

INFLUENCE OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT, KNOWLEDGE SHARING,
AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON PUBLIC UNIVERSITY
PERFORMANCE IN SAUDI ARABIA

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UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved husband, Bandar for his constant support, motivation, love and sacrifices.

To my Children Faris and Taleen, for all the happiness and joy they shared with me through my PhD Journey.

To my parents for their, prayers and encouragement all the time.

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ABSTRACT

The performance of the higher education sector has been explored by many researchers and is deemed saturated. However, strategic techniques to maximize the level of performance of the higher education sector continue to attract the attention of educationalists and researchers. Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of strategic management, knowledge sharing, and organizational culture on the performance of the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia. This study applies a resource-based view, knowledge-based view, and organisational culture theories to achieve the research objectives. The mediating effect of knowledge sharing and organizational culture are also tested in understanding the phenomena under investigation. This study used a cross-sectional method guided by a quantitative research approach. Data was collected from 261 senior, middle, and lower-level employees working in the different public higher education sectors in Saudi Arabia. The data was analyzed using Smart PLS to test the model and proposed hypotheses. Findings indicate that strategic management significantly impacts organizational culture and knowledge-sharing practices. Accordingly, the research found a negative impact of strategic management on the performance of the higher education sector. Additionally, organizational culture and knowledge sharing are positively associated with the performance of the higher education sector. Besides, strategic management directly impacts the performance of the higher education sector by mediating the effect of organizational culture and knowledge-sharing practices. The findings from the current study are envisaged to support The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia in understanding the influence of strategic management, and knowledge sharing, on the performance of the public higher education sector in Saudi Arabia.

ABSTRAK

Prestasi sektor pengajian tinggi telah diterokai oleh ramai penyelidik dan disifatkan tepu. Walau bagaimanapun, teknik strategik untuk memaksimumkan tahap prestasi sektor pengajian tinggi terus menarik perhatian pendidik dan penyelidik. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengaruh pengurusan strategik, perkongsian pengetahuan, dan budaya organisasi terhadap prestasi sektor pengajian tinggi di Arab Saudi. Kajian ini menggunakan pandangan berasaskan sumber, pandangan berasaskan pengetahuan, dan teori budaya organisasi untuk mencapai objektif kajian. Kesan pengantara perkongsian pengetahuan dan budaya organisasi juga diuji dalam memahami fenomena yang disiasat. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah keratan rentas berpandukan pendekatan kajian kuantitatif. Data dikumpul daripada 261 pekerja peringkat kanan, pertengahan dan bawah yang bekerja di sektor pendidikan tinggi awam yang berbeza di Arab Saudi. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan Smart PLS untuk menguji model dan hipotesis yang dicadangkan. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa pengurusan strategik memberi kesan ketara kepada budaya organisasi dan amalan perkongsian pengetahuan. Sehubungan itu, kajian mendapati kesan negatif pengurusan strategik terhadap prestasi sektor pengajian tinggi. Selain itu, budaya organisasi dan perkongsian pengetahuan berkait secara positif dengan prestasi sektor pendidikan tinggi. Selain itu, pengurusan strategik juga secara langsung memberi impak kepada prestasi sektor pengajian tinggi dengan kesan pengantaraan daripada peranan budaya organisasi dan amalan perkongsian pengetahuan. Penemuan daripada kajian semasa dijangka akan menyokong Kementerian Pendidikan di Arab Saudi dalam memahami pengaruh pengurusan strategik, dan perkongsian pengetahuan, terhadap prestasi sektor pendidikan tinggi awam di Arab Saudi.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVE	-	Average Variance Extracted
F ²	-	Effect Size
HTMT	-	Heterotrait-Monotrait
KS	-	Knowledge sharing
LV	-	Latent Variable
OC	-	Organization Culture
OP	-	Organizational Performance
PLS-SEM	-	Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Model
Q ²	-	Predictive Relevance
R ²	-	Coefficient of Determination
SM	-	Strategic management

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This chapter discusses the effects of strategic management, organization culture, and knowledge sharing, on the performance of the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia. The background of the study illustrates the contribution of the higher education sector to the economy and society. The problem statement highlights the issues and gaps that have been faced by the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia. Accordingly, the research questions and objectives were proposed for this study. The scope of research deliberates on the sample population, which focuses on the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia. The significance of the study presents the theoretical, methodological, and empirical perspectives contribution of the study. The last section provides the operational definitions of the variables in the context of the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

The concept of higher education was established in 1636 by Harvard College in the United States of America (Geiger, 2014). The aim of establishment of higher educational intuitions as to shape the culture, develop more career opportunities, provide the human capital to the country, and the unrelenting advancement of the knowledge (Jung, 2020; Sá and Serpa, 2020).

