

# A Systematic Literature Review on GenAI Through the Lens of Corporate Sustainability

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**Abstract:** Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is a subset of AI capable of autonomously producing new content in the form of text, audio, video and code based on previously learned data patterns. As modern organizations face increasing pressure to align with environmental, social, and governance (ESG) objectives, GenAI, due to its enormous potential is reshaping organizational processes, presents an unprecedented opportunity for fostering sustainable practices related knowledge. In this context, this study aims to critically review the existing literature on the topic with the aim of analysing its potential to support social responsibility. Specifically, this Systematic Literature Review (SLR) examines the intersection of GenAI, Knowledge management (KM), and sustainability, emphasizing the role of Green Knowledge Management (GKM), a framework that integrates environmentally conscious knowledge practices into corporate strategy. Through an extensive review of peer-reviewed articles, four key thematic areas emerge: (1) sector-specific application of GenAI for sustainability, (2) Ethical and regulatory concerns on GenAI implementation, (3) GenAI in promoting organizational knowledge and innovation and (4) The role GenAI in corporate social responsibility (CSR). The result of the review indicate that GenAI is increasingly emerging as a catalyst for sustainability. Its role in promoting green innovation and its capacity to facilitate the exchange of knowledge regarding sustainable practices provide crucial support for firms pursuing ESG compliance. Despite these benefits, considerable concerns remain, especially regarding the ethical use of GenAI. This study contributes to the ongoing discussion on the role of GenAI as key enablers of sustainability. By providing a systematization of the research domain, it not only provides a comprehensive understanding of its current applications but also indicates present gaps and opportunities. In addition, it outlines future directions and serves as foundation for further empirical research on the use of GenAI to promote responsible corporate practices.

**keywords:** Artificial intelligence (AI), Generative AI, Green knowledge management (GKM), Sustainability, Corporate social responsibility (CSR), Systematic literature review (SLR)

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## 1. Introduction

Knowledge is essential to the functioning of organizations and represents a well-established source of competitive advantage in the modern context. The ability to effectively manage both internal and external sources of information often determines whether organizations can successfully achieve their strategic objectives. Knowledge Management (KM) is the discipline concerned with the acquisition, sharing, and application of knowledge within organizational contexts. Numerous studies have demonstrated that well-conducted KM practices have a positive influence on both operational efficiency and innovation performance. In parallel, the increasing consumption of natural resources and the accelerating pace of climate change have intensified pressure from policymakers and public opinion, urging organizations to make sustainable choices regarding their operations. As sustainability becomes a core organizational imperative, the scope of KM has gradually expanded to include knowledge specifically related to environmentally conscious practices. This body of knowledge, known as Green Knowledge Management (GKM), is now recognized as a strategic organizational resource (Sahoo et al., 2023). GKM supports sustainable development by guiding organizations in acquiring, sharing, and applying eco-knowledge. In doing so, it fosters green innovation and contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Wu and Gao, 2022). Moreover, since KM is closely tied to firm performance, the adoption of GKM practices has been shown to positively influence organizational environmental outcomes and innovation capacity (Abbas and Khan, 2023). This shift is vital to ensure business competitive advantage guaranteed by the effective use of the knowledge in this dynamic environment. In the last two decade the scientific discussion on artificial intelligence (AI) has reach extraordinary dimension thanks to the inner revolutionary potential of this new technology. With the advent of Machine learning (ML) algorithms, AI-based systems became capable of learn from a previously collected data and improve their outputs. However, only in recent year, with the emergence of deep learning (DL) techniques such as neural networks, generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has emerged as a specific field within AI domain. GenAI is a technology able to autonomously produce text, video, audio and code starting from patterner learned in previous elaborated data. From a technological standpoint, it is made possible thanks to enabling technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), which collects real-world data, and big data infrastructure that supports large-scale processing. One of the most prominent examples of GenAI are Large Language Models (LLMs), which

