KNOWLEDGE CENTRICITY AND ITS ROLE IN ACHIEVING SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE: AN APPLIED STUDY AT AL-MUSTAQBAL UNIVERSITY

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A R T I C L E I N F O.	**Abstract**
Keywords: Knowledge Centricity, Superior Performance, Al-Mustaqbal University.	This study examines the effect of Knowledge Centricity on superior performance at Al-Mustaqbal University. The primary hypothesis posits a significant positive effect of Knowledge Centricity on superior performance. Data were collected via a structured survey of workers at Al-Mustaqbal University. 378 valid questionnaires were collected for statistical analysis which confirmed that seven out of eight dimensions of Knowledge Centricity significantly enhance superior performance. However, the ability to Produce revenue online did not show a significant effect. These findings spotlight the importance of adopting a holistic approach to knowledge centricity unitizing its multi dimensions. The study offers actionable insights for Al-Mustaqbal University and similar institutions aiming to leverage knowledge-centric practices to achieve superior performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's knowledge-driven economy, organizations are increasingly recognizing the strategic importance of knowledge as a necessity. Knowledge-focused, the idea that knowledge is at the root of organizational activities has emerged as a key factor in increasing performance (Cruywagen et al., 2013). This paper examines the role of knowledge management in achieving high performance, with a particular focus on its application at Al-Mustaqbal University. A forward-thinking institution dedicated to academic excellence and innovation, Al Mustaqbal University is an example of modeling to analyze the impact of Knowledge-based practices in higher education translate into higher performance, and that is still an area ripe for exploration.

This study aims to address this gap by examining how Al-Mustaqbal University uses knowledge-based practices to improve the performance of its organization. By examining the use of specific projects, programs, and technologies, this research seeks to provide a broader understanding of the ways in which knowledge-focused practices contribute to the success of learning and organizations Furthermore, this paper will identify the challenges of implementing these interventions and ways to overcome them. The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for other educational institutions aiming to enhance their performance through a knowledge-based approach. In addition, this study will contribute to the existing knowledge management literature.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Knowledge Centricity

A knowledge-centered organization works to consider knowledge as the basic resource for superior performance, and therefore knowledge is embedded and embodied in the organization's mission and strategy, as well as its social architecture, operations, and performance (Stonehouse & Pemberton, 2005).

It is necessary to differentiate between a learning organization and a knowledge-centered organization, as the concept of a learning organization includes organizational learning, which is similar to the creation of knowledge. The learning organization also works to develop leadership, culture, structure, and infrastructure that facilitate learning processes. Although a knowledge-centered organization includes these concepts, it goes further by forming an organizational mentality that views knowledge as permeating the essence of what the organization represents (Goswami & Agrawal, 2023).

A knowledge-centric organization can be defined as one that improves its capabilities and builds a whole new knowledge through its resources and capabilities(Cruywagen, 2010). Therefore, this organization uses practices related to knowledge as tangible and intangible assets to ensure its sustainability and competitiveness, and thus knowledge helps in achieving goals and improving organizational performance (Vakharia et al., 2018, p. 5).

In 1997, the consultancy Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdele (KPMG) developed the knowledge journey framework, which includes the following five steps: (Janardhan & Vakharia, 2014, p. 4)

1. Knowledge-chaotic: the organization fails to recognize the importance of knowledge, resulting in a lack of direction and leadership.

2. Knowledge-aware: The organization begins to identify the importance of knowledge and implements some structured strategies, but still does not use knowledge as a strategic asset.

3. Knowledge-enabled: The organization begins to acquire knowledge through tools and processes, even if it faces both technological and cultural barriers.

4. Knowledge-managed: The organization has established processes for knowledge creation and management, with regular review and improvement, but this knowledge is limited to top management.

5. Knowledge-centric: The organization fully integrates knowledge creation and management into its mission and strategy, with all leadership, culture, and infrastructure actively supporting comprehensive knowledge development.

Knowledge centricity according to Vakharia et al. (2018) has eight dimensions as follows:

1. **Level of Board Engagement (KL)**: assesses the extent to which the university's board is involved in and committed to knowledge-centric practices.

2. **Ability to Collect and Manage Data (KD)**: evaluates the university's capability to systematically gather and handle data essential for knowledge management.