The higher education sector has always been considered an important sector in every country agenda. It is a superintendent and fountaining factor of the nation's social, environmental, and culture change (Richards, 2004; Niedlich et al., 2020; Jung, 2020; Sá and Serpa, 2020). However, it assumes as a dominant indicator for the development of the national economy (Xu et al., 2020) and a mechanism for the

realization of collective aspirations (Feitosa et al., 2021). Additionally, the public interest in higher education mainly highlighted whether the delivering institutions operated privately or publicly. The modern world of higher education is experiencing massive strategic management reforms (Said, 2010; Gupta and Gupta, 2020). Furthermore, Poole (2001) emphasised the various strategic choices that may be pursued in the effective monitoring and evaluation of educational activities. The appropriate strategic management changes can force a valuable mechanism for the significant performance of the higher educational institutions (Al Dhaen, 2021; Mourato et al., 2021). Sustained strategic management practices and policies have become prominent requirements to enhance the performance of the higher education sector (Brown, 2004).

Empirically, several scholars discussed the academic performance of the higher education sector (Sharif et al., 2018; Ayaz et al., 2018; Amber et al., 2020). Thus Ryder et al. (2018) pointed out that the, in this era of modern educational system the higher educational institutions are still facing critical problems such as; socio-economic environment in different contexts, culture, budget, and policies implication. Accordingly, there are several stakeholders involved in the higher education sectors, i.e., teaching, and non-teaching staff, students, funding agencies, government institutions, assessors, validators, accreditors, and auditors (Thakur, 2007; Abidin, 2015; Ferrero-Ferrero et al., 2018; Saraite-Sariene et al., 2019). Cumulatively, higher education performance is assessed based on the performance of teachers and students (Ferrero-Ferrero et al., 2018).

In this brief, The World Bank defines higher education as the tertiary level of education leading to an academic degree, also called post-secondary education (The World Bank, 2020). Higher education is often defined as academia featuring students studying the education system's tertiary level and the employees (i.e., professor, researchers, and senior-level management) (Tigelaar et al., 2004; Gilis et al., 2008; Heilporn et al., 2021). A recent report published by Fortune Business Insight stated that the worldwide higher education sector generated 77.66USD billion in revenues by 2020, which will hit 2367.51USD billion by 2027 (Fortune Business Insight, (2021). Referring to the above figures, the higher education sector contributes to one of the

enormous revenues in the country's economy. Additionally, a recent survey by United Nations reported that the global population is getting over, which is interpreted as the maximum ratio of the millennials group, highlighting that the majority are attending higher education institutions or planned to attain in the near future (United Nations, 2020). Mok and Jiang (2017) illustrated that the higher education sector is setting to touch substantial growth as never achieved in the past.

The rising significance and progress trends of the higher education sector to the global economy have got strong attention from the individuals and government agencies concerning the modern academic strategic management practices (Poole 2001; Brown, 2004; Gupta and Gupta, 2020). Not surprisingly, the conception of strategic management association with the higher education sector service has become an essential concentration for the senior managers and leaders of the institute (Athiyaman, 2000; Slade et al., 2000).

The higher education sector is primarily known for its social objectives; however, they also set their profit and financial goals that significantly contribute to the country's economy (Lilles and Rõigas, 2017). Subsequently, National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER's)(2014) reported that higher education institutions contribute to the country's community development and supply skilled human capital to several other sectors, ultimately strengthening the country's economic growth.

However, Paradeise et al. (2009) highlighted that developed countries have one of the world's leading higher education systems, particularly in Europe. According to a European Commission report, higher education institutions currently have over 1.5 academics, 19.5 million active students in different programs, and 500,000 academic researchers. Meanwhile, the higher education sector of Europe employs more than 1.4 million teaching and non-teaching staff (European Commission, 2020).

European countries have 42 of the top 100 universities and 104 universities in the top 200 rankings in the world. This is compared to 39 and 63 in the United States of America, with the second Higher Education sector after Europe. Nearly half of the

World's most prestigious 400 universities reside in Europe. For example. “The University of Oxford, The University of Cambridge, The Karolinska Institute, and Ludwig Maximilians Universitat Munchen,”. From there, annually, more than 4.7 million students graduate from higher education institutions. With the majority in business, information, social sciences, administration, law, and journalism (European Commission, 2020).