are logical structures using neural networks and trained on vast quantities of data mainly taken from the web (Raiaan et al., 2024). These models are currently applied across a wide variety of task, from software development to literary composition. Due to its powerful capabilities, GenAI has captured growing interest from many fields, specifically business management experts have considered its application within organizational processes. Specifically, GenAI has emerged as a key enable helping companies in addressing modern context complexities, increasing their competitiveness and efficiency. Given its role in supporting GKM practices, this powerful tool is promising to support organizations in effectively aligning their process and management practices with sustainable development goals (SDGs). By supporting organizations in acquiring, processing and applying sustainability-related knowledge, GenAI can serve as a valuable tool for enhancing sustainable practice. However, there is an urgent need for understanding how to efficiently integrate its use in organizations and the discussion regarding how to use this technology for the best is still on debate. Despite the growing academic interest on the topic, comprehensive systematic reviews focusing on the intersection of GenAI, knowledge management and sustainability-oriented practices remain scarce. While other studies provide a broad overview of the technological capabilities and emerging ethical considerations of GenAI, it does not delve into its implications for corporate sustainability. In this scenario, this work aims at critically review the extant literature in order to offer a novel contribution by exploring how GenAI is not only reshaping organizational processes but also emerging as a catalyst for sustainability and social responsibility. The resulting thematic framing indicates GenAI as a tool for enabling organizations to both create and disseminate sustainability-oriented knowledge.

## 2. Methodology

A systematic review is a method for identifying and analysing all pertinent literature related to a specific research domain. This methodology is characterised by specific phases that encompass the processes of gathering, organising, and evaluating literature within a review area (Petticrew and Roberts, 2006). Thanks to its scientific rigour, a systematic literature review (SLR) is a rigorous and relevant methodology through which is possible to identify relevant insights which further enhance comprehension, aid in detecting research trends, and highlight new avenues for future research within a specific topic. An SLR provides an empirical foundation that prevents the omission of pivotal articles and mitigates researcher bias (Tranfield et al., 2003). Specifically, the present study employs a methodology structured on a four-step process shown in figure 1.

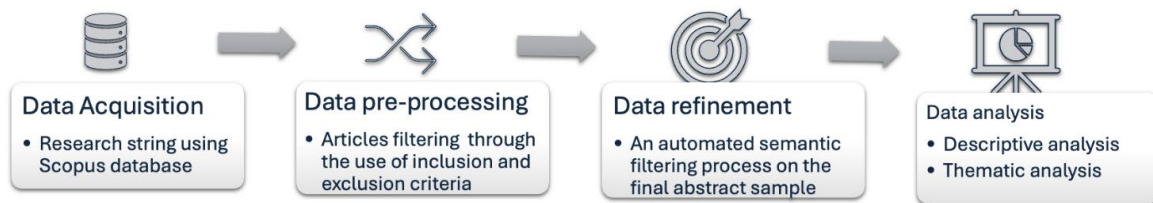


Figure 1: Methodological steps

### 2.1 Material Search

The data for SLR was collected from the Scopus database, selected due to its comprehensive indexing of peer-reviewed literature across multiple disciplines. The search strategy combined keywords related to sustainability, knowledge and artificial intelligence. Specifically, the following search string was used: ( TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "sustainability" OR "corporate social responsibility" OR "CSR" OR "ESG" ) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "knowledge" OR "green knowledge" ) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "Artificial intelligence" OR "AI" OR "LLMs" OR "DL" OR "ML" OR "Generative AI" OR "GenAI" ) ). This query yielded 1657 items.

