

## **Status of Knowledge Management Practices in Pakistani Universities**

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### **Abstract**

Knowledge Management (KM) is the process of knowledge creation, knowledge acquisition, knowledge dissemination, knowledge storage and knowledge re-application. It is considered as one of the most important area of research in the era of globalization. Knowledge management practices are one of the important areas of knowledge management. The objectives of this study were to explore the perceptions of PhD approved supervisors about six factors of knowledge management. The study was quantitative in nature and cross sectional survey was used as method of the study. The population of study was all 4636 approved PhDs research supervisors of all public and private sector universities in Pakistan. By multi-stage sampling techniques 465 PhD approved supervisor were selected as sample. Seven major areas which were definition, plan, strategies, framework, unit, budgets, and coordination point of knowledge management in Pakistani universities were examined. Study concluded that there is absence of definitions, plan, strategies, framework, unit, budgets, and coordination point of knowledge management for practices and its implementation in universities of Pakistan. The results recommended that there may be provided knowledge management practices definitions in universities of Pakistan. Higher Education Commission and universities may be equipped with knowledge management unit, framework, coordination point and budgets for implementation.

**Keywords:** *Knowledge, Knowledge Management, Higher Education, Framework*

### **1. Introduction**

Knowledge Management is aroused as emerging and new phenomena of 21<sup>st</sup> century. All over the world, knowledge management practices are considered as an interactive and favorite area of research and practices for researchers. There are two broad types of knowledge i.e. tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge which are considered as roots of knowledge. Tactic knowledge is referred as that knowledge which resides in human mind. It cannot be articulated easily. Explicit

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knowledge means open and database knowledge. It is easy to access and can be effortlessly articulated by searchers. According to Nawaz & Gomes (2014), tacit knowledge is based on the idea that we know more than we can present, and explicit knowledge is carefully arranged and systematically stored in database.

Knowledge management as filed and subject is accepted all over the educational and academic world. Universities and higher education institutions are the source of knowledge creation, knowledge dissemination, knowledge storage, knowledge accusations and knowledge application. Knowledge management practices in higher education institutions are acknowledged by every country. Davenport (1998) clarified knowledge management as a process for capturing of knowledge, spreading of knowledge and effectively use of knowledge for any type of organizational development and growth. According to Serenko (2013), Knowledge Management has already reached the level of a scientific discipline. Petrides & Nodine (2003) opined that Knowledge management practices as notions were accepted in the field of education due to achieved competitive advantages for face pressure of globalization and knowledge economy. In the field of research, knowledge management is new and inevitable. Knowledge management practices has been attracted by researchers but knowledge management practices research has been found very limited in numbers globally in general and in the South East Asian region in specific (Sohail & Daud, 2009). Pakistan is also located in South Asia region of the world and has limited theoretical levels of knowledge management practices in universities.

Rowley (2000) suggested that knowledge management activities in universities are important for development and must be ensured for recognition and used as foundation. Mikulecky and Saeed (2009) articulated and considered the importance of knowledge management for academic sector of Pakistan. The authors further explained key areas of higher education which can be directly improved by knowledge management practices. The author further proposed that universities must respond to their changing role in a knowledge-based society and managing their explicit created new knowledge assets.

### **1.1 Statement of Problem**

Knowledge management is not only the need of society but also very crucial for universities. Knowledge management practices and strategies can help stakeholders of universities for improving organizational and educational achievements. Therefore, researcher was attracted to explore the perceptions of PhD approved supervisors about knowledge management practices in universities. The problem investigated the perceptions of PhD approved supervisor about knowledge management practices in universities.

## **1.2 Objectives of Study**

Objectives of the study were:-

1. To find out the perceptions of PhD approved faculty about definition of knowledge management as given by the universities.
2. To find out the implementation plan for knowledge management in universities.
3. To explore the perceptions of Ph.D approved supervisors regarding availability of primary coordination points for knowledge management practices in universities.
4. To investigate the availability of knowledge management framework and knowledge management units in universities
5. To find out the perceptions of Ph.D approved supervisors about availability of separate budget for knowledge management practices in universities of Pakistan.

## **2. Literature Review**

The term and concept of knowledge management was aroused in 1990s. Knowledge management is a set of practices and procedure that helps to use and sharing of information in decision making (Petrides & Nodine, 2003). According to Metcalfe (2006) knowledge management is renowned as a method for increasing institutional innovation. According to O'Dell & Grayson, (1998) knowledge management is a strategy used as right knowledge to the right people at the right time and helping people to share information into action to improve organizational performance. Knowledge management applied to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can bring about improvement in processes, such as the research process, curriculum development process, student and alumni services, administrative services, and strategic planning (Kidwell, Vander Linde, & Johnson, 2000). According to Brewer and Brewer (2010) active and dynamic knowledge management practices strategies can help stakeholders of universities for improving organizational and educational achievements.