Accordingly, a recent report published by The World Bank highlighted, the higher education sector in developing countries is under a great burden of quality and leadership strain (2020). Due to the lack of funds and resources, they face ultimate problems achieving the educational targets (Oliver, 2004; Tadesse and Muluye, 2020; Sumner et al., 2020; Dou, 2021; Asongu et al., 2021; Baco and Elihami, 2021). However, approximately half of higher education students live in developing countries (OCHA, 2020). Another study by Altbach (2009) noted that higher education institutions in developing countries still lack funds, academic motivation and achievements, and a poorly rewarding system to the students and faculty members. Similarly, Diso and Njoku (2007) emphasized that the standard curriculum system of higher education is inferior and outdated to achieve and maintain the status in the modern world. The World Bank established four categories to analyse and facilitate the higher education institutions in developing countries (a) severe resource constraints, (b) internal efficiencies, (c) external efficiencies, and (d) social equity (Oliver, 2004).

Mainly, the higher education system in the GCC faces rapid altering challenges from the competitors. This era of globalization and internationalization is significantly influencing the educational market. It is therefore essential to know and measure the productivity of the higher education institutions because of its strength in promoting the status of the university in the international classification as well as an important for attraction for different stakeholders, especially students, professors, and researchers (Altbach, 2009; Sumner et al., 2020; Baco and Elihami, 2021; Dou, 2021).

Referring to the GCC countries, mainly the higher education sectors in Saudi Arabia are lacking to the modern strategic management practices (Aldabas, 2015) and

also lacking to implement the modern academic reforms (Alqarni, 2015). Recently, Adelowo and Surujlal, (2020) stated that the higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia still following the traditional academic reforms that negatively impact the overall academic performance of the higher education. Another study by Aljughaiman, (2016) identified that the higher education in Saudi Arabia not following and implementing the modern information and communication technological reforms. In results, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published a report and stated that only 24% of Saudi nationals go to attend higher education (college and universities); from them, only 74% successfully get employed in private and public organizations (OECD, 2019).

However, Al Sadaawi, (2010) and Alqarni, (2015) suggested that the higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia should implement the modern academic reforms for example; development of rigorous standards and better assessments, adoption of better data systems to provide students, teachers, and parents with information about student progress (Alabdulmenem, 2016), support for teachers and school leaders to become more effective (Elyas and Picard, 2013), a modern education syllabus, (Aldabas, 2015; Alqarni, 2015). As well as the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia also lacking the strategic leadership practices (Al-Ahmadi, 2011; Aljodea, 2012). Therefore, there is a need to identify the factors that could determine the performance of the higher education sector on the broader level.

Since the main activities of higher education institutes are to deliver trained teachers and scientific findings to the community (Jenkins et al., 2003; Davies et al., 2017; Crawford et al., 2020), which influence effective learning and development of society. Several stakeholders are directly associated with the educational institutions, i.e., students, teachers, society in general, and governments institutions (Beerrens and Udam, 2017). Within the higher education sector, scientific publications and modern course implementation significantly affect their performance (Labanauskis and Ginevičius, 2017; Ferrero-Ferrero et al., 2018).

A large and growing body of researchers argues that the higher education sector is an important sector that significantly contributes to the economic development and

delivery of human capital to the other several industries (Lilles and Rõigas, 2017; Niedlich et al., 2020; Jung, 2020; Sá and Serpa, 2020). However, strategic management plays an immediate role in predicting higher education performance by making dynamic decisions (Serdar Asan and Tanyaş, 2007; Mourato et al., 2021). Furthermore, understanding the factors that influence the performance of the higher education sector is better to understand the overall process of the education system. Similarly, prior research acknowledged that organizational culture, knowledge sharing, and strategic management practices are the key predictor of performance of the higher education sector (Tan et al., 2010; Al-Husseini and Elbeltagi, 2012; Ramírez-Hurtado et al., 2021; Bouton et al., 2021; Wild and Alvarez, 2021).

Concerning the critical role of strategic management, organizational culture, and knowledge sharing in predicting the performance of the higher education sector is referring to the empirical studies and focusing on concepts that are still underdeveloped. However, this study committed to identifying the determinants of the performance of higher educational institutions in Saudi Arabia. Relying on the resource-based view and theory of organizational culture and effectiveness Denison and Mishra, (1995), a conceptual framework developed, which includes strategic management with its two dimensions (i.e., strategy evaluation and strategy implementation), knowledge sharing with its two dimensions (i.e., attitude toward knowledge sharing and knowledge sharing behaviour), organizational culture with four dimensions (i.e., clan culture, bureaucratic culture, market culture, adhocracy culture) and performance of higher education sector with its three dimensions (i.e., customers, learning, and growth). Additionally, the performance of the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia and the reason to select specific constructs and justifications of the research context are explained in the following sections.

