

The Relationship Between Knowledge Management and Competitiveness: The Case of Iraqi Organizations

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to identify the most important arguments that drive organizations to apply knowledge management processes to achieve a competitive advantage, detection the impact of the application of knowledge management in achieving the competitive advantage of a group of Iraqi organizations, and determine statistically significant differences in the level of competitive advantage for a group of organizations due to demographic variables (job title, years of experience). The study was a descriptive cross-sectional design; data was collected in the different organizations in Iraq/Erbil from 1 May 2021 to 1 July 2021. The researchers used an online program to distribute 450 questionnaires. The study's sample size was 400 individuals since 400 questionnaires were received and completed correctly, and 50 questionnaires were missing. The authors were unable to conduct field visits to organizations to acquire information and personally interview people due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The findings of the study indicated that knowledge management affects the achievement of competitive advantage, there was a statistically significant effect of applying knowledge management processes in achieving competitive advantage, the organizations are more competitive, more sustainable and effective when they set goals that help spread knowledge in the organization.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Organizations, Competitiveness, Iraq.

Bilgi Yönetimi ve Rekabetçilik Arasındaki İlişki: Irak Örgütleri Örneği

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, organizasyonları rekabet avantajı elde etmek için bilgi yönetimi süreçlerini uygulamaya iten en önemli argümanları belirlemektir, bir grup Iraklı kuruluş için rekabet avantajı elde etmede bilgi yönetimi uygulamasının etkisi, ve demografik değişkenler (iş unvanı, yılların tecrübesi) nedeniyle bir grup organizasyonun rekabet avantajı düzeyinde istatistiksel olarak önemli farklılıkların belirlenmesi. Çalışma, kesitsel tanımlayıcı bir tasarımdır. Veriler 1 Mayıs 2021'den 1 Temmuz 2021'e kadar Irak/Erbil'deki farklı kuruluşlarda toplanmıştır. Araştırmacılar, 450 anketi dağıtmak için internet üzerinden bir program kullandılar. 400 anket alınıp doğru bir şekilde doldurulduğu ve 50 anketin kaybolduğu için çalışma örneklem büyüklüğü 400 kişiydi. Yazarlar, COVID-19 salgını nedeniyle bilgi almak ve insanlarla röportaj yapmak için kuruluşlara saha ziyaretleri gerçekleştiremedi. Çalışmanın sonuçları, bilgi yönetiminin rekabet avantajı elde edilmesini etkilediğini göstermiştir, rekabet avantajı elde etmede bilgi yönetimi süreçlerini uygulamanın istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir etkisi gösterdi, ve Kuruluşlar, bilgiyi kuruluşta yaymaya yardımcı olan hedefler belirlediklerinde daha rekabetçi, daha sürdürülebilir ve etkilidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bilgi Yönetimi, Organizasyonlar, Rekabet Gücü, Irak.

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Introduction

Increasingly, businesses are recognizing the fact that the material component of a product or service's economic value is steadily diminishing, with the remaining portion being accounted for by intellectual capital, marketing strength and branding, innovative elements, and human resources. Additionally, they recognize that in order to remain competitive, they must develop a strong knowledge base that encompasses both contemporary and advanced knowledge relevant to their business fields and exploit it effectively (Cooke & Leydesdorff, 2006: 10). Land and money are now secondary in a knowledge-based economy, with knowledge serving as the primary source of competitiveness and innovation (Cranfield & Taylor, 2008: 98). Organizations are under pressure to be more productive and business-like as the external environment gets increasingly challenging. Business management approaches are used by organizations to implement change. Organizations are increasingly regarded as being in the knowledge industry, and they are subjected to market forces in the same manner that other businesses (Kidwell, Vander Linde, & Johnson, 2000: 30). The role of knowledge is critical to business growth and long-term stability (Aujirapongpan, Vadhanasindhu, Chandrachai, & Cooparat, 2010: 193). Thus, it is reasonable to believe that knowledge management could benefit organizations (bin Suhaimie, Bakar, & Alias, 2005: 51).

Organizational excellence, which is frequently referred to as Business Excellence, can be defined as a collection of practices such as leadership, process management, and resource optimization that adhere to social responsibility in order to ensure the best products and services that result in customer satisfaction (Martín - Castilla & Rodríguez - Ruiz, 2008: 153). Importance of knowledge management on the basis of total quality management and business processes for organizational excellence interventions Numerous studies have identified re-engineering as a core competency of organizational development practices (Akdere, 2009: 357). Over the last decade, interest in combining quality techniques and knowledge management has grown thanks to Business Excellence Models (Singh, 2008: 13). Essentially, it is considered that Organizational Excellence in the information economy necessitates speed, complexity management, a sense of history within the appropriate context, effective judgment, and organizational flexibility, which cannot occur by chance (Dimitriades, 2005: 321). Through a persistent emphasis on values, organizational excellence techniques have been demonstrated to contribute to organizational flexibility and cope with outcome improvements (Bou-Llugar,

Escrig-Tena, Roca-Puig, & Beltrán-Martín, 2009: 14). Knowledge management contributes to effective operations and establishes competitive advantages over competitors. Knowledge gained during various formal and informal procedures can be incorporated into operations when demonstrated knowledge from field operations is re-used (Pyo, Uysal, & Chang, 2002: 401). The advent of powerful forces that are reshaping the economic and management systems and necessitating a major shift in organizational tactics. Globalization, a high degree of complexity, new technology, greater competition, and changes in economic and political systems are the most important of these influences. These factors are reflected in organizations in all shapes and sizes, as well as the necessity for them to be quick to adapt, respond, and take initiative in order to retain their viability. This was accompanied by the birth of a slew of new concepts aimed at improving administrative performance, the most notable of which was knowledge management.

