency against which preventative measures should be taken whenever possible, as scientific research has shown that it leads to poor organisational performance (Henman, 2020). For modern enterprises, it seems necessary not only to counteract siloing but also to support knowledge creation and dissemination through communication. In an era of persistent uncertainty and volatility in business environments, internal and external collaboration has become a fundamental competency and a factor in achieving a sustainable competitive advantage (Nordin et al., 2020). In organisations, silos signify restrictions on communication and information exchange. More precisely, organisational silos have been recognised as barriers to open communication and information flow, with negative consequences such as the separation of employees, which poses a challenge for small and large businesses alike (Sessoms, 2021).

In the real economy, a practical example of systematised, scientifically studied organisational siloing can be found in the medical sector, particularly among healthcare service providers and their organisational structures. Through specialised knowledge, the configuration of organisational structures, time pressures, and specific competitive forces, it creates organisational barriers and obstacles. Furthermore, the sense of isolation among individual actors can be exacerbated by the use of specialised terminology (Zipperer & Williams, 2014). In fact, siloing occurs in all organisations that follow functional structures, which still include many entities in the public sector.

The author argues that siloing is closely linked to both knowledge and communication. This relationship stems from the fact that siloing is inherently a source of problems in communication and knowledge transfer. From another perspective, communication serves as a mobilising force for knowledge. If the knowledge accumulated in silos is not particularly extensive but is freely shared beyond the silos in which it was created (i.e., different organisational structures), it is difficult to definitively confirm the presence of organisational siloing. Conversely, even if silos contain a significant amount of valuable knowledge, without proper communication, this knowledge remains trapped within them, to the detriment of the entire organisation, while this exacerbates siloing tendencies. Communication deficiencies are particularly damaging in this scenario, but to stimulate and improve communication, the right knowledge is required, including appropriate strategies for action.

Causes and Determinants of Organisational Siloing

There are numerous causes of organisational siloing, ranging from poor leadership to enduring traditional functional structures. However, the aim of this article is to identify the specific causes of silo formation that are directly linked to the processes of knowledge accumulation, dissemination, and communication. Scientific sources indicate that the most fertile ground for silo formation is the lack, meaning at best the inability or insufficient capacity, and at worst, the lack of motivation, to share knowledge, especially beyond competency-based groups such as project teams (Aaker, 2008; Lessard & Zaheer, 1996). Problems related to knowledge dissemination and sharing increase in proportion to the growing specialisation in various industries and sectors (Hadi et al., 2022). This issue aligns closely with the definition of *siloing*, which revolves around obstacles to the flow of knowledge between different segments and levels within an organisation.

A functionalist, bureaucratic perspective in the literature suggests that siloing results from inadequate or insufficient communication. According to this view, desirable organisational changes should focus on the members and levels of an organisation responsible for communication. However, this opinion has been losing support among scholars. Contemporary research indicates that achieving organisational success and increasing organisational value requires a holistic transformation—not just in communication but across the entire organisation, ensuring that communication occurs effectively across multiple levels (Dimitrov, 2014). Consequently, a successful enterprise is one that fosters smooth communication between its various structures and divisions.

Another significant factor contributing to silo formation is specialist knowledge, which is a unique and valuable organisational resource that enables a company to function and achieve its objectives efficiently. However, excessive expertise can become an obstacle to knowledge communication, leading to organisational outcomes that do not match the level of expertise possessed. The true value of knowledge only becomes apparent when it flows between the knowledge holder (the sender) and the person who requires it (the receiver) (Silberman et al., 2022). This does not mean undervaluing expert knowledge; rather, the goal should be to ensure that expertise remains connected to the organisation as a whole and its individual segments, particularly where it is needed and sought after.

Organisational silos can hinder knowledge sharing, and individual organisational units, even when aware of the problem, may require support to improve processes for transferring knowledge and practical experience among themselves (Rodriguez & Edwards, 2014). A lack of organisational response, even after diagnosing the issue, often intensifies siloing tendencies.