1.3 Saudi Arabia Context

To move along with the rising trends of the services sector is considered one of the best sectors for boosting the economic growth of any country. Similarly, in the academic field, it is referred to as a significant indicator for economic development,

which raises the country's literacy and delivers the best human capital to numerous industries (Ramírez-Hurtado et al., 2021; Bouton et al., 2021). However, to achieve the global academic challenges, the Ministry of Education Saudi Arabia aims to yield intellectuals system to conduct world-class achievements in research and academic curriculum to attain top rank in education by implementing influential factors. Since the formation of the higher education sector has been widely reviewed by several authors, they still consider that the still limited studies investigate the performance of the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia (Alkhazim, 2003; Alomair, 2015; Alghofaily, 2019; Alzahrani and Althaqafi, 2020).



Figure 1.1 Fiscal year budget for The Ministry of Education Saudi Arabia (Source : The Ministry of Education Saudi Arabia, 2021)

Besides that, educational development is an important sector of Saudi Arabia vision 2030 (Alghofaily, 2019). In that view, The Ministry of Education Saudi Arabia broadly supporting the higher education sector by allocating annual financial support. Hence, Figure 1.1 presenting the overall financial budget for The Ministry of Education allocated by Saudi Arabia.

Despite this situation with the generous support of the government, still, an educational sector, not all the resources were spent beneficially or created the desired results (Alomair, 2015). Recently higher educational institutions face several challenges because of many factors equivalent to economic processes and speedy

technological changes (Alkhazim, 2003). Therefore, to survive during this challenging environment, public higher education institutes got to improve their performance.

Thus, to facilitate the higher education sector to develop and promote academic research that plays a substantial role in achieving educational goals (Wild and Alvarez, 2020). Thus, the Government of Saudi Arabia planned to bring the modern academic transformation through the collaboration with the private and public higher educational institutions. The aims of such transformation to enhance academic performance of higher education through development of appropriate programs for teaching while admitting its role and particular concerns related to academic research and commercialization of the product. Further, the key transformation from Vision 2030 are listed below:

- a) “A comprehensive framework for the professional development of teachers and educational leaders”
- b) “Developing a national strategy to upgrade the teaching profession by raising the professional level of teachers, improving the profession’s ecosystem and raising the quality of services provided to teachers”
- c) “Development KPIs at Ministry level”
- d) “Establishment of a Transformation Office and an office of strategy management at Ministry level to implement the relevant sections of the NTP”
- e) “Shifting to digital education to support teacher and student progress”
- f) “Encouraging the private sector to invest in public education including at kindergarten level”
- g) “Attracting private investments to finance school’s construction”
- h) “Develop the Independent Schools model to reach 2000 public schools run by small establishments”
- i) “Establishment of the King Salman University for Technical and Vocational education”
- j) “Establish a practical framework to align university graduates with labour market needs”
- k) “Life-long Learning (Sustainability).”

- 1) “Taken together these measures represent a sea-change in the education sector in the Kingdom, and one which must be delivered at a critical period economically.”

In comparison with other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, the trend of formation of high performance of higher education sector is widely practised in some GCC countries such as United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar (Gulf Finance House, 2020). According to a survey conducted by Gulf Finance House in 2020, “Dubai International Academic City” registered 22 foreign universities. The “Education City Qatar” hosts eight foreign higher educational institutions, which project to enrol local and international students in different universities. However, the ratio of new students increased by (CAGR 5.5%) in 2018 (Gulf Financial House, 2020).

Allocations for Saudi universities is enormous. As in 2016, were estimated at 56.8 billion Saudi Riyals for 27 universities, while for 2015, it was 56.4 billion riyals. King Saud University received the most significant budget share, followed by King Abdulaziz University and Imam Mohammed bin Saud University (Ministry of Education, Aleqtsadyiah news).

The public higher education institutes ranking levels among the international universities are presented in Table 1.2. Few institutes had reached a higher than 200, including King Abdul-Aziz University (KAU) and King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals for the QS top universities ranking 2022. For Times higher education (THE) world university ranking, King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals came at 501-600. King Abdul-Aziz University is advanced position compared to others on the list.

Table 1.1 Saudi Arabia universities ranking

University	QS Rank (2022)	Times Higher Education (2021)
King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals	163	501-600
King Saud University	277	401-500
King Abdul-Aziz University (KAU)	109	201-250
King Khalid University	651-700	501-600
Umm Al-Qura University	447	1001+
King Faisal University	801-1000	1001+

Saudi Arabia's education reform has always been the focus of attention of researchers and academics. The main issues addressed are low productivity and efficiency that have not been corrected comparing to the offered funds. Other highlighted issues that despite strong government support, some universities are still in low university rankings, and the role of universities is limited to teaching rather than being a research centre, and productivity of research did not reach the desired goals (Alhudaithy, 2015; Ghabban et al., 2016; Ahmed and Albuarki, 2017). Also, the low performance of some institutes compared to other institutes in the country is due to the failure process of utilizing the available resources well (Alabdulmenem, 2016). As Alissa, (2009) discussed, that Saudi Arabia's educational performance has not reached the desired level, and a slight progress. Besides There is still room for further development and improvement, especially when the government is generous funds for the sector.

