

Journal of Engineering Research

ISSN 2764-1317

vol. 6, n. 1, 2026

... ARTICLE 7

Acceptance date: 13/02/2026

CONSIDERATIONS ON ISO 30401:2018 AND ITS INTERACTION WITH ISO 9001:2015

Robson Jeremias

PhD candidate in Production Engineering
Universidade Paulista - UNIP
0000-0002-1372-8514

Luiz Alberto Nogueira Machado

Specialist in Leadership and Technology 5.0
PUC RS
0009-0000-8171-3106

Josué Mario de Oliveira

Specialist in People Management
Faculdade Iguaçú
0009-0006-5852-3711

Joel Porto Alves

PhD Candidate in Production Engineering
Universidade Paulista - UNIP
0009-0000-9220-3371

Dircelene Teixeira do Nascimento

Master's Degree in Human Development
Universidade Taubaté - UNITAU
0009-0002-6580-5224

Rafael Aljona Ortega

Master's Degree in Production Engineering
Universidade Paulista - UNIP
0009-0000-7392-9935

Douglas Leonardo de Lima

Master's Degree in Production Engineering
Associação Educacional Nove de Julho - UNI-
NOVE
0000-0002-3868-1222
Info autor



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Denise Normino de Oliveira

MBA in Financial Management
Faculdade Iguacu
0009-0003-6546-1422

Evandro Ferigato

Master's Degree in Administration
Centro Universitário Campo Limpo Paulista -
UNIFACCAMP
0000-0003-2044-1324

Paulo Alexandre Pereira

Master's Degree in Production Engineering
Universidade Paulista - UNIP
0000-0002-4612-9737

Abstract: The Topic Of Knowledge Management Has Been Under Discussion For Several Decades, However, An Iso Standard On The Subject Is Recent, And In An Environment Where There Are Already Several Other Standards, Such As 9001 (Quality), 14001 (Environment), 50001 (Energy), And 45001 (Occupational Health And Safety). The Main Objective Of This Article Is To Analyze Whether An Organization With A Qms – Quality Management System, Based On The Iso 9001:2015 Standard, Could Incorporate And Even Be Certified To Iso 30401:2018 And That This Synergy Could Generate Greater Gains For Its Organizational Management. In This Analysis, A Brief Historical Evaluation Was Made On The Topic And How It Is Addressed In Organizations Through A Literature Review And Collection Of Information From Materials Prepared In The Form Of Scientific Articles And Books On This Subject. It Concludes That The Standard Is Important When Used In Addition To Iso 9001:2015 And/Or Other Standards To Improve Organizational Management.

Keywords: Qms; Organizational Knowledge; Iso 30401:2018; Iso 9001:2015; Knowledge Management

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of human existence on the planet, an evolutionary characteristic of our species (Homo sapiens) that sets us apart from other living beings is undoubtedly our ability to learn through active or passive interaction with our environment. This is undoubtedly one of the conditions that has enabled us to live across the globe today. This characteristic has even allowed us to live in groups and, as a result,

shape and improve social structures, many of which are still in place today due to the knowledge we have acquired, as well as generating behavioral changes.

Thus, throughout our history, we can see the relevance of the knowledge generated and its impact on our lives, whether when we learned to master fire or even to travel into space, confirming the relevance of this wisdom in everyday life and prompting us to ask how it acts in organizations, in addition to the human connection with technology in its application. With regard to business organizations (first, second, and third sectors), it was only after the Industrial Revolution (18th century) that we begin to see, albeit incipient, more objective practices in the application of knowledge management in decision-making to operate companies in the face of internal and/or external adversities in which they were inserted, and it is in this context that, almost 200 years later, studies on this topic would begin to be conducted in universities and research centers around the world.

With the advent of what is known as quality and, more specifically, as QC – Quality Control at the industrial level during the period of the world wars in the first half of the last century, the topic began to be noticed in everyday industrial life, and studies of its role and impact on human life gradually began, as can be seen, for example, in the ideas of Dr. William E. Deming, creator of the Deep Knowledge System, which treats knowledge management as an item for improvement in his book *The New Economy* (DEMING, 1997), aiming to improve not only the products generated, but also the organizational management of companies themselves.

