

Gatekeeping in the 21st century: The changing narrative

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A research project submitted to the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Evidence Based Management.

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Abstract

Background: Gatekeeping theory was developed in the 20th century as a conceptual framework to aid in our understanding of the complex, multivariate factors that collectively affect communication. A number of theoretical frameworks have influenced interdisciplinary gatekeeping research, and their connections reveal differences in interdisciplinary discourse.

Study purpose: The goal of this study is to identify new trends in research, theoretical gaps, and potential directions for further investigation by looking at the state of gatekeeping from 2000 to 2020.

Design/Methodology: A structured methodology for reviewing the literature was used to identify pertinent studies in the electronic databases SCOPUS and Business Source Complete. A thorough search was conducted using the keywords gatekeeping, gatekeeper, gate, and contemporary gatekeeping. The PRISMA selection protocol helped me locate pertinent studies in peer-reviewed journals.

Results: The results of the thematic analysis looked at topics like contributions to the field, intra- and cross-disciplinary analyses, and conceptualisation trends. The electronic search turned up 872 studies, of which 53 studies in 42 journals met the inclusion criteria.

Conclusion: Overall, evidence from a review of the body of knowledge suggests that current gatekeeping approaches are fragmented and have not been combined into a comprehensive and cogent theory of gatekeeping to address all disciplines in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: Gatekeeping; 21st century; Theoretical approaches

Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Evidence Based Management at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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TABLE OF ACRONYMS

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Acronym	Acronym Stands For
SLR	Structured Literature Review
AJG	Academic Journal Guide
QAC	Quality Assessment Criteria
GT	Gatekeeping Theory
NGT	Network Gatekeeping Theory
MS	Microsoft

CHAPTER 1: STUDY INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview of review problem

Modern and post-modern societies are becoming increasingly complex. There is an impetus for more debate on the concept of gatekeeping. The research agenda in the area of gatekeeping has undergone significant change over the last two decades. Research evidence indicates a shift away from purely descriptive investigations based on classical gatekeeping theory of the 20th century (Barzilai- Nahon & Barzilai, 2005; Barzilai- Nahon, 2008; Deluliis, 2015; Lewin, 1943; Shoemaker et al., 2001; Wallace, 2018). Recent work has captured post-critique of gatekeeping as a cross-discourse process to substantiate a hotly debated classical theory.

Despite the shift, eminent scholars continue to view gatekeeping as inherent models of human communication and representations of human thought (Lewin, 1943; Schultze & Boland, 2000; Shoemaker & Reese, 2013; White, 1950). Indeed, Guildken et al. (2019), Montgomery (2020), and Van den Brink and Benschop (2014) relate to gatekeeping as holistic cognition or decision making. It not only controls information through gates and filters, but also processes it. The purpose of this study is to recognise and clarify the position that the observed changes in the conceptualisation of gatekeeping changed the role of the gatekeeper and challenged the gatekeeping process.

Lewin (1943) begins with an important work theorising gatekeeping as a manifestation of the stimulating role played by various social actors. However, various research streams have emerged propelling continuity of the concept for over half a century (Corra & Willer, 2002; Shoemaker et al., 2001; Shoemaker & Reese, 2013; Singer, 2014; West, 2017). Historical approaches have addressed deep-seated fundamental theories rooted in communication, journalism, and psychology (Lewin, 1943; Lewin, 1947; White 1950). The concept was later applied to sociology, management, information science, political science, law, and public relations (Shoemaker & Reese, 2013; Sturges, 2001; Tushman & Katz, 1980).

Interestingly, the conceptualisation of different areas of gatekeeping has highlighted different elements. There is strong evidence of fragmentation of the gatekeeping literature within and across disciplines in terms of models, theories, vocabulary, heuristics, research questions, and epistemologies, according to Barzilai (2005) and Shoemaker et al. (2001). The above, mentions relative arguments about gatekeeping as occurring in isolation within each field. This notion forms the basis for this research need.

1.1 Study need

The types and amounts of literature produced over a wide period of time gleaned from the search on gatekeeping literature validates the need for a systematic approach that enables the mapping of territories and their associated models and theories (Snyder, 2019; Tranfield et al., 2003). Gatekeeping as a concept has been extensively studied and has its intellectual origins in the middle of the 20th century. However, the concept has spread rapidly to cover a wide range of practice and research (Lewin, 1947; Schultze & Boland, 2000; Shoemaker et al., 2001; Sturges, 2001; Tushman & Katz, 1980; White, 1950). Gatekeeping is therefore a diverse and pervasive phenomenon.

In this study, the structured literature review (SLR) methodology proposed by Snyder (2019), Tranfield et al. (2003) as well as Aguinis et al. (2020) will be used to determine the most important gatekeeping research methodologies and unpack insights that open new avenues for future research in the field. This study critically examines gatekeeping literature published in high-ranked journals on the scale 3-5 according to the principles of the Academic Journal Guidelines (AJG). The results of this research show that the majority of articles on gatekeeping focused on traditional gatekeeping. At the same time, several studies were found that focused on treating gatekeeping as a side effect during the research plateau phase.

These insights could be useful for gatekeeping scholars when planning or conducting their next structured literature review. I first outline the current development of gatekeeping theory in order to set the stage for this endeavour. This study demonstrates how gatekeeper models have advanced as theorists have considered a wider variety of external pressures on gatekeepers as well as the intrinsic qualities of gatekeepers as individuals while considering the systems where they are employed (Coddington & Holton, 2014). On the basis of the findings, an investigation into the growing significance of gatekeeping mechanisms and digital platforms is investigated in order to create a contemporary gatekeeper typology.

The original model of gatekeeping by Lewin (1947) presented considerably more than a mass communication proposition, however, Shoemaker and Reese (2013) and Singer (2016) reiterate that the current model of gatekeeping, which was birthed in the last decade seeks to generalise and extend earlier models. Others argue that, while the model is more appealing and plausible than the original news decisions, it has flaws (Deluiliis, 2015; Erzikova, 2018; Pearson & Kosicki, 2017). Therefore, the goal of this study is to compile a thorough inventory of the state of research in the area today with a focus on the evolution that has occurred over the past 20 years. As a result, based on the detailed overviews, I created three research questions to investigate the field.

1.2 Study Background

1.2.1 Gatekeeping definitions

As a construct, gatekeeping is broadly described as how information is regulated as it passes through gates or filters (Lewin, 1947; White, 1950). It is nothing more than using a gate to keep unwanted or useless things out (Lewin, 1947). The gatekeeping metaphor describes the behaviour of someone who withholds, selects, or transforms messages that are deemed to be suitable for the audience (Lewin, 1947). Gatekeeping is fundamentally concerned with selecting, composing, and controlling messages. Shoemaker et al. (2001) defined gatekeeping as a process that reduces billions of messages to hundreds of messages that reach an individual. Making decisions about what data should be gathered, assessed, and ultimately shared is what gatekeeping essentially entails (Shoemaker et al., 2001).

Continuing the conversation Shoemaker and Reese (2013) defined gatekeeping as a method for investigating how society's subjective states and cultural values affect the objectivity of problems. Dwivedi et al. (2018), defined gatekeeping, on the other hand, as a strategy for controlling access to a target outcome. Montgomery (2020) also described gatekeeping in the most recent scholarly work as being concerned with determining one's eligibility to pass through gates of opportunity or success. All of the aforementioned viewpoints on gatekeeping are true, but over time, they have developed different flavours and theories. The main advantage of the gatekeeping theory still lies in summarising the various factors that people consider when choosing which messages to present to their audiences, which is astonishingly profound. (Barzilia-Nahon, 2008). The new perspectives back gatekeeping as a comprehensive cognitive or decision-making process that involves more than just selection. Clear highlights on how the classical theory has been contested by shifting social landscapes brought on by a variety of factors, changing the role of the gatekeeper, and challenging the gatekeeping process emerge in the context of evolving perspectives.

1.2.2 Historical development of gatekeeping

Kurt Lewin developed the gatekeeping metaphor and theory (White, 1950). Lewin established standard practices so that social scientists could analyse social phenomena with the same methodological rigor that they do physical phenomena (Shoemaker et al., 2001). According to Lewin (1947), the social world is a network of relationships between individuals and groups. Each person, as an individual, has a life space that includes both the person and the person's environment (Lewin, 1947). Groups, on the other hand, comprise life spaces, which are the collective and their surroundings. Finally, Lewin (1947) concludes that the life spaces in the

social domain define the entire social world. Each person's and group's personal spaces form a single ecological environment in which they coexist in the social field (Lewin, 1947).

As he introduced the gatekeeping theory Lewin (1947) used keywords, gate, force, channel, and section to describe the concept. According to Lewin (1947), a gate denotes a location which restricts flow, a force as what shifts and keeps things out or in the channel, channel influence what challenges will be faced by an object as it flows from encounter to usage and section represents points of decision making through the channel. Decisions are made directly in every segment of the channel. The nature of the force changes at this critical juncture. Finally, gatekeepers are those who determine what should and should not enter a channel (Lewin, 1947). These gatekeepers, according to Lewin (1947), were subject to pressures that resulted in societal transformation.

1.2.3 Gatekeeping development immediately after Lewin

The assessment of Mr. Gates a newspaper editor by White (1950) highlighted that subjective features influence gatekeeping judgments. When it comes to the development and selection of messages by journalists, White (1950) claimed that the field of communication most frequently resembles gatekeeping. Journalists are referred to as gatekeepers because they develop selection criteria for making decisions. According to Shoemaker et al. (2001) gatekeepers construct social reality during the selection process. As a result, gatekeeping theory and its application to media have a long history in communication studies. In short, communication theory attempts to explain how information reaches an audience.

Shoemaker et al. (2001) have noted that the gatekeeping theory's evolution has advanced to include the entirety of the social context. However, the introduction of the internet changed how people communicated and the media they used (Lu, 2007). It is also unsurprising that decisions about what actually reaches individuals have shifted. Shoemaker and colleagues chimed in, arguing that what influences gatekeeping is not restricted to news work routines but also the gatekeeper's personal opinions (Shoemaker et al., 2001).

1.2.4 Theoretical framework of gatekeeping

The foundational pillars of gatekeeping theory as propositioned by Lewin (1947) are found in the process of dissemination of news through channels of mass media. The model of gatekeeping was presented as linear and focused on scrutinising how tabloid editors carried out news selection as they denoted the terminal gatekeepers, who selected news on the basis of a criteria that is predefined. The focus of the conceptual model was strong on the role of channel in stipulating critical roles for the audience, which include offering and selecting

information, creating symbols from the information, and diffusing to the audience the symbols (Shoemaker et al., 2001). Gatekeeping behavior pervades the entirety of channels in communication and is not limited to final tabloid editors as described by White (1950).

According to Barzilai-Nahon (2008) the applicability of uni-linear gatekeeping model is perverse as well as its simplicity for use because many channels in social life do not have distinct beginning and ending points. Some researchers summarised information flow in this manner and then proposed multi-linear gatekeeping models (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008; Shoemaker & Reese, 2013; Singer, 2006). Importantly, gatekeeping models should include a non-linear feedback loop that should be devised for effective operation in technical environments that are specific (Montgomery, 2020). According to the multilevel gatekeeping model, gatekeepers at an individual level are not independent but are impacted by internal and external forces along channels, the feedback loop and the institution's influence (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014).

Gatekeeping is, in a nutshell, a process. The basic premise of the gatekeeping theory is depicted in Lewin's (1947) exposition of gatekeeping, which states that changes in contents occur as they pass through gates. These contents create what is given to the audience as information. Shoemaker and Reese (2014) poists that the correct depiction of gatekeeping is a simulation of social reality that is constructed by the media from the entire transmission process, which is more than just selecting of information.

1.2.5 Gatekeeping Theory in Transition

For more than two decades, digital platforms have become very important as dissemination of information is inclining more towards actors who are non-journalistic which has challenged the gatekeeping theory (Barzilai-Nahon & Barzilai, 2005; Lu, 2007; Porter & Sallot, 2003; Shoemaker et al., 2001). The emerging trend is the growing disparity between phenomena such as viral posts versus the traditional journalistic gatekeeping. As a result, there is constant contestation of the gatekeeping theory which is calling for its modification. Current research has brough focus on issues that include the existence of gatekeepers, and their identity while also questioning the extent to which the gatekeeping process has evolved. This second line of inquiry has concentrated on the shifting nature of the gatekeeping process.

Globalisation has complicated gatekeeping even more as demographic information from the audience is what gatekeepers rely on to control information flow through the gates (Reese & Ballinger, 2001; Shoemaker et al., 2001; Singer, 2006). As the audience is cornered by the changing dynamic driven by digital media, this has begun to make difficult flow through gates, leading to the proposal of a new gatekeeping constitution in which the unidirectional

flow is not an element (Barzilai- Nahon, 2008). Furthermore, if the audience does not consider itself a gatekeeper, how does the audience perceive gatekeepers, and what impact does it have on the flow of information (Lu, 2007). Because the advent of the internet continues to change the rules and making it unrestrained for anyone to pick and publish a topic in the absence of the precincts of traditional gatekeeping, it has become apparent that the theory has reawakened or, at the very least, the term gatekeeping has become more popular.

Leading the discussion, Shoemaker and Reese (2014) assert that the limited applicability of gatekeeping theory to digital media is a result of increased audience interactivity, which has led to a new stage in the gatekeeping process where secondary gatekeepers on the internet are now audience members. Singer (2006) emphasises the importance of revisiting gatekeeping's conceptual foundation in order to account for the new challenges that the process faces in the digital age. To accommodate the changes brought about by technological advancements, the emergence of the internet necessitates a re-theorisation of gatekeeping.

1.2.6 The need to rethink the foundations of Gatekeeping theory

Despite the fact that research has produced a number of new approaches, gatekeeping has continued to be a challenged and disjointed due to the failure of the research field to adapt gatekeeping theory to the technological age (Reese & Ballinger,2013). All specific elements of control of information are addressed by the current approaches whereas additionally concentration is on explicit processes or actors. The core concern is the relevance of or the idea that gatekeeping roles have been taken by individual users. While Lewin's and many other scholars' scholarly efforts to standardize the gatekeeping process are extremely valuable and scientifically essential, existing literature reveals that synthesis of multivariate factors of the concept remains theoretically and methodologically narrow (Shoemaker & Reese, 2013).

The preceding synopsis is the result of gatekeeping's primary function, which was to depict the media communication system of the twentieth century. It is critical that people value and consider the consequences as well as the social risks associated with the advancement in social media and overallly digital technology. What is becoming critically important especially in the social big data era is structure, function, and composition of gatekeepers (Lu, 2007). Information shapes social reality and affects what occurs in society, which is a central tenet of gatekeeping theory (Singer, 2006). Whoever controls the flow of information has the ability to shape social reality. As a result, existing gatekeeping models must be revised.

