

Review Article

# The Impact of Crafting Knowledge Strategy on Improving Job Performance. An Explorative Study for the Managerial Leaders Opinions at Amediya District Governmental Organizations

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**Abstract** - The reported study aimed to examine the relationship between Crafting Knowledge Strategy and improving job performance in Amadiya District governmental directorates. The study depended on two main variables: the independent variable Knowledge Strategy with three components or parts, i.e. knowledge framework, knowledge environment, and knowledge initiatives and job performance serving as the dependent variable. The data for this study were collected through a questionnaire survey distributed among over 31 government directorates. Findings from the data analysis revealed that the three components of strategic knowledge were available in the directorates and clearly showed that Crafting Knowledge Strategy had a significant impact and positive relationship with improving job performance in the government organizations in Amadiya District.

**Keywords** - Knowledge Strategy (KS), Job Performance (JP), Knowledge Environment (KE), Knowledge Framework (KF), Knowledge Initiative (KI).

## I. INTRODUCTION

The competitive advantage of corporate knowledge has been stressed in the literature, with the strong recommendation that company managers should take information sharing into serious consideration, as it will ensure benefits for their respective organizations including improved performance assessment and formation of more productive teams. Huie *et al.*, (2020) asserted that the interconnection between users, technologies as well as techniques enhance organizations' ability to fulfill tasks of innovative and difficult nature. This is where institutional knowledge comes into play by becoming the backbone of a company's effort to acquire distinction, development, and excellence. Other recent studies, however, focused on factors such as motivation, satisfaction, and knowledge that contribute to better job performance (Kianto *et al.*, 2016; Kuvaas *et al.*, 2016). The studies in this regard concluded that for the public sectors to appear more successful in terms of job performance amongst people for how they handle problems or grievances they should empower their

staff with knowledge management skills and qualities (Mustapa & Mahmood, 2016).

In particular, the key to utilizing and maintaining knowledge as a strategic weapon is the incorporation of corporate knowledge in the company's long-term development plans. Strategic management must not be limited to its typical targets be it physical and financial assets, operations, or markets. In a similar light, the growing significance of knowledge management in management practices and as a strategic source in the general management process is reflected in studies conducted by (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2017; Jashapara, 2011). Razali (2008) maintained that knowledge management comprises actions intended to bring about expected business outcomes and complex activities. Based on the foregoing, the reported research aimed to formulate Knowledge Strategy in governmental organizations to help them improve their performance levels and, as a result, gain a competitive advantage.

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This section defines and discusses the nature of Knowledge Strategy and job performance followed by the presentation of the research hypotheses concerning the impact of crafting Knowledge Strategy on improving job performance.

### A. Job performance

Job performance as a pivotal element in industrial and organizational psychology encompasses measurable actions, behaviors, and outcomes on the part of the employees in an organization (Pavalache-Ilie, 2014), and defines how corporate staff's behaviors lead to the achievement of organizational goals (Campbell, 1990). Job performance correlates to personal qualities (experience and ability), outcomes (e.g., feedback and job security), occupational environment and knowledge (Waldman & Spangler, 1989), and education (Ng & Feldman, 2009). Campbell *et al.*, (1993) stated that job performance is, in general, determined by motivation, procedural knowledge



and skills, and declarative knowledge. Corporations and their personnel tend to view performance as an important occupational factor directly affecting issues including advancement, employee income, and the firm's market value (Caillier, 2010). Johari and Yahya (2016) maintained that in organizational psychology research job performance is one of the most important norms to evaluate an industry's performance. Giri and Kumar (2010) concurred that job performance could be seen as a person's ability to perform their job competently. Likewise, Johari and Yahya (2016) stated that job performance was a significant indicator when conducting measurement of employee's performance despite the various definitions available for job performance.

Job performance may also refer to an individual's action consciously guided by results due to an a priori incentive. In other words, factors of social, cultural, or demographic nature may influence how individuals perform their jobs. Besides, other factors including organizational characteristics, work environment, and worker characteristics directly correlate with job performance. Campbell (1990) described the performance as the actual action rather than the results it brings about. Manning and Barrette (2005), on the other hand, stated that effective performance is how an individual accomplishes the desired result by proper employment of the mechanisms allocated to the task by the organization. Sukardi (2020) discovered that to improve job performance and job satisfaction among their employees, governments must initiate certain programs that can boost their motivation and encourage them to acquire new competencies and knowledge.

