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# Knowledge Management Implementation and Employee Work Performance: Insights from a Saudi Arabian Universities-based Survey

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#### Abstract

This study seeks to explore the connection between employees' knowledge management practices at six Saudi universities and their job performance and identify barriers to implementing knowledge management and the necessary steps to enhance it. Utilizing a quantitative descriptive-analytical method, the study gathered data through a questionnaire distributed to 280 employees regarding their perspectives on how knowledge management influences their job performance. Saudi universities have made significant progress in implementing knowledge management. Most employees believe that their institutions prioritize the application of knowledge and actively seek to acquire insights and experience by investing in the development of their members. They feel that the universities provide a conducive work environment, encourage learning within teams, and offer the necessary technical infrastructure. Ultimately, based on the findings, we offer various recommendations to enhance employees' job performance by raising awareness about sharing experiences and skills.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Employees, Work Performance, Questionnaire, Saudi University, Saudi Arabia

## 1. Introduction

Knowledge management is vital in enhancing organizational development and shaping the business environment (Omotayo, 2015). By prioritizing exchanging knowledge and information, individuals and organizations can harness their full potential (Mosconi & Roy, 2013). Emphasizing this process fosters innovation and improvement and positions institutions to pursueexcellence and achieve their strategic goals effectively. Furthermore, organizations are actively embracing knowledge and management strategies to boost their performance and enhance the effectiveness of their daily operations, both internally and externally. This proactive approach is crucial for their medium- and long-term success, as it positions them to adapt and thrive in a dynamic environment (Chien, 2015). However, human resources in organizations can face unique challenges when employees hold specialized knowledge that they find difficult to share (Stone & Deadrick, 2015). Often, this knowledge is not adequately documented in manuals or recorded in processes and procedures. Implementing effective knowledge management strategies can address these challenges by providing structured processes and tools for

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knowledge transfer. By facilitating the exchange of information between different management levels, knowledge management enhances collaboration and improves the quality and speed of output delivery across the organization (Kazi & Charoenngam, 2003). This proactive approach can empower employees and foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement. Certain employees at Saudi Arabian universities possess specialized knowledge crucial to the institution's operations. However, this can lead to challenges such as work centralization, where a few individuals become indispensable, potentially causing workflow delays and duplicated efforts (Assaf et al., 2011). Recognizing that previous research has not fully explored the relationship between organizational pressures and citizenship behaviors, this study seeks to contribute valuable insights. Specifically, it aims to investigate whether there is a significant relationship between knowledge management and employee performance at Saudi Arabian universities, ultimately promoting more effective organizational practices.

This research explores the impact of knowledge management on the development of human resources among university employees. By examining this relationship, we can understand how effective knowledge management enhances employee performance and contributes to institutional success. We will identify training and skills development opportunities that empower employees to meet the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's goals. Additionally, it will investigate how organizational knowledge is structured and utilized, promoting innovation and the development of cutting-edge technologies. Ultimately, this research aims to drive economic growth and enhance competitiveness within the Kingdom by examining the current situation of knowledge management use among university employees and evaluating the current level of job performance at these universities. Analysis results will provide a clear understanding of how knowledge management functions at Saudi Arabian universities and how it affects job performance.

The knowledge management research project aims to build a knowledge society in Saudi Arabia by analyzing and sharing existing knowledge. It will enhance community awareness and improve teaching and learning skills. Additionally, the project supports the growth of the knowledge and innovation industry by employing the best practices to collect and organize knowledge, fostering the development of new ideas across various sectors.

## 2. Literature review

The foundation of knowledge management is centered on the effective administration of knowledge and the empowerment of employees. Organizations can enhance their performance and differentiate themselves in the competitive landscape by encouraging team members to engage in various tasks and adopt innovative work methodologies (Islam et al., 2024). This strategy leads to improved effectiveness and elevates the quality of organizational outcomes. To fulfil these objectives, knowledge management seeks to achieve several essential aims: First, it endeavors to cultivate a comprehensive understanding of the organization and its processes. Second, it strives to promote an organizational culture prioritizing knowledge sharing, collaboration, and creative thinking. Finally, it aims to establish a coherent infrastructure and technological framework that facilitates and supports these initiatives (Putra et al., 2023). By

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embracing these initiatives, organizations could cultivate a more dynamic and engaged workforce, effectively driving continuous improvement and contributing to lasting success.

