

Aesthetics as Knowledge: An Aspect of the Future of KM?

Clemens Kerschbaum

Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria

Clemens.Kerschbaum@wu.ac.at

Abstract: Knowledge Management (KM) is concerned with the process of capturing, organizing, sharing or utilizing knowledge within an organization. At least since the works of Nonaka and Takeuchi in the 90s, it is a commonplace that the term knowledge, as understood from the perspective of KM, includes both explicit and tacit elements. However, it seems that the focus of many KM initiatives and resulting KM systems still lies mostly on the more explicit facets of knowledge. This has two implications for the field: the first is the obvious danger of confusing knowledge management with information management. The second, which is actually a consequence of the first, is that the focus on technology and explicit knowledge can lead to a diffusion of the field of KM towards more technical domains such as Semantic Web, Knowledge Graphs or Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence. Those fields have arguably become way more capable of managing explicit knowledge and draw the attention of companies away from 'traditional' KM systems (Davenport, 2015). Thus, in this paper, I argue that KM research should somewhat reconsider its strengths which lie in the management of tacit knowledge that is closely tied to humans. Following this argument, I propose organizational aesthetics as one of many promising avenues for KM research in the future. The idea for this stems from a recent literature review on organizational aesthetics that identifies three perspectives on the topic – one being *aesthetics as a knowledge tool* (Baldessarelli, Stigliani and Elsbach, 2022). According to this perspective, aesthetics is seen as a form of knowledge that originates in sensory perceptions and is permanently deployed in the interaction with organizations, organizational artifacts, and social settings. The present paper hence aims to contextualize the notion of organizational aesthetics for the field of KM to give an overview of the idea and offer a basis for discussion on whether aesthetics could be a useful field for future inquiry.

Keywords: Organizational aesthetics, Tacit knowledge, Future of KM, Perspectives on knowledge, Knowledge creation, Capacity to act

1. Introduction

Most people will, at first glance, not associate aesthetics with knowledge. Probably even less so would practitioners - and maybe even researchers - in the area of Knowledge Management (KM) connect aesthetics to their field of study. However, with this paper I want to break down the concept of aesthetics, and more precisely, *organizational aesthetics* in relation to knowledge types and definitions for the field of KM. As I will show, aesthetics is indeed not so far from knowledge, as understood by the KM community, and it could potentially be an interesting avenue for contemporary and future KM.

I present the idea of aesthetics in the context of KM because I perceive the field as in a state where new streams are being thought of and start establishing themselves. Examples include the notion of *responsible KM* (rKM) that has been coined by Susanne Durst (Durst, 2021) and taken up for example by Raysa Rocha, Florian Kragulj and colleagues (Rocha, Kragulj and Pinheiro, 2022) in the context of wisdom in organizations, or also the movement towards spiritual KM that has been developed by a group of researchers around Constantin Bratianu and Alexander Kaiser (Bratianu, 2015, 2017; Kaiser, 2023) in an attempt to include purpose and personal development into the field of KM. Such initiatives currently broaden the scope of KM that seems to have been very focused on technology and the rather mechanistic 'production' of knowledge, as argued by some.

Already in 2015, Thomas Davenport had written an article for the Wall Street Journal in which he argued that KM had faded since the 2010s. According to his view, the field had over-emphasized those technical facets of KM which led to an abundance of many KM initiatives because people did not change their behavior towards acquiring new, or sharing their knowledge just because a new system has been put in place. In addition, the advance of other technologies such as powerful search engines for external knowledge (e.g. Google) made in-house databases of explicit knowledge relatively obsolete. Ultimately, Davenport argues, despite its technical focus, KM seems to have failed to properly incorporate up-to-date data analytics in its study area which subsequently led to the cannibalization of traditional KM in most cases through more innovative, data driven analytic approaches. Hence, following this view and taking up the recent efforts towards a more human-centered approach to the field of KM, I would like to bring aesthetics to the table in an attempt to get a particularly human aspect back into the loop of knowledge-generation. Why it is particularly aesthetics that I believe in as a potential driver for the relevance of future KM will be shown after a brief introduction to the concept.