Thus, when the first set of ISO 9000 series standards appeared in 1987, the topic of organizational knowledge began to be addressed globally in a normative model that determined the documentation of work activities and the reporting of results (documented procedures, records, and the like), even though the term knowledge itself was not declared. but as this set of standards became successful, future revisions and other related standards would also emerge.

This subject began to take shape until, in the 2015 revision of the ISO 9000 series, it formally appeared as a normative requirement in clause 7.1.6. Furthermore, in 2018, a specific standard would emerge to address the topic, ISO 30401, confirming the relevance of this subject and its real impact on business management.

Furthermore, although the subject has been developing over time around the world and gaining increasing notoriety in academia and research centers, it is not applied in most companies or is misused due to a lack of understanding or adequate control techniques. Thus, proper study of its applicability may be the differentiating factor for the future of organizations, regardless of their industry, size, and product and/or service provided. Finally, would ISO 30401:2018 bring advantages for managing Organizational Knowledge in companies with a QMS – Quality Management System based on ISO 9001:2015, or would it bring unnecessary work demands?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowledge

The term knowledge is defined in the Aulete dictionary (2011) as an individu-

al's ability to understand, grasp, and comprehend the world around them, which has been an innate condition of human nature since its appearance on our planet.

Thus, if this condition, classified as a human characteristic observed as pointed out by Jean Piaget's epistemology as seen by Taille (2019), means understanding cognitive functioning, a term coined by Jean Piaget to describe what a person goes through in their intellectual development, it is something natural throughout life, but a condition influenced by the social environment that surrounds them, including their interaction. Taille (2019) confirms this idea through Piaget himself, who describes this thought in his 1967 book *Biologie et Connaissance*: "human intelligence only develops in individuals as a result of social interactions, which are generally overlooked" (Piaget, 2019).

This is addressed in greater depth by Lev Vigotski's socio-interactionist theory, which considers human learning as a process of interaction with the general environment that surrounds the individual as a whole throughout their life, as noted by Taille (2019), which was also used by Jean Piaget when refining his lifelong studies on the subject and thus consolidating what would be cognitive development.

This condition is an important prerequisite for understanding the evolution of the human species, its ability to obtain and use acquired knowledge and, with this, to adapt to its environment, as stated by Charles Darwin (2020) in his theory of evolution of species, since the action of adaptation and evolution involves learning and, consequently, the use of knowledge acquired in this process. Thus, as reported by Darwin, this provides what is necessary to

move forward to the next stage of the evolutionary scale, and the knowledge that has been acquired is preserved in our human characteristics.

Therefore, understanding the relationship between human beings and their environment in terms of their biological, emotional, social, and intellectual aspects helps us to understand what knowledge is and its role, its characteristics, how it arises, how it is preserved, its evolution, and how it is shared, in addition to its importance to society.

Knowledge as Science

Throughout human history, knowledge has been seen as a fundamental part of who we are and how we leave our mark in all areas of knowledge, such as the exact sciences, arts, biology, health, and others, as pointed out by professors Nonaka and Takeuchi in their book *The Creation of Knowledge in the Company* (NONAKA and TAKEUCHI, 1997). Thus, it was only towards the end of the last century that academia began to view what was obvious, that is, studying knowledge and its various nuances in relation to human beings and their journey through history on the planet, as something specific.

Even considering its multidisciplinary form for analysis and study, understanding the subject of knowledge and how it occurs is challenging, but once the challenge was set, various researchers have been contributing. It is not necessarily only areas such as psychology and pedagogy that have sought to study and understand this topic, but also many others, given the plurality of the issue and its penetration, however small, into the most diverse existing study agendas. For

example, the role of knowledge in Industry 4.0, given its multidisciplinary nature, is vital for its more adequate understanding, as demonstrated in the book *Knowledge Management and Competitive Intelligence* (JORGE, 2021).

