

Knowledge Management in the Digital Era: Leveraging Technology for Effective Organizational Performance

Mohammed Nasir Salihu

International School for Social and Business Studies, Slovenia
salihumn@gmail.com

Abstract

Knowledge management (KM) practices play a pivotal role in modern organizations by facilitating the capture, organization, storage, and sharing of intellectual assets. This paper underscores the transformative potential of KM in shifting organizational paradigms from efficiency-driven approaches to holistic and effective ones. Focusing on corporate organizations and other sectors, the study delves into the significance of adopting Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in KM to enhance organizational performance. This study's scope encompasses exploring the intricate relationships between KM and emerging ICT tools, including big data, artificial intelligence, smart technologies, and mobile applications. Additionally, the paper delves into the intersection of KM with innovation, emphasizing the synergistic effects that arise from integrating these concepts. Through a comprehensive review, the study elucidates the need for a deeper investigation into the nexus between KM and human decision-making processes. This entails gaining a nuanced understanding of how ICT-enabled KM practices influence both individual and organizational behaviours. By shedding light on these connections, organizations can harness the full potential of their knowledge resources to drive innovation, collaboration, and informed decision-making. Ultimately, this paper underscores the imperative for organizations to embrace ICT-enabled KM as a strategic imperative for enhancing performance in today's dynamic business environment. It advocates for further research efforts to explore the multifaceted impacts of ICT on KM and human decision-making processes, thereby paving the way for more effective knowledge utilization and organizational success.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Knowledge Sharing, Data Management, External Knowledge Integration, and Data Analytics/Digital Transformation.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly changing and competitive global landscape, driven significantly by the impact of Information Technology (IT) on the business environment, there is a growing necessity to secure a

competitive edge amid numerous competitors (Fattahiyan, 2012; Russ, 2021; Dong and Yu, 2022). The effective exchange of knowledge, whether within an organization or beyond its boundaries, plays a crucial role in successful organizational management (Lozić, 2019b). Sharing knowledge among different departments has the potential to enhance overall organizational efficiency. By incorporating external knowledge into internal processes, organizations can improve performance and foster stronger relationships with stakeholders and partners. In today's business landscape, the significance of knowledge management has grown, as it positively impacts competitive advantage and overall business performance (Argote & Ingram, 2000; Zack, McKeen & Singh, 2009; Lee et al., 2016; Kianto, Hussinki, & Vanhala, 2018), but also because it is in line with the new vision on corporate strategies as platforms rather than pipelines (Van Alstyne, Parker & Choudary, 2016).

In today's rapidly changing and competitive global landscape, organizations face the challenge of effectively managing and leveraging knowledge to secure a competitive edge. Despite the growing recognition of knowledge management (KM) as a critical tool for achieving competitive advantage and enhancing organizational performance, there exist complexities in managing and controlling information, particularly regarding storage, organization, and retrieval (Singh, S. 2022). Additionally, the increasing complexity of modern businesses necessitates a proactive approach to address these challenges through effective knowledge management practices. While many studies acknowledge the importance of KM, there remains a need to assess how KM and its resources can contribute specifically to competitive advantages in organizations. Therefore, the problem statement revolves around understanding and leveraging knowledge management practices to enhance organizational performance and gain competitive advantages in the current dynamic business environment as stated by (Sahoo S. et. al. 2023).

Today's modern businesses exhibit a high level of complexity, necessitating an increased accumulation of knowledge. This complexity, in turn, poses challenges in effectively managing and controlling information, particularly in terms of storage, organization, and retrieval. According to Mills (2010), this challenge has led to a significant increase in investment in knowledge management. Hence, it can be inferred that organizations are increasingly recognizing Knowledge Management (KM) as an opportunity to attain their desired objectives. When organizations engage in discussions related to the aforementioned aspects, their primary aim is typically to enhance overall performance, facilitate the development of decision-making processes, and consequently, boost profitability and sustainability in the current global markets. Additionally, organizations may seek to acquire knowledge capabilities that enhance efficient management and the smooth flow of information and knowledge within the business (Muhammad, 2021). This paper will concentrate on assessing how knowledge management and its resources impact organizational performance, intending to attain competitive advantages. This paper highlights the growing recognition of knowledge management (KM) as a critical tool for achieving competitive advantage and enhancing organizational performance in today's rapidly changing business landscape.