1.4 Problem Statement

Several studies identified that the worldwide higher education sector faces numerous challenges, i.e., demographical, social, technological, strategic management, cross-cultural, academic reforms, and economic (Teferra and Altbachl, 2004; Jaffer et al., 2007; Mohamedbhai, 2011; Tham and Tham, 2013; Van Hees et al., 2015; Altbach and De, 2018; Badran et al., 2019; Tri et al., 2021 Syed et al., 2021). Alkhazim (2003) reported that the usual insistence's limitations on the students'

places, accountability, and resource reduction were highlighted as the main problems that higher education institutions face. Accordingly, Mourato et al. (2021) concluded that the strategic management is an important factor that broadly predicate the performane of higher educational sectors. Similiarly, prior studies emphasized that the higher educational sector are lacking to implement the strategic management practices (Slade et al., 2000; Brown, 2004; Serdar Asan and Tanyaş, 2007; Gupta and Gupta, 2020).

Parakhina et al. (2017) discussed that the higher educational institutions are seriously lacking to implement the modern strategic management practices. Further, they stated that the “Acute shortage of efficient technologies of university strategic management and low efficiency of standard algorithms for the adoption and implementation of strategic decisions for improving university competitiveness in domestic and international markets require enhancing market mechanisms of higher education management (p.63).” Thereby, Sawhney et al. (2017) suggested that the **lack** of researcher investigated the role of strategic management practices in higher educational sector in developing countries, where the educational institions are still lacking to awareness on how to implement the strategic management practices as to enhance the academic performance of the higher educational instituions.

A recent survey by UNESCO reported that around 617 million children and youth are not attending primary school and higher education institutions (UNESCO, 2020). Conversely, higher educational institutions are still lacking qualified teachers, sufficient learning materials, sustained classrooms, security concerns, and modern syllabus to provide to the students (Tytherleigh et al., 2005; Okumus and Yagci, 2006; Chang, 2006; Isa and Yusoff, 2015; Holmqvist, 2019; Vlasenko et al., 2019; Leal Filho et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, economic, social, environmental, and technological crises and inability led the society toward the poor standard of the education system (Languille, 2014; Bawa, 2019; Obiakor and Adeniran, 2020). In this concern, several scholars and practitioners agreed that the higher education sector could support to solve the economic and labour market problems over the world (Jaffer et al., 2007;

Mohamedbhai, 2011; Tham and Tham, 2013; Van Hees et al., 2015; Altbach and De, 2018; Badran et al., 2019; Tri et al., 2021; Syed et al., 2021). Higher education is highlighted as a beneficial sector that simultaneously develops social, environment, and economic values (Van Hees et al., 2015; Badran et al., 2019). Drawn from the literature, higher education institutions delivering quality and skilled labour to the market, which ultimately contributes to the development of the economy of the country (Tri et al., 2021). They noted that the constant attempt to adopt a modern education system address sustainable social, economic, technological, and environmental problems.

The higher education institutions are potential change agents who can deliver systematic and sustainable solutions to persistent problems in society (Jongbloed et al., 2008). Although, recent statistics show a deficient level of student enrolment in higher educational institutions, particularly in developing countries (Bennell and Pearce, 2003; Bergh and Fink, 2006; Bloom et al., 2014). This low enrolment of students implies scarcity of emerging economic development, resulting in a boost in poverty (Mitra, 2008; Musa and Maigari, 2020). In other words, students from those countries tend to attend higher educational institutions to avoid any kind of uncertainty for their future.

However, a new trend of research developed to understand the role of strategic management (Gupta and Gupta, 2020), organizational culture and knowledge sharing in the performance of higher education sectors (Tan et al., 2010; Samad et al., 2018; Ramírez-Hurtado et al., 2021). Accumulating the performance of higher education institutions significantly enhances the literacy ratio, which is part of strategic decisions led by the senior management of the institutions. Numerous studies argue that it is still crucial to know what kinds of policies and skills to boost higher education institutions' performance (Robotham, 2008; Mtebe and Raisamo, 2014). Nonetheless, there is a scarcity of literature that seek to identify the predictors or address the performance of the higher education sector (Verburgh et al., 2007; Croucher and Woelert, 2016; Khalid et al., 2019).

