

# The Relationship between Knowledge Management Practices and Team Learning at Higher Education Institutions in Pakistan

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**Abstract:** The primary aim of this study is to look at the relationship between university teachers' knowledge management practices and team learning. This study used a correlational research design and a quantitative method to investigate this association. The main hypothesis is that there is a significant relationship between university teachers' knowledge management practices and team learning. Additional hypotheses focus on different dimensions of knowledge management practices (acquisition, transfer, documentation, creation, and application) in association with team learning. The study's participants were all of Punjab's HEC-recognized university teachers from both the public and private sectors. The sample size for this study was 929 university teachers, who were chosen using a multi-stage random sampling technique. The respondents' data were collected using the Knowledge Management Practices Questionnaire (KMPQ) and Team Learning Questionnaire (TLQ), a Likert-type scale. On Cronbach Alpha, Knowledge Management Practices Questionnaire (KMPQ)'s reliability was found to be 0.881 and Team Learning Questionnaire (TLQ) was found to be 0.866, indicating that both are reliable. Inferential statistics techniques such as Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson  $r$ ) were used to find out the relationship between knowledge management practices and team learning among teachers of public and private sector universities in Punjab, Pakistan. It revealed from the study that there exists a significant moderately strong relationship between knowledge management practices and team learning at  $p \leq 0.01$ . The results also indicated that there exists a significant relationship between knowledge management practices (acquisition, documentation, transfer, creation, and application) and team learning of university teachers.

**Keywords:** *Knowledge management practices; Team learning; University teachers*

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## 1. Introduction

Knowledge's strategic importance as a source of competitive advantage has steadily risen over the previous two decades (Appelbaum & Gallagher, 2000; Kumar, 2006; Mazhar & Akhtar, 2016; Pemberton, 2008). This progress has been facilitated by the awareness that being able to learn quicker than competitors can be the only source of competitive advantage (De Geus, 1988). As a result, both researchers and

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practitioners have discovered that team learning and knowledge management have a profound impact on organizational success and sustainability in today's competitive business world. Cavaleri (2004) claims that both concepts can reach high levels of efficacy, which supports this conclusion. Although it appears that both knowledge management and team learning are essential to organizational success, little research has been done to date about how these concepts work to deliver that performance in the developing world's higher education context. Cavaleri (2004) does also argues that the result of combining these two concepts into a single framework is largely unknown. The current study focuses on the essence of the relationship between the two knowledge-based concepts in a higher educational setting in a developing country like Pakistan, rather than on how knowledge management practices and team learning affect organizational success.

Although the actual nature of the link between the two ideas is yet uncertain, the integration of knowledge management practices and team learning has been taken for granted in the associated literature. Furthermore, recent studies of the two concepts have mostly concentrated on commercial companies, rather than areas such as higher education. Few studies have concentrated on knowledge management in the sense of a developing country's higher education sector (Kumar & Idris, 2006; Mazhar & Akhtar, 2018). It has been determined that an empirical study aimed at determining the relationship between knowledge management practices and team learning in the context of a higher education setting is needed.

In the current information era, knowledge and learning have become critical determinants of an organization's production, development, and long-term viability. This phenomenon occurs in all organizations, regardless of whether they are in the corporate sector or other fields, such as education. In today's world, an organization's success is largely determined by the availability and utilization of its intangible assets, especially knowledge (Mazhar & Hussain, 2021). According to Drucker (1994), knowledge is the only meaningful economic resource in a post-capitalist society, and an enterprise can only thrive in the current competitive environment by effectively using knowledge production, inventory, and diffusion.

The significance of continually discovering new areas of knowledge, as well as utilizing current information, is stressed by the employment sector in today's knowledge-based economy. Organizations are supposed to gain a competitive advantage through such knowledge exploration and utilization (Drucker, 1994; Teece, 2000). While the need to manage knowledge has existed for decades, it was only in the 1990s that the idea of knowledge management began to gain traction among academics and practitioners in the fields of organization and information technology (Huysman & Wulf, 2006). The growing acceptance of expertise as a source of competitive advantage (Appelbaum & Gallagher, 2000), the increased use of information technology in work processes, and the degree of work complexity may all contribute to the increased interest.