Siloing has a dangerous tendency to take control over communication processes and information flow, leading to limited or completely restricted access to information, a lack of information exchange, or unequal distribution of knowledge (O'Reilly & Paper, 2012). In the literature, in terms of both terminology and the general conditions of this problem, researchers even refer to the existence of a *silo mentality*, which is fragmented, self-serving organisational thinking that perceives the organisation as a whole but fails to connect it internally (Cilliers & Greyvenstein, 2012). This mindset can systemically reinforce the general tendency to create silos.

On the other hand, in knowledge-intensive organisations with strong reputations—such as IT firms and consulting companies—knowledge-sharing processes and collaboration through communication tools are key success factors that enable companies to compete in dynamic business environments (Mola et al., 2019). However, siloing can also affect technology within an organisation. Some researchers argue that creating independent internal company networks and relying exclusively on IT tools for knowledge and communication support—without complementary or even primary reliance on social tools—limits knowledge sharing (Swan et al., 1999).

Thus, the relationship between siloing, knowledge, and communication within an organisation is multidimensional. It involves interdependencies, cause-and-effect relationships, and a negative correlation between these concepts. However, these considerations merely provide context for the study and justify the need to pursue the primary objective of this article. This leads to the formulation of the second research question: What strategies can be used to counteract organisational siloing? As demonstrated above, siloing has been classified as a tendency that has an unequivocally negative impact on organisations. Therefore, posing this research question appears all the more justified.

Strategies for Counteracting Organisational Siloing

In pursuit of the fundamental objective of this article, the following section presents the results obtained through the adopted research procedure. However, before delving into the specifics, it is important to note that despite the widespread presence of organisational siloing, organisations are not passive in the face of this tendency. Although siloing presents numerous challenges and pitfalls, organisations employ various techniques—including extracting and integrating knowledge that remains 'trapped' within silos—to bring together previously fragmented knowledge into a cohesive whole (De Waal et al., 2019). Table 1, arranged chronologically based on the publication date (and alphabetically for materials published in the same year), provides a concise summary of strategies for counteracting silos and organisational siloing.

Before an organisation decides to merge existing silos, it should first focus on preventative measures to prevent them forming in the first place. Such an approach can be based on a retrospective strategy, which aims to minimise processes and events that contribute to the emergence of silos. This involves structuring the organisation in a way that keeps unwanted silos that do arise under control. Lencioni (2006) developed a comprehensive strategic framework for preventing the formation of organisational silos, outlining four interrelated strategies: establishing the organisation's primary thematic goal to unify all its activities; defining objectives that clarify and refine the overall thematic goal; setting a set of current operational goals that support and align with the main goal but do not belong to previous subcategories; implementing a proper organisational goal metric, which unifies goal structures transparently, making them easier for employees to identify with. For these objectives to effectively prevent silo formation, the organisation must possess or develop the necessary knowledge to establish relevant goals and the communication capabilities to ensure that every member is informed about them.

Table 1

Strategies for Counteracting Silos and Organisational Siloing Using Knowledge and Communication

No	Author	Strategy	Application in the context of knowledge and/or communication
1.	Kets de Vries, 2005	Improving leadership and decision-makers	Creates efficient teams, bridges gaps between them, and enhances information flow
2.	Lencioni, 2006	Establishing a general organisational goal and sub-goals	Unifies and integrates the organisation through knowledge of its strategic direction
3.	Lemmergaard, 2009	Implementing benchlearning	Increases knowledge rotation and communication via an information platform
4.	Kabalski, 2012	Creating project teams	Facilitates the exchange of knowledge, information, and ideas
5.	Grycuk, 2016	Implementing lean management	Improves communication
6.	Świetlikowski, 2016	Leveraging internal employee mobility	Enables knowledge sharing and mentoring by more experienced employees
7.	Forsten-Astikainen et al., 2017	Creating CoPs – communities of practice	Breaks the isolation caused by silos
8.	Bilecka, 2018	Organisational network analysis (ONA)	Provides strategic, cross-sectional knowledge about organisational functioning
9.	Centola, 2018	Creating network clusters	Strengthens social actors and improves information flow
10.	Bjaalid et al., 2019	Developing meta-disciplinary structures	Increases the amount of knowledge within teams
11.	Świetlikowski, 2019	Implementing internal training policies	Integrates employees and the organisation as a whole through knowledge sharing
12.	Golczyńska-Grondas & Błaszczyk, 2020	Establishing systems for monitoring the institutionalisation process	Enables the collection, processing, and use of data and knowledge
13.	Staszewski, 2021	Strengthening knowledge exchange systems	Prevents organisational fragmentation and enables knowledge replication
14.	Hadi et al., 2022	Creating PMOs – project management offices	Synchronises and distributes knowledge released from silos throughout the organisation

Source: author's own work.