Gatekeeping was viewed by prominent scholars as a model inherent in human communication and an expression of human reasoning. Today, gatekeeping is employed as an academic

theory across a number of fields, including communication studies, journalism, political science, psychology, and sociology (Bruns, 2003; Dwivedi & Misangyi, 2018; Harris & Ogbonna, 2016; Montgomery, 2020; Shumsky & Pinker, 2003). In contrast, the concept has come to apply to any decision point involving any piece of information. Barzilai-Nahon (2008), like Shoemaker and Reese (2013), emphasised the importance of paying attention to the audience. Barzilai-Nahon (2008) also emphasised the necessity of a new structure and a new model that considers its dynamics. How the old and new media compare is yet another hotly debated area of gatekeeping research (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008; Singer, 2006).

Gatekeepers' influence on the creation of cultural artifacts, representation of various social groups, the operation of the gatekeeping process, and normative questions and definitions of what constitutes a gatekeeper are other issues that Barzilai-Nahon (2008) identified as necessitating a re-examination of the theory's underlying premises. According to an assessment by Barzilai-Nahon (2008) the period 1995-2007 is viewed as a plateau for gatekeeping theory, referring to the fact that traditional gatekeeping theory was unable to keep up with changes in the environment. In order to continue making the case for reconsidering the fundamentals of gatekeeping theory, Barzilai-Nahon (2008) asserts that current definitions of gatekeeping are too varied to constitute a theory that is mature and malleable, in addition to being contradictory, and that the need for new gatekeeping theories is stronger and backed by a variety of factors. More discussion on the transition of the gatekeeping concept is necessary given the complexity of modern and postmodern societies, which is constantly growing.

1.3 Definition of terms associated with gatekeeping

While describing the gatekeeping metaphor, Lewin (1943) coined and defined the term gatekeeper. The term was used to describe the process of reserving, selecting, or renovating messages by an individual from the sender to the audience. In his famous case study of Mr. Gates, White (1950), first introduced the idea of the individual or gatekeeper as the first level of influence. According to Barzilia-Nahon (2008), gatekeepers are those people who are in strategic decision-making positions within news, communication, or media or any other organisational setting and have a primary role in making objective and impartial decisions vital to an organisation. Being a gatekeeper implies controlling information, when it reaches society and how it will shape social reality.

The term gate is described as an entry or exit point on a network (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008). Gates are viewed as dynamic and fluid within networks of information and social network,

however, they usually go dormant as they enter and leave the network, as well as delete information, also through integration (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008).

1.4 Problem statement

The arguments raised above demonstrate unequivocally how much gatekeeping literature there is. In gate keeping theories, two fundamental characteristics are emphasised. The first characteristic is that gatekeeping theories are being supported by a wide range of research fields. The research field is influenced by many different disciplines. Furthermore, the abundance of gatekeeping narratives on diverse topics like terrorism, the environment, political science, medicine, and public health emphasises that the emerging interest in gatekeeping is broad and not confined to any one discipline. The research fields are extremely interdisciplinary, and to a certain extent, this idea aids in deepening the comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon by drawing on the wealth of knowledge. At the same time, it draws attention to a risk that stems from the inherent disparities in how gatekeeping theory is conceptualised across disciplines, which could obstruct ongoing conceptual development.

Another feature of the research area is the diversity of definitions of gatekeeping theory. Gatekeeping is theorised differently and different aspects of the theory are emphasised by academics from various scholarly backgrounds and dispositions (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008; Bruns, 2003; Corra and Willer, 2002; Shoemaker et al., 2001) For instance, some academics have stigmatised the positioning of gatekeeping as a diversion effect on anything not deemed worthy of admission in a particular environment and ultimately making the function of gatekeeping as surveillance, stressing its epistemological nature (Montgomery, 2020). Because it is indicative of a pervasive phenomenon, the existence of various definitions and aspects of gatekeeping theories can be seen as a positive advancement in the field. It is vitally important for the entire discipline to be aware of the fundamental elements of the phenomenon.

The study is built on the stark divergences in theories, or global viewpoints surrounding the construct, which are fascinatingly accompanied by new definitions that have emerged but have not yet been adequately captured. Barzilai- Nahon (2008) made a compelling case for the need to discuss gatekeeping and reassess its theoretical underpinnings in light of the impact of the digital era. In order to address the new issues that confront the process in light of expanding inter-disciplinary discussions, it is unquestionably important to look into discussions on modern gatekeeping and how its theoretical foundations have been and will continue to be re-evaluated (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008). Scholars in the twenty-first century clearly started to understand the idea as a holistic cognitive or decision-making process rather than just a straightforward method of controlling information through gates (Guildken et al. , 2019).

1.5 Study Objective

In order to identify new trends and tendencies in gatekeeping research and track how they develop over time, as well as to fill theoretical gaps in the literature, the main objective of this study is to provide a critical exploration of the research status and hotspots of the field using the SLR methodology.

1.6 Purpose and scope of study

Barzilai-Nahon (2008) asserts that the majority of gatekeeping theories within and across disciplines are vertical because they are limited to contextually examining gatekeeping questions. In light of this, the objective of this study is to review and evaluate the current state of the literature on gatekeeping with the aim of identifying knowledge gaps, defining emerging trends and tendencies, and identifying pathways to inform future research agendas.

53 articles were selected as the final sample in the study, which looked at major trends in gatekeeping and analytical frameworks in the literature from 2000 to 2020. During this time, discussions about gatekeeping have evolved as a concept. The defined timeline addresses the dynamism of gatekeeping as well as the crucial role that those who are subject to a gatekeeping process play. Thus, the structured literature review will focus on data from sources that specifically studied gatekeeping and showed its significance and centrality in their research.

1.7 Research questions

The SLR methodology is unique in the sense that it starts from the research questions which motivate the need to pursue the study. In their work Massaro et al. (2016), poisted that before providing a path for future research, an SLR must critique an existing body of knowledge. Massaro et al. (2016), supported by Snyder (2019), defined critical inquiry's three tasks which are insight generation, critical appraisal, and redefinitions that are transformative. As a guide to number of research questions for a SLR, Massaro et al. (2016) proposed at least three.

RQ.1: How has research exploring gatekeeping evolved over the past 20years?

RQ.2: What are the emerging issues in gatekeeping research?

RQ.3: Which future research directions in the field of gatekeeping could be identified?

The primary goal of this study is to determine how the gatekeeping literature stream has changed over time. An analytical framework highlighting the themes that distinguish the literature under consideration is to be developed in order to address the second research question, which aims to provide a critical examination of developments in the gatekeeping field of study. The analytical framework in particular is made up of various analytical units that

compile prior research and critically evaluate its key findings while promoting a deeper understanding of the pertinent literature. This ultimately creates opportunities to address the study's final research question, whose sole purpose is to suggest new lines of inquiry that will advance our understanding of the subject.

1.8 Shortcomings in other literature reviews

This SLR looked into how much the shift in gatekeeping conceptualisation has been reflected in recent studies. Current gatekeeping reviews have a thematic focus (Corra and Willer, 2002; Shoemaker et al., 2001); utilised pre-selected frameworks (Barzilai-Nahon, 2009); mapped shifting perspectives (Soroka, 2012); or generally tracked the state of development in the gatekeeping field (Shoemaker et al., 2001). Review papers have unquestionably been based on an increasing number of papers over time. However, the majority of structured literature reviews only cover a small portion of the available research and offer no conclusive proof of involvement in contemporary gatekeeping (Ishikawa, 2012). Because of this, the main objective of this study is to broaden the scope of the current gatekeeping reviews and try to frame new lines of inquiry.

1.9 Study justification

This study will add to our knowledge in a number of ways, all of which together will help the idea of gatekeeping develop and become more cohesive. First, this study examines a sizable body of explicit gatekeeping research, in contrast to earlier studies, in response to Barzilai-Nahon (2008) call for future reviews to be more focused and in-depth in their analysis. The results of this study significantly expand knowledge by investigating the gatekeeping field broadly in an effort to shed light on the shift in field theories conceptualisations, in contrast to other studies that focused on specific aspects of gatekeeping in-depth.

Barzilai- Nahon (2008) and Shoemaker et al. (2001) and Singer (2001) are some of the authors who have studied gatekeeping in the digital age, but they have not completely updated the theory to consider the constantly evolving digital activities. Thus, by identifying and emphasising the context in which contemporary gatekeeping operates and establishing the crucial role that this new component plays, the current study makes a significant contribution.

The study contributes to the field of gatekeeping research by illuminating how contemporary gatekeeping and its developing theoretical underpinnings have addressed and will continue to address flaws in traditional gatekeeping theory while addressing fresh issues that the process must deal with in the face of expanding inter-disciplinary discussions. Qualitative analyses of the contributions of the various disciplines to gatekeeping research as well as research

hotspots were conducted using the SLR methodology. This study also aids in our understanding of gatekeeping's dynamic nature. This could assist academics in moving beyond the alternatives to gated that are currently available and in changing traditional theories and tools that do not consider the dynamic environments in which gated, and gatekeepers' abilities evolve. The relationship between gatekeepers becomes more intricate. The investigation of how gatekeeping's expanding research boundaries have changed illustrates the possibility to advance knowledge of gatekeeping.

1.10 Directions for future research

The study identifies future research areas related to the omnipresence and growing dominance of technology which will drive abundance of information, and shift much of physical information exchange to the text territory (Barzilai-Nahon & Barzilai, 2005). As a result, gatekeeping researchers are challenged to work hard to comprehend the implications on the discourse and impending refinements (Lu, 2007). It is undeniable that gatekeeping has shifted and is now associated with text and information rather than physical activities.

The study identifies areas for further study in relation to the pervasiveness and growing influence of technology, which will foster an abundance of information and shift much of the verbal exchange of information (Barzilai, 2005). In order to comprehend the effects on the discourse and impending improvements, gatekeeping researchers must exert a great deal of effort (Lu, 2007). There is no denying that gatekeeping has evolved and now tends to involve text and information more so than physical activities.

1.11 Brief explanation of the methods used to source papers

The principles put forth by Snyder (2019) and Massaro et al. (2016) served as the foundation for this study's research methodology. The SLR is a methodical and structured approach that starts with developing research questions and moves on to carrying out the entire study while being guided by discretionary decisions at every stage of the process to ensure the study can be replicated. The research methodology, which was deemed appropriate for the study's goals, was centred on a review of the literature from 2000 to 2020, tracking the development of gatekeeping and what problems have developed over time that have complicated the research area.

Although not detailed for the purpose of this section, the search strategy focused on using SCOPUS and EBSCOhost Business Source Complete as the main databases to identify potentially relevant publications for an in-depth literature search. The two databases were chosen because they are widely considered to be very comprehensive databases, containing

mostly peer-reviewed literature from a wide range of disciplines, with the ability to filter and limit searches to articles published only in scholarly journals (Aguinis et al.,2020). In the scoping study, Google Scholar was used to build the vocabulary of search terms used in subsequent literature search steps. Gatekeeping, gatekeeping process, gatekeeper, gated and gate were identified as key terms from a review of titles, abstracts and studies. The initial search protocol was open-ended and not constrained by time or study quality. Most importantly, AJG standards were used to select specific journals for review in the 3rd to 5th rank.

The scoping study was conducted between October and December 2021 and returned 873 articles with titles, abstracts, and keywords. These articles were selected from the period 2000-2020. In addition to the period articles, basic articles relevant to the study were also considered. The list of results was further narrowed down by search terms such as gatekeeping, gatekeeping mechanisms, gatekeeping dilemmas and gatekeeping process. The number of articles was reduced to 322 and subjected to predefined exclusion and inclusion criteria described in the method and analysis section. Documenting the inclusion and exclusion decision matrix was critical to providing an audit trail that would allow defensible retrieval of used articles and replication. From January 2022 to July 2022, the selected 322 key journals were subjected to the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, and 53 articles used for SLR construction were returned.

1.0. Chapter conclusion

This paper is divided into five sections. The work begins by developing the theoretical perspective on gatekeeping, setting out the research questions, and outlining the research context, which includes the background of the review problem, the research questions, and the scope of the proposed review. The previous section describes the methodological framework of the study and the data sources. Outline how the final sample of articles used for the study was selected and finally present the methodological limitations. This was followed by a literature review explaining how the data collected from the articles was analysed to answer the research questions posed, while also providing the basis for discussion and interpretation of the results. The pattern and proliferation of gatekeeping literature was highlighted in the outcome analysis discussed and presented in the following chapter, which emerged from a content analysis structured by emerging issues in the context of study objectives. The final chapter presented the conclusions of the study and suggested future research directions and possible new research questions and ended with concluding reflections on practical lessons learned from the study.

CHAPTER 2: METHOD AND ANALYSIS

2.0. Introduction

In order to minimize bias and increase transparency when using pre-existing data to address research questions, the structured literature review (SLR) methodology was developed (Massaro et al. 2016; Snyder, 2019). The SLR methodology was chosen for this study for two specific reasons. First of all, there is a substantial body of literature that needs to be organised on gatekeeping across various research fields. Second, the SLR approach is regarded as a suitable technique for locating research gaps in the literature (Snyder, 2019). Before the review process began, a review protocol was created to direct the investigation and guarantee a well-organised procedure from start to finish.

The development and design of the review protocol was influenced by the guidelines and standards outlined by Snyder (2019) and Tranfield et al. (2003). The protocol had four sections. Prior to implementing a search strategy that prioritized data sources, resources, and developed search terms, research questions had to be established. Following the presentation of the data collection and data abstraction process results is the strategy for choosing the sample, which included the eligibility criteria (inclusion and exclusion criteria), and the defined quality assessment criteria. The sections of this chapter that follow describe in detail the procedures used to obtain the study's findings.

2.1 Specifying the Review Research questions

According to Moher et al. (2003) and Petticrew (2015), the first official position of evidence-based practice is to convert the information needs of practice into well-structured questions. A vital first step in conducting evidence-based research is this (Massaro et al., 2016). In order to focus on a transition that took place in the research field between 2000 and 2020, the study first selects a broad area of gatekeeping and then narrows it down to one that was sparked by an increase in interdisciplinary discussions. The gatekeeping research field has developed in a variety of ways, according to the available gatekeeping literature. In order to fill this gap, the study framed the key questions for this review in the manner described below.

RQ.1: How has research exploring gatekeeping evolved over the past 20years?

RQ.2: What are the emerging issues in gatekeeping research?

RQ.3: Which future research directions in the field of gatekeeping could be identified?

To answer question 1, this study attempts to assess the state of current gatekeeping research compared to previous studies. After RQ2, a qualitative analysis of the content of the selected papers was performed to identify the main theme of each study. Finally, RQ3 addressed gaps

in current literature knowledge and paved the way for the formulation of future research questions.