1. Literature Review

1.1. Knowledge Management

The mobility of information inside an organization, as well as the processes of knowledge accumulation, assimilation, creation, and distribution, are all covered under knowledge management. It ensures secure knowledge access and retrieval, among other things. Knowledge management supports in the development of capabilities around knowledge resources as well as the identification of essential organizational competencies. Its main goal is to make it easier for employees to learn, absorb, recreate, and share knowledge (Kabir, 2017: 212). People, processes, and technology interact with the organization's strategy and culture, as well as organizational learning, systems, and technologies. If this relationship is effective and long-lasting, the organization can benefit from the potential benefits of knowledge management (Simaškienė & Dromantaitė-Stancikienė, 2014: 566). The strain of competition in the globe is a major factor in maintaining successful knowledge management in enterprises. Organizations see knowledge as a crucial economic resource in today's work environment. For increasing levels of innovation and performance (Izci & Hamad Ameen, 2021: 192).

Knowledge management is the process of producing and utilizing an organization's tangible and intangible knowledge resources. Information and experience-based knowledge about consumers, suppliers, goods, rivals, and so on are examples of tangible assets. Competencies and knowledge resources of employees within the organization are examples of

intangible assets. In a nutshell, knowledge management refers to the collection of organizational methods aimed at building a smart organization that can capitalize on both tangible and intangible assets, learn from past successes and failures, and develops new knowledge (Menkhoff, Chay, & Loh, 2004: 96). Knowledge, with capital, labor, land, and environment, becomes a significant factor of production in the world's new economics. Knowledge will almost certainly become more important for development; knowledge may impact the gap between prosperity and poverty. For lack of a better term, knowledge management is a wide topic that has been integrated into various disciplines, but it hasn't been fully defined because of its novelty, which causes some confusion regarding whether there's a debate about the concept. Because it encompasses a wide range of scientific disciplines such as anthropology, strategy, information science, computer science, economics, human resource management, psychology, philosophy, sociology, management science, and compound synthesis, there is some misunderstanding about knowledge management (Simaškienė & Dromantaitė-Stancikienė, 2014: 568). Knowledge management aims to make knowledge the primary source of improving an organization's ability to compete in the modern economy (Dimitriadis, 2005: 318).

It has been shown that improved decision-making and organization performance can be attained through knowledge management, a term that can be used to describe both the process of acquiring, organizing and transferring knowledge, as well as the final result (Hlupic, Pouloudi, & Rzevski, 2002). Thus, knowledge management involves assisting organizations in creating, expanding, and exploiting knowledge in order to achieve their business goals (Riege & Lindsay, 2006). The practice of knowledge management encompasses processes and practices that facilitate the creation, acquisition, capturing, sharing, and utilizing of knowledge at all levels of an organization in order to facilitate organizational development (Loermans, 2002). Knowledge management strategies improve the quality of decision-making and problem-solving for practitioners, which can help businesses maintain their competitiveness in the modern economy (Salleh & Ahmad, 2005). Knowledge management is a set of processes that go from gathering information to putting it to use in order to improve an organization's performance in comparison to previous periods or to competitors. However, he feels that knowledge management practices are dependent on the process of putting information to use, and that this definition indicates that knowledge management is restricted to information.

1.1.1. Acquisition and Development of Knowledge

Global industrial rivalry requires businesses to innovate in order to manufacture and provide products and services in the shortest feasible time frame and at the lowest possible cost. They are utilizing information technology to create a process-based, knowledge-driven product development environment with the goal of ensuring fast development cycles for new goods. The term "knowledge" refers to the process of gathering, storing, and employing knowledge for the purpose of design and manufacturing (Xing, Huang, & Shi, 2003: 221). If the prediction model was developed in conjunction with the generation of human-interpretable knowledge, it would be more believable following confirmation. Thus, it is preferable to build an interpretable predictor that concurrently considers predictive performance and knowledge acquisition (Huang, Gromiha, Hwang, & Ho, 2006: 409). Multiple elements contribute to an enterprise's ability to perceive and value new knowledge, including prior experience, internal competencies, and forms of outside collaboration (Grekova, Calantone, Bremmers, Trienekens, & Omta, 2016: 8). Prior experience with comparable programs and management systems enables the reduction of overall transaction costs associated with the knowledge of new knowledge and its integration into current systems (Darnall & Edwards Jr, 2006: 316). Internal factors can improve an organization's knowledge acquisition and absorption processes (Jansen, Van Den Bosch, & Volberda, 2005: 1001). However, the majority of these qualities have been overlooked when it comes to knowledge acquisition and absorption. A shared vision entails the ability of the owner-manager and the rest of the workforce to effectively communicate and incorporate sustainability-related goals (Aragón-Correa, Hurtado-Torres, Sharma, & García-Morales, 2008: 98). Employee qualification is also critical, particularly in areas of sustainability management, since individuals may quickly identify and value knowledge assets, resulting in the ability to gain this knowledge effectively (Caloghirou, Kastelli, & Tsakanikas, 2004: 37; Tilleman, 2012: 428).