3. **Strategic Use of Audience Data for Programming and Audience Development (KS)**: measures how effectively the university leverages audience data for program planning and audience engagement.

4. **Investment in Staff Training and Professional Development (KI)**: assess the university's commitment to enhancing staff capabilities through training and professional growth opportunities.

5. **Effectiveness in Using Technology Systems and Website (KE)**: evaluates the efficiency and effectiveness of the university's technological infrastructure and online presence.

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6. **Level of Staff Capacity, Training, and Roles (KL)**: looks at the adequacy of staff capacity, the comprehensiveness of their training, and the clarity of their roles in supporting knowledge-centric initiatives.

7. **Ability to Document and Report Critical Information and Knowledge (KA)**: assesses the university's proficiency in documenting and reporting vital information and knowledge.

8. **Ability to Generate Revenue Online (KR)**: this dimension evaluates the university's success in generating revenue through online platforms.

B. Superior Performance

Every organization seeks to grow and thrive in its competitive markets. Success depends on internal forces and external market position. Positive business performance occurs when an organization is able to deliver products that customers value enough to pay more than production costs. Essentially, an organization must excel in creating value for its customers (Aghazadeh, 2015, p. 126).

Superior and below average performance in all areas can be distinguished by the three basic elements of overall performance, leadership, and management

The difference between exceptional and inconsistent performance in different areas can be attributed to three main factors: overall performance, leadership, and management (Young & Dulewicz, 2009, p. 804). Resource advantage theory, social capital management, and knowledge management propose methods for organizations to enhance their capabilities and attain higher levels of performance (Hoffman et al., 2005, p. 93). Managers need to have a highly skilled workforce in which employees are more involved in the decision-making process, develop strategies for exceptional customer service and continuous improvement, and receive financial rewards for their contributions (Collins, 2010, p. 20).

Superior performance is done when skilled workers put in their best efforts and use their power in a well-organized and effective manner. This high level of performance is the result of committed leadership, strategic planning, process management and a nurturing environment (Adebi, 2010). From the above, superior performance can be defined as "achieving the maximum levels of performance by harnessing all of their energies in the workplace."

To achieve superior performance, organizations must take advantage of key opportunities as they arise. Competitive advantage comes from making the most of these short-lived opportunities, which competitors may not anticipate. Such opportunities often contain scattered and unexpected features that, if exploited effectively, can significantly increase productivity. Companies must manage the uncertainty inherent in these fleeting opportunities. In an increasingly competitive market, it is important for companies to anticipate market potential and look for opportunities to make process changes that improve their performance. (Koh et al., 2009, pp. 22-23).

3. HYPOTHESIS

In today's knowledge economy, organizations with a strong focus on knowledge management are better positioned to innovate, adapt, and gain a competitive edge. Knowledge centricity emphasizes the importance of knowledge as a core asset and its central role in driving organizational activities. Universities are inherently knowledge-centric institutions. By emphasizing knowledge creation, dissemination, and utilization, Al-Mustaqbal University can foster a learning environment that benefits students, faculty, and staff. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated (see figure 1):

➢ H1 There is a positive significant effect of Knowledge Centricity on Superior Performance.

➢ H1a There is a positive significant effect of Level of board engagement on Superior Performance.

➢ H1b There is a positive significant effect of Ability to collect and manage data on Superior Performance.