2.2 Methodological Framework

This study aims to thoroughly analyse the status of gatekeeping research and its literature features using an integrated and systematic methodological framework, as shown in figure 1. The purpose of this study is to illustrate gatekeeping research's evolution trends and research constraints. We will follow the SLR framework. The review protocol from a prior study by Barzilai-Nahon (2009), who summarised the state of research in the gatekeeping field, served as the foundation for the method framework that was ultimately chosen. The volume of research across and within different disciplines is evidence of the field's positive growth trajectory, which would benefit from a current perspective from many stakeholders. According to Tranfield et al., research methodology According to Tranfield et al.(2003), the SLR offers a platform to make the research transparent, legitimate, and repeatable.

The rigorous and structured approach adopted in the SLR methodology ensures research reproducibility and future continuation of research in a growing field (Massaro et al., 2016). As suggested by Snyder (2019), the SLR implementation process consisted of four phases. Plan, select, extract, and execute, as shown in figure 1. SLR incorporates bibliographic and content analysis and differs from traditional reviews. According to Aguinis et al. (2020) reiterated that using the SLR method increased the likelihood of identifying all original work in gatekeeping research.

One of the SLR framework's standout features is its stringent reliability and validity checks, which, though they do not entirely eliminate bias risk, significantly reduce it (Aguinis et al., 2020) For this study, for instance, multiple coding sessions on a single codebook were used to achieve reliability, while results were related to theory to ensure validity. Using Atlas . it as the study's analysis software package, the SLR approach also enhanced the ability to analyse data and produce forecasts. Last but not least, I was able to extract quantitative measurements from data counts that were incorporated into the analyses using SLR as a methodology. Quantitative measures can be incorporated to help qualitative studies become less subjective.

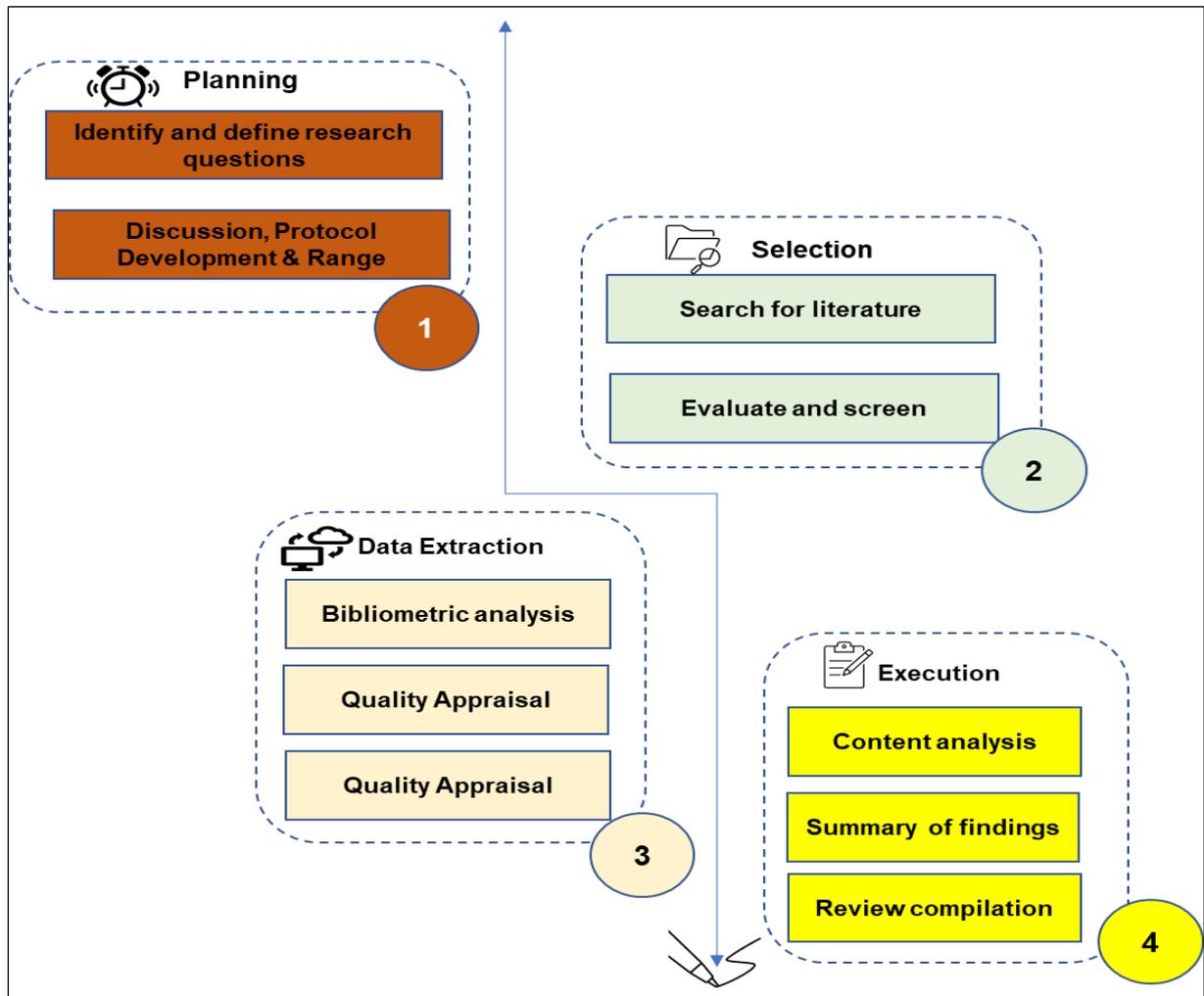


Figure 1: Methodology Framework

Source: Researcher's Configuration (2022)

2.2.1. The time frame for selecting papers

For this study, it was decided to restrict the review and assessment process to works that were published between a certain time period (2000–December 2020). The fact that the first research paper on the effects of technology on gatekeeping was published there in 1998 (Clayman and Reisner, 1998) led to the decision to choose the given time horizon. Conversations about gatekeeping underwent a change as a result of this. Although they did not fall within the specified time horizon, foundational studies in the field of research were also considered because they aimed to provide an overview of the conceptual roots of the idea and a lens through which to view the changes that have taken place over time.

2.2.2. Bibliometric analysis

In order to evaluate the current state of research, future directions, and development trends in the gatekeeping discipline, bibliometric analysis was frequently used (Massaro et al. , 2016). The bibliometric analysis was broken down into four distinct steps: selecting the search parameters and key words, choosing the time period and file type, locating the literature, and then importing it into an analysis program to draw conclusions. I chose a bibliometric analysis to sketch the development of gatekeeping over the 20 years since the digital age started to undermine the concept's tenets. I concentrated on the traditional media communication field's contributions in this analysis to the more reliable and practical applications in various academic fields. This gave the big picture a wide canvas.

The field is clearly fragmented and lacks consistency in its conceptualization of the key aspects of the construct, as evidenced by an analysis of gatekeeping over the specified time period. Due to this, the focus of this analysis was on two emerging research streams. The first path was a comprehensive analysis of gatekeeping development drawn from pertinent literature, primarily by communication and journalism scholars. The second development stream was formed by literature that supports an ostensibly technocentric view of gatekeeping. In light of these contradictory and divergent explanations, it appears that gatekeeping as a field of study is no longer viable because it has failed to live up to the expectations of its target audience in the techno centrically driven environment to which it ought to conform. The authors were able to follow how different disciplines interacted despite the divergent paths.

2.2.3. Content analysis

An extension of bibliometric analysis, content analysis seeks to understand the overall framework of the literature's clustering and thematic organisation (Farrington, 2003). The purpose of the content analysis was to visualize the body of pertinent literature that was instrumental in determining the overall academic framework for gatekeeping research from 2000 to 2020, map collections of publications related thematically, and ultimately identify future development paths that will be represented by various thematic clusters. The primary gatekeeping development paths were specifically identified, demonstrating how the field is structured in terms of its methodology and divisions that have developed over the past 20 years. The divisions were further exposed by the content analysis, which also showed that there were a variety of emerging gatekeeping development paths. The emerging thematic cluster speaks to the multifaceted nature of the development paths in gatekeeping research, which explains the observed dissonance.

These contrasts relate to the principles that should be considered in the tech-centric age, a more holistic characterization of the topic, various gatekeeping models of helical structure, and how various disciplines conceptualise the topic. It has put forth a number of theories regarding how the network came to be, including the individual-versus-network theory. The need to re-evaluate the field's tenets is not solely one-dimensional, at least. This leaves a significant knowledge gap that this study starts to close using the findings of this organised literature review. The validity of the hypotheses arising from each dichotomy was investigated by looking at the key authors who were regarded as leaders in the field of gatekeeping development during the time period under consideration.

2.3. Study information sources

Articles are frequently the most significant type of data for many types of research. The best way to find articles on a subject is to search electronic databases, which give you access to hundreds of articles at once. In the scoping survey, Google Scholar was used to understand the extent of publications on the construct and to gather an initial sample of the scholarly work that was already available. To start, I compiled a list of important references and peer-reviewed gatekeeping articles using general search terms. The retrieved articles and abstracts were used to build a string of search terms. The search string also contained other search terms, such as "gate," "gatekeeper," "gated," "gatekeeping process," "gatekeeping theory," and "modern gatekeeping," which were then used in searches of other databases.

A thorough electronic search was carried out utilising two databases: SCOPUS and Business Source Ultimate (EBSCO). The decision to utilise two databases is in line with the claim made by (Massaro et al., 2016). The effects of different coverage between individual databases are mitigated by using at least two databases. Over the course of the study, the two electronic databases were accessed through the University of Pretoria (UP) Library website. Concurrent searches of the two databases were performed to maximize efficiency. Google Scholar and index citations were added to the results as further support.

The two databases have the advantage of being the largest and most important commercial databases of peer-reviewed literature. They also provide an additional feature that lets me limit searches to only include articles published in academic journals, which, in the words of (Petticrew, 2015), guarantees the robustness of the search process. SCOPUS is well-known for having the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature when it comes to electronic databases (Moher et al. , 2009). Additionally, SCOPUS's search function allows for improved keyword searches and results filtering by year, publication type, or domain.

2.4. Search Strategy

Establishing a research timeline is the first step in creating any search strategy. The search period for this study was restricted to works that were published between 2000 and 2020. Prior to 2000, research was disregarded because the debate still centred on conventional gatekeeping and the internet was thought to be less significant in the field. The search strategy for the study is shown in annotated detail in Figure 2, starting with the sequential search method. The sequential search process was started at the beginning of the review process, but it was improved and updated as the review progressed (Vom Brocke et al. , 2015).

In the second stage of the search strategy, citation indexing services like Google Scholar were used in an iterative, process-based approach. A third step in the search strategy involved determining the extent of coverage provided by the literature review. The search for this study started with gathering papers from top-ranked journals within levels 3-5 as defined by the Academic Journal Guide (AJG), to address the problem that it is impossible to collect all publications on a subject. Finally, a keyword, backward, and forward search method was selected for the study. While forward search looked at the papers cited in papers discovered through keyword search, backward search looked at all references from papers discovered through keyword search.

1	Process	Process		Iterative
2	Source	Citation Index Services	Bibliographic Databases	Publications
3	Coverage	Comprehensive	Representative	Foundational Works
4	Technique	Keyword search	Backward search	Forward search

Figure 2: Search strategy summary

Source: Adapted from Vom Brocke et al. (2015)

The search terms and their combinations were established using the scoping study, which ran from October to December 2021. The study found that the terms "gatekeeping," "gatekeeper," and "gate" were the most frequently used search terms. These terms ended up serving as the study's general classification. The following step involved choosing various keywords that would be used to represent any of the umbrella search terms, as well as the definitions of gatekeeping mechanism, gatekeeping process, modern gatekeeping, traditional gatekeeping, and 21st century gatekeeping. Finally, the various keywords were combined

using the odds ratio (OR) and AND Boolean operators, such as gatekeeping OR gate watching OR modern gatekeeping or gatekeeping AND technology.

The search strategy was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles published in journals available in electronic databases and with a quality rank of 3-5 on the AJG matrix. The focus of this decision was to ensure validation of all studies included in the study. Search terms derived from the above keyword combinations were systematically applied to the selected databases. This search yielded a first sample of 872 potentially relevant journal articles. A search strategy is a combination of approaches supported by journals and databases.

The literature search in the two databases was directed by three pre-set limiters. Academic journals was the first limiter used, I chose it to prevent retrieval of grey literature, conference proceedings, and opinion pieces from search results. I was also able to concentrate on retrieving academic journals that had undergone peer review and were therefore more likely to be of higher quality by using this limiter. I also added a new date limiter to the mix. The time frame 2000–2020 was chosen because the study's main goal is to determine when the various debates challenging the fundamental assumptions underlying gatekeeping conversations that eventually led to discussions about the necessity of rethinking these assumptions began to gain momentum. The search was not restricted by study type or field of study to guarantee thoroughness. Full text was not set as a limiter during the literature search either. Any studies whose full text was unavailable in the chosen electronic databases were searched for using Google Scholar.

The remaining articles that adhered to the standards set forth by Greenhalgh and Peacock (2005) were retrieved using snowballing techniques. I found 85% of the potentially relevant articles through keyword searches in the chosen electronic databases. In order to perform a thorough search in this case, snowballing techniques like reverse and forward searches were used to find additional potentially relevant items. The snowballing strategy allowed for the identification of older research studies through backward searching, which was then supplemented by forward searching into more recent research articles that cited the earlier identified items (Greenhalgh and Peacock, 2005). Iterative literature searching was achieved through the use of snowballing techniques.

The literature search turned up a sizable number of research articles with crucial data on fundamental gatekeeping components. Language, lessons learned, and best practices of the gatekeeping process over time all reflect the evolution of gatekeeping. There are still issues in the field even though the theory and practice have changed over time. Due to ongoing difficulties, gatekeepers have different practices, and this phenomenon is implemented

dynamically. Additional quantitative and research studies that emphasise the significance of the gatekeeping role have been conducted.

2.5. Eligibility Criteria

The first stage of the study selection strategy is the determination of admission criteria. Given the usual time and resource constraints, trade-offs are necessary and these result from the definition of study eligibility criteria (inclusion/exclusion criteria) to determine which studies are included in the final review sample (Aguinis et al., 2020). Inclusion criteria were established before the review process began and are documented in the protocol. The research question played a central role in defining the limits of the suitability criteria. This study followed his two-step approach of defining inclusion/exclusion criteria and then quality assessment criteria (QAC). The methodology involved applying a non-content (non-content) criterion during the studies identification step, followed by a content-related (content-based) criterion. For the content-based criteria, which I used during the study screening stage, a more thorough analysis of potentially pertinent research items was needed.

Non-content criteria included publication year, which was limited to 2000–2020, so studies outside of this time frame were excluded unless they were foundational articles, and publication outlet, which related to only including journal articles in the study, published in journals within AJG–3-5, so all articles that were not journal articles were excluded.