1.1.2. Organizing Knowledge

Business processes, defined as sequences of business activities, accomplish a predefined business objective and generate an output that adds value to the client. On the one hand, corporate processes are becoming increasingly reliant on required knowledge; on the other hand, they are expected to be adaptive to changing external conditions (Richter-von Hagen, Ratz, & Povalej, 2005: 148). A potentially worthwhile endeavor is to determine whether holistic and

correlative thinking can be integrated into knowledge organization using advanced technology and whether it can function in continually changing information settings. Additionally, research must consider categories and relationships in their cultural settings, as they are socially produced and have genuine social purposes and implications (Lee, 2010: 6). In an organization, the knowledge development cycle consists of four phases: knowledge generation, knowledge adoption, knowledge distribution, and knowledge evaluation and revision. A business must pick distinct ways for organizing knowledge at various stages of the knowledge development cycle. During the knowledge production phase, a company should provide many possibilities for undertaking planned or spontaneous experiments to learn from ambiguity, instability, unpredictability, and chaos. A firm should acquire and establish certain knowledge objects, modules, procedures, and processes throughout the knowledge adoption phase. A firm should ensure that each member has an equitable opportunity to access, retrieve, and share knowledge within the firm during the knowledge distribution phase. During the knowledge evaluation and revision process, a business should encourage a variety of perspectives in order to provide ample opportunities for learning (Bhatt, 2000: 25).

1.1.3. Transfer and Use of Knowledge

By reproducing a routine, the corporation that owns it can observe it in its entirety. Due to the fact that the template is a working example, potential recipients can watch it in operation. Because leveraging knowledge assets requires recreating productive knowledge from the source location, using the initial effective routine as a template may facilitate knowledge transfer inside the organization. Despite the potential importance of templates for getting greater economic rents, no direct empirical test of the core assertion that privileged access to templates improves knowledge transfer effectiveness has been conducted (Jensen & Szulanski, 2007: 1716). The utilization of influential individuals or a group of experts has been found to be a pretty effective strategy for increasing the diffusion and implementation of research in practice. Numerous writers conducted systematic evaluations to assess the efficacy of initiatives aimed at increasing the uptake of research into practice (Grimshaw et al., 2001: 41). At times, the system relies heavily on passive distribution of knowledge, such as journal publication, and lays the onus of behavioral change squarely on individuals. The literature, however, indicates that this logic is incorrect and that frequently, the knowledge provided by academics does not reach its intended audience via these channels. Numerous bridges have been proposed to address the reality or

perception of this chasm. The most appropriate bridge is determined by a variety of factors, including whether the change required in practice can be accomplished through individually focused methods such as one-on-one discussions with an opinion leader or champion, or whether it requires a more structural intervention involving formally trained individuals (Thompson, Estabrooks, & Degner, 2006: 698). Numerous impediments to knowledge transfer include the following: knowledge can be utilized to take action and impose zones of influence; passing knowledge to colleagues may enable some of these possibilities. Those who lack this knowledge are bereft of their ability to act or influence. Transferring knowledge may be perceived as additional work, owing to the time required for documentation, communication, and so forth. Certain employees do not anticipate reciprocal benefits from knowledge transfer because they do not believe in them or have not personally experienced them. Particularly younger and less experienced individuals may suffer some confusion since they are unable to determine whether their work outcomes represent useful knowledge for others. They cannot, for example, determine whether their knowledge is too broad or too well-known, or whether some outcomes are too specialized to a particular circumstance and so useless to peers in other situations (Disterer, 2001: 2).

1.2. Competitiveness

Competitiveness encompasses components of economic concepts that preoccupy policymakers and economists as they attempt to comprehend concerns of prosperity and wealth development on a bigger scale (Porter, 2011). Organizations frequently pursue a business strategy with the objective of improving their competitive position. When an organization learns how to effectively use its resources by developing capabilities and core competencies, it achieves this goal and gains a competitive edge (Grant & Grant, 2008). In competitive public sectors, management that fosters personal competition may be the distinction between attracting and maintaining valued workers (Izci, et al., 2021: 4) Competitiveness is a particularly complicated concept; it is not a straightforward situation or condition that can be quantified using a single or multiple parameters. The ability of a corporation to respond swiftly to market developments and preserve its market position is directly related to its competitiveness (Simaškienė & Dromantaitė-Stancikienė, 2014: 568). Competitiveness is determined by four factors that affect an organization's performance. This can be seen in the organization, its

competitors, its consumers, and its surroundings (Coleman, 2004: 632). Cost, quality, delivery speed, and brand image are all characteristics that can be compared to competitors to ascertain an organization's competitive position (Menon, Chowdhury, & Lukas, 2002: 324).