Even though the present research on team learning and learning organizations implies the lack of a real learning organization (Calvert, Mobley, & Marshal, 1994; Daniels 1994), interest in the issue has exploded in the second half of the twentieth century. Many scholars, including Griego, Geroy, and Wright (2000) and Tobin (1998), have argued that Team learning is critical to business success. To put it another way, Team learning appears to be a key success driver for today's companies, which work in a constantly evolving world and recognize that long-term competitive advantage is based on continuous learning. Despite these trends, some scholars and practitioners have given the concepts of knowledge management and Team learning equal but parallel attention.

As a result, the relationship between the two concepts has yet to be fully articulated, prompting Cavaleri (2004) to wonder if it is more than a coincidence that team learning and knowledge management serve the same goal of promoting successful action. The apparent uncertainty surrounding the relationship between knowledge management and team learning is highlighted by such a query. Such ambiguities are exacerbated in higher education, where the number of knowledge management and team learning studies has been restricted, even though the sector's institutions are knowledge-based. Oliver, Handzic, and Toorn (2003) pointed out that one field of omission in knowledge-intensive studies is within higher education study, where there is a cyclical nature of activities involving teaching, research, and consulting professional work, to emphasize the need for research in knowledge management and team learning in the realm of higher education. Although higher education institutions are fundamentally in the knowledge market, little research has been done about how they obtain and handle knowledge, as well as how they learn. To stay competitive and sustainable, higher education institutions must better manage their knowledge assets and learn more quickly.

Higher education institutions must use knowledge management practices in designing, exchanging, implementing, and optimizing their knowledge-based tools to remain competitive in an ever-increasing market for educational services. Higher education organizations can only learn how to apply effective interventions to improve organization-based knowledge and learning if they have a better understanding of how knowledge management and Team learning interact (Mulford, 1998).

Knowledge management practices and team learning are critical to higher education institutions' productivity and long-term viability. However, the way they interact in such a setting, especially in a developing country like Pakistan, needs to be understood. The current study articulates the position that knowledge management practices and team learning can be brought together, to achieve an understanding of their relationship and application.

### **Objective of the Study**

The objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between knowledge management practices and team learning of university teachers in public and private sector Universities in Punjab, Pakistan. In this regard, the following hypotheses were proposed:

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated to achieve the above-mentioned objective.

*H<sub>1</sub>*: There is a significant relationship between knowledge management practices and team learning of university teachers.

*H<sub>2</sub>*: There is a significant relationship between knowledge transfer and team learning of university teachers.

*H<sub>3</sub>*: There is a significant relationship between knowledge documentation and team learning of university teachers.

*H<sub>4</sub>*: There is a significant relationship between knowledge creation and team learning of university teachers.

*H<sub>5</sub>*: There is a significant relationship between knowledge acquisition and team learning of university teachers.

*H<sub>6</sub>*: There is a significant relationship between knowledge application and team learning of university teachers.

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## 2. Research Methodology

The primary aim of this study is to look at the relationship between university teachers' knowledge management practices and team learning. This study used a correlational research design to investigate this association. The association between knowledge management practices and team learning among teachers at public and private universities in Punjab, Pakistan was investigated using a quantitative technique. The research hypotheses were developed after conducting a literature review. The main hypothesis is that there is a significant relationship between university teachers' knowledge management practices and team learning. Additional hypotheses focus on different dimensions of knowledge management practices (acquisition, transfer, documentation, creation, and application) in association with team learning. The study's participants were all of Punjab's HEC-recognized university teachers from both the public and private sectors. The sample size for this study was 929 university teachers, who were chosen using a multi-stage random sampling technique. Nine hundred and twenty-nine (929) questionnaires were distributed to them, with 734 completed questionnaires returned. The response rate was 79 percent, which indicates a strong response rate, indicating that the study was successful. The respondents' data were collected using the Knowledge Management Practices Questionnaire (KMPQ) and Team Learning Questionnaire (TLQ) a Likert-type scale. On Cronbach Alfa, Knowledge Management Practices Questionnaire (KMPQ)'s reliability was found to be 0.881 and Team Learning Questionnaire (TLQ) was found to be 0.866, indicating that both are reliable. Before data collection, the sample's reliability was confirmed through pilot testing. Each university was personally visited by the researcher, who conducted the questionnaire. The inferential statistical technique was used to analyze the data. Inferential statistics techniques such as Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson  $r$ ) were used to find out the relationship between knowledge management practices and team learning among teachers of public and private sector universities in Punjab.