For the content-related criteria, the primary emphasis was on articles that explicitly dealt with gatekeeping; duplicate studies were excluded; only recent and complete versions of a study were included; and finally, only empirical studies were included; systematic reviews, conference papers, books, and commentary were excluded. Although the individual articles were explicit about the idea of gatekeeping, a second filter was used to gauge how much emphasis was placed on the idea. The explicit articles were further categorised based on the depth of treatment of gatekeeping in each piece using the following dimensions: journals with a full analysis of the gatekeeping concept, articles where the construct is not a large element but is a factor, and articles that only state gatekeeping. Gatekeeping-related commentary or editorial pieces were excluded.

2.6. Study Sample selection

According to Greenhalgh and Peacock (2005), Petticrew (2015), and Aguinis et al. (2020), SLRs must describe every step taken from finding articles in databases to choosing the final sample that will be used in the study. Figure 3 illustrates the three main steps that served as the guide for the sample selection process, which is described in this section of the report. It

is crucial to note that the sampling strategy included pre-established eligibility criteria, allowing me to exercise personal judgment when applying the inclusion/exclusion criteria in either the stage of articles identification or screening (Booth et al. , 2016). While some academics, like Paul and Criado (2020), contend that there are few insights on how to carry out sample selection in the research field of business management research and that due care is required because traps still exist.

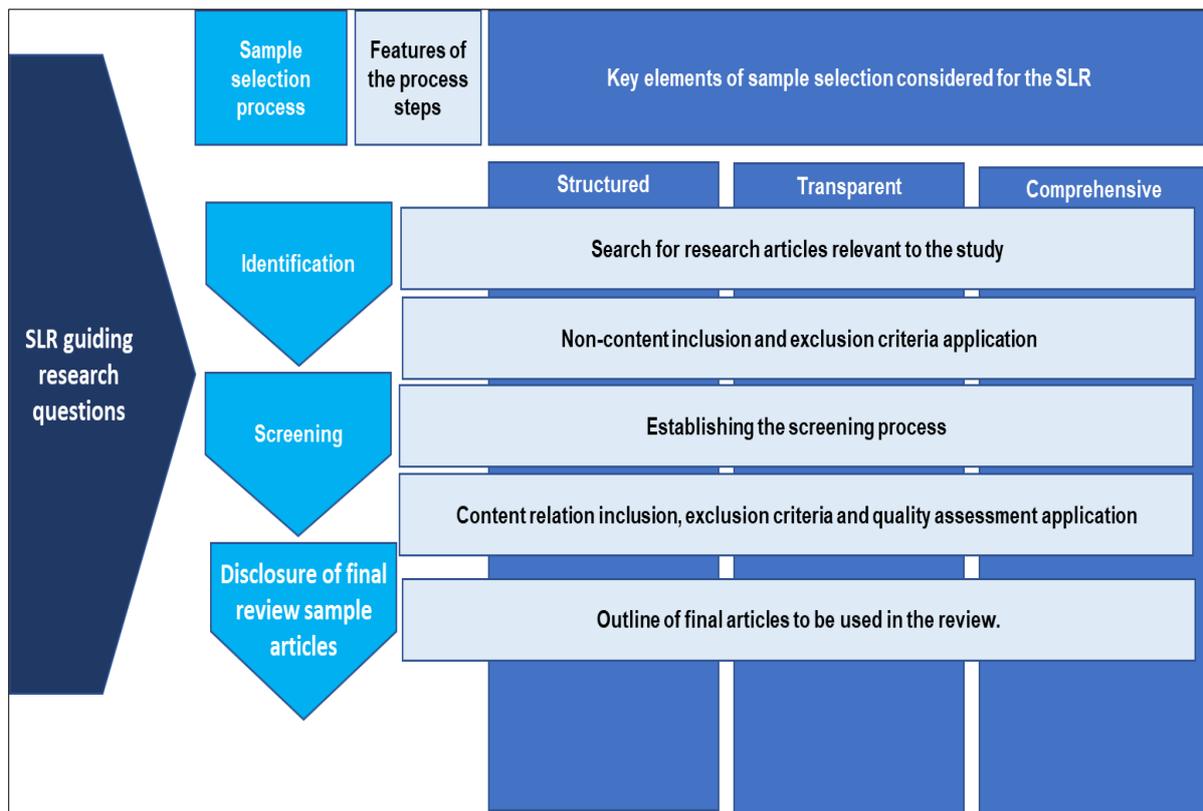


Figure 3: Steps in Sample selection strategy

Source: Researcher's configuration (2022)

2.6.1. Identification of articles

According to Booth et al. (2016) finding potential pertinent research articles that could address the study's research questions is critical. Potentially is a key word to take note of in this context because it suggests that the sample that was gathered at this point needs more content clarification to support its inclusion in the final sample needed to address the study's research questions (Petticrew, 2015). After removing duplicate entries, the first return list from the search, which was produced in December 2021, contained 783 articles. A scoping study and the use of the search terms gatekeeping, gatekeeper, modern gatekeeping, gate, the gated,

gatekeeping dilemmas, gatekeeping process, gatekeeping and the digital age, and gatekeeping and the digital age led to the discovery of the articles.

Implementation of non-content eligibility criteria was pursued to direct the collection of potentially relevant studies during the identification stage in order to obtain this initial return list of articles. The criteria included considering the different types of publication outlets, for the study which was limited to journals within the AJG range of 3-5, the time period 2000-2020, with the exception of foundational articles which contributed to the foundational development of the concept, and the method of finding research items which was from specific electronic databases.

2.6.2. Quality Assessment Criteria

From this vantage point, I understood that defining eligibility criteria as peer-reviewed articles published in journals was very loose to be used as a critical indicator of quality alone and would probably not be sufficient as a base for determining the relevance or quality of a study for a (Massaro et al. ,2016). To reduce the risk of bias, a quality assessment system that was systematic and comprehensive was necessary given the spread of articles across the field over the years, the types of studies, and the heterogeneity of studies. Therefore, I developed a quality assessment checklist based on the research questions, first reading of article titles and abstracts, and benchmarks from previous reviews, and applied it to the 783 potentially relevant studies that were found after full implementation of the non-content criteria.

Based on Snyder (2019) recommendations and the research questions, the QAC checklist was used to assess the quality of 783 studies. Each study was assessed using the six questions on the QAC checklist, which is included in Appendix 1, by selecting Yes, No, or Moderately, which corresponded to scores of 2, 1, or 0 for each. After carefully examining the titles and abstracts for each study, the articles were put through the QAC checklist. I gave each study a quality score, and then I added the scores for each study's answers to the checklist questions to get the overall quality score. Studies with quality scores of less than six, or six out of a possible twelve, were disregarded in order to ensure the dependability of the quality assessment throughput and impact on study findings. 322 articles made it to the screening stage after the QAC was implemented, while 466 were excluded.

2.6.3. Articles Screening Process

This selection stage consisted of two sequential steps: abstract review and dissertation review (full text). 322 articles from the preliminary stage were subjected to content screening criteria based on the research question of the study (Booth et al., 2016). Full-text electronic search

criteria were applied to the returns list and 190 items were excluded. After 190 items were excluded, 132 items were restored. More than half of the 132 articles (79) were excluded because they did not explicitly address the concept of gatekeeping and the articles did not contain any literature or discussion of gatekeeping.

The primary criterion for selecting a paper is that gatekeeping was specifically examined using a model and was not just a coincidental result. They had to be categorised in accordance with a number of factors related to the research questions after being chosen as relevant papers. Additional papers were not included because they were not primary studies, did not concentrate on the study's context, and did not evaluate the construct; they merely made references to it. The 53 articles that were included in the final review sample came from the full text articles that were screened for eligibility.

2.6.4. Final SLR articles disclosure

After following arguments by Booth et al. (2016), a final sample of articles for the study was made public following the thorough application of the eligibility requirements and the quality evaluation. 53 articles made up the last list that was returned. According to Paul and Criado (2020), a minimum of 50 articles can be used in an SLR for business research. The final list of articles worked well as the SLR's sample size. Based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews framework (PRISMA), the entire search and selection process for the study is presented in Appendix 2.

2.7. Data Management

All of the included research studies are protected by copyright and are freely usable for research without any limitations. Studies were downloaded for analysis from their respective databases, printed, and stored in a safe folder. Electronic copies of articles and other materials related to this review have been stored on the cloud storage platform Google Drive, which also offers file synchronization and storage capabilities, to prevent data loss due to computer malfunction.

2.8. Ethical considerations

Electronic database searches were given enough time to ensure that the study's source material was comprehensive. I have presented the arguments as accurately as I could, avoiding the use of direct words used by the original authors, which is considered plagiarism, because the credibility, verifiability, and transparency of the research process were crucial. The review was restricted to already completed and published studies; no author contact was

made in an effort to learn more about the studies. In any of the included studies, there were no declared conflicts of interest. According to reports, all studies adhered to reasonable research ethics standards. This review only includes findings that were included in the original papers. For the purpose of avoiding unethical plagiarism, the authors and sources of the included studies are correctly cited and acknowledged.

2.9. Data extraction and Analytical Approach

Mapping the various stages of the reviewing process was crucial, and to complete this crucial task, a data extraction framework was made before the review and uploaded into the software program I used for a data abstraction and synthesis, Atlas.ti. The data abstraction process continued after the final sample, which included 53 articles, was determined. Data was abstracted to the full texts of the final selected articles using the tabulation techniques and matrix method on Microsoft (MS) Excel as proposed by Petticrew (2015). I read through each of the papers and used the time to start open coding at the same time. I quickly combed through the papers looking for texts and words that could be coded. Some of the successful open codes that were developed included gatekeeping justifications, within-field analysis, cross-field analysis, gatekeeping vocabulary, modern gatekeeping, and others.

The first step involved creating a codebook based on an analysis of the broad context in which studies were conducted, key elements of that context that were related to the gatekeeping discipline or generalisations to the overall gatekeeping research, the research topic, which could be either specific or fall under a sub-domain, and finally the publication forum. Every study that was looked at for the review's codebook had a clear goal that was documented. Every component of the purpose was expressly defined. For instance, if the goal of an article was to demonstrate collaboration, then it is obvious that the paper's content must do so. I created codebooks for numerous important elements that I selected from the studies as I abstracted data. One of the codebooks I created involved assessing the level of research-related implications each study had. The most insightful codebook created measured each scholar's contribution to the field. I was able to determine how much research was being done in the field and how much of it was being acknowledged by other researchers by using citations from Google Scholar and a bibliographic analysis.

The first step was to create a codebook based on analysis of the broad context in which the research was conducted. An important element of that context is a specific or formulated research topic that relates to the field of gatekeeping or is a generalisation of all gatekeeping research. or subdomains, and finally public forums. Each study considered in the review codebook had a clearly documented purpose. Each part of the purpose is explicitly defined. For example, if the purpose of the article is to show collaboration, then it is clear that the

content of the work must be. This white paper includes Appendix 4, which is a snapshot of the codebook. In abstracting the data, we created a codebook of a number of key factors selected from our research. One of the codebooks I created included an assessment of the research impact level for each study. The most insightful codebook ever produced measures each scholar's contribution to the field. Using citations and bibliographic analysis from Google Scholar, I was able to determine how much research has been done in this area and how much is acknowledged by other researchers.

I read through the articles five times to confirm the coding: once in January 2022, once in April, once in July 2022, once in August, and once in September 2022. I changed at least 20% of the previous codes during each iterative cycle. I ensured that each cycle of coding was independent of the one before it and that it was completed following a new reading of the articles. Since my study focused on examining what was emerging from the literature, I did not adhere to a predetermined framework.

Therefore, data extraction demonstrates that the papers reflect similarities. a component of a measure that promotes comparability between result groups. The most notable characteristics and themes they form are used to categorise these common elements. The procedure was therefore inductive (Massaro et al., 2016). In other words, the thematic focus of this review was inspired by the search results. The transition to modern gatekeeping was one of the presentation's main themes, as were discussions about traditional gatekeeping and conversations across disciplines.

2.10. Limitations of the research design and methods.

SLRs have been celebrated for their natural integrity, structurally embedded robustness, and ability to generate transparent processes, but Farrington (2003) and Massaro et al. (2016) must be considered There are inherent limitations. One of the concerns associated with SLRS is the limitation of study scope due to defined constraints on time, publication site, type of study, use of selected electronic databases, and adherence to stringent eligibility criteria. All these terms that add structure to the process may suggest the possibility of excluding some related studies from the study, although as argued by (Pittaway & Cope, 2007) Additionally, SLR allows for notable contributions in a particular area of research to appear as a continuous stream of sequential journal articles, usually. .

Another restriction relates to the selection of keywords used to regulate the inclusion criteria for the papers. This also raises the possibility of leaving some important studies out of the analysis, which could affect the validity of the results. In order to lessen the impact of this limitation on my study, I took a cautious approach during the initial inspection phase and

thought about inspection of the abstract, title, and full text to ensure that each article was adequately consulted.

Another drawback to the SLR methodology is publication bias. There is a chance of assuming that studies published in prestigious journals and having significant effects made enormous contributions to the field of study, when in fact smaller or negative studies that may be harder to find may have made more beneficial contributions. A research field runs the risk of overstating its benefits.

Working alone as the author and reviewer of the study with no methodological expertise was a significant limitation of the research design because SLRs are by their very nature very time-consuming and intense and are therefore most frequently carried out by a team, as Pittaway and Cope (2007) allude to. Time and resource limitations were plain to see. This goes hand in hand with the methodology's painstaking limitation of its process-oriented focus, which confines the author within the process.

The methodology's final point of contention is that the review process inevitably revealed studies with various designs, levels of methodological quality, and settings. Subjectivity has an impact on how studies are combined to form the final review sample and runs the risk of mixing studies of varying quality, which lowers the calibre of the findings and conclusions.

2.0. Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the importance of methodological literature and sample selection for conducting structured literature reviews. Details on search strategies, selection strategies, and rigor on quality assessment were developed in this chapter. A detailed overview of the methods used to extract data from articles for analysis from selected samples was provided. The process-oriented nature of the study design, beginning with the development of the review protocol, followed by a detailed description of the research methodological activities aligned with the research question, allowed for the editing of the articles included in the final review sample selection. A final 53 articles were selected for review after the strategy was fully implemented. The chapter concluded by acknowledging the limitations of the research methodology. In the next chapter, analytical results of data obtained from a sample of articles selected for study are presented.

CHAPTER 3: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

3.0. Introduction

The issue of how study results are synthesised is crucial from the outset of an SLR. The studies gathered for the SLR are summarised in this chapter. The chapter is much more than just a summary of the findings of the included studies. In order to answer the research questions for the study more effectively than individual studies could, the emphasis is on attempting to integrate the individual studies and gather information. Each phase of the review affected the results because choices made earlier in the review influenced the synthesis options. For instance, when operationalizing the selection criteria in the first phase of the review, it was necessary to decide whether similar or dissimilar studies should be included, as well as whether studies should be combined or not (Thomas et al., 2017). The synthesis process involved data transformation carried out through standard analytical steps like searching for relationships in data, assessing the synthesis's quality, and combining all the data to address the review question (Thomas et al., 2017). In varying degrees, the methods used to transform data for synthesis may appear to be separate steps in the presentation.