The fundamental competencies, resources, client base, legislation, technical advancements, position, strategic plan, and culture of an organization determine its competitiveness (Dwyer & Kim, 2003: 407). Like most other entities, organizations exist in a continuous cycle of competition. If an organization successfully implements a strategy that propels it to a new level of competitiveness, competitors will try to gain these benefits as well, and some will succeed, forcing the original organization to rethink and strengthen its position (Kabir, 2017: 63). By using the best processes and practices, the business aims to make the best use of all of its resources in order to ensure the welfare of its consumers (sustainable development). Competitiveness is a modern term in management and economics that refers to the foundations, principles, and standards that are used to assess a country's competitiveness and the level of efficiency, excellence, and development achieved by its citizens in various political, economic, social, and cultural fields. The institutions that measure competitiveness use different criteria.

Competitive advantage is defined as the ability of the enterprise to apply production processes that are not applied by the competing enterprises, and then these enterprises cannot obtain the necessary resources to imitate those processes (Al-Ali et al., 2006: 40).

- Price: In this study we mean the value that the customer pays in return for providing the required service, and the extent to which this is an appropriate price with service compared to services provided by competitors
- Providing new services: the services that are able to keep pace with new developments and the renewed requirements of customers, the process of providing new services in light of competition should be one of the most important priorities of the Iraqi group of organizations.
- Quality: Quality is achieved by providing high-quality services that meet the desires of the beneficiaries and achieve their satisfaction, given that quality is one of the most important entrances to achieving the competitive advantage of the organization and the prestigious reputation among other organizations.

- Speed in providing the service: It is the period that starts from signing the contract with the customer until this service is delivered to him, and each service has its own stages and a certain period of delivery to the customer.
- Distinguished efficiency: represented in high productivity at the lowest costs through the optimal use of inputs to produce specific outputs, and the higher the productive efficiency of the organization compared to others, the more the organization can achieve its competitive advantages.

1.3. Knowledge Management and Competitiveness

In an uncertain environment, many businesses should struggle to stay competitive. While physical assets and financial capital are still important, the effective channeling of successful growth and longevity in the business, where human capital encourages businesses to learn more, is the new definition of competitiveness (Phusavat, Anussornnitisarn, Patthanaturak, Kekale, & Helo, 2010: 29). Organizations that wish to be considered competitive must be able to make the transition from tangible to value-based metrics, which requires organizational performance capabilities that are based on the organization's internal resources (Druker, 2012: 76). The ability of an organization to fully utilize its intellectual assets in strategic and tactical decision making is a critical component of its competitiveness (Yeh, Lai, & Ho, 2006: 807). According to research, the increase in organizational competitiveness can be attributed to the accumulation of values that originate from organizational developments when utilized and sustained, as well as bringing in practices and processes that support knowledge creation and sharing. These in turn foster learning and innovation (Lin, 2007: 326).

Knowledge management is increasingly being viewed as a management goal aimed at improving the organization's knowledge, which leads to better decision-making, increased innovation, and improved performance, all of which led to long-term competitive results (Rhodes, Hung, Lok, Lien, & Wu, 2008: 97). By expanding the organization's capacity to gather and store knowledge, management enables it to produce new knowledge as well as help facilitate knowledge transfer, which boosts government agency competitiveness through ongoing process changes (Bogner & Bansal, 2007: 186). The implementation of knowledge management and the use of knowledge sharing can have a significant impact on an organization's competitiveness (Zheng, Yang, & McLean, 2010: 769). Knowledge management methods can be investigated

using a more balanced approach to evaluating organizational non-financial performance indicators that can be used to establish significant organizational competencies that are difficult to copy by competitors (Rhodes et al., 2008: 96).

A strategy's success is also determined by how well resources are managed. Physical resources and conceptual resources, such as information and knowledge, are two types of resources. Managers must decide the optimal distribution of available resources within their organizations. In order to acquire a set of competencies that will boost competitiveness, knowledge management must be able to combine innovative activities, updated information technology, and knowledge development. In reality, if this mix is properly handled, the organization may develop competitive strategies that incorporate creative products and new commodities to outsmart its rivals (Carneiro, 2000: 91). The concept of knowledge management quickly evolved into a practical enthusiasm, more appropriate to the fast-paced changes in the business world, and its importance grew as competitiveness and sustainability became increasingly dependent on intellectual assets, as well as updating and investing in knowledge assets, with what results from continuous creativity, whether at the product or service level. Not all information reflects knowledge, and not all knowledge is important, which is why management should collect beneficial knowledge and apply it in the institution's activities and operations, which is also one of the components of the feature's long-term growth.

1.4. Competitiveness and Iraqi Organizations

Competitiveness development policies are a set of procedures, measures, and frameworks used by a higher authority concerned with competitiveness or macroeconomic management to enable a country to deal with its competitive reality and to identify the best and most appropriate measures to develop the country's competitiveness and achieve steady growth rates in individual income.

