

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AS AN APPROACH FOR ENHANCING COMPETITIVE CAPABILITIES IN MAJMAAH UNIVERSITY FROM A STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE: AN APPLIED STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study represents a theoretical and empirical study to recognize the influence of strategic knowledge management on enhancing competitive capabilities. It aims to investigate the extent to which Majmaah University apply the knowledge management approach, determine the contribution of this approach in building the Universities' competitive capabilities, and identify the most important constraints that adversely affect the strategic knowledge management processes in Majmaah University. The study also aims to clarify the nature of knowledge management and determine its reliability as a strategic perspective in enhancing the Competitive Capabilities of Majmaah University. Through the survey study conducted by the researcher, the problem of the study is summarized as follows: The Majmaah University facing a variety of academic and administrative problems and obstacles, due to the relative novelty of this university, which was created with the increasing social demand for education in Saudi Arabia.

Therefore the Emerging Universities in general and Majmaah University in particular, have to develop its strategies and use new strategic approaches for the best exploitation for their strategic capabilities, knowledge is the most important, in order to build competitive capabilities that enable them to survive in the competitive environment of rapid change inside and outside Saudi Arabia, and enable them to keep up with technological and informational development in a highly competitive environment.

For testing hypotheses, the researcher depends on secondary data, which composed the theoretical frame of the study. In addition to the primary data that have been collected through personal interviews and the questionnaire that consist of forty questions. The revised questionnaire was then distributed to 150 academic members from deans and agents of Majmaah University colleges, a total of 95 correct

responses were received with a rate 63.33% (some of these questionnaires are collected through e-mails).

As regards the results of hypotheses test, it has been confirmed that the basic hypothesis has been accepted that there's a positive relationship with statistically significant between the strategic knowledge management and enhancing the competitive capability of Majmaah University. And also the sub-hypotheses have been accepted that there's a significant relationship between the organizational culture that supports knowledge, leadership of knowledge, the flexible organizational structure & effective information technology respectively and between enhancing the competitive capability of Majmaah University. Finally, researcher presents a proposed framework for applying knowledge management approach from a strategic perspective in Majmaah University that enables it to achieve competitive capabilities, as this framework can be generalized for emerging Saudi Universities to strengthen its competitive position in the highly competitive environment.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Competitive Capabilities, Strategic Perspective, Majmaah University

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge management is one of the modern management concepts that have become increasingly important in business organizations, especially after the transition towards knowledge economics; which has confirmed that the source of wealth is not "capital" but "knowledge" therefore, investment in knowledge has attracted the attention of various institutions (Petrides & Nodine, 2013), in another hand, universities are beacons of knowledge, where knowledge is produced by providing students with the basic concepts of many sciences, also development and application of knowledge through scientific research units at universities (Ramanigopal, 2017), therefore, knowledge management is one of the necessities of universities, and the regulatory environment of universities are the most appropriate environments for applied the knowledge management, because universities are responsible for preparing and qualifying human cadres, which are the vital component of all development processes in society (Rowley, 2016).

The applied of knowledge management in universities has many advantages most important of it is ensuring the scientific development, also, universities in doing their roles requires a strategic management of knowledge (Gopal & Shobha, 2018) so that universities can successfully fulfill their roles, so there are a set of criteria for knowledge management as explained by (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2013; Steyn, 2014; Yusoff et al, 2018) as follows: the ability of universities to form a new knowledge base, the dissemination of knowledge between employees and students

in universities, the application of knowledge in all activities, services, processes and programs providing through universities.

(Mikulceka & Mikulecky, 2015) emphasize that there are five main possibilities for the investment of knowledge management in universities, namely; teaching knowledge management in universities, using knowledge management to support the decisions of the university administration, upgrading the dissemination and dissemination of knowledge inside and outside the university, improved internal document management and providing them to beneficiaries, and investing knowledge in the development of the educational process.