Utilising configurative synthesis, which generates outlines in the data, investigates different configurations in the data, and produces novel synthetic representations of the phenomena under study, various types of text pooled from individual studies along with their results were linked and networked for this study. To look for areas of overlap and disagreement, individual study results were translated both within and between studies. Iteration, repeated comparison, theme construction, multiple reading sessions, explanatory as well as analytical coding, and multiple reading sessions were some of the techniques used (Thomas et al., 2017). Which studies are comparable enough to offer an understandable pooled estimate of the phenomenon was the most frequent query during the review process.

3.1. Study Selection

This section examines the SLR results, starting with the PRISMA flowchart of the screening procedure that is shown in Appendix 2. 872 potential journal articles that were relevant were found after the database search. The PRISMA chart, which summarises the handling and flow of articles until the final sample, shows that 47 articles were retrieved from direct database searches, and an additional six articles from the reference list review met the eligibility criteria. The analysis program Atlas.ti. received the chosen articles and began to analyse them. And duplicate entries were disregarded. There were 89 duplicate records, which were collected

and eliminated. This produced 322 records, which were then subjected to screening using titles and abstracts, leading to the removal of 190 articles. Following the exclusion of 79 articles and the return of 53 records as the final review sample, the returned 132 research articles were flagged for full-text review. Appendix 3 contains an excerpt from the list of the works that were excluded, along with a description of the grounds for the exclusion.

The three fields with the highest number of citations were management ($n = 9$), information science and technology ($n = 11$), and communication and journalism research ($n = 18$). Only gatekeeping network theory was presented in 9 articles, only gatekeeping theory was presented in 37 articles, and only traditional gatekeeping was presented in 5 articles. The distribution of journals across disciplines reveals the relative importance of gatekeeping in different areas of research. Five articles from foundational studies were among the 48 articles that were published between the study's target date range of 2000 and 2020.

The earliest study in the final set was a foundational article from 1947, and the most recent was from 2020. The period between 2000 and 2010 saw a significant amount of publications, which is when debates about gatekeeping were at their most intense and gave rise to the networked gatekeeping model (NGT), a redefined conceptual framework. The HTML version of every journal article that was screened was available. The three most frequently researched trends were the use of social media in gatekeeping, network gatekeeping, and modelling advancements in gatekeeping. In various appendices that are attached to this paper, the data tables and analyses from this study are presented..

Gatekeeping research has been making its way into high-quality journals on a larger scale since its inception, according to the analysis of the 53 core papers selected for the study. Since then, the majority of gatekeeping articles have been taken from prestigious journals and have appeared in the main collection of papers in the study sample. The sample analysis reveals that from 2000 to 2020, gatekeeping remained the main topic of discussion in the majority of papers. The papers that made up the final review were distributed equally between the two decades of publication.

3.2. Implementation of Gatekeeping Theory

All 53 of the articles that were chosen for inclusion had at least one speculative framework that was postulated, it was discovered. Gatekeeping theory (GT), which was referenced in 35 studies (66%) and network gatekeeping model (NGT), which was referenced in 13 studies (25%), received the most references. Ten studies (19%) were based on two theories, the two most common being GT and NGT. Only one theory was used in the final set of studies, and eight studies (15%) made up the final sample. The research focused on modifications made

to one or more constructs during framework development. The most prevalent goal-directed constructs were gatekeepers, driven by the need to increase participants' confidence in their ability to influence the process and gate which postulated the capacity to pursue and select potential goals. In Appendix 3, specifics on study characteristics are provided. The end of this essay contains a list of all the papers that were included.

3.3. Synthesis of results

I used a thematic analysis to examine the data that was taken out of the studies, especially for the main findings. According to Tranfield et al. (2003) the classification for thematic analysis, although it was created as a useful abstraction of the similarities of the classified phenomena does not exist independently. The following criteria were applied based on the evaluation function for identifying clusters or groupings: topics covered that are thematically similar, that is, they communicate semantics and ideas that are the same or similar to a greater extent; and topics covered that are contextually related and complement one another, making them more valuable when bundled.

The purpose of the study was to assess the degree to which the observed shift in gatekeeping conceptualization was reflected in existing gatekeeping studies and to attempt to frame new research directions. Investigating the nature of the various analytical frameworks that have appeared in gatekeeping research was the main objective. In order to fully explore the aim of the study, all 53 articles were read again. In order to create categories that could later be clustered into themes and analysed thematically, a three-stage coding style was employed. Articles were categorised in accordance with the study's theme at the beginning of the open coding process. Then, in order to link the relationship between themes, common sub-themes were identified using axial coding. The items associated with each sub-theme were used in the final stage of selective coding. The next section goes into great detail on each theme.

3.3.1. Research contribution

After carefully examining the relevant studies, contributions to the field of research were categorised in order to get a general overview of the gatekeeping literature. Six research contributions were identified through categorization. To gain a preliminary understanding, description, and overview of the contents of the studies included in the analysis, the studies were categorised according to their research contributions. The information is then analysed in light of the research questions. Gatekeeping procedures and methods were categorised under the first heading (22 studies). By establishing, extending, and occasionally evaluating gatekeeping approaches, these studies advanced the field of research. The second category included gatekeeping procedures (20 studies).

Studies in this post-type category look at actual gatekeeping attitudes and behaviours. (16 studies) The role of gatekeeping in the organisational structure. The design, traits, and procedures of gatekeeping in an organisational structure, which served as the foundation of management studies, fell under another category. The application of gatekeeping was the topic of the fourth category. Finally, the final category examined the emergence and development of network gatekeeping models and their contributions to the field. The fifth category examined how the Internet has pushed the boundaries of gatekeeping theory.

3.3.2. Trends in conceptualisation

Defining the investigation's scope is crucial at this point. It is evident that gatekeeping is a pervasive and varied phenomenon that is visible in a variety of routine activities. The term, which has its roots in communication, has evolved over time, with theories primarily emerging in the fields of communication, technology, management, computer science, and later political science. The different gatekeeping conceptualizations within each discipline and domain were given particular consideration. This analysis only applies to sources that explicitly examined gatekeeping, so it is crucial to state this once more. Studies where academic researchers directly apply gatekeeping concepts to show the importance and centrality of the gatekeeping phenomenon in their research. Therefore, studies that alluded to the phenomenon were disregarded. The conclusions regarding the underlying assumptions, underlying foundations, and individual contributions are presented in the sections below.

3.3.3. Theories from communication studies

For more than 50 years, journalists have been researching the dynamics of gatekeeping. Theories created in the fields of journalism and communication have centred on the human information selectors or filters used by gatekeepers. Despite offering various theories, Schultze and Orlikowski (2004) define gatekeeping as the process by which the billions of messages sent globally are condensed into a few hundred that are delivered to an audience on a particular day. Shoemaker et al. (2001), ten years later, acknowledged that gatekeeping was a broader concept and clarified the gatekeeping process as involving more than just selection. In fact, gatekeeping evolved from being viewed as merely a set of in and out decisions to the holistic process by which social reality was constructed (Shoemaker et al. , 2001).

For more than 50 years, researchers who work in the media have researched gatekeeping dynamics. Theories in communication and journalism studies have concentrated on the human information selectors or filters used by gatekeepers. Despite offering various theories,

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Because of this, the main emphasis of communication theories has been on the gatekeeping process and identifying the relevant factors that influence it. Early theories held that gatekeeping was largely determined by personal attributes like judgment (White, 1950). White (1950), for instance, proposed a straightforward model to explain the selection procedure in newspapers, contending that news was rejected for three reasons: the gatekeeper's personal preferences, the availability of adequate space, and whether the story had already been published. Many academics who followed the development of these theories have emphasised personality traits, as proposed by Tushman and Katz (1980) and Clayman and Reisner (1998), or the influence of gatekeepers' moral reflexivity and decision-making process normative placement (White, 1950).

As the gatekeeping controversy grew, Shoemaker et al. (2001) noting the alternate surge of communication propositions described gatekeeping as being routine and organisational position propositions. Alternative surge proposals that focused on internal organisational settings included those that highlighted the impact of organisational traits on gatekeeping, routines that establish working procedures for the gatekeeper, and established industry benchmarks (Shoemaker et al., 2001). The models of cost and time constraints, mechanical product models, and technological absence factors are also included in this surge (Livingston & Bennett, 2003). Scholars started to investigate gatekeeping as a social change act as new gatekeeping theories and models emerged.

These studies contributed to the creation of theories that addressed the institutional and social environment, such as the effects of group consensus on gatekeeping, the influence of market pressure on gatekeeping, models of newsworthiness, and the role of culture (Livingston & Bennett, 2003; Shoemaker et al., 2001). Later, some researchers developed information features theories to explain how editors make decisions about what news to include in the media by looking at visual aspects, size of the news, count, and clarity (Corra & Willer, 2002; Kunovich & Paxton, 2000; Singer, 2006). To summarise, according to the majority of communication theories, gatekeeping refers to the process of regulating how messages are entered into a gatekeeper's domain.

3.3.4. Theories from the management field

It was the technological gatekeeper Allen (1969) who first conceived of the concept of gatekeeping propositions in management, and he later developed and expanded it with the help of several other scholars (Allen and Cohen, 1969). Studies on opinion leaders and their effects on various facets of life served as its main sources of inspiration. Three characteristics of gatekeepers and the participants with whom they interact are linked according to Allen and Cohen (1969), and they high-position specialist doer. This spells out that gatekeepers are mature and recognised as first-line administrators, and that gatekeepers are specialists in operation who are recognised as having such a part by technical management. Understanding the role of gatekeepers as crucial individuals who are both explosively connected to internal associates and linked to external disciplines continued this line of exploration after Tushman and Katz (1980) started perfecting the aspect of communication across organisational boundaries.

Gatekeepers and border crossers are increasingly being treated as interchangeable terms in research, especially in the current management literature (Pawlowski & Robey, 2004; Schultze & Orlikowski, 2004). Later, the idea was utilised in more specific management contexts, like personnel matters (Dwivedi & Misangyi, 2018, Ishikawa, 2012). In fact, this area has concentrated on either developing a set of criteria to identify technological gatekeepers, as per Schultze and Boland (2000), or on using established parameters to understand how gatekeepers manage information flow, business processes, and influence communication between organisational sub-units. These models' emphasis on either intra- or inter-organisational contexts are a particular weakness. While gatekeepers are viewed as rule-breakers in management studies, they are literally viewed as selectors in communication studies literature who guard the gates and walls.

3.3.5. Theory development in the Information Sciences

Information and technology science only became interested in the concept of gatekeeping after the growth of the internet when communication and management field were well established in studying gatekeeping. Information science is somewhat fragmented, like communication science, and includes a wide range of theories and definitions of gatekeeping (Shoemaker et al. , 2001). Contrary to communication, information science has adopted some of its theories and terminology from other disciplines, such as editorial gatekeeper and technological gatekeeper from management (Allen, 1969; Schultze and Boland, 2000). The role of the information scientist as gatekeeper has also been examined from a selector or

mediator perspective using other variations on the management and communication concepts of gatekeeping (Sturges, 2001).

Two schools of information science theory questioned established gatekeeping norms. Cultural theory of gatekeeping, which was the first stream, aimed to identify and comprehend gatekeepers in communities (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008; Lindell, 2011). One of this model's strengths is how gatekeeper roles in social and community networks are conceptualised (Pearson and Kosicki, 2017; Schultze). In light of this, information science's contribution to gatekeeping research is the conception of gatekeepers as deeply ingrained in the communities whose voices they represent. It is challenging to separate the second stream from the cultural stream because information-seeking models are inextricably linked to one another (Shoemaker & Reese, 2013). Information-seeking models place a strong emphasis on understanding how the gatekeeper contributes to meeting information needs and services by a community.

3.4. Beginning of conversation challenging traditional gatekeeping:2000-2009

Between 2000 and 2010, most studies (Shoemaker et al., 2001; Singer, 2006; Schultze & Orlikowski, 2004) centred on pre-existing theories. Studies frequently focus on second-order questions and assumed purposeful issues when the theoretical foundations are well-established. Rather than reiterating definitions, the studies look at how a specific factor influences gatekeeping effectiveness or how gatekeepers act in a specific circumstance (Shoemaker et al., 2001; Shumsky & Pinker, 2013). The four topics discussed in the previous section point to a period of stagnation in the development of gatekeeping theory. The foundations of gatekeeping theories and gatekeepers, as well as one single theme, identity, were critically examined. Research on gatekeeping has not produced any original hypotheses or questions (Reese & Balinger, 2014; Schultze & Orlikowski, 2004). In the context of gatekeeping, what and who are more frequently asked as first-order questions than how and when. For example, what exactly is gatekeeping, who is eligible to be a gatekeeper, and what factors influence gatekeeping?

The majority of studies favoured to advance incrementally, building on the foundation already laid down by earlier researchers, according to Shoemaker and Reese (2014) and Singer (2014). Every field should have mechanisms for revisiting the axioms, presumptions, and hypotheses that advance theory development, according to Coddington and Holton (2014). However, every study does not have to be critical or aim to revolutionize the field by tackling first-order issues. Sadly, gatekeeping conceptualisations have started to be discussed as a

result of a macro-level analysis of the fields and disciplines over the past ten years (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008).

Only the amount of debate and variation surrounding this theory needs to be considered. Lack of both within-field and cross-field integration may be the cause of the research field's apparent fragmentation. This is not to say that certain theoretical frameworks are not rigorous or important (Lu, 2007). It does, however, show that academics prefer to avoid posing first-order issues that might cause controversy and take them away from their main research topic. It appears that they would rather provide safe answers than address significant issues that might endanger the scholarly establishment.

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3.5. 2010 to 2020- Current gatekeeping literature

This section's main goals are to offer a comprehensive overview of the most recent gatekeeping literature, reflect trends, and suggest a foundation for developing additional theories. Key journals in a range of disciplines and fields were examined between 2000 and 2020 to accomplish this goal. Only articles that explicitly used gatekeeping as a concept were taken into consideration, and priority was given to journals that are currently publishing and are ranked between three and five according to the AJG standards in a particular field. Over a twenty-year period, 53 (6%) of the 872 articles discovered in the eight disciplines explicitly focused on or referred to gatekeeping and met the study's inclusion criteria. The fields of communication, management, and information sciences had the highest number of studies, but it was crucial to consider how much of an emphasis each study placed on gatekeeping.

The situation changed when the articles' depth of treatment was analysed. These three disciplines have the most ad hoc conceptualizations of gatekeeping, as I will discuss in later sections. This discourse's fragmentation is a blatant attempt by the fields to challenge a dominant gatekeeping system. Additionally, the fragmentation highlighted the potential for intellectual uncertainties brought on by flawed theories or the inadequacy of those theories in the face of a constantly changing environment, such as how media gatekeeping may need to be rethought in light of the exponential changes in the digital landscape (Wallace, 2018). An

additional intriguing finding of the analysis is that few articles that fully analyse the gatekeeping concept are found in the fields of public affairs, politics, social sciences, law, and psychology. A closer look reveals that communication, management and information sciences are the only areas that consistently contribute to new theories on gatekeeping during this period, and that these areas have not produced new theoretical frameworks on gatekeeping between 2000 and 2020.