One effective solution, which, like the previously discussed anti-silo strategies, stimulates multi-directional knowledge exchange and communication processes, is benchlearning. This involves creating platforms for free knowledge exchange between different units. While organisational siloing is primarily a cultural rather than a technological issue (Cromity & Stricker, 2011), this does not mean that modern tools cannot be used to counteract it. Knowledge repositories, such as an internal knowledge-sharing portal, can help liberate valuable knowledge trapped in silos, aligning with ongoing digitalisation trends.

A study on knowledge dissemination in human resource management demonstrated that this approach resolved the issue of organisational siloing by ensuring that knowledge was shared not only within the organisation but also with external audiences, including the academic community (Lemmergaard, 2009). This study showed that siloing is not limited to individual organisations—it can affect entire sectors and networks. Thus, countermeasures must also be multi-level and directed towards a broad range of stakeholders. Some scholars even argue for building bridges between silos, suggesting that the problem is not rooted in a lack of communication tools but rather, as already mentioned above, in cultural barriers (Cromity & Stricker, 2011). However, organisational silos can be harmful not only to organisations. They can undermine the effectiveness of technological tools meant to connect different departments (Mola et al., 2019).

One attempt to reduce silos and siloing in the areas of knowledge and communication is the creation of project management offices (PMOs)—specialised units responsible for managing projects within organisations. PMOs play a key role in bridging the strategic and operational levels of a company by facilitating team-based project work. However, PMOs are not always entirely effective in counteracting siloing. Some researchers argue that organisations often struggle with communication difficulties in transferring knowledge between operational and strategic management levels, causing valuable knowledge to remain trapped at the operational level (Ershadi et

al., 2021). PMOs have also been criticised for lacking conceptual frameworks for knowledge mediation across different organisational segments. Despite these challenges, PMOs can still play a crucial role in releasing knowledge trapped in silos. By balancing bottom-up experiential learning with top-down strategic learning, while ensuring horizontal knowledge synchronisation, PMOs facilitate multi-directional knowledge transactions (Hadi et al., 2022).

Another anti-silo strategy is the creation of network clusters. Research on network analysis has provided theoretical foundations for understanding how these structures function as spaces of social reinforcement, essential for the spread of complex information and the mitigation of siloing tendencies. However, for this to work, a balanced network structure is required—one that connects local clusters for close interactions and establishes broad bridges for information flow. Networks in this sense function as social system structures, comprising dynamic, ever-changing member flows, information flows, and social support availability (Centola, 2018). A powerful example of network-based organisational improvement can be found in public administration, where increased structural fragmentation has coincided with growing demands for public services from local stakeholders. This juxtaposition of siloing and networks as a potential solution raises the bar for public organisations, which must operate with increasing efficiency to achieve their objectives. A study conducted in a large European city demonstrated that integrating municipal public organisations into smart networks reduces communication barriers and knowledge flow restrictions, thereby neutralising the organisational siloing that is common in public functional organisations (Todorović et al., 2015).

According to some self-improvement trends in management, every employee, to some degree, bears responsibility for the organisation. Some researchers have concluded that the most crucial department in an organisation is the one that manages its most valuable asset—its people. Studies show that this department plays a significant role in preventing the emergence of organisational silos. A tool used by social capital specialists is the establishment of *communities of practice* (CoPs). Due to their inherent interdisciplinarity, CoPs transcend the boundaries and limitations imposed by silos. CoPs emerge organically, allowing employees to break free from isolation and move beyond rigid, closed work patterns. These groups are not project teams, but rather informal practitioner groups within an organisation that focus on a particular topic or issue and facilitate knowledge exchange. However, for CoPs to develop effectively, HR departments require additional competencies that enable them to foster the growth of these communities beyond the existing silo structures (Forsten-Astikainen et al., 2017).