While it provides a comprehensive overview of the importance of KM and its impact on organizational efficiency, decision-making processes, and profitability, the article aims to bring new insights to both theory and practice in several ways as stated in (Rehman, S. U., Bresciani, S., Ashfaq, K., & Alam, G. M. 2022) and these are: integration of information technology (IT) impact; focus on external knowledge integration; alignment with modern corporate strategies: recognition of increasing complexity and focus on competitive advantage. Overall, the article brings new perspectives to the discourse on knowledge

management by integrating IT impact, emphasizing external knowledge integration, aligning with modern corporate strategies, recognizing increasing complexity, and focusing on competitive advantage. These insights contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical applications of KM in contemporary organizations. Therefore, the study would focus on two main objectives to arrive at its conclusion, which are as follows;

1. What are the best practices for implementation knowledge management in the digital era?
2. How does digital technology impact organizational performance?

This paper is organized as follows: the first section of the literature, after introduction, presents an overview of knowledge management; an overview of knowledge management and its impact on organizational performance. The second part of the paper presents the study methodology, and subsequently the result in relation to applications of Artificial intelligence was captured in the third section. The last section discusses the future work and conclusion.

RELATED LITERATURE

The fundamental goal of knowledge management is to arrange and make critical information accessible whenever and wherever it is needed. Knowledge management is a strategy that ensures that individuals in the organization have access to the appropriate information in the appropriate format at the appropriate time. Effective knowledge management has a favorable effect on an organization's ability to innovate. An organization's capacity to create new goods, procedures, and knowledge is greatly impacted by its knowledge management system (Letshaba & Ndlovu, 2024). Also, Knowledge management is the art of managing organizational knowledge to give a corporate organization a competitive edge and create value. In order to accomplish corporate objectives, it facilitates the production, sharing, and use of information. Knowledge management may also be defined as "the process of collecting a form of collective expertise wherever it resides – in a database, on paper, or in people's heads and distributing it to where it can help produce the biggest payoff." Alternatively, it may be a "combination of business practices and software products that help organizations capture, analyze, and distill information." Ibrahim and Hadood, (2016). Since managing knowledge is viewed as a process that enhances intellectual capital and increasing intellectual capital is a challenging undertaking, knowledge management is a complicated system that extends much beyond the information-centric component of any system. Above all, in order to maximize intellectual capital and boost organizational performance and competitiveness, knowledge management must be done in an orderly, purposeful, and methodical way. Moreso, organisational knowledge management is a collection of practices that govern the creation, sharing, and use of knowledge, thus building organizations and supporting structures, fostering relationships among members, utilizing technology, and disseminating knowledge were all necessary to meet this description (Saarikoski et al. 2018).

Knowledge management is the organizational resource that enables a sustainable competitive advantage in times of severe rivalry, according to the company's knowledge-based theory. Modern businesses place a strong emphasis on knowledge because they believe that information has strategic value due to obstacles to its duplication and transmission. A lot of companies are developing information systems designed to facilitate knowledge sharing and integration. Such systems are referred to as knowledge management systems (KMS). Businesses or educational institutions can strive to promote a culture of knowledge exchange and cooperation by implementing the knowledge management system. This will

allow staff, students, and instructors to benefit from the collective expertise and experience of the company. New trends in knowledge management systems have emerged as a result of technological advancements. In order to improve knowledge retrieval, automated knowledge extraction, and personalized knowledge recommendations, recent research has investigated the integration of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and natural language processing techniques (Basabe, Ferolino, Durano, Patiño, Moncada, Lao, & Obaob, 2024). By facilitating the effective collection, organization, dissemination, and use of information among intelligence institutions. Moreover, knowledge administration plays a critical role in enhancing intelligence capabilities. Its importance stems from its ability to ensure that intelligence analysts quickly obtain accurate and relevant data, enabling them to make decisions and projections based on solid facts. By adopting knowledge management systems, these organizations can improve communication between different sectors, streamline their processes, and apply common knowledge to effectively address complex problems. Therefore, this type of management plays a crucial role in preserving institutional legacy and best practices, which enhances organizational intelligence and adaptability in the face of changing threats and unstable international environments. Additionally, such management plays a crucial role in preserving institutional legacy and best practices, which enhances organizational intelligence and adaptability in the face of changing threats and shifting global landscapes. (Syed,2024) Moreover, previously knowledge management, storage, and transmission were still limited to a single mode that made it hard for the enterprises to obtain information and make effective use of the knowledge resources acquired. Coupled with the rapidly progressing era of artificial intelligence, big data, blockchain, and cloud computing, the digital revolution has led to an unprecedentedly dynamic, available, and iteratively improved era of knowledge. This transformation allows organizations to move out of the limits of evolving into a culture of enhanced digital knowledge management. In this sense, high-tech firms have emerged as trailblazers who have strategically embraced knowledge digitization—operational improvements and success through digitally dictated knowledge practices (Han, Li, Zhu, Lu, & Zu, 2024). Advent of new technologies has influenced strategic knowledge management where the information system plays a vital role that adds to organisational performance and improves individual capabilities.