3.6. Intra-field analysis of the three core disciplines

Starting with the management field, the main objective of gatekeeping according to the literature on management today is the preservation of organisational culture and objectives. According to Harris and Ogbonna (2016), Ishikawa (2012), Lindell (2011), and Montgomery (2020), this position is the result of a synthesis of boundary-crossing, editorial gatekeeping, and enculturation theories. Van den Brink and Benschop (2014) state that facilitation is the mode of action, but that the preservation of values and norms within networks is the ultimate objective (Van den Brink & Benschop, 2014; Guldiken et al., 2019). These networks need to be developed. A topic of ongoing discussion that reflects the diverse origins of management studies is whether gatekeeping is a political or neutral process, as Shumsky and Pinker (2003) allude.

An intriguing position is offered by the communication industry. Some recurring patterns are revealed by recent communication science research. First, the emphasis is on the editorial meaning of gatekeeping as it relates to a fundamental aspect of journalism. Gatekeepers in journalism are typically seen as necessary elite members, according to Singer (2001) and Singer (2006). In other places, however, they are seen as being a part of a bigger community that also consists of the gated, who are governed by gatekeepers, as well as gatekeepers themselves. The editorial community in this case serves as the primary analysis unit and is an individual gatekeeper with a latent community perspective. Gatekeepers are therefore seen as part of a collective, institution, or corporation and the analysis's unit, and there is an extension beyond the individual (Shoemaker and Reese, 2013).

The lack of a dominant framework or theory and the fragmentation of the gatekeeping concept are the main trends in information science, according to findings from a within-field analysis (Schultze and Boland, 2000; Schultze). Information science, which originally borrowed the idea's theoretical foundations, has since evolved the idea. Over time, a distinguishing semantics of editorial justification has emerged in the dialogue between communication and information science (Lu, 2007). The semantics of scholarly editors emphasise the superiority and quality of information artifacts entering the gatekeeper network governed by publication

gates as a result (Lu, 2007). The gatekeeping literature that is currently available in information science also tends to distance itself from gatekeeping socialization theories. Enculturation theories are increasingly used when offline ethnocultural communities are studied and a link to cultural context is assumed, but scholars do not see their value in situations where gatekeeping involves selection, dissemination, or mediation in organisational, professional, or individual contexts (Lu, 2007).

3.7. Common gatekeeping themes in current literature

The previous section provided some cryptic results on how each field addresses gatekeeping by presenting an intra-field analysis across three core disciplines, which account for more than 85% of the studies included in the final sample. The study had to first determine which topics are emerging across these disciplines in order to be able to analyse and reflect on changes. This led to the inter-field analysis, which gave rise to the four key themes in the studies.

The identity theme is the first overarching pattern that can be found in all research from the three disciplines. The goal of this theme was to pinpoint the gatekeeper in gatekeeping studies. The identity theme, which focuses on the underpinnings of current theoretical frameworks and is dominated by information science academics. In the two studies (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008; Nahon, 2011) that focus on the identity theme, it is assumed that gatekeepers are developed from within the community and serve to represent its members' needs. These studies examine gatekeepers from a neutral as well as a pluralistic perspective, of course. Information skills are what distinguish gatekeepers from other network members rather than being a member of a particular class or elite or possessing a certain level of power (Wallace, 2018).

The first common theme that was consistent across all studies in the three disciplines is the identity theme. This theme sought to identify who the gatekeeper is in gatekeeping studies. The identity theme, which is dominated by information science academics and is focused on the foundations of current theoretical frameworks. In the two studies that address the identity theme (Nahon, 2011; Barzilai-Nahon, 2008), it is presupposed that gatekeepers are created from within the community and serve to represent the needs of its members. Of course, both a neutral and pluralistic viewpoint is used in these studies to examine gatekeepers. Instead of belonging to a particular class or elite or having a certain amount of power, information skills are what set gatekeepers apart from other network members (Wallace, 2018).

In most studies, the theme of processes came in second. This theme explores the subtleties of decision-making. The decision-making process motif focuses on the variables that affect

decisions. It effectively distinguishes between factors that can be interpreted in different ways, such as a person's feelings and perceptions, and political and power metaphors of gatekeeping (Lewin, 1947; White, 1950). Furthermore, by focusing on the process, this approach stifles conversation about how the gates impact the process. As a result, they do not have an equal opportunity to succeed within the system (Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Shoemaker et al., 2001).

The comparison of the old and the new emerging contexts of gatekeeping across fields consistently and continuously led to the third theme being identified. In order to understand the differences between traditional forms of communication and novel ones made possible by the internet, communication is the only field of study that is addressed by the questions posed under this rubric. Anyone can speculate as to why other fields are so slow to examine how new technologies affect gatekeeping concepts (Singer, 2014). The main issue that arose during the analysis was whether communication theories were more advanced than theories in other fields. According to Tandoc and Vos (2016), the new-old comparison reflects communication scholars' dissatisfaction with traditional gatekeeping theories. In an effort to analyse new gatekeeping phenomena, numerous studies use outdated techniques and frameworks that need to be updated. According to Singer (2006), information is no longer seen by gatekeepers as a finished good but rather as a base for user participation, engagement, and personalization, highlighting the gap between reality and theory. The majority of conventional gatekeeping theories are unable to explain such phenomena (Barzilai- Nahon, 2008; Wallace, 2018).

The need to comprehend the effects of gatekeeping in each field emerged as the final theme. The affect theme is reflected in monolithic questions that investigate the results of gatekeeping in a specific circumstance. It demonstrates how gatekeeping and gatekeepers influence cultural change through representation, for instance. Gated individuals are typically treated as dependent variables in these studies, while gatekeeping and gatekeepers are treated as independent variables (Steensen & Ahva, 2015). The seemingly limitless variety of outcome variables and contexts is inevitably questioned (Nahon, 2011). Under the right conditions, the ability to analyse deconstruct gatekeeping as a process can be compromised, or the gatekeeping itself can take centre stage (Putterman, 2005).

3.8. The birth of new theories: 2010-2020

This section's main topic is the initial period of new approaches to gatekeeping research. Three things were responsible for this. Beginning with the new-old theme comparison, Singer (2014) highlights some of the challenges that researchers faced when attempting to describe

and analyse new gatekeeping phenomena. Second, the prevalence of information and communication technologies, the widespread use of interactive applications, and the population's increasing digital literacy forced scholars to revisit or at the very least re-examine traditional models of gatekeeping. In two articles about how the World Wide Web changed the role of the newspaper editor, Singer (2001, 2006) illustrates the mismatch using traditional communication theories of gatekeeping. The majority of the earliest gatekeeping theories began to offer problems, solutions, and foundations that were unique to their particular field or discipline in addition to expanding the boundaries of the research field (Shoemaker and Reese, 2013).

As work on novel theory/model proposals that were not constrained by any specific paradigm advanced, the discipline's barriers began to dissolve (Nahon, 2011). Contextual richness in the field began to develop at this point. This started to provide an interdisciplinary framework that could be applied in various settings and fields, which was extremely beneficial (Gao et al. , 2014). The proposed theoretical framework, also known as a meta-theory, could be further tailored by developing questions that are relevant to a specific field. The first mention of Network Gatekeeping Theory (NGT) in the literature dates back (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008). It is a novel method of gatekeeping through the gated. The presentation of the within-field and cross-field themes enhanced comprehension of the gatekeeping concept as it is applied in research today. It also highlighted the gaps that still need to be filled, such as how difficult it is to handle complex phenomena like gatekeeping when the required analytical tools are not available. As a result, it was necessary to combine fundamental ideas from various theories to create a more complex conceptualization.

3.9. Emergence of Network Gatekeeping Theory

Barzilai-Nahon (2008) developed the concept of network gatekeeping as a theoretical framework focusing on four perspectives, namely as an information control process gatekeeping is not limited to a type of control that is specific, networks are important in the conceptualization of gatekeeping, the identification of the gated, gatekeepers, and the entity subject to a gatekeeping process is important, and the identification of the gated, gatekeepers, and the entity subject to a gatekeeping process is important through their interactions. NGT emphasised the concept of the gated based on their four characteristics, which include, in relation to the gatekeeper, their political power, in terms of information production, their ability, then the relationship with the gatekeeper, and finally, in the context of gatekeeping, their alternative (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008; Tandoc & Vos, 2016). The presence of these qualities is thought to be correlated with how important a particular gated is to a gatekeeper (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008).

By developing a new vocabulary to fit modern contexts, considering dynamics, and applying interdisciplinary methods and approaches to gatekeeping questions, NGT provided a roadmap for gatekeeping scholars to close knowledge gaps (Chin-Fook & Simmonds, 2011; Erzikova, 2018; Tandoc & Vos, 2016). The theory did provide researchers with a starting point for challenging accepted wisdom and the conceptual foundations of gatekeeping, even though it was not a silver bullet or the ideal theoretical framework for illuminating and explaining gatekeeping phenomena in all of their complexity (Lu, 2007). On the other hand, other academics quickly identified a few shortcomings in this novel tactic. The dynamism reflected in this theory is initially obscured by the dichotomous types of gates, which leave little room for the hazy conceptualisations (Coddington & Holton, 2014).

Nevertheless, the theory as it stands has developed to the point where it can be debated and bring up unresolved issues (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008). Second, using these four criteria as a strict guideline might deter researchers from including or excluding other factors that might be important in a specific circumstance (Pearson & Kosicki, 2017). NGT is one method for bridging vocabulary gaps that obstruct the transfer and transformation of concepts from one field to another (Coddington & Holton, 2014). To put it another way, the new vocabulary promotes the assimilation of thoroughly researched concepts by obscuring distinctions and exploiting the growth of existing concepts.

3.10. The dynamic nature of gatekeeping

According to Montgomery (2020), dynamism is crucial in capturing an environment where stakeholder goals, as well as gatekeeping and gated roles, change frequently. As a means of advancing scholarship beyond conventional theories and tools that are unable to explain dynamic situations in which the alternatives available to gated change, information producers' skills and capabilities develop, and relationships between gated and gatekeepers become more complex, Schultze and Orlikowski (2004) stressed the significance of understanding the dynamic nature of gatekeeping. The proposed NGT made it possible to better understand the dynamism of interactions involving information control in various contexts by utilising the various attributes suggested. Because of this, the model offers a framework for theorising about a significant phenomenon while also accommodating different gatekeeping characteristics in different contexts (Singer, 2014; Shumsky and Pinker, 2013).

Most of the literature examined in this chapter Lewin (1947), Shoemaker et al. (2001), Ballinger and Reese (2011) allude to a representation of the concept of gatekeeping as a dynamic phenomenon with no discernible inertia. Singer (2006) and Putterman (2005) proposed a linear evolution of the gatekeeping role, with gatekeeper authority increasing over

time. The fact that models are a simplified representation of reality must always be kept in mind. Gatekeepers and gated people do not behave in a uniform manner, and neither do the social and political constructs that they represent (Erzikova, 2018).

3.11. The growth of interdisciplinary conversations

A review of recent literature indicates the need for an interdisciplinary theoretical framework to illuminate the various facets of gatekeeping within the context of the information society. In order to accomplish this goal, multi-field methodologies and vocabulary were only added to NGT as the first step. Interdisciplinary frameworks, however, also help in the development of questions (Shoemaker & Reese, 2013). According to Barzilai-Nahon (2008), scholars, for instance, want to understand the various roles that gatekeepers play because these roles can occasionally collide when the gatekeeper is viewed as both a community messenger and a boundary guardian at the same time. NGT served as a meta-theory and an all-purpose framework for subsequent theory and model development processes in various fields. The introduction of the theory served as a starting point for a more in-depth discussion and gradual advancements in numerous fields and disciplines that concentrated on first-order network problems.

3.12. Retrospective analysis and the future of gatekeeping.

The earlier studies laid the groundwork for answering research question 3. The discipline has gone through three stages of development: fragmentation, when the gatekeeping discipline was embodied by various schools of thought; integration, when the gatekeeping discipline was embodied by an all-encompassing perspective, a common vocabulary, and analytical approaches; and finally fusion, when the gatekeeping discipline converged with other scientific domains, theories, and principles (Barzilia- Nahon, 2008; Shoemaker et al., 2001). Nevertheless, the field is riven with ambiguity, sharp divisions, and disintegration despite ongoing interest in gatekeeping topics (Barzilia- Nahon, 2008; Nahon, 2011; Shumsky & Pinker, 2013). Nevertheless, there will probably be ongoing interest in gatekeeping theories and methods, and there are exciting opportunities to apply gatekeeping principles in other scientific fields (Erzikova, 2018; Wallace, 2018).

The NGT raised new concerns about how to view those who have been gated as contributors to society and the gatekeeping procedure. The dual roles of gatekeepers as both gated and gatekeeper have increased discussion about any potential additional roles for them (Coddington & Holton, 2014; Ishikawa, 2012). Another set of investigations focuses on how gatekeeping mechanisms affect behaviours, norms, values, awareness, and attitudes. Due to technology's pervasiveness and the abundance of information, many human information

exchanges now take place in the textual domain, necessitating attention (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008). Putterman (2005) noted that gatekeeping literature has neglected to acknowledge the crucial role that politics plays in understanding gatekeeping, despite the fact that this is a deficiency.

Reconceptualisation, which refers to going back to the basics and reorganising the entire discipline, specialisation, which refers to the creation of sub-domains within a larger gatekeeping paradigm, and extension, which refers to extending the depth and breadth of current gatekeeping research, are three emerging trends that may define the future of gatekeeping. Gatekeeping scientists ought to promote interdisciplinary research (Lu, 2007). The term "gatekeeping" might be replaced with "gate watching," and the field might converge with fields like information systems (IS), education, philosophy, industrial and organisational psychology, information economics, artificial intelligence, and strategic management (Erzikova, 2018; West, 2017).

3.13. Collective results summary .

Despite the fact that studies on journalism and communication were the most popular (Chin-Fook and Simmonds, 2011; Deluliis, 2015; Shoemaker & Reese, 2013). There are many gatekeeping themes that are misunderstood or misrepresented, as well as various audience-related issues. Gatekeeping has a rich historical background (Lewin 1947; White 1950) and has undergone numerous stages of development, from technological to strategic to soc. 2019, and Wallace (2018). It distinguishes itself from other disciplines even though it draws from and advances knowledge in a variety of fields, including engineering, economics, social sciences, particularly psychology, management, and accounting (Brear & Dorrinan, 2010).