### 2.2 Data Pre-Processing

To reduce the dataset to a manageable and analytically robust sample, a multi-stage screening procedure was adopted. This included both automated text analysis and manual validation steps. Both exclusion and inclusion criteria were utilised to enhance the sample quality. As per exclusion criteria, firstly, only peer-reviewed journal articles published in English were included into the final sample (Secundo et al., 2020), the application of this filter reduced the sample to 643 items. Second, with the aim of finding a balance between relevance and completeness, it has been set a threshold for the starting year to 2015. Starting from this year both AI and CSR offered a more meaningful contributions, when sustainability, ESG, CSR and AI maturity started to converge. In addition, an inclusion criterion was introduced to improve the accuracy and validity of the procedure, minimising the risk of excluding any relevant articles within the domain. The study specifically employs snowball sampling,

incorporated highly cited publications from the raw sample that were not part of the primary data collected. This validation criterion allowed the authors to identify and get important papers cited in the literature that were excluded from the chosen databases and keyword search (Shashi et al., 2021). The result produced a total of 553 papers.

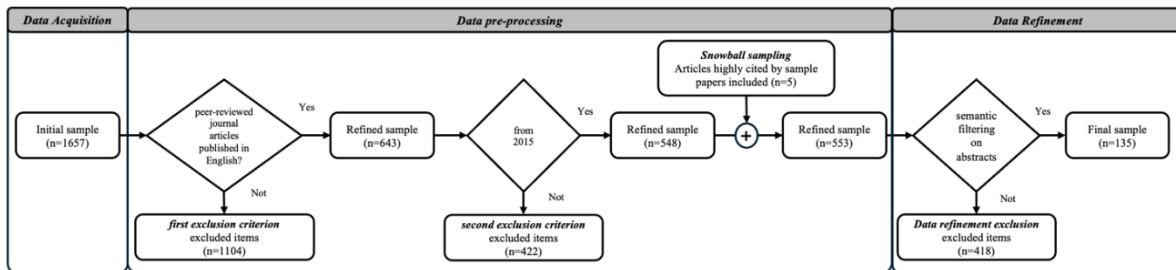
### 2.3 Data Refinement

A subsequent filtering step was employed. For evaluating the abstract eligibility, an automated semantic filtering process was developed using Python. This process involved scanning each abstract for the presence of keywords aligned with the aim of the present work. Abstracts were retained only if they satisfied all three inclusion dimensions and were free from exclusion triggers. This approach enabled the objective reduction of the dataset while ensuring thematic relevance. A codebook, shown in table 2, was used to ensure transparency and replicability of the process.

**Table 1: Codebook employed in data analysis phase for automatic filtering the abstracts**

Code	Criteria	Definition
IN-1	GenAI Relevance	Mentions of ChatGPT, LLMs, or related generative technologies.
IN-2	Sustainability/CSR Focus	References to CSR, ESG, sustainability, or green knowledge.
IN-3	Organizational Relevance	Includes terms related to knowledge management, innovation, or strategy.
EX-1	Technical-Only Focus	Focuses solely on model training or optimization without societal context.
EX-2	Non-Organizational Domain	Discusses creative arts or entertainment without CSR implications.
EX-3	No Abstract or Unclear	Lacks a sufficient or informative abstract for analysis.

After automatic filtering, all abstract classifications have been manually revised and validated by authors. Specifically, those abstract not classified by the algorithms have been deeply analysed and manually filtered. This process resulted in a total reviewed sample of 135 records containing conceptual or practical insights into the intersection of Generative AI, sustainability and organizational knowledge. These articles were subsequently analysed through thematic analysis methodology and classified into four thematic clusters according with their focus.



**Figure 2: Articles selection process**

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Descriptive Results

The present section briefly illustrates the descriptive results emerged from the analysis of the sample. Specifically, Figure 2 shows the articles distribution over time. As expected, there is a growing interest on the topic as evidenced by the increasing number of articles over the observation period. Figure 3 highlights papers geographical distribution. Cina and United States lead the ranking with respectively 15 and 12 articles.