The role of knowledge management is fundamentally based on transforming information, data, and intellectual assets into sustainable values that can significantly benefit the organization. The identification of practical knowledge is crucial for fostering organizational growth. Consequently, efficient storage and transfer processes for data and information are paramount, as these practices enable the organization to develop more advanced and practical knowledge exchange (Wibowo et Grandhi, 2017). This includes enhancing infrastructure and investing in staff training, which is essential for fostering a culture of collaboration and ongoing improvement within the organization.

Over the years, a wealth of studies has highlighted the crucial role of knowledge management in enhancing employee performance. One insightful study focused on the relationship between knowledge management and employee competence. The researchers identified key knowledge management enablers, such as fostering collaboration among team members, promoting Tshaped skills, encouraging continuous learning, and providing robust IT support. Their findings suggest that these enablers can significantly boost employee competence, ultimately contributing to improved job performance and organizational success. This underscores the importance of investing in knowledge management to cultivate a more effective and efficient workforce.

Afifah et al. (2011) proposed a comprehensive employee plan tailored for information technology (IT) service organizations, focusing on enhancing strategic knowledge management (KM). This study addresses the critical challenge of retaining knowledge and expertise in these organizations, which is crucial for their success. The researchers outlined several constructive strategies for effective knowledge management, such as establishing knowledge-sharing platforms, fostering employee collaboration, and offering targeted training and support. By implementing these strategies, IT service organizations can significantly improve their knowledge retention and overall performance.

Budianto and Sardjono (2022) analyzed internal operations within companies in the multi-site service sector, focusing on knowledge retention. Their study's findings indicate that organizations can effectively preserve knowledge by cultivating an environment conducive to knowledge sharing, providing comprehensive employee training and support, and implementing robust knowledge management practices.

In Saudi Arabia, Alyoubi et al. (2018) proposed a theoretical model to assess the impact of knowledge management processes and methods on job satisfaction and employee performance. The study concluded that implementing effective knowledge management practices can significantly enhance job satisfaction and work performance among regional employees, contributing to organizational success. Khoualdi and Saleh (2015) conducted a valuable study investigating the positive relationship between knowledge management and job satisfaction in Saudi Arabia. They gathered important insights by distributing a questionnaire to 490 employees across Saudi universities. Their findings highlight that key element of knowledge management,

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including collaboration, training, and support, play a crucial role in enhancing employee job satisfaction. This research highlights the importance of effectively implementing knowledge management practices to foster a more satisfied and engaged workforce.

These studies emphasize the valuable role of knowledge management in enhancing employee skills, job satisfaction, and performance. Organizations can cultivate a thriving knowledge-sharing, collaboration, and innovation environment by embracing effective knowledge management practices. This approach empowers employees and positions businesses to excel and adapt in today's competitive landscape.

#### 3. Research method

This research employs a quantitative methodology with an analytical descriptive approach to investigate the influence of knowledge management on improving job performance among employees. We conducted a comprehensive survey involving 280 individuals from a variety of departments and backgrounds at three prominent universities in Saudi Arabia. This diversity allowed us to gather valuable insights into the ways in which various knowledge management mechanisms can enhance both organizational effectiveness and individual employee performance.

The data collection phase took place over a period of nearly eight weeks, from April 10 to June 2, 2024. During this time, we meticulously distributed online questionnaires designed to capture a broad range of experiences and perceptions regarding knowledge management practices. This duration enabled us to conduct an in-depth assessment of the relationship between these practices and job performance within the unique contexts of each university.

A standardized tool was used in this survey, which included questionnaires designed to assess the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions regarding knowledge management practices at six Saudi universities, as well as their impact on job performance. Importantly, we employed the Likert scale, which offers a range of options for respondents to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with specific statements.

Out of 280 employees approaching, 62 completed and returned the questionnaires, resulting in a significant dataset for analysis (the response rate was 63.2%). This response rate provides a strong foundation for deriving meaningful conclusions that can inform future efforts to enhance knowledge management strategies within these institutions. Furthermore, the responses that were incomplete will also play a crucial role in identifying potential gaps in our understanding and pinpointing areas that warrant further exploration and study.

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# 3.1 Sample and questionnaire

The survey unfolds over a vibrant data collection period from April 10 to June 2, 2024. Within this timeframe, a diverse group of 62 participants has emerged, comprising 13 men and a striking 49 women. They span a variety of age brackets, each reflecting a unique life stage: those under 25, individuals aged 25 to 35, mature adults between 36 and 45, and those in the 45 to 55 range, showcasing the rich tapestry of perspectives. Sample direction reflects whether employee responses lean positively (above neutral), negatively (below neutral), or remain neutral regarding the statement. The scale includes "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Neutral," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree," representing the percentage of employees selecting each option.