### **B. Knowledge Management**

Only knowledge unique to the organization may result in a competitive advantage. Since knowledge resides in individual employees, it is valuable as long as it nurtures creativity. To accomplish this, organizations utilize reward systems that promote knowledge sharing amongst their staff (Sharkie, 2003). The Oxford English Dictionary offers several definitions for knowledge including (i) expertise; (ii) practical understanding of a subject, (iii) knowledge of a particular field, and (iv) an awareness gained through experience. While attempts to define and formulate knowledge dates back to Plato who referred to knowledge as "justified true belief", a lack of commonly agreed-upon definition of knowledge has triggered countless competing theories (Khanal & Poudel, 2017).

Knowledge management often refers to as the collective knowledge within an organization that constitutes its competitive qualities (Von Krogh, 1998). Generally, Knowledge management is the entirety of all processes including creating, sharing, acquiring, transferring, and applying knowledge in connection with an organization's capabilities, management practices, and available facilities that promote those knowledge processes (Gold *et al.*, 2001; Lee & Choi, 2003). Being pivotal to the discussion of competitive advantage, knowledge management as the enterprise to achieve organizational performance is of paramount importance to both private

and public sectors (Bakar *et al.*, 2014). In this regard, Moballeghi and Moghaddam (2011) have particularly defined knowledge management as the practice of acquiring, sharing, and using knowledge including learning processes and management information systems that reside in an organization.

Knowledge Management (KM) has occupied the focal point of discussion during recent decades. This has led to a wider recognition of the significance of knowledge management as industrialized economies began to shift from natural resources to intellectual assets. Therefore, it is not surprising to see an outburst of research and discussion regarding the concept of knowledge management towards the end of the twentieth century. Nowadays, knowledge management is a widely discussed topic in almost every conference or published journal. It is therefore difficult to overemphasize the importance of knowledge management as a critical tool in the organization and society. In their study of the benefits of knowledge management, McAdam and Reid (2000) discovered that both private and public organizations appreciated the benefits of improving quality, efficiency, and effectiveness, empowering the management, and reducing the operational costs of products and services. Yet, the public sector's perception of knowledge management is far more important than that of the private sector due to its greater contribution to improving efficiency in various industries. Findings from previous research on knowledge management and job performance in the public sectors concluded that a positive attitude towards job performance was higher among employees with knowledge management (Chong *et al.*, 2011; Sandhu *et al.*, 2011). Teng and Song (2011) also stated that knowledge management bears great significance to all sectors of the economy as well as knowledge-intensive firms in the high-tech industries.

### **C. Knowledge Strategy**

Knowledge Strategy is a more recent concept than the notion of strategy. The literature on management in the past two decades has emphasized the association between knowledge and strategy (Kogut & Zander, 1992), indicating that there has been a growing tendency to view knowledge as a strategic weapon and a competitive factor (Kasten, 2007). Other scholars, however, including (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2017) maintained that "strategy" and "knowledge" have long been interconnected in managerial literature. As a modern construct, Knowledge Strategy (KS) reflects the interconnection of Knowledge Management (KM) and Strategic Management. This notion tends to generate new values by placing knowledge at the heart of decision-making strategies to secure a competitive advantage. While using Knowledge Strategy as a specific reference to an organization's business strategy to utilize its intellectual resources and capabilities, Zack (1999) referred to the term as the approach a firm adopts in its attempt to bridge its current and future intellectual requirements in maintaining competitive advantages. This requires that an organization identify its knowledge gaps and surpluses which are then exploited to boost

organizational performance by executing a knowledge management strategy.

A good Knowledge Strategy that properly integrates into the entire business should address and describe the following (Scheepers *et al.*, 2004):

- The three or four strategic objectives or focus areas that the business seeks to achieve. In other words, what changes in the way people work in the business should be implemented?
- How the current environment supports these objectives and identification of the gaps. In other words, how will the changes be supported?
- The knowledge behaviors company employees need to embrace to facilitate this change. In other words, how are people going to change how they do things at work?