## 3. Results

**Table 1**

*There is a significant relationship between knowledge management practices and team learning of university teachers*

Variable	Variable	$r$	$p$ -value
Knowledge Management Practices	Team Learning	.448(**)	.000

The value of the correlation between knowledge management practices and team learning is  $r = .448$  and the  $p$ -value is .000. It shows that a significant moderately strong relationship exists between knowledge management practices and team learning at  $p \leq 0.05$ . Therefore, the first research hypothesis is accepted.

**Table 2**

*There is a significant relationship between knowledge transfer and team learning of university teachers*

Variable	Variable	$r$	$p$ -value
Knowledge Transfer	Team Learning	.210(**)	.000

The value of the correlation between knowledge transfer and team learning is  $r = .210$  and the  $p$ -value is .000. It shows that a significant slight relationship exists between knowledge transfer and team learning at  $p \leq 0.05$ . Thus, the second research hypothesis is also accepted.

**Table 3**

*There is a significant relationship between knowledge documentation and team learning of university teachers*

Variable	Variable	$r$	$p$ -value
Knowledge Documentation	Team Learning	.167(**)	.000

The value of the correlation between knowledge documentation and team learning is  $r = .167$  and the  $p$ -value is .000. It shows that a significant weak relationship exists between knowledge documentation and team learning at  $p \leq 0.05$ . As a result, the third research hypothesis is also accepted.

**Table 4**

*There is a significant relationship between knowledge creation and team learning of university teachers*

Variable	Variable	$r$	$p$ -value
Knowledge Creation	Team Learning	.217(**)	.000

The value of the correlation between knowledge creation and team learning is  $r = .217$  and the  $p$ -value is .000. It shows that a significant slight relationship exists between knowledge creation and team learning at  $p \leq 0.05$ . Thus, the fourth research hypothesis is also accepted.

**Table 5**

*There is a significant relationship between knowledge acquisition and team learning of university teachers*

Variable	Variable	$r$	$p$ -value
Knowledge Acquisition	Team Learning	.225(**)	.000

The value of the correlation between knowledge acquisition and team learning is  $r = .225$  and the  $p$ -value is .000. It shows that a significant slight relationship exists between knowledge acquisition and team learning at  $p \leq 0.05$ . As a result, the fifth research hypothesis is also accepted.

**Table 6**

*There is a significant relationship between knowledge application and team learning of university teachers*

Variable	Variable	$r$	$p$ -value
Knowledge Application	Team Learning	.138(**)	.000

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The value of the correlation between knowledge application and team learning is  $r = .138$  and the  $p$ -value is .000. It shows that a significant weak relationship exists between knowledge application and team learning at  $p \leq 0.05$ . As a result, the sixth research hypothesis is also accepted.

### 4. Discussion

The first hypothesis stated that there is a significant relationship between knowledge management practices and team learning of university teachers. The finding of the study shows that the value of the correlation between knowledge management practices and team learning is  $r = .448$  and the  $p$ -value is .000. It shows that a significant moderately strong relationship exists between knowledge management practices and team learning at  $p \leq 0.05$ . These findings backed up a study by Nickpour, Nehardani, and Keavanlou (2013) titled "The relationship between team learning and knowledge management," which found a significant link between the indicators of knowledge management and team learning at the Islamic Azad University of Sabzevar Branch. According to Firestone, Fani, Fard, and Yakhkeshi's (2015) research, there is a positive and significant association between knowledge management and team learning among middle and senior managers in Iranian public organizations.