Framework for the implementation of knowledge management in the digital era

This framework provides a structured approach to understanding and implementing knowledge management practices in the digital era, with a focus on leveraging technology to enhance organizational performance. The framework was adopted and modified from (Pellegrini, 2020).

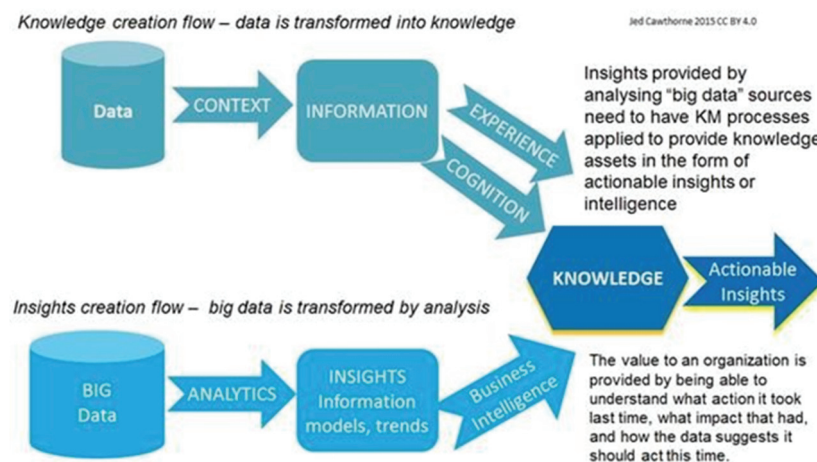
Fig 1: KM Framework (Pellegrini, 2020).



The framework, which serves as a structured plan or outline, was developed following a thorough review process. During this review, various factors, insights, and findings were taken into account to ensure the framework's effectiveness and suitability for its intended purpose. Additionally, metrics and performance indicators were carefully selected and integrated into the framework. These metrics and indicators were chosen with the future implementation of the framework in mind, ensuring that they align well with the anticipated methods and approaches that will be employed. By considering both the insights gleaned from the review and the requirements of future implementation, the framework is designed to be robust, adaptable, and conducive to achieving its objectives effectively.

Digital transformation is being actively used by a variety of companies. However, the corporate environment is the main focus of the academic literature, with the public sector—such as smart cities or e-government—getting the next level of attention. In contrast, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) receive comparatively less attention, even if they are keen to take advantage of the opportunities brought about by the digital age, as noted by Zbuche and Leon (2015) and Jahanshahi et al. (2023). One of an organization's most valuable assets is its expertise, which is essential for obtaining a competitive edge. And in some cases, it is even more important than money and other material possessions. As a result, research and studies on knowledge management have grown increasingly fascinating in recent years, as reported by Chawla, (2011) and Muhammad, (2021). A significant consequence of digital transformations, profoundly impacting business practices, is the advent of big data (Günther et al., 2017). Big data serves as a valuable asset for organizations, but it also presents numerous challenges. Questions arise about what to collect, how to effectively utilize it, and whether the organization has the necessary competent employees. Big data comprises vast amounts of knowledge, but extracting meaningful insights from it is a complex process. Moreover, this complexity extends beyond the organization to the public domain, with privacy and trust emerging as significant concerns. Therefore, the management of this knowledge proves to be a complex endeavor. Jed Cawthorne's analysis in 2015 delves into how knowledge management strategies, when applied to data and big data, play a pivotal role in generating actionable insights (see Figure 2). This process is facilitated by tacit knowledge within the organization, informed by prior experiences, and guided by formal processes encoded in business intelligence. The synergy of both tacit and explicit knowledge is harnessed to enhance decision-making and create added value.