- ➢ H1c There is a positive significant effect of Strategic use of audience data for programming and audience development on Superior Performance.
- ➢ H1d There is a positive significant effect of Investment in staff training and professional development on Superior Performance.
- ➢ H1e There is a positive significant effect of Effectiveness in using technology systems and website on Superior Performance.
- ➢ H1f There is a positive significant effect of Level of staff capacity, training and roles on Superior Performance.
- ➢ H1g There is a positive significant effect of Ability to document and report critical information and knowledge on Superior Performance.
- ➢ H1h There is a positive significant effect of Ability to generate revenue online on Superior Performance.
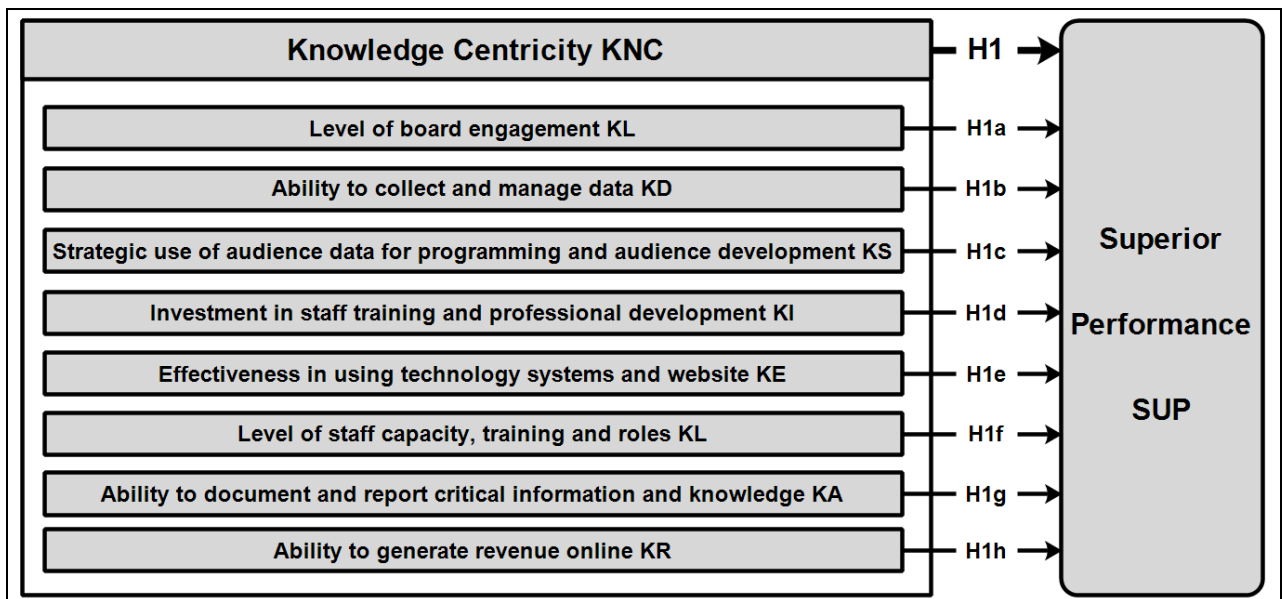

Figure 1. Hypotheses Diagram

4. MEASUREMENT

The study adopted established instruments form previous studies to measure knowledge centricity and Superior Performance. Table 1 provides used measures.

Table 1. Measurement of variables

Variables and its dimensions		Items	source
Knowledge Centricity	KNC	27	Vakharia et al., 2018
• Level of board engagement	KL	7	
• Ability to collect and manage data	KD	5	
• Strategic use of audience data for programming and audience development	KS	4	
• Investment in staff training and professional development	KI	3	
• Effectiveness in using technology systems and website	KE	2	
• Level of staff capacity, training and roles	KS	3	
• Ability to document and report critical information and knowledge	KA	1	
• Ability to generate revenue online	KR	2	
Superior Performance	SUP	5	Gould-Williams, (2003)

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5. DATA COLLECTION

A random sampling method was adopted to distribute the questionnaire, the target population included employees of Al-Mustaqbal University which included board members, administrative staff, faculty members, and technical staff involved in knowledge management practices. Between 1/3/2024 and 1/4/2024, 378 valid questionnaires were collected that are suitable for statistical analysis.

6. DATA ANALYSIS

Three steps were implemented in data analysis, the first one gives an overview of the collected data through descriptive analysis. The other two implementing a two steps PLS-SEM analysis which includes: a) assessment of the measurement model in terms of validity and reliability indicators; b) assessment of the structural model which incorporates path analysis for the hypothesized relationships.

A. Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis seeks to give an overview of the collected data. Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation for the variables. Having all variables surpassed the assumed mean of 3 on a five-point Likert scale. This indicates that all variables are spread within the studied sample.

Table. 2 Descriptive analysis results

Variable	KNC	KL	KD	KS	KI	KE	KS	KA	KR	SUP
Mean	3.98	3.83	4.13	3.94	4.07	3.89	3.95	3.88	3.17	4.02
S. Deviation	0.983	0.844	0.961	0.988	0.878	1.01	0.945	1.013	1.114	0.915

B. Measurement model

According to Hair et al., (2017) there are three main criteria for the measurement model:

1. Internal consistency stability composite reliability ≥ 0.60; Cronbach Alpha 0.70

2. The stability of the index, the standard saturation of the index 0.70

3. Asymptotic validity average contrast extracted (AVE) 0.50

By utilizing the SmartPLS software, a measurement model was constructed, Table (3) illustrate the results which were all within required criteria.