2. Organizational Aesthetics

Aesthetics, seen from a scientific perspective, describes all sorts of meaning and knowledge that sensory perceptions elicit in a human being (Baumgarten, 1988; Taylor and Hansen, 2005; Baldessarelli, Stigliani and Elsbach, 2022). Contrary to the terms usage in colloquial language, aesthetics hence includes beauty and art, but is not limited to those concepts. Instead, there are plenty of other aesthetic categories such as, for example, the comic, the sublime, the ugly or the grotesque (Strati, 1992), just to name some. Apart from those explicit categories, aesthetic perceptions can lead to all sorts of perceived meanings. Aesthetic perceptions are by definition highly subjective and always root in direct personal experience. Thus, aesthetics can also be seen as a precursor to knowledge because we first experience the world, and are hence subject to aesthetic perceptions, before we can engage in intellectual and conceptual thought about the world. However, how a person aesthetically perceives an artifact, a situation, or basically anything that can be experienced through the senses, may vary and naturally differs from each individual to another.

With regards to organizations, the scientific field of organizational aesthetics is concerned with the study of organizational life as experienced and understood through the senses of organizational members (Strati, 1992; Gagliardi, 2006). So whenever there are people involved, there will necessarily be aesthetic perception. Thus, the concept has been researched in different fields e.g. in terms of creative work in an architecture firm (Ewenstein and Whyte, 2007), medicine (Creed, Taylor and Hudson, 2020), innovation (Akgün, Keskin and Kırçovalı, 2019) or also in the leadership domain (Hansen, Ropo and Sauer, 2007). According to the respective research interest and the design of a particular study, aesthetics can be seen from different viewpoints.

Reviewing the field, Taylor and Hansen (2005) in this regard identify different scopes of organizational aesthetics: aesthetics understood as an epistemology, as criteria for judgement or as establishing connection (Taylor and Hansen, 2005). A more recent review of empirical studies on the concept has shown that there are three main perspectives on the role of aesthetics in organizations: aesthetics can be understood as (a) a directed stimulus that influences the behavior of people in and around organizations, (b) an open-ended outcome that describes the personal aesthetic experience of a person engaging in, or with an organization and, (c) as a knowledge tool which describes how people make use of their aesthetic perceptions and the meaning therefrom to execute work (Baldessarelli, Stigliani and Elsbach, 2022). What makes aesthetics appealing from an organizational perspective is its holistic character i.e. that it integrates all sensory perceptions and respective meaning generated from them, focusing primarily on the effect – the meaning generated from such perception. Respectively, the notion of aesthetics has been a popular concept in pragmatism especially in William James' and John Dewey's works. Aesthetics later also appears in Chester Barnard's seminal "Functions of the Executive" where he builds on pragmatist views to argue that management is to a large part about sensing the organization as a whole, which is best described through the terms "feeling, judgement, sense, proportion, balance or appropriateness" (Barnard, 1938, p. 123). However, notions of aesthetics, although not explicitly stated as such, can be also found in more contemporary management theories such as Scharmer's Theory U (Scharmer, 2007) or the, by now, well-known Design Thinking framework for innovation (Shrivastava et al., 2017).

3. Conceptualizing Aesthetics in Terms of Knowledge Management

The above-mentioned examples already suggest some connection between aesthetics and topics of KM. This section hence takes a more systematic look at the intersection of the two fields.

When looking at the purpose of Knowledge Management that derives from a knowledge-based perspective on organizations, we know that its main goal is to support the combination and application of knowledge that is embedded in culture, identity, routines, policies, systems, documents and individual employees (Grant, 1996; Spender, 1996; Alavi and Leidner, 2001). However, it is not merely the amount of existing knowledge that matters most but the ability to apply it and also the ability to generate new knowledge on top of the existing (Alavi and Leidner, 2001). Let alone, the term knowledge can mean different things depending on the context that it is used in, and accordingly, a multitude of definitions for knowledge have been proposed.

Hence, we first have to locate the term aesthetics within those definitions to create an understanding of how it can be useful for KM.