It is worth emphasizing that the initial studies to understand knowledge as we understand it today did not occur within academia, but began with organizations that sought to understand the subject in order to generate a competitive advantage through its management, as seen in the studies by Peter M. Senge (2018), although the topic had already been observed, albeit indirectly, by academia over the years, through the concept of organizational pedagogy, addressed by scholars of the subject, especially in the educational field. This view was used as an important part of understanding this organizational phenomenon that would later become Knowledge Management.

Thus, organizations empirically sought actions on the subject through internal improvements in their processes, until the topic took on another form in academia, something that occurred with relevance in the 1990s with the work of professors Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takeuchi, both from Hitotsubashi University in Japan, in the articles and books they would publish from then on, refining the theory they created and thus providing an understanding of the topic by the corporate world through what they would call *the Knowledge Spiral*.

The knowledge spiral presented by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1996) separates knowledge into tacit and explicit, in a relationship they call knowledge conversion, since this condition is associated with the process of knowledge creation. This condition can be further subdivided into four modes, which

lead to the name of the SECI method: socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization.

Tacit Knowledge

When looking up the origin of the term tacit in the Aulete dictionary (2011), we find the Latin word *tacitus*, which means “silent, not expressed in words,” and thus it can be assumed that when addressing tacit knowledge, we are referring to the knowledge acquired throughout an individual’s life, through their experiences, and therefore something unique to each person.

It is difficult to share this knowledge, given the characteristics of its emergence, in addition to being associated with a person’s *know-how* over time in relation to a portion of their learning acquired in life. This makes it complex to transfer to other people, such as learning to ride a bicycle, as its assimilation is something very individualized.

Explicit Knowledge

When looking up the origin of the term explicit in the Aulete dictionary (2011), we find the Latin word *explicitus*, which means “declared, clear” and, thus, can be manipulated, coded, and even packaged in some type of media. Therefore, because it is formal and easy to express, it can be easily shared.

Using various media such as texts, videos, images, among others, it becomes the most widely used teaching method by various entities and organizations to train people and thus generate, maintain, and improve the knowledge of individuals, which, added to their tacit knowledge, improves their understanding of something.

The Knowledge Spiral

The proposal by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1996) notes the challenge faced by organizations in managing tacit and explicit knowledge in such a way as to extract a clear return applicable to their businesses from this action. As proposed by the professors in the Knowledge Spiral, there are four ways (SECI) to convert it so that it leads to personal learning, which are socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization, which feed into a spiral of continuous improvement, as shown in Figure 1.

Socialization involves transferring tacit knowledge between people, since tacit knowledge is personal and not formalized. Done through personal interaction, it allows knowledge to be shared through experiences, practices, examples, and the like. Externalization converts tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge, where people articulate and express knowledge clearly, using metaphors, analogies, among others, allowing tacit knowledge to be shared with others.

Combination involves gathering and synthesizing explicit knowledge from various combined sources, structured and or-

