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## Knowledge Management as a Catalyst for Institutional Performance (Empirical Study at Private Universities in the Pantura Region of West Java)

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**Abstract:** When it comes to enhancing the efficiency of educational institutions, knowledge management plays a crucial role. This study aims to analyse the role of knowledge management in improving the performance of Private Universities in the Pantura region of West Java. As a first step in the research process and creating a research model, this study employs a quantitative descriptive approach to describe the actual conditions using data gathered from questionnaires based on first-hand observation of research objects and interviews. During this phase, researchers gather information and preliminary data through observations. Subsequent study systematically defines the features or functions of a phenomenon within a certain population, emphasising what happens and how it can happen. In this method, 315 faculty members with at least two years of experience as permanent lecturers at private university foundations fill out a questionnaire based on the knowledge management model and higher education performance indicators. The purpose of this survey is to examine potential relationships between the variables. The direct influence of knowledge management on university performance was tested through data analysis utilising the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approach. According to the study's conclusions, university performance is positively affected by knowledge management. This conclusion reinforces the significance of enhancing knowledge management to boost university competitiveness. In order to create policies for the long-term development of knowledge management, university administrators might look to the research's practical consequences.

**Keyword:** University Performance, Knowledge Management, Pantura West Java, SEM, Private University

### INTRODUCTION

Education is an important element for growth, including the economic development of a country. Indonesia is a developing country with many human resources, but if the use of resources is not appropriate, Indonesia will lag even further behind. Likewise, research conducted in Pakistan states that Pakistan is full of resources, but the use of resources is not

appropriate, making it backwards. Suppose the right education standards can help Pakistan overcome economic problems. Therefore, Pakistan has failed to establish new universities in the last two decades (Ali, Q. et.al, 2024). There are several obstacles to effective knowledge management at private colleges in West Java's Pantura district, including a lack of funding, a culture that discourages the exchange of information, and subpar information systems.

Knowledge management in universities is not dissimilar from knowledge management in other settings. This is because universities, like other educational institutions, have multiple faculties that must work together to provide students with solid training in knowledge perception, knowledge collection, creation, sharing, diffusion, and retention (Nawaz et al., 2020).

Universities are affected by this condition, which affects their ability to improve the quality of their graduates, the productivity of their research, and their contributions to society. Even though the pandemic has altered the natural order of things, this does not absolve universities of their responsibility to innovate and enhance their performance to maintain a competitive edge and keep up with the fast pace of scientific and technological advancement. In these situations, the smart thing to do is to adapt. This means organisations should maximise knowledge management to offer a relevant work model and keep performance high (Wahyudi & Sunarsi, 2021). There is empirical evidence of the collective relationship and impact of knowledge management on organisational performance in higher education. Ultimately, it boosts organisational performance and gives policymakers and decision-makers in the higher education sector useful insights (Suparwadi et al., 2024).

Reliable and qualified human resources (HR) are essential for any organisation's operational activities. In this era of globalisation, organisations are encouraged to analyse and anticipate changes in the environment or business climate, and to respond efficiently, effectively, and precisely (Nisa, Astuti, and Prasetya 2018). One of the strategic components that contributes to better university performance. "Knowledge management" refers to an organised approach to gathering, organising, analysing, and using information to serve an organisation's objectives.

This study's significance lies in its realistic portrayal of how private universities in West Java's Pantura region have used knowledge management and how it has affected their overall performance. By understanding the factors that support and inhibit knowledge management, universities can formulate more effective strategies for optimising the potential of their knowledge.

The primary goal of this research is to find out what private universities in West Java's Pantura region are doing with knowledge management. The outcomes should help boost regional and national institution competitiveness and add to the body of knowledge management policies and practices in the academic setting.

By presenting various interpretations of knowledge, an organisation becomes more sensitive to environmental pressures to understand market realities and implement knowledge management to improve organisational performance (Ella Anastasya Sinambela and Didit Darmawan, 2021). In contrast to previous studies, which stated that Knowledge Management plays a role as one of the company's strategies to develop employees, the study showed that Knowledge Management had no significant effect on Employee Performance. This can be caused by several factors, including the fact that knowledge management has several obstacles in its implementation, related to each organisation's commitment (Nisa, Astuti, and Prasetya 2018).