Delving into their personal lives, the participants include 18 singles embarking on new beginnings, 35 married individuals navigating shared journeys, and 9 divorced participants who bring their own stories of growth and resilience to the mix. On the educational front, an impressive 31 participants boast bachelor's degrees, while 12 have gone the extra mile with master's degrees and 15 individuals have achieved the esteemed status of doctorate holders. A smaller, yet notable group of 4 has completed secondary education, each with unique narratives behind their academic paths. When it comes to work experience, the participants' professional journeys can be categorized as follows: those with less than 5 years of experience, professionals with 5 to 10 years of dedication, seasoned workers with 11 to 15 years, and the wise veterans boasting over 15 years in their fields, each bringing their own wealth of knowledge and expertise.

The heart of the study lies in a thoughtfully crafted questionnaire featuring 26 questions, intricately designed to explore the landscape of knowledge management in universities. These questions are organized into three core themes: the alignment of knowledge management with university objectives, the current realities of knowledge management practices, and the practical applications that drive progress in this crucial area of academia.

## 4. Statistical analysis

## 4.1. Descriptive Analysis

The sample age ranges from under 27 to over 57, with the most represented group being those aged 38 to 47. Among the respondents, the majority are married (35), followed by divorced individuals (9) and singles (18). Regarding educational qualifications, PhD holders comprise the most significant percentage (15), followed by bachelor's degree holders (31), master's holders (12), and finally, high school graduates (4). Among the individuals surveyed, the largest group comprises those with 9 to 17 years of experience (13 respondents). This is followed by participants with between 5 and 10 years of experience (25) and those with less than 5 years of experience (19). Finally, the group with over 17 years of experience includes 5 respondents.

An impressive 65.5% of participants highlighted the importance of knowledge management in achieving university goals, indicating "strongly agree" or "agree" with the statement that successful university education depends on integrating knowledge management. Moreover, 81%

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of respondents believe the university prioritizes the application of knowledge, while 75.6% think it aims to enhance knowledge and skills through investment in its members' education. Additionally, 77.4% agree that the university provides a supportive working environment, and 71% perceive it as promoting collaborative learning. Although 66.1% acknowledge the university's provision of adequate technical infrastructure, 58.1% feel there is a need for more specialized databases. Furthermore, 58.1% agree that the university attracts outstanding talent, and 56.5% recognize its commitment to leveraging research and development for knowledge acquisition.

Only 51.6% of respondents feel there is a culture of knowledge sharing among employees. In contrast, 62.9% believe the university supports teamwork, while 59.7% think it encourages employees to share their ideas. Additionally, 59.7% agree that the university provides training programs, and 54.8% view it as fostering individual initiatives for knowledge development. However, only 48.4% of respondents believe the university prioritizes group performance, indicating potential improvement in this area.

54.8% of respondents feel that the university values experienced staff. Meanwhile, 51.6% believe that implementing knowledge management enhances job performance. Additionally, 45.2% agreed that there are opportunities for learning and career growth, suggesting that improvements can be made in this area.

#### 4.2. Factors to improve job performance

We measured the degree of reliability in the responses contained in the questionnaire by choosing the alpha-Krumbach coefficient. The results of the reliability test were reported in Table 1. Outcomes provided by the SPSS software explain that the Cronbach Alpha coefficient value for the knowledge management practices variable is at 0.798, and the employee's work variable is at 0.837. These values prove that the variables knowledge management practices variable and the employee's work have good reliability values because they are above the Cronbach Alpha standard of 0.600. One might, therefore, support the current state of knowledge management practices and the tools designed to enhance daily operations within university administration.

Reliability coefficient, Cro-Nebach alpha method								
Field Knowledge management	number of items 15	Alpha Cro-Nbach coefficient of reliability 0.798						
practices Employees work	11	0.837						

Table 1. Stability coefficients knowledge management practices and employees' work

The statistical analysis was based on mean, standard deviation (SD), coefficient of variation (CV), and the percentage of weights (PW) to show the consistency in responses. Thus, a higher standard deviation (SD) indicates greater variability in the answers, suggesting a wider range of

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opinions. However, the CV reflects the level of response dispersion among the surveyed samples. For the PW, it stands for percentage weight showing the consistency in responses.