As evidenced by the results of measuring the competitiveness of the Iraqi economy, the significant deterioration in the level of governance and the effectiveness of institutions, competitiveness development policies aim to improve performance in the field of governance and institutional effectiveness. Accountability, transparency, and elevating the level of the administrative apparatus in terms of appointment and promotion based on efficiency, as well as trying to remove the administrative apparatus from the circle of stakeholders and those with

influence. Improving governance requires enforcing the law and striving to ensure that regulations and legislation do not clash (Reda, 2012:1). The competitiveness policy aims to create a competitive environment in the local and global markets by enhancing the level of competitiveness and achieving efficiency and fair entry and exit from the markets. Competitiveness has an effective role in developing performance and strengthening financial centers, especially in banking performance in Iraq (AlNuaimi & Kadawi, 2018: 156). In view of the significant competitive challenges posed by the new economic climate, Iraqi institutions are pursuing a strategic goal of owning and creating a competitive advantage. And technologically, in order to create value for consumers and meet their demands, Iraqi firms operate in a highly competitive environment, with each organization attempting to be the greatest activist for client satisfaction while also attempting to remain competitive in the labor market.

2. Research problem

The problem of the study lies in determining the relationship of knowledge management in achieving the competitive advantage of a group of Iraqi organizations, especially because the organizations in Iraq possess many elements of competition. Therefore, the problem that this study addresses can be formulated in the following main question:

What is the role of knowledge management in achieving the competitive advantage of a group of Iraqi organizations?

Several sub-questions emerge from the main question, as follows:

1. What are the main arguments that drive organizations to apply knowledge management processes to achieve competitive advantage?
2. What is the extent of application of knowledge management processes to achieve competitive advantage in Iraqi organizations?
3. Is there a relationship and impact of the application of knowledge management in achieving the competitive advantage of the Iraqi group of organizations?
4. Are there statistically significant differences in the level of competitive advantage for a group of organizations due to demographic variables (job title, years of experience)?

3. The Importance of the Study

The importance of the research is embodied in determining the reality of the application of knowledge management processes, which enables the management of organizations to reconsider the planning of their policies, design their programs, take appropriate decisions in this regard and analyze their practices for the essential knowledge management processes (knowledge acquisition, knowledge organization, transfer and application of knowledge). Thus develop a proposed scenario to manage knowledge in the light of the knowledge environment and the opinions of experts to unify and coordinate the efforts of the material and human elements in a way that is compatible with the hegemony of the era of knowledge and the expansion of its sectors, in a manner that achieves competitive advantage.

4. Hypothesis

H1. There is no relationship and a statistically significant effect at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) to apply the dimensions of knowledge management in achieving the competitive advantage of a group of Iraqi organizations.

H2. There are no statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of the effect of applying knowledge management processes in achieving competitive advantage due to demographic variables (job title, years of experience)

5. Methods

The study was a descriptive cross-sectional design, conducted in different organizations as the health sector, commercial sector, and academic sectors in Erbil city in Iraq (Consent of Ethics from Erbil Polytechnic University 26.09.2021/8075). The author distributed 450 questionnaires, and gave the participants one week to respond, 400 questionnaires were received and completed properly, and 50 questionnaires were missing, so the study's sample size was 400 participants. Data were collected via online due to the COVID-19 outbreak in Iraq. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 24 software to enter data analyze and interpret the results. The inclusion criteria included all participants who desired to participate, but exclusion criteria were included for participants who did not respond to the questionnaire format. The study's limitation was the COVID-19 pandemic, so the author was unable to make the field visits to gather information. the effects of the Covid-19 disaster, which continues to put people in danger

every day, It made people stay away from each other (Yilmaz & Hamad Ameen, 2021: 79). Ethical considerations and permission from the organizations' management were taken to conduct the study. The questionnaire was used to collect data consisting of four parts, the first part related to socio-demographic characteristics comprised of 6 questions, the second part associated with main arguments for putting knowledge management initiatives in organizations consisted of 10 items, the third part related to measure of knowledge management in organization (A. Acquisition and development of knowledge, B. Organizing Knowledge, and C. Transfer and use of knowledge) consisted of 14 questions, and the fourth part related measure of Organizational Competitiveness consisted 10 questions addressed to the participants through the questionnaire formats.

6. Results and findings

Internal consistency and stability of the vertebrae:

To measure the stability of the research tool according to the dimensions of the axes of knowledge management and competitive advantage, the (Cronbach Alpha) test was used, and the degree of internal consistency was (70.6%), which is a good percentage for this study.

Table 1 Cronbach's alpha coefficient to measure the stability of the questionnaire axes

Axes	Items	Axis stability
Main arguments for putting knowledge management	10	0.722
Acquisition and development of knowledge	5	0.741
Organizing knowledge	4	0.726
Transfer and use of knowledge	5	0.701
The measure of organizational competitiveness	10	0.730
The overall stability of the questionnaire	34	0.706

Table 1 shows the general stability coefficient of the questionnaire axes was 0.706 for the total items. The stability of the axes ranges between 0.701 as a minimum and 0.741 as a maximum, and this indicates that the questionnaire has an acceptable degree of reliability that can be relied upon in the study.