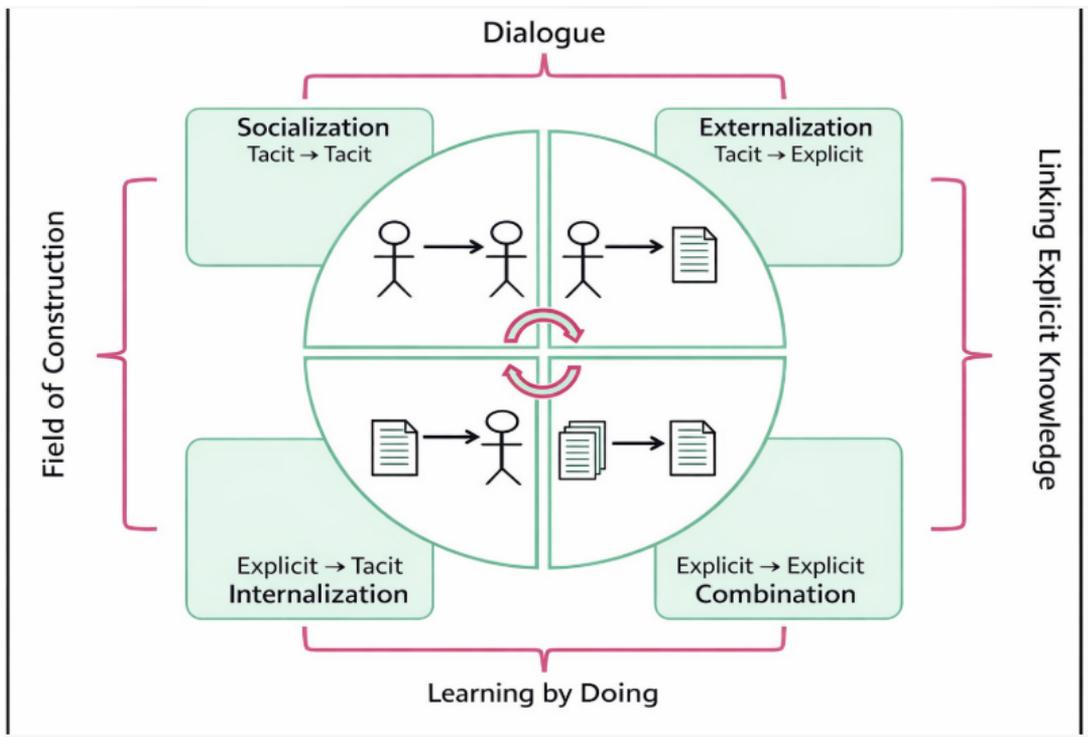


Figure 1 – SECI Model and its Learning Process

Source: Adapted from Nonaka and Takeuchi (1997)

ganized to generate new knowledge, carried out through meetings, documents, or other collaborative means. Finally, internalization involves incorporating explicit knowledge back into individuals' tacit knowledge. At this stage, knowledge is assimilated and internalized through practice and personal experience. Individuals apply the knowledge acquired in their own activities and contexts, transforming it into part of their personal knowledge base. Internalization allows knowledge to be used effectively in performing tasks and solving problems, as pointed out by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1996).

The Role of Knowledge in the ISO Environment

The standards issued by the ISO (International Organization for Standardization) focused on management system practices in various areas such as quality and the environment, among others, require mastery of the specific knowledge that each topic addresses for its proper operation. However, as Nonaka and Takeuchi (1996) point out, knowledge is initially held by people (tacit) and then becomes documented information (explicit).

Therefore, when the first ISO standards eligible for certification appeared (notably the ISO 9000 family from the late 1980s onwards), the focus was on document control, and this continued until the first decade of the 2000s, when the vision of Knowledge Management began to gain strength within the ISO environment, as stated by Costa Neto and Canuto (2010, p. 243) "*The analysis of this synergy allows the implementation of Knowledge Management to be carried out based on the foundation of Quality Management provided by the standard, optimizing resources and building on*

practices already implemented and established in the organization."

Therefore, the standards that would later be developed by the normative working committees would add this thinking as organizational knowledge, thus having both issues explicitly stated in their documents, Information Management and Knowledge Management, the latter being one of the important items for implementing and maintaining the respective management system, when it conducts information in an appropriate manner for an organization, as described in the previous citations on page 248: "*An adequate information system should enable the management of the organization's knowledge, supporting its main purpose and integrating all departments, being capable of disseminating these standards, supporting the improvement of the company's quality, productivity, and competitiveness. To this end, documentation and control are essential in order to evaluate and understand all of the organization's processes, enabling cost reduction and greater financial return.*"

Organizational Knowledge in ISO 9001:2015

As described in ISO/TS 9002:2016, "*Organizational knowledge is the specific knowledge of the organization, which comes from both its collective experience and the individual experience of its people. This knowledge is, or can be used to achieve the organization's quality objectives or its intended results,*" thus clarifying the relevance of this subject for achieving the objectives of the quality management system.