3.1 Perspectives on Knowledge and the Role of Aesthetics

To this end, I will draw to Alavi & Leidner's (2001) overview of knowledge taxonomies and perspectives on knowledge and reflect their relation towards aesthetics and vice versa. I use their paper as a starting point,

because it is one of the most cited accounts of knowledge definitions in the field and has served as a basis for many consecutive studies on the topic. Table 1 contains an overview of the perspectives on knowledge, enhanced by a brief description of the potential relation to aesthetics. As we will see, some perspectives have a closer connection than others, while some have no noteworthy connection at all. The latter are marked N/A (not applicable) in the table.

Table 1: Enhanced Overview of Perspectives on Knowledge. Adapted from Alavi & Leidner (2001)

Perspective	Explanation	Implications for KM	Relation to Aesthetics
<i>Knowledge vis-à-vis data and information</i>	Knowledge is personalized information on the basis of processed data	KM must expose individuals to potentially useful information	N/A
<i>State of mind</i>	Knowledge is the state of knowing and understanding	KM involves enhancing individuals learning and understanding through provision of information	Enabling individuals to expand personal knowledge through aesthetic experiences
<i>Object</i>	Knowledge as an object to be stored and manipulated	KM must build and manage knowledge stocks	Aesthetic perception of objects (both physical and intangible). Aesthetics as a frame of reference for knowledge
<i>Process</i>	Knowledge is a process of applying expertise. Simultaneous knowing and acting	KM focuses on knowledge flows and the process of creation, sharing and distributing knowledge	Aesthetics as a knowledge tool deployed in organizational work
<i>Access to information</i>	Knowledge is a condition of access to information	KM focus is organized access and retrieval of content	N/A
<i>Capability</i>	Knowledge is the potential to influence action	Building core competencies and understanding strategic know how	Aesthetics as precursor of knowledge, necessary requirement to gather experience and build competence; 'link to the future'

As for the perspectives *Knowledge vis-à-vis Data and Information* and *Access to Information*, there is no noteworthy connection to aesthetics, as those perspectives focus primarily on explicit knowledge and its representation. The knowledge captured within this perspective is rather objective due to its explicit nature, in a sense that the knowledge itself is the same for everybody i.e., it does not include a subjective component in its representational form. Both of these perspectives can be considered rather mechanistic accounts which assume that knowledge can be 'managed' in a technical sense, or that its distribution can be more or less controlled.

Knowledge as a *State of Mind* means the sum of what has been perceived, discovered or learned (Schubert et al., 1998 cf. Alavi and Leidner, 2001). Here, especially the aspect of perception establishes a link towards aesthetics. Since aesthetics means the sensorial perception and meaning elicited through such perception, aesthetics is a part of the acquisition of new knowledge. Within this perspective, enabling the acquisition of individual knowledge and its application to organizational domains is focal. Thus, the provision of opportunities for learning are crucial and can be supported through considerations of aesthetics within the process. This could mean to give people as many opportunities as possible to perceive artifacts or situations in the organizational context in order to facilitate their individual learning and broaden their knowledge.

If knowledge is understood as an *object*, it can itself be subject to aesthetic perception. An illustrative example would be an organizational process that is typically considered organizational knowledge. That process can elicit different meanings for organizational members. Some may find it useful and important while others might consider it annoying or outright grotesque. Hence, aesthetics can act as a frame of reference for the evaluation of artifacts that people encounter in an organization (Creed, Taylor and Hudson, 2020) – such as knowledge. Although the authors did not explicitly coin it as such, we see an example for that mechanism of

evaluation in Nonaka & Takeuchi's (1995) Knowledge Creating Company where the authors argue that organizational intention is "*the most important criterion for judging the truthfulness of a given piece of knowledge*" (Nonaka, 1995, p.74). Such intention is heavily value laden and aims to foster commitment towards the organizations purpose that roots in a positive aesthetic evaluation of the organizations purpose (Kerschbaum, 2022).