Knowledge management initiatives as a tool aids in driving innovative processes and maintaining competitiveness within business organizations (Bhatt, 2001; Carneiro, 2000). According to Yeh (2011), knowledge management can be supported by educational authorities and in return knowledge management supports teaching and learning for improving universities. Ramakrishnan and Yasin (2012) articulated that knowledge management system could enhance the curriculum, quality of curricula and its programs. Knowledge management can create the way of competition for Global knowledge economy era. According to Stein (2017) when European public universities faced the crisis of losing students

in the global field of education competition with American universities have applied knowledge Management Strategy effectively like UK based Southampton Solent University. It is inferred from that knowledge management has potential for competitive advantages.

According to Whyte, Ewenstein, Hales & Tidd (2008) knowledge management strategy may be achieved through staff's ability to exchange knowledge in universities, flexible mechanisms, infrastructures to facilitate the flow of knowledge and legislation and information for implementation of knowledge management practices. According to (Aurelie Bechina Arntzen, Worasinchai & Ribière, 2009) described that innovative Knowledge Management practices approaches in higher education of Bangkok University and recommended a generic Knowledge framework. According to Omona et al. (2010) universities need to have appropriate KM framework to effectively manage their knowledge asset. Mehralizade & Abdi.(2009) investigated the practices of KM in Iranian University and institutional research unit and function supported the KM. The research findings showed that KM strategies, policies and programs cannot smoothly function without institutional research unit and primary coordination point.

Cranfield (2011) emphasized and investigated that what would be the motive of spending of knowledge management budgets. The author further explained the decentralization of power for knowledge management budgets. Tippins (2003) highlighted common budget difficulties to implement knowledge management practices. Budget deficits have negative impact on KM activities in HEIs including increased workload for teachers, decrease in knowledge dissemination through publication and longer processes of problem-solving activities. Geiger (2015) expressed that HEIs of United States have been affected by reductions in budget. There is not enough literature available for studies in Pakistan on impact of Budget on Knowledge management practices. Eram and Arshad (2005) developed knowledge management model for public universities of Pakistan. According to Shah and Mahmood (2015) knowledge management is receiving importance in geo-political circumstances of Pakistan. Knowledge management practices are not getting much attention in Pakistan as well as in developing countries where literacy rate is low. Therefore, researcher was attracted to explore the perception PhD approved supervisors about knowledge management.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study was quantitative in nature. Survey was conducted for data collection.

#### **3.2 Population & Sampling**

The population of the study included all (4634) HEC PhDs approved supervisors in universities of Pakistan. Researcher used multi-stage sampling techniques to select the sample of 465 PhDs for study. At first stage universities were selected and after that subject wise PhDs supervisor were selected.

#### **3.3. Research Instrument**

Questionnaire was used as data collection instrument.

#### **3.3 Validity & Reliability**

The content validity of the instrument was carried out through expert's opinion by PhD faculty in Education. The reliability co-efficient of the questionnaire was .94

#### **3.3 Data Collection**

465 questionnaires were distributed among PhD approved supervisor by E-mail, Google form, and personal visits to the target universities of Pakistan. 326 questionnaires were received from respondents.

### **4. Data Analysis & Results**

Collected data were analyzed through descriptive analysis i.e. percentage by using SPSS. Details are as follows:

Table 1

*Knowledge Management Practices: Specific definition for Knowledge Management*

Responses Category	Frequency	Percent
Yes	88	27.0
No	121	37.0
Do not know	117	36.0
Total	326	100.0

Table 1 illustrates the knowledge management perception in Pakistani universities. There were three categorical choices for answer to obtain the perception of PhD supervisors. Only 27% supervisors responded that they have specific definition for knowledge management in their respective universities. There were 37% perception existed in universities that they have no proper

definition of KM and 36% of the respondents respond that they have no knowledge about KM definition.

Table 2

*Availability of strategies and implementation plan for knowledge management practices in universities*

Responses category	Frequency	Percent
Yes	65	20.0
No	104	32.0
In the Development Stages	50	15.0
Do Not Know	107	33.0
Total	326	100.0

Table 2 described the perceptions about availability of strategies and implementation plan for KM in Pakistani universities. The four options were presented to choose one of them. Only 20% respondents stated that there are strategies and implementation plan for knowledge management practices in universities. A total of 32% respondents stated that no strategies and implementation plan for knowledge management practices existed in universities. A small number (15%) of Pakistani universities were in the development stages of KM plan. There were also 33% respondents who have no knowledge about such type of plan and strategies for implementation KM practices.

Table 3

*Availability of plan for knowledge management practices in universities' departments*

Responses category	Frequency	Percent
Yes	69	21.0
No	139	43.0
Do Not Know	118	36.0
Total	326	100.0

Table 3 has three options to obtain perceptions of supervisors about plan of knowledge management in universities department. The only 21% respondents said that they have plan of KM in universities departments. A total of 43% of the respondents stated that they have no plan for knowledge management practices in Pakistani universities. On the other hand, 36% of the respondents opined that they have no knowledge management practices and are unaware about plan of KM in universities.