According to Shawn (as cited in Callahan, 2002), a knowledge management strategy needs to account for the following:

- Intended Actions that result in anticipated business outcomes;
- Emergent actions resulting from the many complex activities taking place within an organization.

Shawn further proposed a three-part framework for developing a Knowledge Strategy in which the components work in parallel. The reported research has adopted Callahan's framework describing the three areas (components) that need to be focused on to develop Knowledge Strategy in an organization.

#### **D. Knowledge framework**

The knowledge framework is the medium through which we can understand how organizations envisage their knowledge and knowledge management within the context of their businesses. Callahan (2002) stated that such a framework should address and include two major components: basic principles that differentiate between the terms knowledge, information, and data; and foundation concepts that define the idea of a knowledge environment, describe features of knowledge processes, and explain how incremental enhancement can improve knowledge environments.

A knowledge framework is a versatile tool that can serve various purposes in an organization. These include how to locate and acquire certain process knowledge types. For instance, the framework is expected to explain how the organization can obtain the desired information that describes the process output quality as a component of the process information knowledge derived from internal and/or external clients. Such a framework navigates and minimizes the acquisition efforts. The process knowledge framework is also beneficial in locating alternative sources of information in case the acquired data is inadequate. Moreover, such a framework helps reveal the less conspicuous connections by discovering sources that may contain knowledge in access of what is required. For

instance, an activity performer may present useful information about a more efficient process logic (Hrastnik *et al.*, 2007).

#### **E. Knowledge Environment**

Previous studies on knowledge management focused on how the environment interacted with creative thinking and knowledge generation and the significance of this interaction for management practices. However, the studies were solely focused on investigating either supportive or impeding dimensions. As a result, they failed to take into account the ongoing managing processes that promote the emergence and maintenance of a conducive environment. Ford and Angermeier (2004) and Hemlin (2006) described Creative Knowledge Environments (CKEs) as contexts, surroundings, and environments that positively affect human beings who are engaged in creative work either individually or collectively to produce new knowledge or innovations within a single or a group of interconnected organizations. Callahan (2002) explained an organization's commitment to gaining favorable business outcomes is affected by the knowledge environment that promotes knowledge creation and sharing of knowledge. However, elements including people, roles, management, corporate or individual culture, and technology facilitate the effectiveness of the environment.

#### **F. Knowledge Initiatives**

According to Finfgeld (2003), knowledge initiatives (KIs) are "any deliberate interventions intended to enhance the distinctive capability of the organization through a systematic approach of explicating, sharing and leveraging knowledge." Generally, the motivation to utilize KM initiatives stems from the foreseen benefits such as cost minimization, greater productivity, better employee motivation, customer satisfaction, and improved viability that could adapt to the interest of the organization that implements those initiatives (McAdam & Reid, 2000). Initiatives can cater to a particular business requirement or a general infrastructure to fulfill multiple business requirements. Knowledge initiatives inform the framework and the environment and, as a result, help them develop appropriately (Callahan, 2002).

### **III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Governmental organizations are among the institutions that have the biggest impact on the environment. Yet, they are often slow to implement change to adapt themselves to the changing environment to achieve excellence. Several critical characteristics including innovation, creativity, and higher performance are critical to the success of an organization. Yet, the fundamental question that confronts us is how organizations, especially in third world countries, achieve success without resorting to knowledge as a keystone in their endeavor. The problem arising from here is the sheer fact that administrators themselves have to create and promote an environment conducive to prevailing knowledge and promoting competitive advantages by

efficiently and effectively utilizing whatever resources they have at their disposal. It is expected that the change will lead to improved satisfaction, better responsiveness, and greater loyalty to individuals positively affecting job performance. Accordingly, this study undertook to answer the questions pertinent to the research problem as follows.

- What contributions can administrative leaders make to Knowledge Strategy?
- Does Knowledge Strategy lead to improved job performance?
- How do Knowledge Strategy and job performance correlate?
- Are differences in job performance in selected organizations caused by the impact of Knowledge Strategy?