Thus, applying knowledge management in universities is not in itself a success, although it is the most important reasons for success, so there are a number of factors that will determine the success of knowledge management in universities, (Omona & Lubega, 2012; Rastogik, 2014 ; Kidwell et al, 2015; Laal, 2018) summed up these factors, namely; emphasis on continuing education and innovation, participation of individuals in dialogue and scientific research, work on establishing new knowledge dissemination systems, encouraging the continuous development of employees and participation in collective vision, helping individuals to define the role and applications of knowledge to accomplish their work, focus on attention to the flow of knowledge rather than storage, and supporting distinctive cases at the university.

With regard to the competitive capabilities of universities, it is known to the academic staff that the new terminology and concepts often appear in the fields of industry, trade and economy, and gradually transporting to the field of education (Herring, 2014) as well the concept of competitive capabilities began to transport into the field of education; where universities are facing new challenges, such as the need to achieve quality standards, and to obtain an advanced ranking at the global level, and other challenges, this places universities in intense competition at the international and local level (Yaghi & Zamzami, 2014).

The competitive capabilities in university education can be defined as "the university's ability to provide high quality educational and research services, which will positively affect the level of its graduates and faculty members, which will gain competitive capabilities in the labor market at various levels, at the same time reflects the confidence of the community, cooperation with it, and increased demand for enrollment on it (Pitts & Lei, 2016) competitive capabilities in university education can also be defined as "Universities are racing to achieve the best in their three functions (teaching, scientific research, community service) for access to global levels " (Watanabe, 2018). As for the elements of competitive capabilities and knowledge management in universities, after the researcher studied and analyzed the reality of Saudi universities (Farzana, 2015; Abokhodiar, 2016; Al-Hussain, 2017) also referring to some of the leading examples of

excellence, such as the European model and the American model (Firestone, 2013; Chumjit, 2017; Bouthillier & Shearer, 2018) so the researcher selected a number of elements that represented the competitive capabilities of universities, that is more closely related to universities and more consistent with the study, so the competitive capabilities in the current study are : tuition fees, acceptance criteria, university reputation, quality of facilities, an efficiency of the educational environment, cognitive content of the curriculum with keeping pace development, and community service).

The interest of Saudi universities in knowledge management is aimed at creating a knowledge society capable of organizing and generating knowledge, and sharing this knowledge with others, then work to apply them to solve the problems, so knowledge management in Saudi universities has acquired a clear importance as an indicator of its success and contribution to the transition to the knowledge economy (Yaghi & Zamzami, 2014 ; Abokhodiar, 2016) also the role of Saudi universities, particularly emerging ones, is growing after it has been shown that competitive capacity building depends on intellectual assets specifically knowledge assets and investment therein thereby enhancing the continuous creativity both at the level of the product and the process, which is also a component of the increase of those capabilities (Farzana, 2015).

As a result of the above, and considering that institutions of higher education, especially universities through knowledge management, now they have the capabilities to attract larger numbers of students in various disciplines, so the success in the management of those universities for knowledge is a major dimension to select creative students, and improving the output of university education, therefore, the present study aims to research in knowledge management as an approach for enhancing competitive capabilities in Majmaah University from a strategic perspective.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Through the survey study conducted by the researcher, the problem of the study is summarized as follows: The Majmaah University facing a variety of academic and administrative problems and obstacles, due to the relative novelty of this university, which was created with the increasing social demand for education in Saudi Arabia. The results of the survey conducted by the researcher showed that the most important problems at Majmaah University related to tuition fees, acceptance criteria, university reputation, quality of facilities, an efficiency of the educational environment, cognitive content of the curriculum with keeping pace development, and community service.

From the above, the researcher believes that Majmaah University must develop strategies, and the use of modern strategic entrances to exploit their resources, the most important strategies is knowledge in order to build competitive capacities that will enable them to survive in the competitive environment, and facing rapid change in the labor market in Saudi Arabia, and enabling it to keep abreast of rapid technological and information development in a highly competitive environment.