Some researchers emphasise that an organisation's susceptibility to silo formation is directly linked to leadership quality, meaning that decision-making effectiveness is a crucial factor. This view is difficult to dispute, given the widely accepted belief that leadership shapes an organisation and dictates its management practices. Although an organisation consists of various processes, information flows, and people, leadership remains the factor determining how much knowledge is accumulated, how it is conveyed, and how effectively communication flows. It is therefore not surprising that enhancing the competencies of decision-makers—for example, through leadership coaching and group coaching—has been identified as an effective remedy for organisational siloing. Such development efforts create high-performance teams, which, in turn, dissolve unnecessary organisational boundaries and facilitate knowledge exchange (Kets de Vries, 2005).

Organisational silos can, of course, be minimised or eliminated through direct structural reforms, implemented via organisational redesign. This approach relies on insight into the most effective organisational structures, but is also a broad, overarching strategy. One study presented the results of an implementation experiment at a Norwegian university hospital, where the organisation was restructured to create a multidisciplinary working environment. The new structure was no longer based on individual medical disciplines, but instead on meta-disciplinary teams. This decision provoked resistance from some employees. The experiment demonstrated that it is possible to reduce the tribal culture among silos and establish a working environment based on effective, multi-directional knowledge transfer through structural change (Bjaalid et al., 2019).

Polish language sources also present a wide range of contextual solutions. Researchers recommend basic yet effective strategies, such as implementing project teams (Kabalski, 2012), and introducing lean management principles (Grycuk, 2016) aimed at limiting or counteracting siloing. A particularly popular and widely applied strategy for addressing siloing is the implementation of internal training programmes. These programmes enhance integration among employees and unify the organisation by facilitating knowledge transfer from experienced employees to new hires. A systematic approach in this context is the internal trainer function, where a designated individual oversees and facilitates this knowledge exchange (Świetlikowski, 2019).

Organisations can counteract siloing by analysing both internal structures and the external environment. One strategy that supports this effort is Organisational Network Analysis (ONA), which leverages dedicated platforms to map organisational relationships and interactions (Bilecka, 2018). An ONA provides cross-sectional and diverse knowledge about both external and internal organisational dynamics, particularly concerning employees, resources, and developmental barriers related to relationships. Tools that visualise knowledge flow and relationships can be used for talent management, among other applications. By identifying knowledge movement within the organisation, silos can be effectively neutralised by directing

knowledge application to where it is needed most. Importantly, an ONA can support the development of CoPs or project teams. For example, in social policy and foster care system organisations, Golczyńska-Grondas and Błaszczyk (2020) propose continuous monitoring of the institutionalisation of service recipients as a means of systemic deinstitutionalisation, ultimately reducing siloing tendencies.

Another more ambiguous strategy for organisations is creating conditions for employee mobility. Employees who change roles within an organisation develop a broader perspective and higher engagement levels. They also accumulate specific knowledge that grows over time. For organisations, this is highly beneficial in terms of knowledge sharing and breaking down silos. However, if an employee leaves the organisation, the acquired knowledge benefits another company and the entire sector instead (Świetlikowski, 2016). Overall, strengthening knowledge exchange systems makes it more difficult for silos to form, creates a foundation for knowledge replication and release, and helps to identify both effective and ineffective organisational solutions. This aspect is particularly significant in the implementation of innovations within the public sector (Staszewski, 2021).

Summary

The primary context of this study is the desire to improve the quality of organisational functioning, with siloing identified as a key barrier in this process. Considering the arguments presented, due to the detrimental nature of siloing, the topic addressed by the author is of great significance, and the search for counteractive strategies is fully justified. On the other hand, the roots of siloing can also be traced to knowledge deficiencies or constraints on information flow. By exploring these aspects, the author fills an existing research gap by presenting the inherent relationship between siloing, knowledge, and communication—demonstrating that these concepts and their cause-and-effect dynamics are inextricably linked.