Figure 2. The Relationship between Knowledge Management and Big Data. Source (Cawthorne, 2015)



In the present era of digitalization, terms like ICT (Information and Communication Technology), smart devices, the Internet, IoT (Internet of Things), and digital infrastructure inevitably come to mind. This is unsurprising, as the workings of the digital economy heavily rely on this new universe of technological elements. Consequently, it is entirely understandable that the academic literature on knowledge management emphasizes the significance of ICT infrastructure (Muhammad, 2021). Technology plays a crucial role in facilitating the acquisition, storage, transfer, and analysis of knowledge. An appropriate infrastructure also encompasses the design of a knowledge architecture, serving as a prerequisite for effective knowledge management. From the outset of the conversation, the focus has been on explicit knowledge. Technology extends beyond being merely a repository for knowledge. New technologies enable the dynamic and timely utilization of knowledge. We discuss sophisticated platforms and versatile, comprehensive knowledge management system infrastructures. Emphasizing that knowledge creation is not solely driven by IT infrastructure, other organizational factors also play a stimulating role (Muhammad, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

The study employs an extensive literature review across different databases to ascertain the role of ICT in relation to the field of knowledge management in an organisation. Overall, the in-depth review will allow for a comprehensive exploration of the research problem, providing insights into the complex interplay between knowledge management, ICT utilization, and organizational performance in the digital era. The review will also serve as a guide in the implementation of KM taking into consideration the industry 4.0 technology.

REVIEW OF FINDINGS

a. Knowledge Management in the Era of Digital Technologies

Various types of organizations are actively embracing digital transformation. However, the academic literature primarily concentrates on the business context, with the public sector, such as e-government or smart cities, receiving the next level of attention. In contrast, there is relatively less focus on non-governmental organizations (NGOs), despite their eagerness to leverage the opportunities presented by the digital era, as also reported by Zbучea and Leon, (2015); Jahanshahi et. al., (2023). The knowledge held by organizations stands out as one of their most critical assets, playing a pivotal role in gaining a competitive advantage. In certain instances, it holds even greater significance than financial resources and other tangible assets. Consequently, knowledge management has become an ever more interesting subject of research and studies in the last few decades, as in the case of Chawla, (2011) and Muhammad, (2021). The advent of the digital era has given rise to a digital economy, signifying a prevailing trend where most organizations exclusively utilize digital information in a hyperconnected system (Tapscott, 2015). This shift impacts various managerial processes, including knowledge management, marketing strategies, customer relationship management, the delivery and sale of products/services, employment practices, and other business operations (briefly reviewed in Pinzaru, Zbучea & Vidu, 2016). Amidst these transformations, decision-making processes—from data collection and knowledge storage to analysis and the timing of decision release—are notably influenced, and this is also in tandem with the literature findings by Kurti and Haftor, (2015); Saputri & Utami (2023).

b. Applications of Artificial Intelligence in knowledge management systems and strategies

Numerous managers perceive that artificial intelligence is having a positive transformative impact on their organizations, particularly in terms of enhancing various business processes (Davenport & Ronanki, 2018). Three main areas are identified when considering the interferences of artificial intelligence with business: automating business processes, gaining insight through data analysis, and engaging with customers and employees. All these areas involve knowledge management. These three have direct relations with knowledge management as affirmed by this study. The foundation of artificial intelligence in knowledge management lies in the presence of knowledge warehouses (Lozić, J2019a). These warehouses serve as a platform for intelligent analysis, contributing to the enhancement of the knowledge spiral. This spiral involves the sharing of tacit knowledge across the organization, the conversion of tacit to explicit knowledge, leveraging explicit knowledge to generate new knowledge, and learning that Artificial intelligence has the potential to enhance the understanding of competition and the business environment, playing a role in competitive intelligence systems through the creation of learning platforms for businesses and organizations (Mihu et al., 2021). A comprehensive examination of academic literature indicates that the integration of knowledge management and competitive intelligence results in improved decision-making and a competitive advantage (Shujahat et al., 2017; Baradari & Nezafati, 2023). This integration positively influences the formulation of mission statements and long-term objectives, facilitates the evaluation of both internal and external environments, and contributes to the enhanced design and evaluation of strategies. Through the conversion of explicit knowledge back to tacit form (Nemati et al., 2002; Saputri & Utami 2023).