Thus, the problem of research is to try to answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the extent to which Majmaah University has implemented the approach of strategic management for knowledge?
- 2) Does the knowledge management approach contribute for enhancing competitive capabilities?
- 3) What are the most important obstacles that negatively impact on strategic management processes for knowledge at Majmaah University?
- 4) What is the framework that leads to enhance competitive capabilities through the applied of knowledge management from a strategic perspective at Majmaah University?

OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

The researcher seeks through this study to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) Identifying the extent of Majmaah University is applied for the approach of strategic management for knowledge.
- 2) Determine the extent contribution of the knowledge management approach to building the competitive capabilities of Majmaah University.
- 3) Determine the most important obstacles that negatively impact on strategic management processes for knowledge at Majmaah University.
- 4) Clarify the nature of knowledge management and determine the possibility of relying on it as a strategic approach in strengthening the competitive capabilities of Majmaah University.
- 5) Proposing a framework for applying the knowledge management approach from a strategic perspective at Majmaah University to enable it to achieve competitive capabilities.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The study based on one basic hypothesis that divided into four sub-hypotheses as follows:

Basic hypothesis:

- There is a positive relationship with statistically significant between the strategic knowledge management and enhancing the competitive capability of Majmaah University.

Sub-hypotheses:

- 1) There is a significant relationship between an organizational culture that supports knowledge and enhancing the competitive capability of Majmaah University.
- 2) There is a significant relationship between the flexible organizational structure and enhancing the competitive capability of Majmaah University.
- 3) There is a significant relationship between leadership of knowledge and enhancing the competitive capability of Majmaah University.
- 4) There is a significant relationship between effective information technology and enhancing the competitive capability of Majmaah University.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study Design:

This research will be mixed-method research and will adopt a descriptive survey design in collecting information by administering questionnaires to a sample of the target population. The study will be aimed at collecting information from the respondents, regarding knowledge management as an approach for enhancing competitive capabilities in Majmaah University from a strategic perspective. The investigator will use both the primary and the secondary data. Primary data will be obtained using questionnaires while secondary data will be found from books, journals, and The Internet.

Research Population:

The study population consists of all deans and agents of Majmaah University colleges, for their role in policy-making responsibilities and strategies and overall objectives putting for the university, guide the process of interaction between the university and the surrounding environment, developing knowledge management strategies, strategic decision-making, competitive capabilities, and develop future plans to achieve the objectives.

Study Sample:

The study sample consists of (150) academic members from deans and agents of Majmaah University colleges. To determine the sample size of the study, the researcher uses Stephen Thompson equation.

$$n = \frac{N \times p(1-p)}{\left[\left[N - 1 \times (d^2 \div z^2) \right] + p(1-p) \right]}$$

Study Tools (Sources of data collection):**First - Primary Data:**

Primary data were collected through:

- Conduct some personal interviews with college deans, and faculty agents at Majmaah University.
- Direct a survey list - closed questions - for college deans, and faculty agents at Majmaah University, including the knowledge management dimensions, which identified in the study and their impact on competitive capabilities of university.

Second - Secondary Data:

Secondary data were collected by:

- Scientific references (Arabic and foreign books and periodicals and reports) in the field of strategic knowledge management and competitive capabilities.
- Master thesis and dissertation are relevant to the subject of the study.
- Research and scientific studies published in the Arab and foreign periodicals.
- Indicators and reports issued by the Ministry of Education.
- Seminars and conferences related to the subject of the study.
- Global databases available on the Internet.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS METHODS

The researcher analyzed the data collected using SPSS ver 22.0, the following statistical methods were used to analyze the data:

1. Descriptive statistics, frequencies and percentages, weighted arithmetic averages, standard deviation, and variance coefficient to determine the characteristics of the study sample.
2. Spearman correlation coefficient used to measure the strength and direction of relationship, between study variables.
3. Simple linear regression to quantify the impact of strategic management of knowledge on competitive capabilities.

4. Multiple linear regression (Stepwise regression) to quantify the impact of the most important types of strategic management of knowledge on competitive capabilities.
5. Cronbach's Alpha to measure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire of study.