The common conclusions reached show that gatekeeping works are focused on the field's intellectual foundation. Both Shumsky and Pinker (2013) and Shoemaker and Reese (2014) acknowledge that the number of annual publications peaked between 2001 and 2010 before beginning to decline. For Nahon (2011), this does not mean that gatekeeping will cease to be a research output in the various gatekeeping research niches. Gatekeeping research appears to have broadened its disciplinary scope and divided into a number of streams that are currently being thoroughly investigated in the last decade, as opposed to increasing in volume. In contrast, gatekeeping is perceived as a distinct, stable, and established field (Erzikova, 2018). The position is that the transition of gatekeeping from theory to practice is proceeding successfully (Coddington and Holton, 2014). Gatekeeping in management is still in its infancy, but it is not a passing fad and is progressing well toward maturity and recognition (Livingston & Bennet, 2004; Shumsky & Pinker, 2013).

The discipline as a whole currently lacks sufficient cohesion, consensus, and communication regarding gatekeeping (Nahon, 2011). It lacks a shared vocabulary, definitions, and terminology (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). According to some scholars such as Chin-Fook and Simmonds (2011), the journalistic school of thought dominates the discipline. Its lack of structure, uniformity, and consistency is partly caused by the interdisciplinarity of gatekeeping. Gatekeeping appears to be represented by a variety of distinct research themes that will probably change over time, according to Erzikova (2018) and West (2017).

3.14. Chapter Summary

The literature review revealed some unmistakable trends in the conceptualisation of gatekeeping and issues that needed to be resolved in order to frame new research directions. These insights are valuable highlights of the literature reviews. Gatekeeping has been gradually moving away from using knowledge that has been created by other disciplines and toward producing its own body of knowledge. In the social and medical sciences, gatekeeping works are frequently cited, which is a sign of discipline maturity. While the vast majority of studies identified the absence of interdisciplinary consensus as a knowledge gap that requires future researchers to fill, another important finding was the lack of consensus regarding the network gatekeeping theory's ability to effectively address the dynamism of the concept. The lack of discipline homogeneity has been cited as a significant barrier to the discipline's continued growth in a number of studies. The traditional model's ability to hold up in the face of the ongoing challenges posed by the rapid growth of the digital economy was also met with conflicting opinions. It is clear that the research conducted was influenced by a wide range of theoretical concepts. In order to highlight common themes that emerged from the results, the following chapter will centre on discussing these findings.

CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSION OF LITERATURE REVIEW

3.0. Introduction

This research produced a number of major conclusions in the results section. I revisit the main research questions as I consider the study's findings. In order to identify knowledge gaps, new trends and inclinations, and opportunities to define future research agendas, the goal of this study was to explore and critically analyse the current state of the gatekeeping literature. Given the constantly shifting environment fuelled by the rapidly changing digital space, which continues to challenge the realms of the gatekeeping classical theory, this review is especially pertinent at this time. Even though there are not many studies on the topic, a few major themes have gradually surfaced in various academic discussions. Specifically, the function of the gatekeeper and how the dynamics of the gatekeeping contexts within the microsystem have affected it. The studies also showed the limitations of conventional gatekeeping models and the lack of interdisciplinary agreement in gatekeeping conceptualisations.

Over time, more articles have been published in this field, but a significant number of papers that have appeared in scholarly journals have nonetheless challenged the intellectual tenets of gatekeeping. There could be a variety of causes for this. The literature demonstrates that finding studies on the shifting narrative in the field of gatekeeping exploration is delicate and time-consuming. There are probably a lot of documents out there describing new, ultra-modern gatekeeping logical models that were excluded from this review because they did not fit the criteria. It has previously been identified as a significant gap in this study of more general developments in the gatekeeping field.

4.1. Discussion of study results

The objective of this review was to thoroughly examine the data regarding the evolution of gatekeeping conceptualizations in light of the emergence and exponential growth of the digital landscape, as well as its effects on the unidirectional flow of information as portrayed by traditional gatekeeping. The evidence from the literature review on the conceptualization of gatekeeping will be carefully examined to provide insight into how the gaps that sprouted into the study research questions were discovered. This section will therefore provide justifications for how the SLR advances gatekeeping research. The evidence that is currently available indicates that the new network gatekeeping model has sped up the development and retrospective study of gatekeeping, but there are still a wide range of opinions held by academics regarding the proposition's suitability as a one-stop explanation for ultramodern gatekeeping and all of its complications.

4.2. The value of Network Gatekeeping Theory

The concept of "network gatekeeping" was developed by Barzilai-Nahon (2008) as a theoretical framework that emphasises four perspectives, including the function of gatekeeping in information control, which is not always restricted, and identification of gated and gatekeeper, which are the entities subject to a gatekeeping process, through their interactions with one another. According to Barzilai-Nahon (2008) and Deluliis (2015), the third and fourth perspectives look at gatekeeper dynamism as well as the status and position of the gated. The current body of literature is completed by these four components. According to Barzilai-Nahon (2008) and Wallace (2018), NGT separates the gated based on defined characteristics listed as the political clout in relation to the gatekeeper, the gatekeeper's ability to generate information, and the relationship between the gatekeepers and gated. According to the model, the presence of these attributes influences a gated's salience to a gatekeeper.

4.3. The Gated's political power as a variable

The process of information control frequently functions as a power play by parties vying for political influence, according to a number of sources, including Barzilia (2005), Shoemaker and Reese (2013), and West (2017). The study's literature did not find any studies of gatekeeper power in relation to the gated in any of the disciplines covered. In more than 60% of the studies, the gatekeeper is seen as powerful, whereas the gated are seen as powerless or, at best, as having little power in comparison to the gatekeeper. Only six articles (Blanton, 2000; Coddington and Holton, 2014; Hardin, 2005; Putterman, 2005; Singer, 2006; Soroka, 2012) suggest gatekeepers are understanding of the interactive nature of the internet and that those who are accessed through them have equal influence over gatekeepers.

Analysing Hardin's (2005) dual approach to power is more challenging. She mentioned that the editor's choice of what, when, and whether to publish something should be influenced by the reader's interest. A gatekeeper is an editor. Hardin (2005) notes that gated preferences are ignored by editors empirically, but she argues that the gated may still profit if they band together to take revenge on gatekeepers. Putterman (2005) argues that because they should be the ones to frame the law rather than representative politicians, the gated should be thought of as legislative gatekeepers. This argument begs the question: Do the gated acquire any power, do they become gatekeepers?

4.4. Gated and gatekeepers contested relationship as a variable

Even though the majority of the reviewed literature acknowledges that there is a relationship between gatekeepers and the gated, it does not go into great detail to explain what reciprocity means or how lasting these relationships are (Wallace, 2018). In addition to the gated's capacity to produce information, other authors (Bruns, 2003; Chin-Fook & Simmonds, 2011) correctly emphasise the gated's involvement in shaping gatekeeper judgments, converting the gatekeeper to gated and vice versa. As a result of this study, future research may look at the dialectics of this interaction and its implications for gatekeeping theory. What circumstances lead a gated to become a gatekeeper, how do gated information and gatekeeper-controlled information interact, and do gatekeepers prefer one gatekeeping mechanism over another to uphold their perceived status are all significant questions that could be added as a contribution to the development of the research field. These are important concerns that could be brought up to advance the field of study.

4.5. The production of information by the gated as a variable

A significant portion (78%) of the literature that has been reviewed is concerned with how information is created, whether by the gatekeeper or other sources like news articles written by reporters. Only 11% of studies on gated information production and what it reveals about gatekeeping have been conducted (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008; Coddington & Holton, 2014; Deluliis, 2015; Pawlowski and Robey, 2004; Putterman, 2005; Singer, 2006; Wallace, 2018). The gatekeeper is portrayed in traditional gatekeeping representations as the sole producer or the main information disseminator, particularly in communication models that view editors as gatekeepers (Shoemaker). It is crucial to realize that contemporary literature downplays the significance of the gated in reality. Scholars have characterized gatekeepers using metaphors of dominance (Wallace, 2018). Because the production of information by those who are gated may translate into power and undermine gatekeeping as a process, many academics prefer to ignore and dismiss gatekeeping as a process (Deluliis, 2015; West, 2017).

Due to this, research questions and hypotheses frequently ignore the context of the gated and instead focus on the creation, dissemination, and use of information by gatekeepers (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008; Wallace, 2018). This is particularly surprising given that users are emphasised as co-producers in the literature currently available on information use in the age of the internet and other evolutionary technologies (Barzilai-Nahon & Barzilai, 2005; Erzikova, 2018). Scholars seem to have been conditioned by the dominant discourse to take a biased

gatekeeper's viewpoint. The vocabulary is obviously in the gatekeeper's favour; it effectively silences any desire to delve deeply into the nature of gated information production.

This study, however, demonstrated the need for new gatekeeping research that raised concerns about the dual nature of information production. Singer (2006) claims that rather than viewing information as a finished product, modern gatekeepers see it as a building block for user participation, engagement, and personalization. Wallace (2018) asserts that elites and non-elites can collaborate to create information on the internet. The ability of the gated to produce information, its function in the gatekeeping process, and its effects on network dynamics could all be the subject of future research.

4.6. Network gatekeeping theory as an anchor for continued conceptualisation

The first step is to consider the various aspects of NGT as they are presented in current literature. To help you better understand the complicated phenomenon of gatekeeping, consider how each attribute interacts with the others. a discussion of the appearance of various gated representations in recent writing. An in-depth investigation is required of the issues that the literature review revealed. My position is that academics should concentrate on the various interactions between gated and gatekeepers. Working within an elitist paradigm may be appropriate, but it's crucial to be aware of the latest communication strategies that gated individuals may use to interact with gatekeepers. Examples include recommender systems, in which gated, and users can rate the efficacy of specific gatekeeping logics at specific gated levels.

Numerous academic experts claim that the research on gatekeepers has shifted (Lewin,1947; Lu ,2007; Montgomery,2020; Shoemaker et al., 2001; Wallace,2018;White,1950).This is reflected in linguistic representations that place gatekeepers at the centre of network practices. Without a doubt, the theory cannot serve as a magic bullet or the best theoretical model for describing and illuminating complex gatekeeping phenomena (Barzilai, 2005). It does have a few shortcomings. First off, the dichotomous types of gates mask the dynamism that is reflected in this theory because they forbid the ambiguous classifications that are typical in a dynamic environment (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). This kind of restriction is typical in the initial stages of a theory's development. The current theory, however, is sufficiently intricate to stir discussion and bring up issues that were not previously significant.

4.7. Limitations of Modern Gatekeeping Models

In addition to the gatekeeper, the gate, force, and channel concepts are essential to Lewin's (1943) theory of gatekeeping. Gates and channels, in particular, are greatly influenced by

forces and, in the interim, select the data that will be used (Lewin, 1947; Shoemaker et al., 2011; Pearson, 2017; White, 1950); However, Shoemaker et al. (2001) analysis of the multi-linear models provided by Barzilai-Nahon (2008) reveals that these models are not linear. This summarises the drawbacks of the current gatekeeping models. The impact of the earlier gatekeeping sections on information is especially underappreciated (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008). The interactions between the various gatekeepers in front of the platform are not examined, which brings us to our second point.

The influence of different gatekeepers cannot therefore be distinguished (Pearson, 2017). Therefore, a detailed discussion of the polarity and strength of force is not possible. Last but not least, the current gatekeeping model does not consider recent changes in the social media ecosystem, such as new gatekeepers and new gatekeeping relationships (Pearson, 2017; Porter, 2003; Wallace, 2018; West, 2017). In other words, alterations in information flow channels cannot be accounted for by the initial gatekeeping models. The media and social media ecosystems have been found to be heavily reliant on networks, which are largely underrepresented in the current gatekeeping models (Pearson, 2017). As a result, it will be important to carefully consider the drawbacks in both the horizontal and vertical directions in subsequent works.

4.8. Time to admit the problem

The results of the study unmistakably show the field's continued development and the emergence of new conceptualizations of gatekeeping, but they also show that most articles focus on the roles of gatekeepers (Shoemaker & Reese, 2013). Unexpectedly, despite more than 60 years of gatekeeping research, no nomenclature has been established to identify the entity subjected to a gatekeeping process, whether it be a person, a group, or a community. Even when gatekeeping has a more collective meaning, the gated play an active but unnoticed role, whereas gatekeepers are viewed as representatives of their communities, groups, or organisations. The lack of terminology to identify these stakeholders in the literature is an illustration of the dominant discourse's disregard for the gated as well as of scholars' limited ability to present opposing viewpoints. For the first time in NGT literature, this entity is referred to as the gated (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008).

Not to mention, the analysis performed to determine the within-field and cross-field themes contributed to elucidating the definition of the term "gatekeeping" as it is used in contemporary research. It also brought to light the areas that still need to be filled and the difficulties faced when dealing with intricate phenomena like gatekeeping in the absence of adequate analytical tools. The significance of the gated as a stakeholder group and the interactive nature of

information technology are just a couple of the things that must be considered. Therefore, in order to establish a shared conceptualization and a more complex conceptualization, it is necessary to incorporate underlying concepts from various theories. There is not agreement on the nature of the issue. The literature analysed for this study confirms that there is a problem, but it does not yet look into how it might be identified, addressed, or resolved on a larger scale than the gatekeeping system. This could be because gatekeeping is unclear or constantly changing, or it could be because the majority of the environments studied are structured and formal.

While some of the research provides a clear picture of the concept at the local level, when the results are taken as a whole, what becomes clear may be different from the primarily individual accounts that emerge from this SLR. The findings of this SLR demonstrate that, rather than tackling the problem one researcher at a time, an ecological approach must be used to address it effectively.

4.9. Time to broaden the focus

There is now a need for closer ties to ongoing scholarly discussions and contributions from other scholars. Through each of the papers, this SLR highlights existing research findings on a variety of challenges, opportunities, and issues, but when taken as a whole, it also reveals a lack of coherence. By using the SLR as a lens, we can see that while the research may look into how people deal with a problem independently or live with it, this is not the same as fully overcoming it.

4.10. Time to look in other directions or sideways for answers.

While the reviewed research provided insights into conceptualization trends and gatekeeping evolution in the twenty-first century, findings that could aid in solving more pressing issues were somewhat lacking. It is important to understand that a structured review basically entails an analysis of the literature that is currently available and a judgment on the success or failure of a process that includes a number of complex steps. There are considerable gaps in knowledge, despite the fact that the literature review provides some nuanced development in the conceptualization of gatekeeping. The study's search terms turned up a limited amount of inconsistently high-quality research. According to the conclusions of the 53 retained papers, there are no obvious solutions in this case; there is only what the SLR determined.

While reading the papers for analysis, it was observed that while gatekeeping appeared to be understood and framed in a variety of ways, the overall picture of modelling appeared to be one of wide-ranging disparities. The conceptualizations presented illustrate the complex and multifaceted nature of gatekeeping, which has its roots in journalism and communication but

is now expanding beyond them. Looking away from the current gatekeeping discourses and toward the expanded research agenda is advised in order to produce more organised, coherent, and well-supported research.