Table 2 Socio-demographic characteristics of study sample

Items	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	224	56
	Female	176	44
	Total	400	100.0
Age	18-25	71	17.8
	26-40	134	33.5
	41-50	128	32.0
	51 above	67	16.8
	Total	400	100.0
Educational level	Secondary	10	2.5
	Diploma	29	7.3
	Bachelor	251	62.8
	Master	87	21.8
	PhD	23	5.8
	Total	400	100.0
Years of experiences	Less than 5 years	23	5.8
	6-10 years	130	32.5
	More than 10 years	247	61.8
	Total	400	100.0
Job Title	Manger	41	10.3
	Division Head	157	39.3
	Employee	202	50.5
	Total	400	100.0

Table 2 revealed that the majority of them were males reached (224) participants, which is (56%). This indicated that most of the individuals who occupy the administrative levels are males. It was also noted from the table that most of the sample members were within the two categories (40-26, 50-41) years old, as the number of sample members was within these two categories are (262) individuals, which is (65.5%), and we infer from this percentage that the organizations focus on young people with experience. Most of the sample members hold a university degree, with a percentage of (62.8%). This indicates that organizations are interested in recruiting individuals with university degrees. As for the years of experience, it indicated that most of the participants are in the category (more than 10 years), which was about (61.8%), which indicates the organizations focused on highly experienced people. Most of the sample members were from the category of employees (workers), which is about (50.5%).

What are the main arguments that drive organizations to apply knowledge management processes to achieve competitive advantage?

To answer this question, the authors calculated the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the responses of the members of a population examine the key argument phrases that drive organizations to apply knowledge management processes. As shown in Table No. (3).

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics About Main Arguments for Putting Knowledge Management Initiatives in Organizations

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Response level
For operating cost reduction	2.6150	.58105	high
Commitment from the top management	2.5450	.65118	high
To increase the efficiency of the organization	2.4025	.79503	high
To make crucial knowledge more accessible	2.5425	.63970	high
Recognize knowledge assets	2.6100	.62360	high
To improve the flow of knowledge	2.6000	.64501	high
For competitive advantage improving	2.5250	.68230	high
To improve the sharing of knowledge	2.5350	.64016	high
To improve employees' productivity	2.6175	.63813	high
To protect against loss of knowledge due to workers' departures	2.5125	.70433	high

(Algahtani, 2019: 203)

Table 3 shows that all the arguments that push organizations to apply knowledge management processes came to a high degree. This indicates that all the arguments received are among the infrastructure requirements that organizations require to achieve a competitive advantage. The three main arguments that got the highest score were respectively (To improve employees' productivity, for operating cost reduction, Recognize knowledge assets). These results support that organizations are more effective when they set goals that help disseminate knowledge to improve their productivity, identify appropriate means to reduce costs that should be known, seek knowledge assets from multiple sources, and develop existing knowledge.

To find out the extent to which knowledge management processes are applied to achieve competitive advantage in Iraqi organizations, the researcher calculated the arithmetic averages, and the standard deviations of the responses of the study community members to the expressions representing the knowledge management axis.

Table 4 Arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the dimensions of knowledge management
 1. Acquisition and development of knowledge

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Response level
Our organization has clearly documented knowledge management strategies.	2.7300	.52706	high
Our organization supports good and creative ideas to develop competitive advantages.	2.5725	.63699	high
Our organization encourages workers to develop their knowledge and skills.	2.5525	.68074	high
Our organization is working on developing its knowledge assets.	2.6500	.62728	high
Our organization sets an appropriate budget to support projects and knowledge management.	2.5850	.66247	high
The total average of the acquisition and development of knowledge	2.618	0.626908	high

(Algahtani, 2019: 202) (Buheji, 2013:231)

2. Organizing Knowledge

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Response level
Our organization provides an effective information technology system.	2.6925	.58206	high
It organizes and classifies the available data and information and then stores it so that it is easy to collect and then tabulate.	2.5900	.61469	high
Our organization has implemented knowledge management policies to improve the delivery of its services.	2.5025	.63719	high
Our organization has a list of all the knowledge assets in inventory.	2.5300	.65969	high
The general average of the Organizing Knowledge	2.57875	0.623408	high

(Algahtani, 2019: 202) (Buheji, 2013)

3. Transfer and use of knowledge

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Response level
The organization uses strategic alliances to gain knowledge.	2.4000	.69729	high
The organization regularly allocates resources to identifying and acquiring outside knowledge.	2.7125	.54827	high
The organization provides formal training related to knowledge management practices.	2.5725	.63699	high
The organization encourages the transfer of knowledge from experienced employees to new or less experienced employees.	2.5650	.66850	high
Formation of work teams of experts for scientific consultancy	2.6375	.63015	high

(Algahtani, 2019: 202) (Buheji, 2013)

The average of the dimensions of knowledge management

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Response level
The total average of the acquisition and development of knowledge	2.618	0.626908	high
The total average of the organizing knowledge	2.57875	0.623408	high
The total average of the transfer and use of knowledge	2.5775	0.63624	high
Total	2.591417	0.628852	high

Table 4 indicated that the dimensions of knowledge management are prevalent in the group of organizations according to the following order:

First: The general rate of knowledge acquisition and development with an arithmetic mean (2.618).

Second: The general average of structured knowledge with an arithmetic mean (2.5787).

Third: The general rate of transfer and use of knowledge with an arithmetic mean (2.5775).