#### IV. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The reported study aimed to assess the relationship and effect of crafting Knowledge Strategy on improving job performance in the governmental directorates in Amadiya District which constituted the sample of the study. After a discussion of the origin of this concept in the literature review and an overview of the definitions, terms, and classifications, an integrated view of the rationale of the study, the researcher attempted to undertake the following:

- Presenting a (theoretical) framework for Knowledge Strategy with a description of the mechanism to crafting Knowledge Strategy.
- Presenting a theoretical framework for improving job performance.
- Measuring the level of Knowledge Strategy in the selected organizations and determining whether the environment was conducive to creating knowledge.
- Measuring job performance in the selected organizations.

#### V. HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

H1: There is a significant relationship between Crafting Knowledge Strategy and improving job performance in Amadiya District governmental directorates.

H2: There is a significant effect of Crafting Knowledge Strategy on improving job performance in Amadiya District governmental directorates.

#### VI. METHOD

To discuss and address Knowledge Strategy and job performance issues in the governmental directorates in Amadiya District, both empirical studies and theoretical facts were applied. Empirical and theoretical approaches are essential to identify the main gaps in Knowledge

Strategy in those organizations and to measure how they relate to and affect their job performance. The theoretical framework of the study was informed by a vast body of research comprising literature reviews, papers, brochures, and web-based theories.

##### A. Research Design and Participants

The study used a quantitative research design. A total of 94 respondents (managerial leaders) from 31 government directorates participated in the study.

##### B. Data Collection Procedure

A five-point Likert Scale questionnaire was developed ranging from 1 to 5 where (1) represented strong disagreement and (5) strong agreement. The questionnaire was validated and designed based on previous research in the field of KS and JP (Callahan, 2002; Charekh, 2010; Hamad, 2018; Hee et al., 2019). SPSS-26 was used to analyze the data obtained from the government sector and calculate the statistical models of regression analysis, correlation, and frequency distribution.

#### VII. RESULTS

##### A. Analyzing Demographic Data

Table 1 blocks the participants' profiles and features according to work experience, gender, education, and present and previous work experience. As the table demonstrates the proportion of male to female respondents was 90.4% to 9.6% in favor of the former. This outstanding gender difference is a norm commonly observed in many third-world countries including Iraq due to their generally male-dominated culture. Referring to Table 1, looking at the age group, it is easy to recognize that most managers (57.4%) who participated in the study fell into the 31-40 age group which demonstrated the rather young composition of the leadership in the directorates. In contrast, less than a fifth of those surveyed (19.2%) were between 41 and 50 years old. Those aged 50 and above made up only 6.4% of the managers. The figures for education were as follows: bachelor's degree, 51.1%; master's degree, 10.6%; diploma, 30.8%; Ph.D., 3.2%. In total, almost 90% of all managers had completed a university degree program which was an impressive record for the district. In the sample consisting of 94 leaders from 31 organizations, 66% had 11 or more years of work experience, and 19.1% had been 6 to 10 in employment. Even though most leaders had on average 8 to 9 years of experience, a sizeable proportion of those surveyed (39.4%) had worked in their current place of work for less than 3 years. The high proportion of newly employed leaders in the directorates could negatively impact crafting Knowledge Strategy as it correlates to the extent of an individual's work experience at his or her current place of employment.

**Table1. Demographic Profile of Respondents**

	F	%		F	%		F	%
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Level of Education</b>			<b>Work experience</b>		
Male	85	90.4	PhD	3	3.2	5 and less	14	14.9
Female	9	9.6	Master	10	10.6	6-10	18	19.1
<b>Age</b>			High Diploma	4	4.3	11 and more	62	66
30 and less	16	17.0	Bachelor	48	51.1	<b>Current position work experience</b>		
31-40	54	57.4	Technical Diploma or less	29	30.8	3 and less	37	39.4
41-50	18	19.2				4-7	29	30.8
51-and more	6	6.4				8 and more	28	29.8

**B. Descriptive Research Variables**

Descriptive statistics measurements including Percentage, Standard Deviation, Mean, Frequency, and Median was used to analyze the two main research variables. Table 2 presents a breakdown of figures for the

variables. As can be seen, the Mean, Median, Std. The deviation was secured at 3.935, 4.047, .6604 respectively. The same statistical measurements for the dependent variable JP were calculated at 3.836, 3.958, .6492 in the order of appearance.