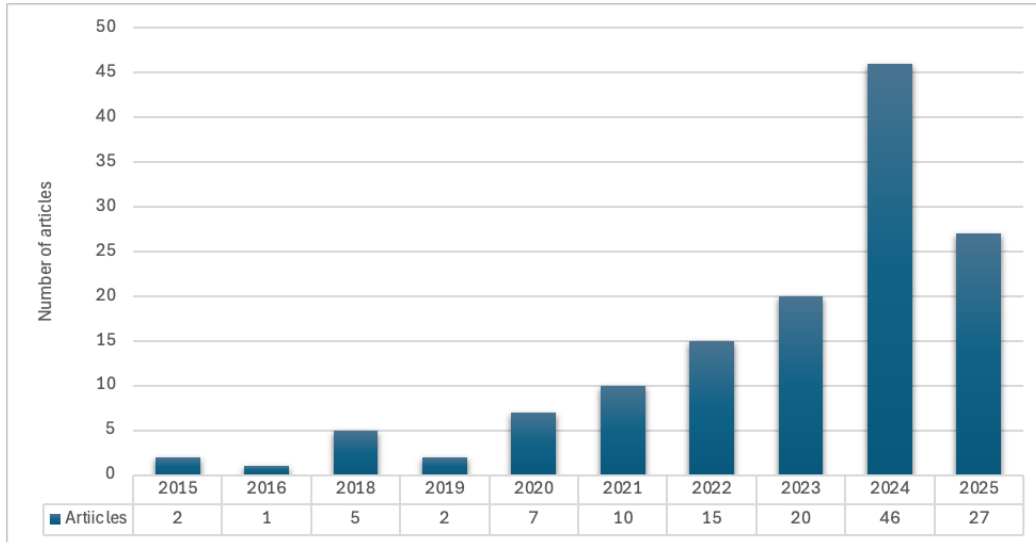


Figure 3: Articles distribution over time

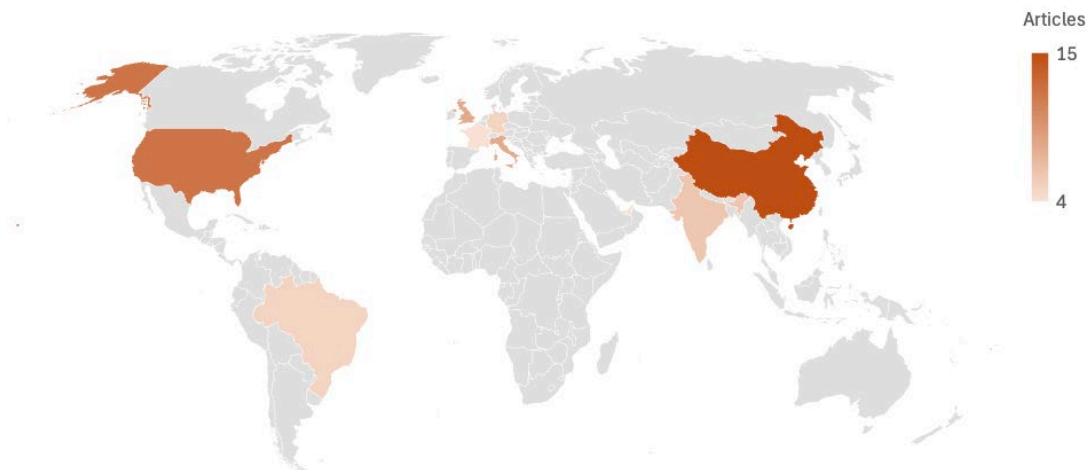


Figure 4: Articles distribution over Countries

Table 2 shows the most relevant contributions in terms of total citations while table 3 summarizes the top 10 contributing journals considering the number of published articles. The sample of 135 articles was published in 93 different source journals indicating a high level of dispersion of the literature across many sources.