Scholars are yet to conclude factors that influence the performance of higher education sectors, mainly for three reasons; first, lack of empirical research studies conducted in the field; second, lack of clear theoretical development; and third, lack of research studies conducted in the context of developing countries. Therefore, it is important to conduct quantitative research in developing countries to develop a framework with the support of theories and find out factors that influence the performance of higher education sectors.

Even though several social, cultural, economic, political, and demographical factors impact non-financial performance of the higher education sector (Languille, 2014; Bawa, 2019; Obiakor and Adeniran, 2020), to date, less attention has been given by the government agencies to reform the strategic academic policies (Verburch et al., 2007; Harman and Bich, 2010; Khalid et al., 2019). In addition, an empirical study by Arnolds et al. (2013) highlighted that the implementation of modern strategic policies significantly influences the performance of the higher education sector. Therefore, Kabir (2021) suggested that government agencies should adopt modern education policies and strategic systems to boost the advanced education system in the country.

Prior studies emphasised that scholarly work is still far from developing a theoretical framework that can deliver a comprehensive model regarding the performance of the higher education sector. In this statement, Al-Husseini and Elbeltagi (2018) developed a framework, which suggested that knowledge sharing and strategic leadership influence the performance of the higher education sector. Recently, Leiber (2019) developed an argument and discussed practical teaching activities, strategic learning processes, and environment is other predictors of performance of the higher education sector. In the same manner, Tan et al. (2010) reported that knowledge sharing practice is a great predictors of the performance of the higher educational institutions. Therefore, Soliman and Karia, (2021) hilghted that the lack of theortical development have been done in the context of performance of higher educational institions.

In this regard, theoritcaly, Powers and McDougall (2005) applied the resource-based view to investigate the performance of the higher education sector. They

suggested that resource-based view is a dominant theory that predicated the influence of strategic management on the non-financial performance of the higher education sector. Later on, Lin and Nabergoj, (2014) confirmed that the resource-based view is a dominant theory that researchers apply to examine the impact of knowledge sharing and strategic management on the performance of higher educational institutions. Similarly, Greve, (2021) investigated and confirmed that the resource-based view theory is a prominent theory that supports researchers to investigate and conclude the key indicators that support to enhance the performance of higher educational institutions. On the other hand, several researchers identified that the resource-based view theory application guides the strategic management team on how, where, and when to use the resource as could maximize the performance and also sustain the competitive advantages. However, empirically, it has been confirmed that resource-based view is a dynamic theory that significantly supports researchers to examine the association between strategic management, knowledge sharing, and performance of higher educational sector.

Furthermore, in the present study researchers also identified that the lack of studies build the relationship between organizational culture and performance of higher educational sector. For that reason, the researcher applied theory of organizational culture and affectiveness suggested by Denison and Mishra (1995). Theoretically, prior researchers applied theory of organizational culture to investigate the link between organizational culture and performance of educational institutions. For example; Abdullah and Siam (2014) developed a framework with the support of theory of organizational culture, and confirmed positive and significant link between organizational culture and performance of higher educational institutions. Another empirical study from Ponnuswamy and Manohar, (2016) also confirmed that the theory of organizational culture is a dominant theory that supports the scholars to build and examine the link between organizational culture and performance of higher education sector. In this regard, Gadia and Mendoza, (2019) suggested that the researcher should investigate the impact of organizational culture and its key dimensions (i.e., clan culture, bureaucratic culture, market culture, adhocracy culture) on the performance of educational institutions. Accordingly, Chang and Lee (2007) confirmed that these are the key dimensions of organizational culture. In this regard, Ponnuswamy and Manohar, (2016) discussed that there are lack of empirical studies

that applied theory of organizational culture to investigate the key factor that impact performance of higher educational institutions.

Theoretically, scholars have overlooked strategic management practices, which is an essential characteristic of higher education institutions. Senior management with adequate strategic power tends to identify change environments and opportunities and take necessary decisions for the better development of the institution (Aldhaen, 2017; Al Dhaen, 2021). However, in evidence of literature that presents effective strategic policies have an essential role in decision-making, there is a lack of research on the influence of strategic management practices in the higher education sector (Alonderiene and Majauskaite, 2016; Allui and Sahni, 2016).

Therefore, knowledge sharing and organizational culture are dominant and basic values in developing of higher education status. Prior studies suggest that they play a crucial role in demonstrating a high level of performance (Hsu, 2008; Chau and Kao, 2009; Wang and Wang, 2012; Chong and Ahmed, 2015; Samad et al., 2018). This is because knowledge sharing and organizational culture usually encourage the institutions to create value for the society. However, there is a lack of literature addressing the performance of the higher education sector from a knowledge sharing and organizational culture perspective.