The strategies described in this article are diverse, multi-layered, and interdisciplinary. They include solutions focused on internal organisational structures (e.g., project structures or CoPs), external organisational environments (e.g., network clusters), digitalisation and new technologies (e.g., benchlearning), and the quality of public management itself (e.g., effective leadership). These strategies have been empirically validated and have been shown to support organisations in mitigating or preventing siloing by enhancing knowledge dissemination and information flow. This underscores the broad scope of the issue and provides an opportunity for further academic exploration. However, given the complexity and structural diversity of modern organisations, as well as the numerous challenges they face, it seems advisable that managers implement more than just a single, isolated strategy. Instead, a comprehensive approach should be pursued, integrating multiple complementary strategies. Similarly, scholars should further investigate the effectiveness of such an approach to tackling siloing.

The structure of this article serves a dual purpose: first, it provides a concise compendium on siloing and its relationships with knowledge and communication, and second, it lays the foundation for further academic inquiry. A deeper understanding of these strategies could serve as a valuable extension of this study, contributing to the theoretical development of the field. For practitioners, this article may function as a practical tool, offering guidance on strategies to mitigate organisational challenges arising from silos.

Nevertheless, due to the limitations of this article, the strategies discussed and the relationships between the described concepts have been highlighted only briefly, leaving room for further scientific exploration, particularly in areas such as the relationship between knowledge management, communication, and siloing, in-depth analysis of individual strategies, and the potential for their integration. An interesting direction for future research could be the evaluation of these solutions in terms of their effectiveness.

Another notable limitation is the relatively small number of sources and studies directly addressing the impact of knowledge and communication on siloing. Some of the cited research was conducted some time ago, which suggests that there is a need for renewed academic attention to this topic. This, in turn, highlights the paradox that despite the significance of the problems caused by siloing, the issue remains relatively niche in the context of knowledge and communication studies. As such, this study represents an important step toward a better understanding of the issue and serves as an invitation for further research in this field.

References

Aaker, D. A. (2008). Marketing in a silo world: The new CMO challenge. *California Management Review, 51*(1), 144–156. https://doi.org/10.2307/41166473

Abernathy, W. B. (2008). Implications and applications of a behavior systems perspective. *Journal of Organizational Behavavior Management, 28*(2), 123–138. https://doi.org/10.1080/01608060802100980

Bilecka, J. (2018). Zarządzanie siecią organizacyjną – nowa jakość w strategicznym zarządzaniu jednostkami badawczo-rozwojowymi [Organizational network management – new quality in strategic management of research-development units]. *Marketing Instytucji Naukowych i Badawczych*, *1*(27), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.14611/minib.27.03.2018.06

Bjaalid, G., Todnem By, R., Burnes, B., Mikkelsen, A., & Øygaarden, O. (2019). From silos to inter-professional collaboration: A mixed methods case study utilizing participating action research to foster multidisciplinary teams in a day care surgery department. *IJAR – International Journal of Action Research, 15*(3), 217–236. https://doi.org/10.3224/ijar.v15i3.04

Centola, D. (2018). How behavior spreads: The science of complex contagions. *Science, 361*(6409). https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aav1974

Cilliers, F., & Greyvenstein, H. (2012). The impact of silo mentality on team identity: An organizational case study. *Journal of Industrial Psychology, 38*(2), 75–84. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v38i2.993

Cromity, J., & De Stricker, U. (2011). Silo persistence: It's not the technology, it's the culture! *New Review of Information Networking, 16*(2), 167–184. https://doi.org/10.1080/13614576.2011.619924

De Waal, A., Weaver M., Day, T., & van der Heijden, B. (2019). Silo-busting: Overcoming the greatest threat to organizational performance. *Sustainability, 11*(23), 6860. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11236860

Dimitrov, R. (2014). Bringing communication up to agency: UNESCO reforms its visibility. *Public Relations Inquiry, 3*(3), 293–318. https://doi.org/10.1177/2046147X14544396