Table 2. Knowledge management variables

Item	Independent Variable/Knowledge Management Practices	Mean	SD	CV	PW (%)
I-1	Work at the university is characterized by accepting new ideas and working on their implementation.	2.790	1.155	0.144	87.336
I-2	The university encourages its staff to pursue ongoing learning and to develop their skills and abilities.	2.871	1.212	0.164	83.498
I-3	University places a greater emphasis on explicit knowledge rather than implicit knowledge.	2.845	1,146	0.178	84.197
I-4	The university is more focused on tacit knowledge than on explicit knowledge, Frank.	3.242	1.021	0.132	91.151
I-5	The university encourages its staff to attend and organize conferences and scientific meetings to enhance their skills and knowledge.	3.187	1.092	0.183	86.143
I-6	The university attracts distinguished competencies among its staff, fostering serious knowledge acquisition.	2.991	1.276	0.118	83.273
I-7	The university offers a suitable technical infrastructure to enhance knowledge.	2.957	1.134	0.122	87.377
I-8	The university offers specialized databases that help in the dissemination of knowledge.	3.021	1.212	0.143	80.799
I-9	Employees at the university engage in a culture of exchanging knowledge with one another.	2.973	1.154	0.158	87.551
I-10	The university has a suitable organizational structure for effective knowledge management at every level.	2.952	1.257	0.163	82.177
I-11	The university is conducting simulations with other institutions to enhance their cognitive levels.	2.956	1.346	0.194	90.155
I-12	The university aims to share knowledge about various specialties with its employees.	3.183	1.167	0.176	91.163
I-13	The university offers programs that help promote knowledge management.	2.921	1.241	0.139	90.202
I-14	The university utilizes the Research and Development (R&D) method to acquire knowledge.	3.012	1.223	0.141	87.171
I-15	The university continuously seeks to update its regulations and policies to enhance the application of knowledge management.	3.023	1.163	0.187	89.778
Overa	ll mean	2.995	1.187	0.156	86.798

**Source:** Author Calculations

The data illustrated in Table 2 reveals a strong consensus among the participants surveyed on all 15 items of the knowledge management questionnaire. This agreement is backed by compelling statistical findings, showing that each item garnered an arithmetic mean exceeding the

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hypothetical benchmark of 3, culminating in a collective average of 2.995, indicating a clear preference that surpasses expectations. Moreover, the overall standard deviation of 1.187 highlights the uniformity of the responses, suggesting that participants expressed similar views with minimal variation. The relative weight assigned to all items is strikingly high at 86.798%, and the coefficient of variation stands at a mere 0.156, underscoring the limited dispersion of opinions among the respondents.

Item 4 emerged as the standout with a remarkable arithmetic mean of 3.242, showcasing a standard deviation of 1.021 and an impressive relative weight of 91.151%. These compelling results reveal aburgeoning enthusiasm for knowledge management practices among the respondents, underlining their vital and transformative influence on job performance. This growing interest has ignited a wave of focus among universities in Saudi Arabia, particularly those surveyed, as they increasingly prioritize knowledge management in their educational frameworks (Agarwal & Marouf, 2014)

Table 3. Employees work variables

Item	Independent Variable/Employees work	Mean	SD	CV	PW
I-1	The university establishes and publishes its regulations.	2.819	1.106	0.107	84.115
I-2	The university promotes team building and fosters strong relationships among colleagues. Positive connections between co-workers are established at the university.	3.032	1.172	0.129	86.699
I-3	The university prioritizes team performance over individual performance. It encourages proposals submitted by others.	3.505	1.135	0.188	87.875
I-4	Employees are eager to enhance their cognitive skills.	2.198	1.147	0.194	85.606
I-5	The University welcomes proposals submitted by individuals and organizations outside the institution.	3.919	1.164	0.174	91.233
I-6	Employees are eager to enhance their cognitive skills.	2.795	1.211	0.165	88.167
I-7	The university utilizes various programs to enhance job performance levels.	3.061	1.292	0.155	90.311
I-8	The university promotes the development and execution of initiatives.	3.029	1.237	0.194	89.117
I-9	Work at the university embraces new ideas and focuses on implementation.	2.881	1.181	0.189	84.336
I-10	Use email to share knowledge among employees.	3.275	1.345	0.161	82.158
I-11	The university strives to create an optimal work environment for employees to enhance and sustain their satisfaction.	2.619	1.128	0.143	81.919
Overa	Overall mean		1.193	0.164	86.503

**Source:** Author Calculations

Table 3, which addresses the variable of employees' work, clearly shows that all paragraphs have progressed according to statistical models. The overall arithmetic mean was 3.012, exceeding the hypothetical mean of 3, with a standard deviation of 1.193. This indicates that there is minimal dispersion in the responses. Furthermore, the paragraphs significantly increased their relative

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weight, averaging 86.503%. This high percentage suggests a strong agreement among the sample members regarding the content of these paragraphs.