Knowledge as a process of applying expertise (that includes simultaneous knowing and acting) opens up a broad connection to aesthetics. This view aligns neatly with Baldessarelli, Stigliani and Elsbach's (2022) perspective of aesthetics as a *knowledge tool*. This perspective includes all studies of aesthetics in which aesthetics is deployed in everyday work. The authors differentiate between aesthetics as a knowledge tool to *accomplish creativity* and aesthetics as a knowledge tool *intertwined with organizing*. Here, the first describes the notion that aesthetics is basically activity that creates value. Illustrative examples are the design of new fragrances or the work of a chef when creating dishes and therefore applying his or her senses of smell and taste. In this understanding of aesthetics, the human senses are used to create or manipulate artifacts in order to generate a desired outcome (Baldessarelli, Stigliani and Elsbach, 2022). For the view of *knowledge as a process*, aesthetics can hence be seen as a constant companion in the application, creation or the sharing of knowledge which naturally involves the senses. This is particularly the case with tacit knowledge, a type of knowledge that roots in and is generated through the personal experience of the knower (Polanyi and Sen, 2009).

Knowledge as a capability emphasizes the potential to influence future action, based on the capacity to interpret information that is necessary for decision making (Alavi and Leidner, 2001). This perspective is in line with later accounts of knowledge as a capacity to act (e.g. Sveiby, 2001). Central to this view is the consideration of individuals as "*primary intangible resource*" as Sveiby (2001, p.355) puts it. The view of knowledge as a *capability* or *capacity* to act is often associated to organizational strategy and includes both elements of rational planning and emergent properties (Bolisani and Bratianu, 2017). The emergent properties stem from individual learnings or the experience of an organization's members and pay tribute to the fact that not everything can be rationally analyzed in a complex environments. Accordingly, it has been proposed to rely on forms of knowledge such as *self-transcending knowledge* which can be acquired through high states of attention and being grounded in the present (Scharmer, 2007; Flowers *et al.*, 2011; Kaiser and Peschl, 2020). From the description of such knowledge, it has probably become evident already that aesthetics is at the core of the perception of this knowledge. Apart from its role in strategic decision-making in modern-day complex environments, it has been proclaimed that to a large extent, organizational life as such is built on tacit knowledge and aesthetics respectively (Strati, 1999; Down, Sternberg and Horvath, 2000).

3.2 Aesthetics as Knowledge

From the brief analysis above, we see that aesthetics can play a role for the acquisition of individual knowledge (state of mind-view), the evaluation of existing or new knowledge (object-view), the application of knowledge (process-view) and, integrating those, if we consider individuals as our *primary intangible resource* (capacity to act-view). However, in more explicit accounts of knowledge (data & information-views) it is rather underpart.

Thus, in terms of KM, we can probably focus on the "soft side" of the field that follows the idea that knowledge sharing and creation, and respectively the creation of organizational knowledge is a dynamic process between individuals and the organization (Nonaka, 1995). According to Nonaka and Takeuchi, the root for knowledge creation lies in the transformation of tacit into explicit knowledge and vice versa. They describe the transformation process through a four-phased model (known as the SECI knowledge spiral) that contains knowledge exchange from tacit to tacit, tacit to explicit, explicit to explicit and explicit to tacit knowledge. Yet, an organization, according to Nonaka and Takeuchi, "*cannot create knowledge by itself*" (Nonaka, 1995 p.72), but requires individual *tacit* knowledge for that purpose. Their understanding of tacit knowledge is based on the original conceptual thoughts of Michael Polanyi (Polanyi and Sen, 2009).

Taylor and Hansen (2005) on the other hand argue that aesthetics in organizations finds its strongest voice in exactly that tacit knowledge coined by Polanyi which Nonaka and Takeuchi see as a basis for knowledge creation in the firm. In fact, Taylor and Hansen (2005) mention tacit knowledge when they speak about aesthetics as an epistemology. They state that tacit knowing corresponds roughly to sensory/aesthetic knowing and is commonly juxtaposed to explicit/rational knowledge.