Ershadi, M., Jefferies, M., Davis, P., & Mojtahedi, M. (2021). A framework for conceptualising the organisational communications of a project management office. *International Journal of Project Organisation and Management, 13*(1), 60–84. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJPOM.2021.114721

Forsten-Astikainen, R., Hurmelinna-Laukkanen, P., Lämsä, T., Heilmann, P., & Hyrkäs, E. (2017). Dealing with organizational silos with communities of practice and human resource management. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, *29*(6), 473–489. https://doi.org/10.1108/JWL-04-2015-0028

Golczyńska-Grondas, A., & Błaszczyk, M. (2020). *Deinstytucjonalizacja placówek opieki całkowitej nad dziećmi i młodzieżą w województwie łódzkim*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.

Grycuk, A. (2016). Bariery w stosowaniu koncepcji *lean management*. *Kwartalnik Nauk o Przedsiębiorstwie*, *40*(3), 72–79. https://econjournals.sgh.waw.pl/KNoP/article/view/1955/1763

Hadi, A., Liu, Y., & Li, S. (2022). Transcending the silos through project management office: Knowledge transactions, brokerage roles, and enabling factors. *International Journal of Project Management*, *40*(2), 142–154. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2021.11.003

Henman, L. D. (2020). Silo busting makes good business sense. *Strategic HR Review*, *19*(4), 151–156. https://doi.org/10.1108/SHR-03-2020-0022

Kabalski, P. (2012). *Wybrane problemy stosowania Międzynarodowych Standardów Sprawozdawczości Finansowej w Polsce. Organizacja, kultura, osobowość, język.* Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.

Kets de Vries, M. F. R. (2005). Leadership group coaching in action: The Zen of creating high performance teams. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, *19*(1), 61–76. https://doi.org/10.5465/ame.2005.15841953

Lemmergaard, J. (2009). Acquiring and sharing knowledge through inter-organizational benchlearning. In M. Lytras, R. Tennyson & P. Ordóñez de Pablos (Eds.), *Knowledge networks: The social software perspective* (pp. 168–180). IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-59904-976-2.ch012

Lencioni, P. (2006). *Silos, politics and turf wars: a leadership fable about destroying the barriers that turn colleagues into competitors*. Jossey-Bass.

Lessard, D. R., & Zaheer S. (1996). Breaking the silos: Distributed knowledge and strategic responses to volatile exchange rates. *Strategic Management Journal*, *17*(7), 513–533. https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1097-0266(199607)17:7<513::AID-SMJ832>3.0.CO;2-P

Ludwig, T. D. (2017). Process safety behavioral systems: Behaviors interlock in complex metacontingencies. *Journal of Organizational Behavior Management*, 37(3–4), 224–239. https://doi.org/10.1080/01608061.2017.1340921

Mohapeloa, T. (2017). Effects of silo mentality on corporate ITC's business model. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Business Excellence*, *11*(1), 1009–1019. https://doi.org/10.1515/picbe-2017-0105

Mola, L., Kaminska, R., & Carugati, A. (2019). Changing institutionalized practices when implementing a mandated technology. In F. Cabitza, C. Batini, & M. Magni, M. (Eds.), *Organizing for the Digital World, 28*, 203–214. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-90503-7_16

Nonaka, I., & Takeuchi, H. (1995). The knowledge-creating company: How Japanese companies create the dynamics of innovation. *Oxford University Press*, *29*(4), 592. https://doi.org/10.1016/0024-6301(96)81509-3

Nordin, H., Min, C. Y., & Wahab, M. M. (2020). Delivering business value through actionable insights: A case study. In A. Garcia-Perez & L. Simkin (Eds.), *21st European Conference on Knowledge Management (ECKM)* (pp. 547–555). https://www.proceedings.com/content/057/057204webtoc.pdf

O'Reilly, K., & Paper, D. (2012). CRM and retail service quality: Front-line employee perspectives. *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, *40*(11), 865–881. https://doi.org/10.1108/09590551211267610

PWN. (n.d.). Silos. In *Słownik języka polskiego*. Retrieved July 22, 2024, from https://sjp.pwn.pl/sjp/silos;2575434