RESULTS

(1) Results of Hypothesis Tests:

The present study aimed at identifying the impact of applying the knowledge management approach from a strategic perspective on enhancing competitive capabilities in Majmaah University by examining the relationship between the strategic management of knowledge (organizational culture that supports, knowledge, leadership of knowledge, flexible organizational structure, and effective information technology) and the competitive capabilities of university (tuition fees, acceptance criteria, university reputation, quality of facilities, an efficiency of the educational environment, cognitive content of the curriculum with keeping pace development, and community service). Through testing the study hypotheses, the statistical analysis resulted in a set of results as shown in the following table:

Table 1. Results of statistical analysis

	Hypotheses	Results
Basic Hypothesis	There is a positive relationship with statistically significant between the dimensions of strategic management of knowledge and enhancing the competitive capability of Majmaah University.	The results of the statistical analysis showed the validity of the first hypothesis and not accepting of the alternative hypothesis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a statistically significant positive relationship between the dimensions of "strategic management of knowledge" as an independent variable and "competitive capabilities" as a dependent variable. The coefficient of correlation was 0.754, indicating a positive correlation with a significant level less than 0.01. • i.e. whenever the more interest of strategic management of knowledge whenever it leads to enhance competitive capabilities at Majmaah University.
Sub Hypotheses	There is a significant relationship between an organizational culture that supports knowledge and enhancing the competitive capability of Majmaah University.	The results of the statistical analysis showed the validity of the first sub-hypothesis and not accepting of the alternative hypothesis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a statistically significant positive relationship between "organizational culture that supports knowledge" and "competitive capabilities" The coefficient of correlation was (0.604), indicating a positive correlation with a significant level less than 0.01. • i.e. whenever the more interest of organizational culture that supports knowledge whenever it leads to enhance competitive capabilities at Majmaah University.

	<p>There is a significant relationship between the flexible organizational structure and enhancing the competitive capability of Majmaah University.</p>	<p>The results of the statistical analysis showed the validity of the second sub-hypothesis and not accepting of the alternative hypothesis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a statistically significant positive relationship between "flexible organizational structure" and "competitive capabilities" The coefficient of correlation was (0.504), indicating a positive correlation with a significant level of less than 0.01. • i.e. whenever the more interest of flexible organizational structure whenever it leads to enhance competitive capabilities at Majmaah University.
	<p>There is a significant relationship between leadership of knowledge and enhancing the competitive capability of Majmaah University.</p>	<p>The results of the statistical analysis showed the validity of the third sub-hypothesis and not accepting of the alternative hypothesis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a statistically significant positive relationship between "leadership of knowledge" and "competitive capabilities" The coefficient of correlation was (0.720), indicating a positive correlation with a significant level of less than 0.01. • i.e. whenever the more interest of leadership of knowledge whenever it leads to enhance competitive capabilities at Majmaah University.
	<p>There is a significant relationship between effective information technology and enhancing the competitive capability of Majmaah University.</p>	<p>The results of the statistical analysis showed the validity of the fourth sub-hypothesis and not accepting of the alternative hypothesis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a statistically significant positive relationship between "effective information technology" and "competitive capabilities" The coefficient of correlation was (0.763), indicating a positive correlation with a significant level of less than 0.01. • i.e. whenever the more interest of effective information technology whenever it leads to enhance competitive capabilities at Majmaah University.
<p>By analyzing the multiple regression of the dimensions of strategic management of knowledge (the independent variable) to determine the priority of each dimension's impact on competitive capabilities (dependent variable), their order was as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizational culture that supports knowledge. 2. Leadership of knowledge. 3. Flexible organizational structure. 4. Effective information technology. 		