Going into detail in Polanyi's original argument, he describes that tacit knowledge roots in sensory perceptions that, altogether, elicit a particular meaning. However, only through that elicited meaning, we can even think

about what perceptions elicited that meaning, an insight that manifests in the famous quote that “*we can know more than we can tell*”. To illustrate that point, Polanyi gives the example of humans’ ability to recognize physiognomy on a face: we can recognize it, but it is almost impossible to tell what led us to the perception. Furthermore, only through the meaning i.e. the particular facial expression and mood, can we even think about the features of the perception that made us perceive that particular meaning (Polanyi and Sen, 2009, pp.12). The same concept applies in many other activities that involve skill or ability, from someone riding a bicycle to a surgeon performing a complicated surgical procedure. This ultimately leads to the conclusion that “our body is the ultimate instrument of all our external knowledge [...]. And, we are *relying* on our awareness of contacts of our body with things outside for *attending* to these things.” (Polanyi and Sen, 2009, pp.15).

Yet, identifying the features that led us to some particular meaning is usually not an end in itself but a means to understand the comprehensive entity they constitute. Put differently, according to Polanyi, it would make no sense to analyze every entity towards its constitutive elements in all detail. Doing so, could even destroy our tacit (holistic) understanding of complex matters (Polanyi and Sen, 2009, p.18).

This line of argumentation explains why tacit knowledge is so important for organizations - because it enables the understanding organizational issues in their full complexity. It allows an understanding of situations, contexts or problems that can hardly be depicted in a reductionist, analytical manner let alone be understood or solved through analytical means. Aesthetics, in that regard, hits exactly the same notch as it emphasizes the holistic meaning that arises from all sensory perceptions.

Strati (2016), coming from the field of organizational aesthetics explains the roots of aesthetics in a philosophical sense as (a) an antithesis to Cartesian rationality, (b) the sensitive judgement that evaluates feelings etc., and (c) the aesthetic judgement of something being perfect or imperfect (taste). To all of which the act of perceiving is a central element. He argues that aesthetics in organizations takes into account (amongst others) the importance of the human person in the process of organizational knowledge, the corporeality of personal knowledge in organizational life and the socially constructed character of aesthetic knowing in organizational settings. Thus, for organizational learning – and this will also apply to KM – Strati (2016) argues that the generation of knowledge cannot rely solely on the translation of all knowledge into “cognitive knowledge” (explicit knowledge in KM terms). Instead (citing Polanyi) one should take account of tacit knowledge, that is the awareness of knowing how to do something without being able to tell why or how, for which the aesthetic understanding is fundamental. Strati then proceeds to identify tacit knowledge as the common ground between Organizational Learning and organizational aesthetics (Strati, 2016).

To conclude the section on tacit knowledge and organizational aesthetics, we can see a considerable overlap of the two fields. Yet, to my personal understanding, from the literature, it is not becoming entirely clear which relation the concepts actually have. Indeed, both concepts are concerned with inexplicable types of knowledge that require subjective, personal experience and after all appear very similar. What aesthetics adds however, is the criteria for judgement on the basis of organizational knowledge which is “*personal and collectively socially constructed at once*” (Strati, 2016, p. 4). This insight takes into account, the socially constructed taste of individuals who prefer some things, situations, styles, appearances, etc. over others on the basis of their previous experiences in society as such. Thus, especially *organizational* aesthetics adds a more collective flavor to tacit knowledge in an organizational context (Erden, von Krogh and Nonaka, 2008), making it an interesting concept to address calls from contemporary KM ideas, like those illustrated in the introduction.

4. Findings and Conclusion

The first insight we can draw from this brief overview, is that the more mechanistic the definition of knowledge, and with it the more technical the management of such knowledge is, the fewer are the points of contact with aesthetics. This is no surprise, because when knowledge is seen as *access to information* or *personalized information on the basis of structured data*, it is well feasible to make it explicit and describe its structure. Such definitions of knowledge put less emphasize on the tacit component of knowledge that is highly subjective and inexpressible.

Conversely, the strongest tie between KM and (organizational) aesthetics can be found in those approaches that assert high value to individual, subjective knowledge.

When looking deeper into the notion of individual knowledge, in particular tacit knowledge, we find that this knowledge roots in subjective personal experience, which is very similar to, and in part also building on the concepts of aesthetic perception and organizational aesthetics. From the descriptions and definitions in the literature, the concepts appear even so similar that it may be questionable, what the actual differences are.