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the topic, which includes sociology, cultural histories, psychology, law, management, public relations, management, information and technology, and political science in addition to communication and journalism studies, there were various interpretations of gatekeeping across all studies. However, most studies focused on how gatekeeping affects cognitive decision-making; less explicit attention, however, was paid to what these various interpretations of gatekeeping are, what they imply, and how they affect the studies. In an effort to highlight the process, concepts of gatekeeping were frequently implied and presented as binary in the papers, potentially leaving out an important topic of discussion.

In the context of the expanding digital footprint, future research in this area may be able to explain and problematize the complexity of gatekeeping understandings and their implications. The discussion in this vein will be more in-depth if intersectional frameworks are examined, such as the definition of reciprocity or the longevity of the connections between the gated and the gatekeeper (Lu, 2007; Wallace, 2018).

4.11. Strengths and limitations of the results

As far as I am aware, this is the first structured literature review on gatekeeping that focuses on holistically tracking the development of the gatekeeping narrative as conceptualizations surrounding the concept evolved. Previous review papers have examined gatekeeping as a process. This study therefore improves our comprehension of future gatekeeping research. The exacting procedures followed to compile the study's findings have guaranteed the validity of the data abstraction. Although the review was thorough, it's possible that not all relevant data could have been located. It was attempted to locate all potentially pertinent papers published in high-ranked journals within ranks 3-5 on the AJG by conducting searches in two different databases, both of which are rich in peer-reviewed articles in management and business research.

By combining different data sources, the results are improved. One of the additional inclusion criteria, the emphasis on papers published between 2000 and 2020, actually altered the results and made the eligibility requirements clearer. Due to the diversity of the papers' objectives, it has also not been possible to summarise the most important findings or conclusions. The articles were different in terms of how much information was provided to describe different aspects of gatekeeping conceptualisation.

4.12. Consolidated discussion summary

As this chapter has discussed, there is evidently little theory exchange between fields. But each discipline has its own vocabulary, metaphors, and icons, which gives rise to distinctive theoretical constructs and variables that frame research questions in a discipline-specific way. The goal of the cross-field themes analysis was to separate specialised questions from their disciplinary paradigm by identifying related themes within the theoretical framework and tailoring it to their particular needs. A discussion can be sparked, and older questions can be raised thanks to the current theory's sufficient depth.

It is proposed that one approach for bridging the vocabularies that prevented concepts from being transferred and transformed from one field to another is NGT. To put it another way, by obscuring boundaries and drawing on the maturity of other concepts, the new vocabulary made it simpler to assimilate thoroughly researched concepts. For instance, co-production issues could be solved if idiosyncratic barriers could be removed as they have attracted a lot of attention in the fields of communication and human-computer interaction (Lu, 2007; Singer, 2014). NGT was employed as a neutralizing mechanism to deal with language's dual roles as a gatekeeping tool and a means of power (Singer, 2014). The theory also helped people understand gatekeeping's dynamic nature completely.

Dynamism is essential for accurately portraying a situation where stakeholders' interests and goals, as well as their gatekeeping and gated roles, frequently change. Understanding the dynamic nature of gatekeeping may help researchers move beyond conventional theories and tools that are unable to explain dynamic situations where the alternatives available to the gated change, the knowledge and expertise of information producers develop, and relationships between gated and gatekeepers become more complex. Utilising the many attributes that the theory suggested, NGT enabled comprehension of the dynamism of interactions involving information control in various contexts (Wallace, 2018). Thus, it developed into the fundamental framework that has accelerated the conceptualization of gatekeeping as a significant phenomenon while also considering its unique contextual characteristics.

4.13. Chapter conclusion

It was made clear how the existing literature had been incorporated to identify any gaps that the research questions might fill as the study's findings were discussed in this chapter in a thematic manner. The chapter, intended to trace the development of gatekeeping as a field of study, methodically presented a discussion of the study's findings. In the subsequent chapter, the study's findings, and conclusions as well as its shortcomings, recommendations, and takeaways are all discussed.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. Conclusion

In order to fully understand the impact of the internet and related technologies on the evolution of modern gatekeeping, it is important to be aware of the resurgence of old patterns and to comprehend what is truly new. Gatekeeping still takes place despite new technology and gatekeepers, but it does so much more quickly. Gatekeeping researchers in the present and the future will be very interested in examining how gatekeeping has changed as a result of the internet as well as how gatekeeping as it currently exists may change as a result of the internet. In order to provide a thorough examination of gatekeeping over the past two decades that supplements and extends other articles in the field, this study used a structured literature review approach to gather and analyse the literature and theoretical lenses on the topic of gatekeeping. The identified studies were organised into themes in order to give a thorough overview of gatekeeping research.

The four main phases that the SLR framework allowed for the mapping of ongoing research efforts along were the traditional models phase, the transitory phase, the shaping phase, and the new models phase. The analysis and discussion of the study's results chapters provided potential directions for further investigation in each of these fields. Although difficult, these instructions are also very important and crucial. Generally speaking, I believe this study did a good job of systematizing and combining the prior research, which will serve as the foundation for subsequent research in this area. The goal of this SLR was to research current gatekeeping conceptualization trends and critically assess how the traditional gatekeeping theory has been challenged by the changing environment brought on by digital transformation. The study also examined the challenges faced by gatekeeping researchers. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the evolution of the gatekeeping concept, its dynamism in changing contexts, and its ongoing relevance as a field of study (Bhat, 2005; Brear and Dorrian, 2010).

How has gatekeeping research changed over the past 20 years? What are the emerging issues in gatekeeping research? What future research directions can you identify in the field of gatekeeping? This chapter provides the final details of the study, including the interpretation of the results and how those results addressed the study's research question. Moreover, network gatekeeping theory was only the beginning of the synthesis of interdisciplinary approaches. The results of this study suggest that an effective conceptualization of gatekeeping requires an interdisciplinary theoretical framework.

I will provide concluding details of the study in this chapter, including the interpretation of findings and how these results addressed the research questions for the study. The changes

in gatekeeping research over the past 20 years, the emerging issues in gatekeeping research, and potential future research directions in the field of gatekeeping are all discussed. The integration of multidisciplinary approaches was also just getting started when the NGT was developed. The results of this study indicate that because different fields and disciplines have different theories and methods for conceptualizing gatekeeping, an interdisciplinary theoretical framework is needed.

5.1. Study final remarks

The rise of the digital landscape, per the study's findings, has called into question the conventional unidirectional flow of gatekeeping (Shoemaker et al. Wallace, 2018; Singer, 2006; Barzilai-Nahon, 2008). The findings of this study demonstrate how the unidirectional model has been changed to include multidirectional flow, in which all actors have the capacity to influence one another and the flow of information, effectively connecting common people to organisations by primarily channelling through the mediation of the hub, which is composed of networked individuals and seasoned communicators (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008; Bruns, 2003; Coddington & Holton, 2014; Wallace, 2018). Because of this, the digital age has not eliminated online gatekeeping; rather, it has changed, evolved, and shifted alongside media and culture.

Modern online news selection processes cannot be explained by the traditional gatekeeping theory, and more recently developed gatekeeping theories have been isolated rather than synthesized. By going over the fundamental ideas of gatekeeping once more and examining how they apply in a digital environment, this study addressed these problems. In order to address the issues that had been identified, gatekeeping theory needed to recognise a typology of gatekeepers, incorporate platforms, and redefine the gatekeeping process. The first gatekeeper archetypes to be identified, according to Chin-Fook and Simmonds (2011), Deluliis (2015), and West (2017), were journalists, individual amateurs, strategic professionals, and algorithms. Access, selection standards, information framing, and publication options all vary between these archetypes. Regardless of how digital media reframes gatekeeping practices, they continue to exist and take place online.

5.3. Limitations of the study

This study is not an exception because no scientific endeavour is ever completely error-free. I followed Snyder (2019) while carrying out the SLR. Based on the SLR research methodology, there were some limitations to this study, though. The first restriction resulted from the search strategy, which was designed as a combination of automatic and manual database searches for a specific set of journals. While it is true that the SLR methodology follows a strict, organised, and rigorous process, it is still possible that some important studies were

overlooked. Ones that are only available in print or that academic databases like Google Scholar have not indexed are two examples.

The only sources of information used in this study were peer-reviewed journal articles. However, insights into the state of the gatekeeping field can be found in non-academic sources such as professional journals. By excluding potentially relevant journals and articles, we may miss relevant studies, and this study may lack specific gatekeeping procedures, objectives, quality factors, or reviews. I have. It can be said that highly rated journals tend to focus more on theoretical issues than on practical ones when it comes to journal selection. For example: another major limitation of this study is the degree of methodological diversity of the studies included in the review. The degree of heterogeneity in the studies made statistical combination of the analytical results difficult. It is difficult to generalise from this summary, as the number of articles that meet the inclusion requirements for this search is small.

The thematic analysis that was presented suffered from three major flaws. First off, gatekeeping is a rapidly expanding field of study that permeates many aspects of daily life. As a result, the research done for this study only offers a cursory overview of the literature in this field, and additional research may yield different results. In relation to the first claim, the scope of the study was limited because the term "gatekeeping" is not frequently explicitly discussed in literature. Furthermore, rather than adding to the body of already published literature, we can speculate on the possibility of more accurate gatekeeping models being used for commercial purposes. The data suggested a number of intriguing theories that were not fully developed here, including hints that online content may be increasingly being provided for conventional print products, a practice one editor dubbed reverse publishing. Other conceptual strategies in addition to gatekeeping would help to advance these early understandings.

Because some journal titles or abstracts lacked the search terms or were not cited in any of the papers that were found, it is wise to be aware that there is no guarantee that all significant publications were indexed in the search. Furthermore, the keyword list might have been missing some crucial phrases. As a result, the research's findings are not definitive.

5.4. Directions for Future Research

The function of gatekeeping in digital media is a hot topic in the literature right now, as this SLR demonstrates and as suggested by the presumptions above. How and how much are digital media redefining gatekeeping theory and practice? How much do the concepts of immediacy, authenticity, and transparency conflict with the unidirectional flow of conventional gatekeeping? And lastly, who are the new gatekeepers in digital media? are some of the potentially fascinating research questions that could guide future study. It is even more

important to look at these novel forms of gatekeeping because the gatekeeping function is now open to influence from anyone and is too complex for anyone to manage.

The function of gatekeeping in digital media is a hot topic in the literature right now, as this SLR demonstrates and as suggested by the presumptions above. How and how much are digital media redefining gatekeeping theory and practice? How much do the concepts of immediacy, authenticity, and transparency conflict with the unidirectional flow of conventional gatekeeping? And lastly, who are the new gatekeepers in digital media? are some of the potentially fascinating research questions that could guide future study. It is even more important to look at these novel forms of gatekeeping because the gatekeeping function is now open to influence from anyone and is too complex for anyone to manage.

5.5. Practical Lessons Learnt

An analysis of the structured literature review study's methodology is provided in this section. Despite the fact that I spent a lot of time planning and getting ready before beginning the study, I also made a lot of mistakes that I learned from, which I summarise in the form of suggestions and best practices for carrying out a SLR. To be a successful researcher, one must first master qualitative research methods. In SLR research, texts in a variety of formats including journals, reports, commentaries, and editorials are typically gathered and processed. Only qualitative analysis can be used to carefully review, synthesize, and draw conclusions from these texts. It is crucial to have at least a basic understanding of some qualitative analysis techniques, such as thematic analysis, content analysis, and discourse analysis, so that you can effectively analyse data whether you're working alone or with a review team. The choice of which method to use depends on the experience of the researchers involved, even though each has advantages and disadvantages.

The second lesson learned from the practical experience of conducting a SLR is the value of maintaining a systematic approach while remaining flexible. Even after using any screening criteria, the amount of research that is produced these days on any topic is enormous. So much information and text must be gathered and managed. In order to increase the review's transparency, it is crucial that each step be methodical and that all choices made during the study be fully disclosed. However, to allow for the systematic approach's improvement as new issues crop up throughout the study, the review protocol should be routinely revised and updated. For instance, considerations were made throughout the research as they emerged rather than conducting this review in a linear fashion. Iteration was a key component of the process.

Avoid haphazard review procedures is the final piece of advice. The review process was found to be significantly more effective when the following procedures/practices were used. In order to avoid relying solely on memory during the review process, it is crucial in the first place to meticulously document all actions and minute movements. When it came time to write the review methodology section and update the review protocol, this was helpful. Utilising reference management software, like Mendeley, to electronically manage all bibliographies and references simplifies the referencing process further. If not, the process of compiling a list of references will be time-consuming. Extra care must be taken to correctly cite all referencing quotes and figures taken from the papers in order to prevent total chaos when writing the review report. Last but not least, it is a good idea to set up a system for keeping both physical and digital copies of the papers organised and retrieving their complete texts.

By focusing solely on academic journals rather than a broad range of publications, the review process can be improved. Early on in this study, when definitions of the construct were being sought after, an important discovery was made. To make the search as comprehensive as possible, I initially tried to include all different types of publications. However, I soon became aware of two issues, or more accurately, challenges, in completing this study's goal. The screening process produced thousands of publications after enlarging the search parameters, which I found difficult to read in the allotted time.

The main lesson learned from this experience was that the SLR had goals beyond just compiling and combining empirical data. Instead, the focus was on attempting to contribute theoretically by synthesizing various aspects of the literature, identifying important gaps and limitations in the body of knowledge, and suggesting new research directions. In a nutshell, while creating the SLR, I found myself first playing the part of a detective going out to gather reliable evidence, then being a lawyer focused on case development and presentation.

5.6. Chapter summary

The SLR approach's strength lay in its capacity to build on already-existing gatekeeping research while also considering new digital variants that at first blush seemed to be at odds with the traditional pillars in the research field. The key issues with gatekeeping, such as who selects what information based on what selection mechanism and how the news item is framed before it reaches the public, could only be addressed by looking at various gatekeeping processes and their interactions. To evaluate the modelled gatekeeping processes, more research is necessary. The proposed digital gatekeeping model, which combines conventional gatekeeping theory with cutting-edge techniques, advances earlier gatekeeping research overall. For further study to fully understand digital selection processes, findings on news flow

patterns, non-journalistic organisations, algorithmic applications, and social behavior must be linked together. The study uncovered evolving gatekeeping theories that need to be considered. The primary focus of this study is on SLR as a technique for compiling literature, important design elements like theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and background information that illuminates key facets of the gatekeeping phenomenon.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: QUALITY ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Item	Question	Point Score		
		2	1	0
		YES	MODERATELY	NO
QAC1	Is the aim of the research sufficiently related to the RQs			
QAC2	Does the study concentrate on the related domain of RQs			
QAC3	Is gatekeeping explicitly presented in study and not a side effect			
QAC4	Is it an empirical study with results clearly presented			
QAC5	Are the results of the study clearly stated and consistent with research aims.			
QAC6	Is full text available			

APPENDIX 2- STUDY SELECTION PRISMA FRAMEWORK

