Exploring the Role of Work Experience in Using Generative AI for Knowledge Management

Tomas Cherkos Kassaneh

University of Padova, Italy

Abstract

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools, such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Copilot, are reshaping Knowledge Management (KM) by enabling automated content generation, advanced knowledge search, interactive question answering, and collaborative processes that transcend traditional boundaries. While their potential is widely discussed in both academic and professional domains (Alavi et al., 2024; Jarrahi et al., 2023; Accenture, 2023; APQC, 2024), limited empirical evidence exists on how GenAI is adopted and used in real work contexts, especially by knowledge workers in fast-evolving industries. This study investigates how software developers use GenAI for knowledge creation, sharing, and problem-solving, and how usage patterns vary with professional experience. A qualitative approach was adopted, involving 21 semi-structured interviews with developers from eight countries, selected through convenience sampling. Guided by knowledge creation theory (SECI model), the interviews explored how GenAI supports core KM processes, decision-making, and learning. Data were transcribed, translated, and thematically analyzed using a structured clustering method to identify commonalities and contrasts. Findings reveal that senior developers employ GenAI for complex, strategic tasks, such as optimizing system design, mentoring, and generating reusable modules, while less experienced developers use it mainly for code generation, debugging, documentation, and quick knowledge lookup. These differences reflect variations in tacit knowledge, confidence, and the ability to critically evaluate AI-generated outputs. The study contributes to KM literature by offering empirical evidence on differentiated GenAI use based on experience level, and provides practical implications for training, tool adoption, and policy design in organizations seeking to maximize the value of GenAI.

Keywords: Generative Artificial Intelligence, Knowledge Management, Work Experience, Software Developers, Interview study.