In determining the need for mediators, studies emphasized that knowledge sharing and organizational culture are the main predictor of the performance of the higher education sector (Tan et al., 2010; Al-Husseini and Elbeltagi, 2018; Lee, 2018; Syakur et al., 2020). From this statement, it can be concluded that, although knowledge sharing and organizational culture are dominant constructs of the higher education sector, they cannot cause to boost the performance level of higher education institutions lonely or directly. This scenario suggests developing a mediating relationship, as clarified by (Razzaque et al., 2013; Hussain et al., 2017). The authors argue that “a mediator transmits influence from an antecedent to a consequence”. In addition, the mediator constructs elucidate how or why a relationship exists between two or more variables. The findings of an empirical study by Suhana et al. (2019) found that knowledge sharing impacts higher education performance through a

mediator, not directly. Accordingly, another study by Hilman et al. (2019) stated that the organizational culture significantly impact the performance of an organization through a mediating variable. Similarly, Ponnuswamy and Manohar (2016) stated that organizational culture positively impact the performance of the higher education sector. However, the mechanism through which organizational culture impact the higher education sector's performance still needs further investigation (Gadia and Mendoza, 2019).

Furthermore, Qian and Fuqiang (2018) suggested that researcher should use dual mediation variable as to make the empirical findings more confident and confirm the indirect relationships. Theoretically, Liu et al. (2020) tested the dual mediating impact on the performance of higher education institutions. Another study conducted in 2018 by Qian and Fuqiang discussed that the dual mediating variables support the researcher to investigate the performance of higher educational institutions. Thereby, this study proposed investigating the mediating and dual mediating relationship between strategic management, knowledge sharing, organizational culture and performance of the higher education sector. Thus, organizational culture and knowledge sharing play dual mediating variables role between strategic management and performance of higher educational institutions.

With referring to the current contextual gap, even though the performance of the higher education sector varies in different countries from conceptual and legitimate perspectives, as stated by several scholars, this concept still needs more investigation in some contexts, particularly in developing countries. For instance, most empirical studies were conducted in the context of developed countries (Vrontis et al., 2007; Varghese, 2011; Zhang et al., 2016). Moreover, there is a need for more research in contexts other than developed countries (Hofmeyer and Lee, 2002; Ahmad et al., 2015; Kanwal and Rehman, 2017), particularly Saudi Arabia, where the performance of higher education sector literature is scarce (Tashkandi and Al-Jabri, 2015; Allui and Sahni, 2016).

According to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), only 24% of Saudi nationals go to attend higher education (college and

universities); from them, only 74% successfully get employed in private and public organizations (OECD, 2019).

Additionally, Saudi Arabia is one of the countries in the G20 countries list, faces a demographic challenges represented by the fact that by 2030, half of the population will be under the age of 25 years. Therefore, the Saudi government has established a new strategic vision and one of the focus areas for development is the education sector (Bindabel & Salim, 2021; Kosárová, 2020; Wali et al., 2020; Alhazmi and Kamarudin, 2021). Other concerns include, a modern education syllabus, technological innovation (Aldabas, 2015; Alqarni, 2015) and low percentage of international students in public higher education institutes (Taylor and Albasri, 2014). As well as the influence and the impact of strategic leadership on the higher education sector not clear (Al-Ahmadi, 2011; Aljodea, 2012). Therefore, there is a need to identify the factors that could determine the performance of the higher education sector on the broader level.

Based on the above discussion and arguments, this study highlighted some cores for this study: a) the novel stream of quantitative research that developed for further studies on the performance of the higher education sector, b) lack of empirical studies on strategic management, knowledge sharing, and organizational culture, c) an essential role of the higher education sector in economic development, delivery of skilled human capital to the labour market, and identifying cultural diversifications. d) dearth of empirical studies on performance of higher education sector in developing countries, particularly GCC countries, this study developed a framework on determinants of non-academic performance of higher education sector. The framework is based on 1) strategic management towards organizational culture, knowledge sharing, and performance of the higher education sector. 2) knowledge sharing towards organizational culture and performance of the higher education sector, and finally 3) organizational culture towards performance of higher education sector.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

- RQ1- Does strategic management positively influence, organizational culture, performance of the higher education sector, and knowledge sharing?
- RQ2- Does organizational culture and knowledge sharing positively influence performance of the higher education sector?
- RQ3- Does knowledge sharing positively influence organizational culture?
- RQ4- Does organizational culture mediate the relationship between strategic management and performance of the higher education sector?
- RQ5- Does knowledge sharing mediate the relationship between strategic management and performance of the higher education sector?
- RQ6- Does organizational culture mediate the relationship between knowledge sharing and performance of the higher education sector?
- RQ7- Does knowledge sharing mediate the relationship between strategic management and organizational culture?
- RQ8- Does knowledge sharing and organizational culture sequentially mediate the relationship between strategic management and performance of the higher education sector?