Table 2: Most impactful papers in terms of citation received

Paper	DOI	TC
DI VAIO A, 2020, J BUS RES	10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.08.019	628
PHAM A-D, 2020, J CLEAN PROD	10.1016/j.jclepro.2020.121082	246
HOLZINGER A, 2023, NEW BIOTECHNOL	10.1016/j.nbt.2023.02.001	183
AL-SHARAFI MA, 2023, INTERACT LEARN ENVIRON	10.1080/10494820.2022.2075014	93
ABBAS S, 2020, IEEE ACCESS	10.1109/ACCESS.2020.2976452	81
FRANK B, 2021, J CLEAN PROD	10.1016/j.jclepro.2020.125242	76
ALSHAHRIANI A, 2023, INT J DATA NETW SCI	10.5267/j.ijdns.2023.6.010	64
EL-ADAWAY I, 2015, J PROF ISSUES ENG EDUC PRACT	10.1061/(ASCE)EI.1943-5541.00208	59
YUN JJ, 2016, SUSTAINABILITY	10.3390/su8080797	58
OUAFIQ EM, 2022, SUSTAINABLE ENERGY TECHNOL ASSESS	10.1016/j.seta.2022.102093	52

**Table 3: Top 10 most productive source**

Sources	Articles
SUSTAINABILITY (SWITZERLAND)	22
IEEE ACCESS	5
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF DATA AND NETWORK SCIENCE	4
JOURNAL OF CLEANER PRODUCTION	4
TECHNOLOGICAL FORECASTING AND SOCIAL CHANGE	3
BUSINESS STRATEGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT	2
COMPUTERS AND ELECTRONICS IN AGRICULTURE	2
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMAN-COMPUTER INTERACTION	2
JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT	2
SCIENTIFIC REPORTS	2

### 3.2 Thematic Analysis

To synthesize the findings from the systematic literature review, the selected articles were classified into four main thematic clusters that reflect the emerging intersections between GenAI, sustainability and corporate responsibility.

#### *Theme 1: sector-specific application of GenAI for sustainability*

The integration of Generative AI (GenAI) across various sectors is increasingly transforming business operations, not only enhancing efficiency but also aligning with CSR objectives. This is true in a wide variety of sector. For instance, in communication and digital interactions, chatbots are improving access to public services, particularly in healthcare and public administration (Alia et al., 2024) where these technologies contribute to inclusive access to essential services. Moreover, AI-powered toxic content detection systems enhance digital safety and support businesses in fostering responsible communication environments, without any doubt a key aspect of corporate governance in the digital economy (Babakov et al., 2024). In education, GenAI plays a critical role in democratizing knowledge access. Its use promotes educational equity and helps in bridging educational gaps by offering personalized learning tools which aligns with CSR initiatives focused on social development (Alrayes et al., 2024). This aspect can be particularly beneficial for underprivileged communities (Diab Idris et al., 2024) given that this tools aligning with CSR principles of transparency, accountability, and fairness (Gallent Torres et al., 2023). In healthcare sector, GenAI is being employing in enhancing both patient care, with the use of social chatbots for geriatric care (Blavette et al., 2024), and ethical medical practices through the detection of social determinants of health for improving social well-being (Gabriel et al., 2024). In the retail sector, GenAI enhanced sustainable supply chain management is enabling companies to optimize logistics, thereby reducing waste. Similarly, in tourism GenAI-powered customer service automation is supporting companies in implementing eco-friendly practices (Wang and Zhang, 2024). As underlined by many studies, the effective integration of GenAI within organizations can help in aligning their business strategies with CSR principles. Technological advancements should contribute not only to efficiency but also to corporate responsibility. Despite all the benefits, GenAI adoption forces companies to implement robust governance frameworks to mitigate AI biases and promote transparency in AI decision-making processes. Future research should explore sector-specific framework to help businesses in using GenAI for CSR-driven innovation, ensuring that AI technologies contribute to both corporate success and societal well-being.