This would be the first interesting area for further research that I would like to point out. So far, from my experience with both fields, my assumption is that conceptually, tacit knowing and aesthetic knowing appear almost identical in its structure and epistemic roots. However, the difference seems to lie in the aims of the concepts: (organizational) aesthetics is much more about a holistic perspective on organizations (Strati, 1992) and their meaning to us. Aesthetics also has a different “flavor” in that it is about the coherence of a given system (be it a thing, a visual image, a situation or an organization as a whole). This includes the element of connection that manifests in the feeling of ‘*belonging to*’ a system instead of just being *in* a system (Ramirez, 1991). Tacit knowing on the other hand has less of a systemic orientation but rather addresses the individual *knowing* of skills and the capacity to find and solve ill-defined problems.

By any means, if we seek to expand our knowledge of organizations in general, and also facets of particular organizations, we might want to consider aesthetics as an additional source for valuable insight. The knowledge that aesthetics promises, concerns in particular knowledge about belonging to a system or what fits or does not fit into a given system, context or organizations respectively.

From the perspective of KM we could inquire into aesthetics by asking (for example) questions about how to implement a particular aesthetic, how to describe such an aesthetic, how to sensitize people for aesthetic perceptions or how to enable meaningful experience in an organizational context. Knowledge derived from aesthetics could be especially beneficial to deal with uncertainty (Kerschbaum, 2022) and to develop an organizations intention, vision (Nonaka, 1995; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 2021) but also to influence an organizations shared frame of reference to facilitate change (White, 1996).

Yet, the big question in the end is, whether these questions are (still) in the scope of KM, and will hence be an area of interest in the future. Is it just the *management* of knowledge (providing ideal solutions for a mostly given problem) and the focus on making knowledge tangible, or is it rather about *facilitating* holistic knowledge to lead innovation – the appreciation of a sense of *responsibility for the pursuit of a hidden truth, which demands his services for revealing it* (Polanyi and Sen, 2009, p. 25), that drives the field of KM in the future?

References

- Akgün, A.E., Keskin, H. and Kırçovalı, S.Y. (2019) ‘Organizational wisdom practices and firm product innovation’, *Review of Managerial Science*, 13(1), pp. 57–91.
- Alavi, M. and Leidner, D.E. (2001) ‘Knowledge management and knowledge management systems: Conceptual foundations and research issues’, *MIS quarterly*, pp. 107–136.
- Baldessarelli, G., Stigliani, I. and Elsbach, K.D. (2022) ‘The Aesthetic Dimension of Organizing: A Review and Research Agenda’, *Academy of Management Annals*, 16(1), pp. 217–257.
- Barnard, C.I. (1938) *The functions of the executive*. Harvard University Press.
- Baumgarten, A.G. (1988) *Theoretische Aesthetik: Die grundlegenden Abschnitte aus der ‘Aesthetica’ (1750/58). Lateinisch - Deutsch*. Felix Meiner Verlag.
- Bolisani, E. and Bratianu, C. (2017) ‘Knowledge strategy planning: an integrated approach to manage uncertainty, turbulence, and dynamics’, *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 21(2), pp. 233–253.
- Bratianu, C. (2015) *Organizational knowledge dynamics: Managing knowledge creation, acquisition, sharing, and transformation: Managing knowledge creation, acquisition, sharing, and transformation*. IGI Global.
- Bratianu, C. (2017) ‘Emotional and spiritual knowledge’, *Knowledge and project management: A shared approach to improve performance*, pp. 69–91.
- Creed, W.E.D., Taylor, S.S. and Hudson, B.A. (2020) ‘Institutional Aesthetics: Embodied Ways of Encountering, Evaluating, and Enacting Institutions’, *Organization Studies*, 41(3), pp. 415–435.
- Davenport, T.H. (2015) ‘Whatever Happened to Knowledge Management?’, *The Wall Street Journal*, p. 2.
- Down, J., Sternberg, R.J. and Horvath, J.A. (2000) ‘Tacit Knowledge in Professional Practice: Researcher and Practitioner Perspectives’, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 45(1), p. 170.
- Durst, S. (2021) ‘A plea for responsible and inclusive knowledge management at the world level’, *VINE Journal of Information and Knowledge Management Systems* [Preprint].
- Erden, Z., von Krogh, G. and Nonaka, I. (2008) ‘The quality of group tacit knowledge’, *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 17(1), pp. 4–18.
- Ewenstein, B. and Whyte, J. (2007) ‘Beyond Words: Aesthetic Knowledge and Knowing in Organizations’, *Organization Studies*, 28(5), pp. 689–708.
- Flowers, B.S. et al. (2011) *Presence: Exploring profound change in people, organizations and society*. Hachette UK.
- Gagliardi, P. (2006) ‘Exploring the Aesthetic Side of Organizational Life’, in *The SAGE Handbook of Organization Studies*. 2nd edn. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, pp. 701–724.
- Grant, R.M. (1996) ‘Toward a knowledge-based theory of the firm: Knowledge-based Theory of the Firm’, *Strategic Management Journal*, 17(S2), pp. 109–122.