**Table 2. Means, Frequency, Standard Deviations for KS and JP**

	N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
Independent (KS)	94	3.935	4.047	.6604
Dependent (JP)	94	3.836	3.958	.6492

Table 3 presents the statistical analysis for KS main components, i.e. knowledge framework (KF), knowledge environment (KE), and knowledge initiatives (KI). As shown in the table, most of those surveyed ranked KF the number one component of Knowledge Strategy and accordingly assigned a high level of importance to the parameter as represented by the letter H. The Relative Importance Index (RII) was also secured at 0.810 with a mean of 4.051 and a standard deviation of .7103. KI, on the

other hand, ranked second in terms of the RII (0.780) with the importance level designated at H-M. The figures for mean and std. The deviation was 3.899 and .7262 respectively. The survey revealed that KE had the lowest RII (0.771) although the respondents assigned an H-M importance level to this component causing it to rank third after KI. The mean for KE was secured at 3.854 and Std. Deviation stood at 0.8113.

**Table 3. Means, Frequency, Standard Deviations for KS components**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	RII	Importance level	Ranking by category
KF	94	4.051	.7103	0.810	H	1
KI	94	3.899	.7262	0.780	H-M	2
KE	94	3.854	.8113	0.771	H-M	3

## VIII. TESTING RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

**H1:** *There is a significant relationship between Crafting Knowledge Strategy and improving job performance in the governmental directorates in Amadiya District.*

The Pearson correlations were computed to examine the significance and direction of relations between KS and JP (see Table 4).

**Table 4. Correlation coefficient between KM and JP**

		KS	JP
KS	Pearson Correlation	1	
JP	Pearson Correlation	0.535**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). N=94

Table 4 explains the statistically significant Pearson correlations between KS and JP. As shown in the table, the 0.535\*\* correlation was significant at the 0.001 level (two-tailed). Accordingly, H1 was confirmed.

**H2:** *There is a significant effect of Crafting Knowledge Strategy on improving job performance in governmental directorates in Amadiya District.* Linear regression was employed to test this hypothesis. The result demonstrated in Table 5 show that Knowledge Strategy significantly impacted job performance. The R2 (0.287) and the T value (6.081) were significant at (.001) lower than the acceptance level (0.05).  $\beta_0$  and  $\beta_1$  were (1.765), and (0.526). Based on the result, H2 was confirmed.

**Table 5. Impact of KS on JP**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.765	.345		5.112	.001
	KS	.526	.087	.535	6.081	.001

Dependent Variable: JP P\* < 0.05 N=94 D.F = (1,92) R2 = (0.287)

## IX. CONCLUSION

The importance of knowledge as a strategic weapon in organizations has been presented and discussed. Besides, effective knowledge management as a strategy and its crafting has been presented and debated as a vital component for organizations committed to improving job performance. This study attempted to develop a conceptual framework for strategic knowledge that explains how it can be crafted. Previous literature in this field was explored to describe how SK relates to and impacts job performance in governmental organizations. What distinguished this research from other similar studies was the nature of the environment which constituted the focus of the research, i.e. governmental organizations in developing countries like Iraq. The research hoped that the framework presented in the study would be used to contribute to the country's management practices, eventually establishing a basis for achieving the well-fare of society by improving services in various government organizations. It was demonstrated that the basic goals of improving the quality of services could not be achieved without utilizing an appropriate level of knowledge that would bring about better job performance in those organizations.

Through careful consideration and analysis of the orientations of the administrative leaders, it was discovered that most of the basic components for the formulation of

strategic knowledge were present to different extents, where KF was at the forefront followed by KI and KE. But the main question that motivated this study was whether the availability of these components was adequately translated into improved and effective job performance. Data analysis revealed that the relationships and impacts were at acceptable degrees and the environment was appropriate for formulating knowledge. Yet, government support remained the key to success. Moreover, demographic data proved that there was a substantial disparity between male and female populations of managers with a ratio of 9 to 1 in favor of the former. This remarkable gender difference may appear normal for a developing country such as Iraq due to its culture, it is certainly a concern that needs to be addressed if women are to take prominent leadership positions.

In conclusion, the reported study managed to provide empirical evidence depicting the relationship between knowledge management and job performance. The study also made a well-founded contribution to local government leaders in Iraq. It is hoped that future studies will focus their attention on other factors that could further orient government organizations on the importance of adopting sound knowledge strategies that can help improve job performance in their local government organizations.

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