#### *Theme 2: Ethical and regulatory concerns on GenAI implementation*

The rapid advancements in Generative AI (GenAI) have prompted significant regulatory and governance discussions. From the literature emerges that policymakers and scholars still strive to ensure responsible deployment of these technologies. A key concern in AI governance is the need for strategic redirection in both policy and business practices to balance technological innovation with ethical constraints. Scholars argue that the business environment surrounding AI must be restructured to ensure that AI applications contribute positively to economic and social development, rather than exacerbating inequalities or ethical dilemmas (Etemad, 2023). GenAI emerges as a game-changer for the future. This consideration plays a pivotal role in regulatory discussions. Despite the unprecedented benefits, scholars emphasize the need for regulatory framework that introduce adaptive policy to prevent technology misalignment with social welfare. AI bias,

misinformation and privacy violations (Amador Nelke et al., 2024) are the main issue concerning the risk of using GenAI. For this reason, the integration of GenAI in decision-making processes within corporate structures necessitates clear guidelines. The effective integration of such disruptive technology will make the difference between human using GenAI and human replacement (Heaton et al., 2024). In addition, to the date policymakers are facing the complex challenge of clearly defining GenAI boundaries for its responsible use. Several issues arise, particularly concerning data privacy, intellectual property and accountability in GenAI outputs. Overall, there is an increasing emphasis on ensuring that AI aligns with CSR objectives. The regulatory landscape of GenAI is rapidly evolving, driven by the need to reconcile technological potential with ethical and legal responsibilities. Future research and policymaking should focus on developing dynamic regulatory approaches that keep pace with AI advancements while safeguarding corporate responsibility, fairness, and long-term sustainability.

*Theme 3: GenAI in promoting organizational knowledge and innovation*

A recurrent theme in the literature is how GenAI support within organization goes beyond the mere task automation acting as a catalyst for radical organizational reinvention. It enhances data-driven decision-making and promote more sustainable operations. In few words, GenAI emerges as powerful driver of both innovation and knowledge transformation. GenAI, with its potential to redefine knowledge production and dissemination, unlocks entirely new pathways of value creation by reducing knowledge fragmentation within organizations (Wu et al., 2024). Some studies further explore this frontier by investigating the possibility to capture and simulate tacit organizational knowledge (Fraile et al., 2023), and the reconfiguration of the entire KM processes with the aim of creating new epistemologies (A Mooradian, 2024). Considering its knowledge dependence, customer engagement is among the domains that benefit the most from GenAI integration. Thanks to digital avatars (Oliveira et al., 2024) and GenAI-powered feedback systems (Leong et al., 2024), this novel technology translates knowledge into interactive experiences and promote CSR by enhancing inclusivity and customer-oriented innovation (Tafesse and Wien, 2024). Many studies highlight GenAI relevance in improving internal knowledge evolution within learning organizations by bridging knowledge gap (Schreiber and Schreiber, 2024) and fostering investment in emerging economies (Sheldon and Kwon, 2023). GenAI seems to be something more than a simply technological advancement. It holds transformative potential to change the way organizations innovate and learn. For this reason, as the literature reveals, those organizations that successfully integrate GenAI within their strategic knowledge systems are better positioned in the complex modern scenario.

*Theme 4: The role GenAI in corporate social responsibility*

From the reference literature emerge both opportunities and challenges in integrating GenAI's use, and its impact on KM practices, for CSR. Some authors underline the need for a proactive approach to GenAI development. Aseeva (2023), for instance, proposes to embed ethical foresights directly into technological systems design process. This should guarantee its smooth integration with governance frameworks that prioritize long-term societal resilience. Other scholars also underline the environmental impact of AI systems computational cost and carbon footprint (Barbierato and Gatti, 2024). From an industry innovation perspective, many research are exploring how GenAI can contribute in purposefully employing green knowledge to foster more sustainable models of corporate value creation (Eisenreich et al., 2024). This trend could reshape open innovation ecosystems. Improvements in managing the internal and external knowledge regarding sustainable practices with the help of GenAI could represent a crucial tool in promoting green product development and foster new form of eco-innovation. This is particularly true for high impact sectors, such as automation, where GenAI plays a pivotal role in supporting organizational transitions toward sustainable business models (Gómez Gandía et al., 2025), and construction, where GenAI-powered predictive models can accelerate the development and adoption of eco-friendly technologies (Feng et al., 2024). Collectively, these contributions signal the shift from potential to actionable strategies in the GenAI integration for CSR. What clearly emerges from the literature is the imperative to sustain a responsible use of this powerful tool. The optimization of operational efficiencies must align with the broader values of social equity and ethical governance.