As the standard is applicable to any type of organization, it can be concluded that the issue of organizational knowledge

also follows the same rule, because, as Professor José Aparecido Pereira points out in his book *Knowledge, Management, and Organizations* (PEREIRA, 2018) on page 34, “... *knowledge is seen and interpreted as a tool of paramount importance for the performance of organizations in a globalized economy.*” Thus, the proper use of knowledge favors not only the survival of the company in a competitive world but also the achievement of profit in its area of operation.

Therefore, in terms of product realization and customer satisfaction, it is vital to manage the information used by the organization and all the knowledge available to conduct its operations and, in this sense, to have a systematic approach to implementation, maintenance, and improvement actions, which are vital, as pointed out in the article by Carluccia et al. (2022). Although the ISO 9001:2015 standard provides the minimum support for its management in this regard, it is not enough to obtain the best results in this area. Therefore, the use of a proprietary management system, such as the ISO 30401:2018 standard, may be the most appropriate path, as pointed out in the articles by Carluccia et al. (2022) and Quintero et al. (2022).

ISO 30401:2018

Understanding the ISO 30401:2018 standard

This standard has requirements for setting up a KMS – Knowledge Management System, through a set of guidelines so that organizations can identify, acquire, maintain, share, and use knowledge in a manner appropriate to the rules determined in the KMS, in the pursuit of its implementation,

maintenance, and continuous improvement, as recommended by the standard itself, aligned with the organizational culture and the achievement of its objectives.

Furthermore, its normative structure has principles that aim to guide the establishment and mastery of key competencies and values, which are the nature of knowledge, value, focus, adaptability, shared understanding, environment, culture, and interactivity, which, when properly observed, even allow for better alignment with other standards, as seen in the approach of Juliano K. Alves in the book *ISO 30401:2018 Standard for Knowledge Management: Fundamentals and Requirements* (ALVES et al., 2021).

It should also be noted that the standard does not conflict with information management, but rather sees it as part of its approach, as also seen in ALVES et al. (2021) in item 3.1, “*However, it is worth remembering that the cognitivist view emphasizes that the role of technology is not exclusively to provide informational support to this human capital, since the systems and solutions offered by knowledge engineering, as well as artificial intelligence, are effectively agents of knowledge that must be included in the organizational plans of the SGC,*” since part of the organizational knowledge (explicit knowledge) is documented information, physical or digital, and must be addressed when operating the SGC.

Based on the process approach and the PDCA cycle for its implementation, as mandatory elements in ISO standards among other requirements common to almost all sections of the standard, such as auditing, corrective action, and management review, for example, it is precisely in its specific items that we see the nature of its

characteristics contained in section 4 of the standard, which address knowledge development (clause 4.4.2), knowledge transfer and transformation (clause 4.4.3), knowledge enablers (clause 4.4.4), and knowledge management culture (clause 4.5). These are the main specific requirements of the ISO 30401:2018 standard that will determine the conduct of the KMS within what the organization aims for.

Finally, expected gains from its implementation can be highlighted, such as a potential increase in innovation and creativity in organizations thanks to knowledge sharing, stimulating the generation of ideas, as well as potential improvement in decision-making and speed, in addition to continuous learning and development of employee skills due to knowing the critical factors in this agenda for better results by the organization. It is also reasonable to expect improvements in productivity and increased business competitiveness.

The relationship between ISO 30401:2018 and ISO 9001:2015

The alignment of ISO 30401:2018 with other standards or management practices stems from the very definition of knowledge in its clause 3.25, which defines this term as “*human or organizational asset that enables effective decisions and actions in context,*” this context being, for example, the fulfillment of conditions, as established by the focus of ISO 9001:2015, which allow for the establishment of a unified system that, when functioning together, can be referred to as an IMS – Integrated Management System.