Table 3. Measurement model

items	loading	Cronbach Alpha	composite reliability	AVE
KL1	0.815			
KL2	0.779			
KL3	0.856			
KL4	0.742	0.762	0.814	0.597
KL5	0.778			
KL6	0.773			
KL7	0.721			
KD1	0.768			
KD2	0.802			
KD3	0.782	0.711	0.836	0.582
KD4	0.851			
KD5	0.836			
KS1	0.784			
KS2	0.748	0.786	0.874	0.698
KS3	0.769			

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KS4	0.747			
KI1	0.705			
KI2	0.717	0.762	0.814	0.613
KI3	0.785			
KE1	0.755	0.742	0.806	0.538
KE2	0.788			
KS1	0.781			
KS2	0.783	0.729	0.806	0.613
KS3	0.845			
KA1	0.778	0.711	0.836	0.582
KR1	0.758	0.742	0.806	0.698
KR2	0.884			
SUP1	0.834			
SUP2	0.786			
SUP3	0.728	0.786	0.874	0.545
SUP4	0.781			
SUP5	0.713			

Source: SmartPLS output

C. Structural Model

In order to test the relationships between the studied variables, a path model was built using SmartPLS, where each path (relationship) is significant when t value > 1.96 and p value < 0.05. Table 4 illustrate the results.

Table 4. Path Analysis

Hypothesis	Path	Path coefficient	t Value	p Value	Result	R^2	R^2 adjusted
H1	KNC→SUP	0.824	19.281	0	Accepted	0.772	0.770
H1a	KL→SUP	0.315	3.547	0	Accepted		
H1b	KD→SUP	0.436	3.339	0	Accepted		
H1c	KS→SUP	0.285	3.124	0	Accepted		
H1d	KI→SUP	0.442	5.196	0	Accepted	0.786	0.781
H1e	KE→SUP	0.417	5.487	0	Accepted		
H1f	KL→SUP	0.476	5.166	0	Accepted		
H1g	KA→SUP	0.321	4.272	0	Accepted		
H1h	KR→SUP	0.161	1.58	0.15	Rejected		

Source: SmartPLS output

Table (4) presents the path coefficients, based on the required criteria outlined by Hair et al. (2017) all the hypotheses were accepted except for H1f. The coefficient of determination (R²) for the main hypothesis was found to be 0.772, This indicates that knowledge centricity explains 77% of the variance in superior performance variable, while the remaining percentage is attributed to factors not addressed in the current study.

7. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of Knowledge Centricity (KNC) on Superior Performance (SUP) at Al-Mustaqbal University. The hypothesis (H1) posited that Knowledge Centricity has a significant positive effect on Superior Performance. This overarching hypothesis was further broken down into eight specific sub-hypotheses (H1a to H1h) to investigate the effects of various dimensions of Knowledge Centricity on Superior Performance.

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The results strongly supported the main hypothesis (H1), indicating a significant positive effect of Knowledge Centricity on Superior Performance with a path coefficient of 0.824, a t-value of 19.281, and a p-value of 0. This suggests that a holistic approach to managing and utilizing knowledge resources substantially enhances the overall performance of the university.

Interestingly, the ability to generate revenue online did not have a significant effect on Superior Performance (path coefficient = 0.161, t-value = 1.58, p-value = 0.15). This suggests that while generating online revenue is important, it may not directly influence overall performance as much as the other dimensions of Knowledge Centricity.

8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study have several important implications for Al-Mustaqbal University and similar institutions. First, fostering a knowledge-based culture through engaged leadership, effective data management, and appropriate use of audience data is essential to achieving high performance in addition to investing in employee development and implementing technology initiatives to enhance organizational performance. Overall, the study confirmed that knowledge orientation plays an important role in better performance in universities. By applying the unique aspects of logic and knowledge base, Al-Mustaqbal University can further improve its performance and maintain its competitive edge in academia.

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