#### **4. Discussion**

Despite their differences, the four thematic cluster emerged from the review collectively illustrate GenAI's transformative power for modern organizations and its possible role in supporting CSR. Across many sectors, from the healthcare to tourism, GenAI has shown its potential in fostering environmental knowledge sharing. The alignment of its application to ESG goals is seen as both technological and ethical imperative. Particularly, the GenAI's pivotal role besides in its capacity to transform knowledge systems which is highly relevant for those firms striving to innovate sustainably. GenAI produce by analysing large dataset and generating insights that supports eco-innovation is enabling synthesis, generation and dissemination of environmental knowledge. In

this view, it represents a mean to support green-oriented decision-making rather than a mere digital tool. While GenAI integration within organization offer significant benefits, it also introduces many regulatory and ethical issues. Algorithm bias, intellectual property and a lack of transparency in AI decisions could undermine stakeholder trust. For these reasons the introduction of this disruptive technology must be carefully implemented and should be guided by solid regulatory framework proposed by governance structures for ensuring its compliance with societal values.

*Future directions*

Although the increasing academic interest on GenAI, the result of this review shows that most part of the literature remains conceptual or technologically focused. Few studies provide empirical contributions to the role of GenAI on the SRC. In addition, the metrics for evaluating its impact are still underdeveloped. Main future directions emerged from the gap found in literature have been collected and summarized in the table 4.

**Table 4: Future research directions**

Future research directions	Description	Research questions
<b>Practical implementation</b>	How to integrate GenAI within organizational knowledge processes is a complex task. Future research could provide a contribution for sector-based framework that guide its strategic integration into sustainability practices	RQ: How can sector-specific frameworks support the strategic implementation of GenAI in sustainability-focused knowledge management?
<b>Cross-functional synergies</b>	Considering GenAI transformative potential on knowledge systems, future directions could investigate on cross-functional synergies across departments to drive responsible innovations.	RQ: In what ways can GenAI facilitate cross-departmental collaboration to enhance responsible innovation within organizations?
<b>Performance indicators</b>	Defining and validating performance indicators for measuring GenAI's contribution to environmental, social and governance outcomes is a must for rigorously demonstrate its importance in CSR practices.	RQ: What are the most effective indicators for evaluating GenAI's impact on environmental, social, and governance performance?
<b>AI governance models</b>	As previously said, the integration of GenAI within organization must be carefully implemented. At organizational level, governance guidelines are absolutely essential in managing the risk while preserving GenAI innovation potential for CSR. Future research could offer precious insight on how to develop regulatory frameworks.	RQ: How can governance models be designed to ensure ethical use of GenAI while promoting innovation aligned with CSR goals?

**5. Conclusion**

This study offers a comprehensive and timely contribution to the growing discourse on the role of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) in advancing corporate sustainability through the effectively employment of the green related knowledge. By conducting a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), the research provides a structured synthesis of how GenAI intersects with knowledge management, sustainability goals, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The findings confirm that GenAI represents a potential catalyst for responsible innovation and green knowledge management across sectors. However, despite its related opportunities, it also introduces several challenges. Developing robust regulatory framework seems to be the key element to balance the desire of embracing its potential and the need of ensuring its alignment with broader human values. Concerning these considerations and in response to the gaps identified in the current literature, this study proposes several areas for future exploration. These include framework development for practical implementation, cross-functional synergies, performance measurement tools and AI governance models tailored to CSR objectives. Ultimately, this review positions GenAI as a crucial element for enhancing green knowledge practices and responsible corporate behaviour.

**Ethical declaration:** Clearance was not required for the research.

**AI declaration:** Generative AI tools were not used in the production or analysis of the empirical data. All interpretations and findings are the result of the authors' critical analysis and are not generated by AI.

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