Table 4

*Availability of primary coordination point for Knowledge Management practices*

Responses category	Frequency	Percent
Yes	51	15.0
No	157	49.0
Do not know	118	36.0
Total	326	100.0

Table 4 illustrates the situation of primary coordination point for KM practices in universities of Pakistan. Only 15% of the respondents opined that they have knowledge about coordination point for KM. A total of 48% of respondents have no knowledge about KM practices point for coordination and 36% respondents have no awareness about such type of coordination point for KM.

Table 5

*Availability of Knowledge Management framework in universities*

Responses category	Frequency	Percent
Yes	73	22.0
No	129	40.0
Do not know	124	38.0
Total	326	100.0

Table 5 illustrates about knowledge management framework. Only 22% of the respondents stated that they have framework for knowledge management practices in universities. On the other hand, 40% of the respondents viewed that they have no KM framework and 38% of the respondents were unaware about such type of framework for KM implementation.

Table 6

*Availability of Knowledge Management unit in universities*

Responses category	Frequency	Percent
Yes	60	18.0
No	149	46.0
Do not know	117	36.0
Total	326	100.0

Table 6 describes availability of KM unit in Pakistani universities. Only 18% PhD supervisors responded that they have unit for knowledge management practices in Pakistani universities while 46% of responses showed non-

availability of knowledge management unit and 36% respondents showed that they have no knowledge about unit of KM.

Table 7

*Availability of dedicated budgets for Knowledge Management in universities*

Responses Category	Frequency	Percent
Yes	56	17.0
No	113	34.0
Do Not Know	157	48.0
Total	326	100.0

Table 7 results showed that only 17% were of the view that they have specific knowledge management budgets in universities while 34% of the respondents said that they have no definite budgets for KM practices. There were 48% respondents unaware about the availability of KM budgets.

## **5. Findings**

Based on the data analysis, following were findings of the study:-

1. There was absence of specific definition of knowledge management practices in Pakistani universities. Only small numbers of Pakistani universities have definition of knowledge management practices.
2. Implementation plan of knowledge management and strategies were available in some universities while majority of supervisors do not have knowledge management plan and strategies.
3. It was further found that there were no proper coordination point and unit of knowledge management in universities of Pakistan.
4. Availability of knowledge management framework also does not exist in Pakistani universities.
5. Knowledge management units in universities of Pakistan do not exist.
6. Lack of separate budget for knowledge management in Pakistani universities.

## **6. Discussion**

Definition of knowledge management adopted in organization as well as in universities supported by Cranfield (2011) results concluded that there was no proper definition of knowledge management. There were no explicit plans of knowledge management as revealed by the study results. The results of Dhamdhare (2015) reflected that there were certain higher educational institutions which have knowledge management plans which is not only for the generation of knowledge. Similarly, the results of the current study were also not in conformity to the results of Chumjit (2013) i.e. knowledge management plans have significant influence on the social development to knowledge-based



societies. No exact knowledge management practices budget head is allocated in Pakistani universities which negatively influenced the benefits of knowledge management as shown by the study results. These findings were supported by the study of Cranfield (2011) which concluded that most of the institutions have no specified funds for knowledge management. Most of the respondents were unaware about the knowledge management framework, supported by Parikh (2001); Holsapple and Joshi (2002). The results also indicated that knowledge management was never used as tool. These results were not in conformity with the results of Cranfield & Taylor (2008) which reflected that knowledge management is used in universities of United Kingdom as a tool. Furthermore, Liautaud, Hammond & Höhlein (2001) accepted knowledge management as a tool in Higher Education institutions. These conclusions were supported by Cranfield (2008, 2011) that there was no sophisticated infrastructure in Higher Education institutions.

### **7. Conclusions**

1. The study concluded that there is no specific definition of Knowledge Management and implementation plan available in universities of Pakistan. It was also concluded that some universities don't have a regular plan for knowledge management practices, no coordination point. Also there is no knowledge management framework available in universities of Pakistan.
2. Further, it was concluded that there is no unit available for knowledge management and no specific budget allocated for it. Financial aid always assisted the development program and projects in organization as well as in universities, but the non-availability of dedicated budgets was considered key barrier for implementation of KM.

### **8. Recommendations**

1. Pakistani universities may be provided with definitions of Knowledge Management.
2. Knowledge Management plan may also be included in Education Policy.
3. There may be a specific unit for knowledge management in universities.
4. Separate budget for knowledge management practices may be provided.
5. For awareness purpose seminars, conferences, and workshops are the awful need to realize the importance of knowledge management and its proper usage for the developmental purposes are indispensable for university.

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