The analysis revealed that the coefficient of variation, a statistical measure of response dispersion, was determined to be 0.164. This value indicates a relatively low level of variability in the responses provided by the surveyed participants, suggesting a consistent level of agreement among them. In particular, the third paragraph stood out, achieving the highest arithmetic mean score of 3.505. This score reflects a favorable assessment of the respondents. Furthermore, the coefficient of difference for this paragraph was calculated to be 1.135, indicating a moderate spread in the responses. Additionally, the relative weight of 87.875% highlights the significant importance placed in this paragraph by the survey participants, reinforcing its prominence in the overall findings.

Universities in Saudi Arabia can enhance employee engagement by directing their human resources toward supporting professional development research initiatives and fostering a collaborative work environment (Alqami, 2016). Specifically, they can offer continuous education and training programs to improve employees' skills. This can be achieved through workshops, seminars, or online courses in leadership, project management, and technical expertise. These programs help employees remain competitive in an ever-evolving job market. Furthermore, Saudi universities can establish research centers, incubators, and innovation labs to encourage employees to participate in research and development. Providing funding, time, and resources for employees to contribute to new ideas and research projects can enhance professional satisfaction and boost the university's reputation.

Additionally, universities should cultivate a culture of teamwork by supporting crossdepartmental collaboration. Human resources can promote this environment by encouraging inclusivity, ensuring fair representation, and providing platforms for employees to openly share their ideas and feedback. Saudi universities can also implement reward systems to recognize and appreciate employees' hard work and dedication (Mabaso & Dlamini, 2018). This could include performance bonuses, awards, or public recognition of their contributions to the institution's goals. Moreover, universities in Saudi Arabia can engage employees in community outreach programs or public service initiatives, aligning with the broader national vision and fostering a sense of responsibility and purpose among staff (Alshuwaikhat et al., 2016).

#### **5.** Conclusion and recommendations

This study highlights the vital role of knowledge management for institutions striving for excellence and success in today's competitive business landscape. Saudi universities emerge as leaders in this field, showcasing effective implementation of knowledge management practices. The findings reveal significant progress in these universities, with many employees feeling that their institutions prioritize knowledge application and are committed to developing skills through substantial investment in learning opportunities. The supportive work environment encourages collaboration and is backed by appropriate technical infrastructure. There are several constructive areas for improvement to further enhance their knowledge management practices.

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The key areas to focus on are encouraging a culture of knowledge exchange among staff, developing specialized databases, improving knowledge distribution, emphasizing group performance, and expanding learning and career development opportunities. By addressing these areas, Saudi universities can refine their knowledge management strategies, better achieve their strategic objectives, and set a strong example for other educational institutions.

To cultivate a thriving environment for knowledge sharing among employees, hosting engaging events, including workshops and seminars, is essential (Sheikh et al., 2019). These initiatives foster opportunities for employees to exchange valuable insights and experiences while leveraging online platforms for knowledge sharing. Universities can significantly contribute by creating specialized databases across various fields, ensuring employees have convenient and effective access to these resources. Furthermore, promoting knowledge dissemination can be enhanced through focused training sessions, workshops, and educational materials on knowledge management (Farkas et al., 2003). Encouraging employees to share what they have learned can further strengthen this culture. Additionally, boosting team performance is vital. Organizations can cultivate a motivated workplace by encouraging collaboration and offering rewards for teams that achieve outstanding results. It is also important to provide extensive learning and career advancement opportunities. This includes hosting training sessions and workshops, offering scholarships, and supporting employee participation in conferences and seminars. Collectively, these strategies will foster a vibrant and supportive learning environment that benefits both employees and the organization (Lowe, 2010).

By implementing these recommendations, can further enhance their knowledge management practices to achieve strategic goals and set a benchmark for knowledge management in both university settings and other educational institutions.

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