As for the arithmetic average of the responses of the study sample members on the knowledge management axis for all its dimensions and expression in general, it was (2.591417),

meaning that the study sample members see that the level of application of knowledge management processes in Iraqi organizations relatively high, but to varying degrees according to its component dimensions, according to the elements of each of these dimensions.

Test hypotheses of the study

H1. There is no relationship and a statistically significant effect at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) to apply the dimensions of knowledge management in achieving the competitive advantage of a group of Iraqi organizations.

Table 5 The results of the multiple regression test for the impact of the application of knowledge management processes in achieving competitive advantage

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	R Square	R
Regression	1558.463	3	519.488	160.499	.000(a)		
Residual	1281.735	396	3.237			.549	.741
Total	2840.198	399					

Table 5 revealed that the calculated f-value amounted to (160.499) at the significance level of (0.05), and this requires rejecting the null hypothesis and accepting the alternative hypothesis which states that there is an effect of applying knowledge management processes in achieving competitive advantage. This result confirms the significance level (f) of (0.000) as it is less than (0.05) the approved significance level.

As for the explanatory power of the model, it reached (R Square = 0.549), which is an acceptable explanatory power, which means that the dimensions of the independent variable (knowledge management) are explained by (54.9%) of the dependent variable (competitive advantage).

As for the degree of correlation between knowledge management and competitive advantage, it reached (R = 0.741), that is, there is a direct and strong relationship between the two variables.

To find out the impact of the application of each dimension of knowledge management in achieving the competitive advantage of a group of organizations, we extract the influence force factor for the dimensions of knowledge management as shown in Table No (6).

Table 6 Results of the influence power factor for the dimensions of knowledge management in achieving competitive advantage

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Acquisition and development of knowledge	.308	.079	.174	3.887	.000
Organizing Knowledge	1.431	.077	.640	18.505	.000
Transfer and use of knowledge	.209	.083	.111	2.504	.001

Table 6 shows that there is a statistically significant effect of the combined knowledge management processes in achieving an advantage the competitiveness of the Iraqi organizations' group at the level of significance (0.00), depending on the high value of (T) with the level of significance (0.000), which is a statistical function at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), and this is reinforced by the high values of (Beta) for these operations, The results also showed that (Organizing Knowledge) ranked first in achieving competitive advantage, followed by the process of (Acquisition and development of knowledge), then (Transfer and use of knowledge), which ranked last in achieving competitive advantage in a group of Iraqi organizations.

H2. There are no statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of the effect of applying knowledge management processes in achieving competitive advantage due to demographic variables (job title, years of experience).

Table 7 The results of the analysis of variance table (ANOVA Table) on the presence of statistically significant differences for the impact of the application of knowledge management processes in achieving competitive advantage due to the variables (job title, years of experience).

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Years of experiences	Between Groups	7.919	2	3.960	.402
	Within Groups	3910.858	397	9.851	
	Total	3918.777	399		
Job Title	Between Groups	85.606	2	42.803	.012
	Within Groups	3833.171	397	9.655	
	Total	3918.777	399		

Table 7 indicated that there are statistically significant differences for the impact of the application of knowledge management processes in achieving competitive advantage due to the variable (years of experience), where the value of (f) calculated for the variable reached (0.402) at the significance level (0.669). The result requires acceptance of the null hypothesis which states that there are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the effect of applying knowledge management processes in achieving competitive advantage. However, showed that there are statistically significant differences for the impact of the application of knowledge management processes in achieving competitive advantage due to the

variable (job title), due to the higher value of (f) calculated than its tabular value, where the value of (f) calculated for the variable (4.433) at the significance level (0.012).

7. Discussion

The study's findings revealed that knowledge management has an impact on achieving competitive advantage; there was a statistically significant effect of implementing knowledge management processes in achieving competitive advantage; and organizations are more competitive, sustainable, and effective when they set goals to help spread knowledge throughout the organization. The findings showed that there are no statistically significant differences for the impact of knowledge management processes in achieving competitive advantage when the variable (years of experience) is controlled for, and that there are statistically significant differences for the impact of knowledge management processes in achieving competitive advantage when the variable (years of experience) is controlled for (job title). That is, knowledge management systems are more effective when superiors and subordinates compete in the application and transfer of knowledge throughout the organization's full organizational structure. This finding was agreed with a study done by (Alawneh, Abuali, & Almarabeh, 2009: 107) who found that knowledge is the most potent and pervasive resource available to any organization. Because of this, knowledge management initiatives in organizations are both effective and essential. They have a positive impact on the success rate of the projects that organizations undertake. In the findings of their study (Allard & Holsapple, 2002: 23) mentioned that e-business competitiveness can be improved by finding new methods for leveraging knowledge.