The connection stems from knowledge being a strategic component within the

organizational management environment, as pointed out by Carluccia et al. (2022), because as this subject gains prominence, ISO absorbs it into its standards, and in the case of ISO 9001:2015, where this topic is addressed in the requirements of clause 7.6, it directs knowledge as a relevant item for identifying improvements, promoting innovations, making decisions, and achieving consistent results in various actions throughout the QMS. As Morais et al. (2020), Carvalho et al. (2020), and Ayinde (2021) also note, there are also gains in auditing issues, a recurring practice in ISO standards, aimed at observing management compliance.

Another interesting aspect of this alignment is the gain provided by ISO 30401:2018 in information management, as pointed out by Payne (2020), since documented information is vital to evidence, preserve, and assist in the continuous improvement of an organization, being an item required by ISO 9001:2015, as well as knowing the needs and expectations of customers, aiming at better attention to their demand.

Therefore, applying ISO 30401:2018 in the context of a QMS based on ISO 9001:2015 strengthens the approach to quality and knowledge and, thus, enables the organization to be more competitive in the market and even respond to changes in the business environment in an agile and more appropriate manner, as observed by Carluccia et al. (2022) and Alves et al. (2021).

CONCLUSIONS

The dynamics of the topic of knowledge in relation to its application in an orga-

nization as a differentiated asset for success, as observed in the book *The Knowledge Creation Company*, by professors Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takeuchi (1997), makes this topic present in discussions about management systems, as recommended, for example, by ISO 9001:2015. This discussion, of course, does not end with this article; on the contrary, there are many issues that can be reviewed and improved within the subject, as noted by Carluccia et al. (2022), Carvalho et al. (2020), Quintero et al. (2022), and Alves et al. (2021).

It is also important to highlight the influence of culture and the impact of technology on our daily lives, as described by author Ronaldo Vieira in his book *Gestão do Conhecimento (Knowledge Management)* (VIEIRA, 2016), in chapter 19. *“Information serves as a bridge between the knowledge, man, and the world, as it can contain and, consequently, transmit to the subject characteristics of the past according to their tacit knowledge, creating the basis for current actions and future planning”* and, thus, making critical analysis of knowledge and its timeless use in organizations, but always observing the positive return of its proper application.

As proposed at the beginning of this article, the question of whether the connection between the standards considered would be beneficial can be seen throughout the text that there are several advantages. It is believed that this is clear from the observation of the material pointed out in the bibliographic reference or even from the cross-focus of the standards, which aim to benefit organizational management as a whole, benefiting those who purchase the product or service, in this case, the customer themselves.

This conclusion about this connection can be seen in the final text of Neri's article (2020), where she describes *“Based on the structure of the standard studied here, it is noted that companies that have already adopted some ISO standard in their management, such as ISO 9001 (quality management), ISO 14001 (environmental management), or ISO 45001 (occupational health and safety management), may find it easier to implement the requirements of ISO 30401:2018,”* so the potential gains are real when properly implemented.

However, there are challenges in adopting this integrated management system model with ISO standards, as pointed out by Carluccia et al. (2022) in an excerpt from their article conclusion: *“They may refer to the limited resources (e.g., money, time, and people) that organizations, especially SMEs, can invest in implementing the ISO standard, but also to the fact that ISO management system standards are written in complex language that can be quite difficult to understand and specify numerous elements that suggest that the system is bureaucratic. In addition, the implementation of several ISO standards, for example, ISO 140001, ISO 9001, ISO 30401, ISO/IEC 27032, etc., in an integrated manner can be demanding for an organization. More broadly, the key aspects that an organization needs to manage to meet ISO KM requirements and how to do so, as well as the risks, challenges, and benefits related to implementing the standard, are topics to be investigated further, especially from an empirical point of view.* Finally, despite all the attention and care, the gains are real, and only over time, with a greater number of companies operating their organizational knowledge based on ISO 30401:2018, will it be possible to gain greater clarity on these

challenges and propose studies and actions to resolve or mitigate the situations they suggest, but certainly never deny the various benefits provided by the ISO standard.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was partially funded by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel - Brazil (CAPES) - Funding code 001 - Case number: 88887637796/202100.

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