The second hypothesis stated that there is a significant relationship between knowledge transfer and Team learning of university teachers. The value of the correlation between knowledge transfer and team learning is  $r = .210$  and the  $p$ -value is .000. It shows that a significant slight relationship exists between knowledge transfer and team learning at  $p \leq 0.05$ . The slight association revealed, on the other hand, is consistent with Yang's (2007) findings in his study of the effects of knowledge sharing and transfer on team learning and effectiveness. His studies revealed a slight link between knowledge sharing and team learning.

The third hypothesis stated that there is a significant relationship between knowledge documentation and Team learning of university teachers. The value of the correlation between knowledge documentation and team learning is  $r = .167$  and the  $p$ -value is .000. It shows that a significant weak relationship exists between knowledge documentation and team learning at  $p \leq 0.05$ . According to the research (Su et al., 2003), knowledge documentation has a significant impact on an organization's learning capabilities. The link between knowledge documentation and institutional learning appears to support the idea that as institutions document more knowledge, their learning improves. As a result, it's reasonable to conclude that knowledge documenting and team learning are linked. Institutional leadership is crucial for ensuring that tacit knowledge is externalized and embedded in organizational processes, according to Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) model's knowledge externalization phase.

The Fourth hypothesis stated that there is a significant relationship between knowledge creation and Team learning of university teachers. The value of the correlation between knowledge creation and team learning is  $r = .217$  and the  $p$ -value is .000. It shows that a significant slight relationship exists between knowledge creation and team learning at  $p \leq 0.05$ . This conclusion is in line with Nonaka's (1994) knowledge creation paradigm, which states that an organization cannot create knowledge on its own, but that individual knowledge serves as the foundation for organizational knowledge creation. Given that organizations create knowledge through their employees, such a relationship makes it reasonable. Team learning can be enhanced by a variety of activities such as training, research, and project participation. In essence, higher education institutions are in the business of creating knowledge (Rowley, 2000). According

to Fiol (1994), knowledge in groups and organizations is based on individual knowledge. As a result, any activity that aims to increase knowledge should result in better Team learning.

The Fifth hypothesis stated that there is a significant relationship between knowledge acquisition and team learning of university teachers. The value of the correlation between knowledge acquisition and team learning is  $r = .225$  and the  $p$ -value is .000. It shows that a significant slight relationship exists between knowledge acquisition and team learning at  $p \leq 0.05$ . This outcome is in line with King's (2008) knowledge cycle model, which states that knowledge acquisition leads to team learning.

The Sixth hypothesis stated that there is a significant relationship between knowledge application and Team learning of university teachers. The value of the correlation between knowledge application and team learning is  $r = .138$  and the  $p$ -value is .000. It shows that a significant weak relationship exists between knowledge application and team learning at  $p \leq 0.05$ . Sabherwal and Becerra-(2003) findings are consistent with the weak association of knowledge application and team learning that externalization, which is linked to knowledge application by a relatively large circle of organization learning, facilitated institutional learning in terms of team-level knowledge effectiveness.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

It is concluded from the study that there exists a significant moderately strong relationship between knowledge management practices and team learning at  $p \leq 0.01$ . The findings also revealed a positive association between university teachers' team learning and knowledge management practices (acquisition, documentation, transfer, creation, and application). The following recommendations are made in light of the findings. Higher education institutions should integrate knowledge management and team learning into their day-to-day operations to fulfill their role as learning organizations. Furthermore, higher education institutions should create and implement knowledge strategies to guide the implementation of knowledge-based activities.

Higher education institutions should establish purposeful methods that help to incorporate people management principles into overall knowledge management systems to synergize the benefits derived from knowledge management practices and team learning. The current study relied solely on academic personnel as a source of data for its results. Because higher education institutions employ additional non-teaching staff members who contribute to the organization's success both individually and collectively, future research in the same topic area should include such staff. The current study was conducted in the Punjab province. Similar studies in other provinces are suggested to back up the study's conclusions and evaluate how closely the results match the current findings.

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