(Sulisworo, 2012: 119) discovered in their study that the knowledge management framework is the process of integrating organizational knowledge into organizational culture, information technology infrastructure, and the organization's repository of individual and collective experiences, learning, insights, and values. Knowledge integration across knowledge management platforms, tools, and processes must allow reflection and dialogue in order to enable personal and corporate learning and innovation. Organizational innovation will be aided by effective knowledge management. As a result, organizational managerial innovation serves as a barometer for effective knowledge management. From the findings of (Simaškienė & Dromantaitė-Stancikienė, 2014: 573) they mentioned that an organizational strategic process aimed at developing strategic skills, enabling organizations to deal with environmental changes,

and successfully assisting in achieving competitive advantage. Knowledge is a valuable and constantly used strategic resource for the organization; it provides a competitive advantage and helps achieve business objectives; it is a strategic process of the organization that seeks to develop strategic capabilities, enable organizations to deal with environmental disruptions, and effectively help achieve competitive advantage. Knowledge management is a multidisciplinary area that can be studied using a range of complimentary methodologies. Knowledge management has benefits from a range of sectors and viewpoints, making it a viable instrument for improving an organization's competitiveness and debunking the notion that knowledge management resources are useless. In order to develop a functional knowledge management system, all parts of knowledge management must be organized harmoniously, depending on the context of the organization.

Results from (Ahmad & Schroeder, 2011: 20) study who mentioned that competitiveness is significantly impacted by knowledge management via technology strategy. The knowledge collected can then be used to make strategic technology acquisition decisions. Regulatory knowledge improves an organization's ability to deal with environmental changes, allowing it to set itself apart from competitors and gain a market advantage. the finding of the present study was agreed with the study done by (Taib, Yatin, Ahmad, & Mansor, 2008: 31) who explained that knowledge has become a critical component of providing strategic direction to any organization in today's chaotic and uncertain business environment. Organizations can employ two major tactics or practices to improve insight and decrease the difficulties of strategic decision-making: knowledge management and competitive intelligence. Results from (Andreeva & Kianto, 2012: 626). study who mentioned that information and communication technologies practices and human resource management are mutually related and have a critical impact on an organization's financial performance and overall competitiveness. (Carneiro, 2000: 97) noticed that innovation and competitiveness are influenced by knowledge management. the significance of knowledge workers to strategic strengthening is demonstrated by its considerations Managers must bear in mind the implications for their career.

these results support findings by (Egbu, Hari, & Renukappa, 2005: 19) who illustrated that effective knowledge management methods can assist organizations in general for long-term competitiveness. (Holsapple & Singh, 2003: 247) discovered in their study that individually and collectively, knowledge management efforts can help organizations become more competitive.

From the findings of (Apulu & Latham, 2009: 21) they discovered that particular aspects of lack of awareness and the need to build a comprehensive framework for knowledge management must be taken into account for businesses to be effective in implementing knowledge management. Certain criteria control and promote the proper application of knowledge management. To get the highest possible benefits for the organizations, knowledge must be recognized, recorded, stored, planned, disseminated, developed, and used efficiently. Any IT infrastructure put in place to support knowledge management must be flexible enough to adapt to the needs of the organization. Organizations must remain competitive in order to survive.

The current study's findings were agreed with the study done by (Mohamad & Zin, 2019: 545) who explained that organizational competitiveness has benefited directly and significantly from knowledge management. However, knowledge management's impact on an organization's competitiveness was determined by the amount of innovation it generated. This implies that in order for knowledge management to be successful, the organization's technical and managerial innovations must be encouraged. (Liu, Chen, & Tsai, 2004: 976) mentioned that knowledge has evolved into a critical component of industrial resources and a requirement for success in the workplace. Knowledge management and intensive learning can help you achieve competitiveness and the advantages that come with it. In enterprises, the link between knowledge management capability and competitiveness is undeniable. The ability to manage knowledge had an impact on competitiveness). From the findings of (Numprasertchai & Poovarawan, 2006: 421) studies they discovered that knowledge management system based on information and communication technology improves competitiveness significantly. Different components of organizations are supported by different knowledge management strategies and projects. A knowledge management system based on information and communication technology has been established and demonstrated to be feasible.

8. Conclusion

The findings of the study noted that the level of application of knowledge management processes in the group of organizations was high, according to the answers of the study sample members. This high level of application of knowledge management processes in the group of organizations may be due to the continuous flow of information and knowledge between the various administrative levels. There was a statistically significant effect of applying knowledge

management processes in achieving competitive advantage. As the explanatory power of the model has reached $R^2 = 0.549$, which is an acceptable explanatory power, meaning that knowledge management affects the achievement of competitive advantage in the group of organizations by 54.9%. That is, organizations are more competitive, more sustainable and more effective when they set goals that help spread knowledge in the organization.

The results proved that there are statistically significant differences in the impact of the application of knowledge management processes in achieving competitive advantage it is attributed to the variable “Years of experience”, and it also proved that there are statistically significant differences for the impact of the application of knowledge management processes in achieving competitive advantage due to the variable “Job title”. That is, knowledge management processes are more effective by increasing the spirit of competition between superiors and subordinates in the application and transfer of knowledge in the entire organizational structure of the organization.

9. Recommendation

Work on developing employees' abilities and skills, as well as assisting them in acquiring knowledge from internal and external sources. To succeed in establishing competitive advantage, businesses must collect, classify, and retain knowledge in an easily-usable format, as well as monitor and control its application and control. Organizations are more competitive when they work to produce new innovative ideas, conduct periodic knowledge reviews, and recognize employees for their innovative ideas.

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