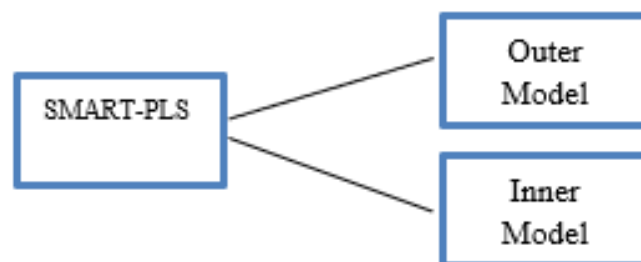
Knowledge management positively impacts academic quality, resource efficiency, and faculty collaboration in higher education. Hence, it is crucial to investigate its effects on the efficiency and effectiveness of private universities.

The overarching goal of this research is to illuminate the connection between knowledge management and university performance, with a focus on the Pantura Region of West Java. The study's authors also hope to offer strategic suggestions for how universities in this area can become more competitive.

## METHOD

This research is a quantitative research with a descriptive and analytical approach. Descriptive research systematically describes the characteristics or functions of a phenomenon from a certain population, focusing on what happens and how it can happen. In order to collect data suitable for statistical analysis and to gauge the strength of the correlation between these variables, a quantitative method was favoured. In order to get reliable information for answering research questions, a systematic approach is used to gather data. This research makes use of both primary and secondary sources for its data. The author gathers primary data from first-hand sources during interviews and survey results, which are obtained directly from the source. This data is the basis for the entire analysis process and is derived from questionnaires and other survey tools. For secondary data collected from pre-existing sources, in this case, secondary data obtained from PDDIKTI, which means secondary data comes indirectly from providing data to data collectors obtained through indirect intermediary media, as previously mentioned.

Mixed data collection techniques are used in this study through surveys conducted to collect initial information about this study's topic, distributing questionnaires to respondents, including conducting secondary data analysis, and conducting unstructured interviews, which are the most flexible type of interview. There is no predetermined list of questions, starting with several main topics and then exploring the topic more freely and openly. This study uses the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) statistical tool to evaluate hypotheses about the relationship between knowledge management (the exogenous variable) and university performance (the endogenous variable). At its heart, a study's research design rests on the relationships between its variables, which provide light on how one variable affects or explains the interplay between other factors. SEM is a multivariate data analysis technique combining path analysis with factor analysis (Hair et al., 1998). The research population is a Private University in the Pantura Region of West Java, which includes Cirebon City, Cirebon Regency, Indramayu Regency, Kuningan Regency, and Majalengka Regency, with the characteristics of a coastal area with Cirebonan culture (a blend of Sundanese-Javanese), an economy based on industry, ports, and trade.



**Figure 1. SEM-PLS Equation Model Stages**

The total population in this study was 1,770 lecturers who are a collection of all individuals or objects that have characteristics according to the focus of the study, based on the sample determination formula (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970), with a margin of error of 5%, a sample of 315 lecturers can be obtained which will be taken using a technique using probability sampling with a proportional sampling type cluster random sampling so that the distribution is proportional and the respondents are more representative. In addition to proportional and

cluster random sampling, each private university uses accidental sampling, which involves selecting respondents as samples based on coincidence and unintentionality. In this case, the researcher chose respondents because of their availability and presence when the study was conducted; anyone who quickly responded to the questionnaire distributed via Google Forms.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The study's findings suggest that private universities can benefit from knowledge management. Knowledge management in higher education institutions encompasses creating and storing information and sharing that information among faculty, students, and staff. Therefore, this study shows that methods to improve knowledge management in universities, such as increasing academic collaboration, can improve University performance. In addition to the discussion based on data processing results, the author also conducted a preliminary study by conducting unstructured interviews with 4 lecturers. The data can be summarised as follows:

### **Informant 1 Is A Lecturer Who Also Serves as the Secretary of The LPAM of A Private University**

According to Informant 1, the university's information system is inadequate, hampering the data collection process when needed, for example, during the institutional accreditation process. Also, several bad habits are difficult to eliminate, thus creating an unhealthy organisational culture that can affect the university's performance.