Contrary to the widespread optimism, the effectiveness of artificial intelligence has not been fully realized. Various reasons contribute to this, including challenges in integrating it into business processes (Miller, 2018; Saputri & Utami 2023) and high costs associated with complex implementation, coupled with a lack of expertise (Davenport & Ronanki, 2018). Additionally, the immaturity of technologies is a noteworthy factor, emphasizing the indispensable role of people in achieving effective outcomes. A pertinent example in this regard is chatbots; despite their increasing popularity and continuous improvement, there are ongoing discussions about their evaluation and utilization (Radziwill & Benton, 2017).

Finally, the findings have given us valuable insights on the implementation of knowledge management in the digital world and highlight the framework that will guide effective implementation. Also, organizations can utilize the findings to make informed decisions on their knowledge management implementation. Furthermore, practitioners can leverage the findings to adequately plan their KM implementation strategies. Therefore, having seen what knowledge management is capable of doing in the digital era, it is imperative to note that the study objective number one, which asked about the best practices in implementing knowledge management, is answered. The review findings also found that digital technology is of great importance to organizations as it simplifies their decision-making process. Thus, answering the study objective number two that asked how the digital technology impacts organizational performance. However, there is a need to explore other areas for further research; future research in the area of the application of artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and blockchain in knowledge management and how they impact organizational culture and performance.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study brought about several insights into the implementation of knowledge management using technological tools, but it came with some limitations; it lacks empirical pieces of evidence of case studies on how KM is effective in the real world, even though AI's role was highlighted in the study, its practical challenges organization faced was not mentioned. Given the exploratory nature of the research, there are no primary data and this will hinder the practical application of the findings. Most of the reviews are predominantly on the corporate sector with less attention on the public sectors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The ethical consideration of the AI applicability was not discussed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- I. There is a need to include practical real-world case studies, survey instruments, and interviews to determine the digital knowledge management practices' impact on organizational performance in future studies.
- II. There is a need for organizations to develop strategies to address the barriers in AI-implemented knowledge management.
- III. There is a need to expand the sectoral analysis to cover public sector, NGOs, and educational institutions to explore how the knowledge management framework can be adapted.
- IV. Implementation of data protection regulations and data governance frameworks to ensure secure knowledge management focusing on AI ethical concerns by organizations.
- V. There is a need for organizations to develop adaptive models for knowledge management that are flexible given the evolving digital transformation that allow for integration of emerging technologies such as IoT, blockchain, machine learning, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

Knowledge management has become a vital strategic tool for businesses in a variety of industries in the digital age. The importance of digital transformation in the public sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is being increasingly recognized, even though the commercial context continues to be the main focus of academic writing. Digital technology integration has transformed knowledge management, influencing decision-making, managerial procedures, and overall organizational effectiveness. Since the emergence of the digital economy, businesses have become increasingly dependent on digital data, resulting in a hyperconnected system that improves customer relationship management, marketing tactics, and knowledge exchange. This paper discovered digital technologies as a tool that makes decision-making easier, from gathering data and storing knowledge to analyzing it and making decisions on time.

By automating corporate procedures, generating insights through data analysis, and interacting with clients and staff, artificial intelligence (AI) revolutionizes knowledge management. Knowledge warehouses powered by AI make it easier to exchange and transform explicit and tacit knowledge, which enhances decision-making and competitive intelligence. Notwithstanding the potential advantages, high implementation costs, technological immaturity, and difficulties integrating AI continue to be barriers.

The study's conclusions, however, highlight the value of digital tools in improving organizational performance as well as the necessity of efficient knowledge management techniques in the digital age.

Therefore, in order to maximize knowledge management, enhance decision-making, and obtain a competitive advantage in a world that is becoming more digital, organizations need to use digital technologies and AI. Further research and innovation in this area will increase the capabilities and efficacy of knowledge management systems and strategies.

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