Rodriguez, E., & Edwards, J. S. (2014). Knowledge management in support of enterprise risk management. *International Journal of Knowledge Management*, *10*(2), 43–61. http://doi.org/10.4018/ijkm.2014040104

Sessoms, G. (2021, January 1). What are organizational silos? *Bizfluent*. https://bizfluent.com/what-are-organizational-silos.html

Silberman, D., Carpenter, R. E., Cabrera, E., & Kernaleguen, J. (2022). Organizational silofication: implications in grouping experts for organizational performance. *Development and Learning in Organizations*, *36*(6), 15–18. https://doi.org/10.1108/DLO-10-2021-0193

Staszewski, B. (2021). Analiza oddziaływania instytucji zarządzania budżetowego na innowacyjność sektora publicznego. *Studia z Polityki Publicznej*, *8*(3), 75–91. https://doi.org/10.33119/KSzPP/2021.3.5

Swan, J., Newell, S., Scarbrough, H., & Hislop, D. (1999). Knowledge management and innovation: networks and networking. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 3(4), 262–275. https://doi.org/10.1108/13673279910304014

Świetlikowski, Ł. (2016). Mobilność urzędnicza w ujęciu teoretycznym. *Studia z Polityki Publicznej*, *3*(2(10)), 153–171. https://doi.org/10.33119/KSzPP.2016.2.7

Świetlikowski, Ł. (2019). Trenerzy wewnętrzni w służbie cywilnej. Warunki skuteczności w świetle modelu AMO (zdolności, motywacji, możliwości działania). *Studia z Polityki Publicznej*, *6*(1(21)), 75–86. https://doi.org/10.33119/KSzPP.2019.1.4

Te'eni, D. (2006). Organisational communication. In D. Schwartz (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Knowledge Management* (pp. 734–740). Idea Group Reference.

Todorović, I., Čudanov, M., & Komazec, S. (2015). Improvement of organizational knowledge transfer through integration of functional silos in smart network: Case study of public enterprises. In P. Ordoñez de Pablos,

L. Turró, R. Tennyson, & J. Zhao (Eds.), *Knowledge management for competitive advantage during economic crisis* (pp. 299–309). IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-4666-6457-9.ch017

Wang, Q., & Waltman, L. (2016). Large-scale analysis of the accuracy of the journal classification systems of Web of Science and Scopus. *Journal of Informetrics*, *10*(2), 347–364. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joi.2016.02.003

Wiig, K. (2004). *People-focused knowledge management*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780080479910

Zdonek, I., Hysa, B., & Zdonek, D. (2016). Publikacje przeglądowe w naukach o zarządzaniu – istota i tendencje [Literature review in management science – issue and tendency]. *Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Śląskiej*, *96*, 519–533.

Zipperer, L., & Williams, L. (2014). Concepts, context, communication: Who's on first? In L. Zipper (Ed.), *Patient Safety: Perspectives on Evidence, Information and Knowledge Transfer* (pp. 23–34). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315599700

Piotr Popęda is a PhD student at the University of Economics in Katowice (Poland), a scholarship recipient of The Fund for American Studies, and a delegate to the 23rd session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration. He has many years of professional experience in local government administration. His core mission is the broad improvement of organisational functioning, particularly in public institutions, from both a scientific and practical perspective.

We recommend

Last year, from 1st July to 15th December, the second edition of the Science-Up scientific training and mentoring program took place, with the e-mentor academic journal serving as a content partner and offering its official patronage.

Science-Up supports students and PhD candidates' academic development and career planning through training sessions and individual mentoring by experienced researchers. The initiative has been co-funded by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

The second edition gathered 35 participants from 12 universities. With guidance from mentors representing 11 academic centers, they developed 35 Individual Research Plans. This was possible through 175 online mentoring sessions and five training workshops focused on online databases, research planning, academic writing, and scientific publishing.

Graduates of Science-Up continue their academic journey by independently participating in research projects, publishing, and pursuing doctoral studies. The third edition is planned for fall 2025 – join us!

More information at: **www.scienceup.bliskonauki.pl**.