### **Informant 2 Is A Lecturer and Also Serves as Deputy Dean I Of the Faculty of Engineering, A Private University**

Informant 2 is a lecturer with a structural position, starting from being a study program secretary and head of study program, and currently serves as vice dean 1 in charge of academic affairs. For him, knowledge management is very important as a supporter of university performance, but it is still neglected that it impacts performance improvement. Moreover, according to him, the role of knowledge management is very vital, especially since the University is engaged in the world of Higher Education which is required to create science/knowledge compared to organisational capabilities such as with the allocation of funds that are still able to improve performance as long as management is managed properly. Organisational capabilities are not only in the financial scope, but there is also a leadership role as a policy/decision maker that impacts improving performance.

### **Informant 3 Is A Lecturer and Also the Chancellor of Kuningan University**

According to informant 3, especially as a leader of a Private University, namely serving as the rector of the implementation of Higher Education must have a competitive management strategy, namely where informant 3 sees the quality of human resources, especially Private Higher Education, is still very low, as seen from the many lecturers with educational backgrounds at the S2 (Masters) level, less than 30% have an educational background of S3 (Doctorate). The main problem in this case is related to financial health, especially salary, which is one of the factors to consider in the decision to continue studying to a higher level, including financial independence, which is still a challenge in terms of study costs and lecturer welfare.

Knowledge management is essential for improving performance. Among the most sluggish adopters of knowledge management practices, educational institutions are increasingly recommending that faculty members enhance their capacity to cater to both internal and external stakeholders. Universities' efforts to enhance their regional involvement show that effective knowledge management can also improve their ability to engage in regional economic development.

According to Informant 3, individuals' motivation is crucial for pursuing higher education. The success of the organisation's systems, such as the University's information system, also plays a role. However, the current academic system's functional policies are limited, so further development is needed. This system is similar to the functional position system in other professions. It is worth noting that fewer lecturers have achieved the highest academic position, which is reminiscent of a pyramid.

#### **Informant 4 Is A Lecturer and Also Serves as The Head of a Study Program at A Private University**

According to informant 4, knowledge management with an approach according to the knowledge-based view theory sees knowledge from what it is like in conveying it, so it is not useless. Every lecturer must be able to manage knowledge and not let knowledge stop in the sense of being stagnant, and from the student's side, they must have begun to be directed towards the output/output of the course itself. In terms of motivational problems, there are differences in age for motivation. For example, assuming that it is useless to improve performance if there is no increase in income, solutions that can be regulated with strict rules can make knowledge management more appropriate in influencing performance. In addition to several things, improving performance through collaboration involves involving students, such as in research and community service.

#### **CONCLUSION**

This research analyses how private universities in West Java's Pantura district have used knowledge management to boost their efficiency and effectiveness. According to the study's findings, knowledge management can boost university performance. This reflects that effective knowledge management can improve academic quality, research productivity, and the role of universities in community service. Some of the main challenges found in this study include limited resources for implementing a knowledge management system. Low culture of knowledge sharing between lecturers and academic staff. Suboptimal information systems that support knowledge management. Obstacles in increasing the academic level of lecturers, especially limited access to doctoral level. Financial aspects, including salaries and welfare of lecturers, are inhibiting factors in academic development.

The practical implications of these findings are the importance of designing strategic policies to improve the academic capabilities of universities, including by improving information systems, improving HR development policies, and encouraging a culture of knowledge sharing. Private universities in West Java's Pantura region can raise their profile and competitiveness by improving their knowledge management practices. To sum up, the results of this study show that information management does help universities perform better. Therefore, concrete steps are needed to improve academic infrastructure and information systems and support human resource development so that universities can be more competitive at the regional and national levels.

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- According to Ade Bastian, S.T., M.Kom (personal communication, March 16, 2025), the role of leadership can improve the performance of higher education institutions as decision makers.
- According to Prof. Dr. Dikdik Harjadi, M.Si (personal communication, March 18, 2025), the obstacle in higher education institutions is still the low quality of human resources.
- According to Dr. Yanneri Elfa Kiswara Rahmantya, M.M (personal communication, March 18, 2025), knowledge in higher education institutions is still stagnant.