(2) A proposed framework for applying the approach of strategic management of knowledge at Majmaah University to enhance its competitive capabilities:

Through the previous results and in the light of the theoretical study, the researcher reached a framework that can be used at Majmaah University to enhance the competitive capabilities of universities, through activating programs of strategic management of knowledge, as shown in the following figure:

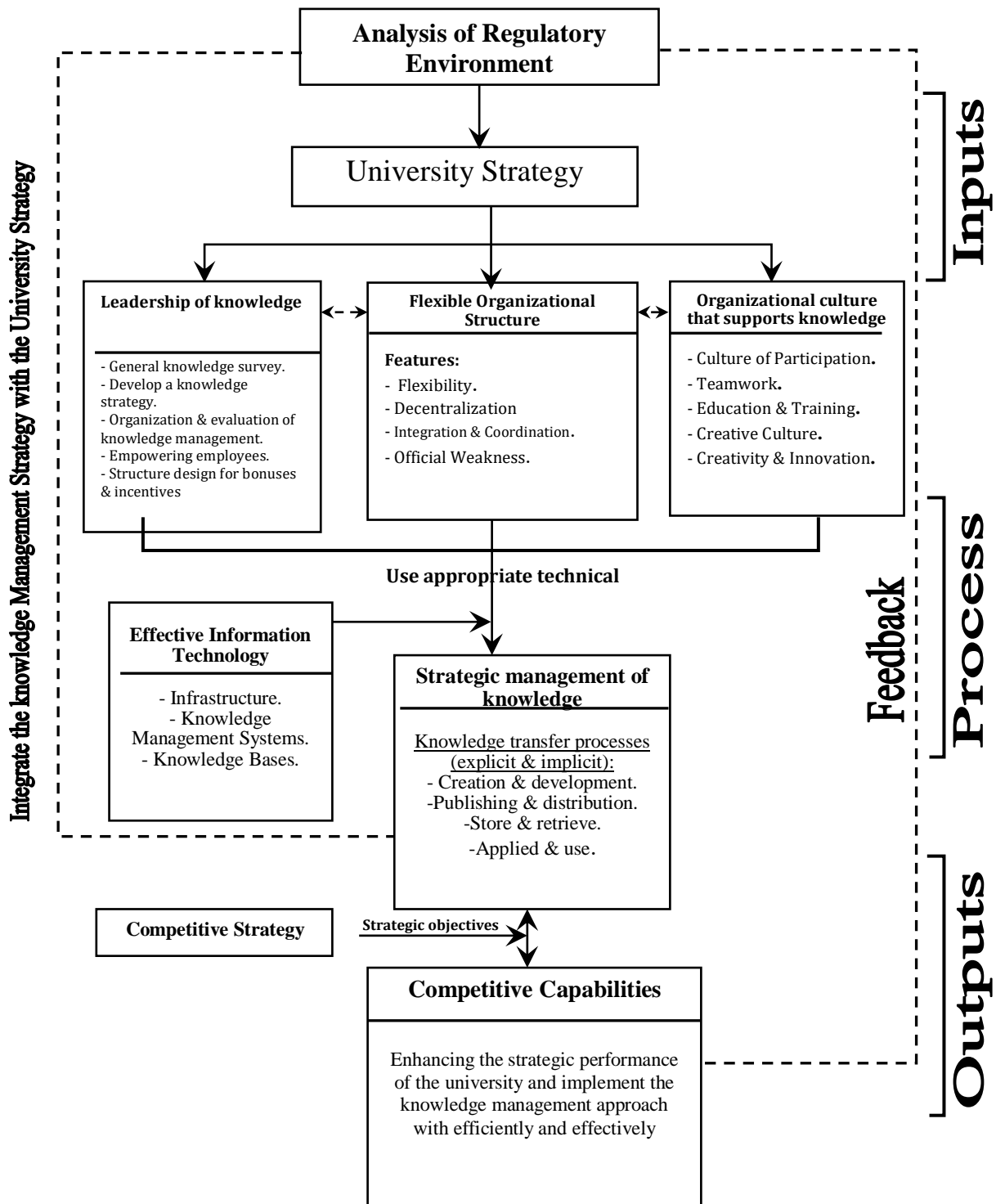


Figure 1. Proposed framework for applying the approach of strategic management of knowledge in universities to enhance their competitive capabilities

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