- Hansen, H., Ropo, A. and Sauer, E. (2007) 'Aesthetic leadership', *The Leadership Quarterly*, 18(6), pp. 544–560.
- Kaiser, A. (2023) 'Spiritual Knowledge Management: Proposing a new approach and defining a Research Agenda', *Proceedings of the 56th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences. Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS)* [Preprint].
- Kaiser, A. and Peschl, M.F. (2020) 'The role of self-transcending knowledge in Senge's understanding of learning organizations. Towards an interdisciplinary taxonomy of self-transcending knowledge', *The Learning Organization*, 27(6), pp. 527–539.
- Kerschbaum, C. (2022) 'A beautiful strategy – bridging the gap between the (aesthetic) perception and (strategic) realization of the organizations purpose', *VINE Journal of Information and Knowledge Management Systems* [Preprint].
- Nonaka, I. (1995) 'The Knowledge-Creating Company', in *The Economic Impact of Knowledge*. Elsevier, pp. 175–187.
- Nonaka, I. and Takeuchi, H. (2021) 'Humanizing strategy', *Long Range Planning*, p. 102070.
- Polanyi, M. and Sen, A. (2009) *The tacit dimension*. Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press.
- Ramirez, R. (1991) *The beauty of social organization (Studies of action and organization)*. Accedo Verlagsgesellschaft.
- Rocha, R.G., Kragulj, F. and Pinheiro, P. (2022) 'Practical wisdom, the (not so) secret ingredient for responsible knowledge management', *VINE Journal of Information and Knowledge Management Systems* [Preprint].
- Scharmer, C.O. (2007) *Theory U. Leading from the future as it emerges. The social technology of presencing*. Cambridge, MA: Society for Organizational Learning.
- Shrivastava, P. et al. (2017) 'Aesthetic Rationality in Organizations: Toward Developing a Sensitivity for Sustainability', *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 53(3), pp. 369–411.
- Spender, J.-C. (1996) 'Making knowledge the basis of a dynamic theory of the firm', *Strategic Management Journal*, 17(S2), pp. 45–62.
- Strati, A. (1992) 'Aesthetic Understanding of Organizational Life', *The Academy of Management Review*, 17(3), p. 568.
- Strati, A. (1999) *Organization and aesthetics*. London ; Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Strati, A. (2016) 'Knowing in practice: aesthetic understanding and tacit knowledge', in *Knowing in organizations: A practice-based approach*. Routledge, pp. 53–75.
- Sveiby, K. (2001) 'A knowledge-based theory of the firm to guide in strategy formulation', *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, 2(4), pp. 344–358.
- Taylor, S.S. and Hansen, H. (2005) 'Finding Form: Looking at the Field of Organizational Aesthetics', *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(6), pp. 1211–1231.
- White, D.A. (1996) 'It's Working Beautifully!' Philosophical Reflections on Aesthetics and Organization Theory', *Organization*, 3(2), pp. 195–208.