1.6 Research Objectives

This study is looking to fulfil the following objectives:

- RO1- To examine the influence of strategic management on organizational culture, performance of the higher education sector, and knowledge sharing.
- RO2- To examine the influence of organizational culture and knowledge sharing on performance of the higher education sector.
- RO3- To examine the influence of knowledge sharing on organizational culture.
- RO4- To examine mediating role of organizational culture between strategic management and performance of the higher education sector.

- RO5- To examine the mediating role of knowledge sharing between strategic management and performance of the higher education sector.
- RO6- To examine the mediating role organizational culture between knowledge sharing and performance of the higher education sector.
- RO7- To examine the mediating role of knowledge sharing between strategic management and organizational culture.
- RO8- To examine the sequential mediating role of knowledge sharing and organizational culture sequentially between strategic management and performance of the higher education sector.

1.7 Significance of the Study

As per the above discussion, arguments, and the overall scarcity of empirical studies on factors that influence the performance of the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia, this study is significant from theoretical, methodological, and empirical perspectives.

First, the current study contributes to the theory by extending the resource-based view by introducing strategic management and knowledge sharing that affect the performance of the higher education sector. Prior studies confirmed that strategic management is one of the significant determinants of performance of the higher education sector. Though still, empirical studies are suggested to discover more factors that significantly influence the performance of the higher education sector. Anchoring on the resource-based view, this study investigates the influence of strategic management, organizational culture, and knowledge sharing on the performance of the higher education sector.

Moreover, this study contributes to the performance of the higher education sector literature by including strategic management, which is a less discussed concept in the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, this study significantly contributes to the knowledge by including new constructs and establishing direct and indirect links between the constructs.

The second contribution of this study can be illustrated from a methodological perspective. In this field, appropriate research methodology is assumed as the dominant contribution. Therefore, Baker (2000) has developed some limitations such as incapacity to generalize the overall findings besides advantages of this method. The researchers began to test the emerging performance of the higher education sector in the last decade. To measure the performance of the higher education sector required more quantitative studies. In addition, this field is suffering from a dearth of empirical studies (O'Shea et al., 2012). Besides, further studies are required to address this issue empirically (Antony, 2015).

Finally, from an empirical perspective, the overall findings of this study are highly significant for the Saudi Arabian government agencies and The Ministry of Education, Technical and Vocational Training Corporation, and other international players in the education sector. By knowing factors that influence higher education performance, the Ministry of Education will be able to organize and monitor the effective plans and policies for making decisions that bring higher education institutions to the next level of performance in Saudi Arabia. Government agencies have to facilitate higher education institutions to grab a higher position in the international market. Apart from the Ministry of Education, students, faculty and non-faculty staff, consultants, and society may also benefit from the findings of this study. Finally, this study can help students, practitioners, professors, consultants, and policymakers to find a clearer picture about how the higher education sector boost their performance level.

1.8 Research Scope

This study primarily focuses on understanding the effects of strategic management, and organizational culture on the performance of the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia.

The sample for this study is limited to teaching and non-teaching staff from different public higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia. Performance of the

higher education institutions means differently presents in different regions or countries because of the distinct ranking style, program offered, and the number of new admissions annually; thus, the obtained findings cannot be generalized as same for all the higher educational institutions in the countries. In this regard, Tyagi, (2021) discussed that the researcher could not be able to conduct a research study an generalize the performance of higher educational institutions all over the country at the same time. Moreover, the researcher admit that contextual, geographical, and cultural conditions influence performance of the higher education institutions (Leontyeva, 2018), those variables have been excluded from this study. This exclusion is primary because it is impossible to examine all the suggested factors in this study. In addition, Allui and Sahni (2016) illustrated that strategic management practices play a more critical role in boosting the performance of the higher education sector in the context of Saudi Arabia. Accordingly, this study investigates the performance at the organizational level. Targeting strategic management at the corporate level would lead to understanding the performance of higher education sectors (Allui and Sahni, 2016). Finally, this study is limited by time, and then it only covers a specific timeframe from March 2022 to May 2022.

1.9 Definition of the study Variables

Operational definitions of dependent and independent variables:

1.9.1 Strategic Management

Strategic management is defined as A set of managerial decisions and actions that determine a corporation's long-run performance. It includes environmental scanning (both external and internal), strategy formulation (strategic or long-range planning), strategy implementation, and evaluation and control (Allui and Sahni, 2016). In this research, strategic management refers to executing the strategic plans set to achieve superior performance.

1.9.2 Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing is defined as “the process where individuals mutually exchange their implicit and explicit knowledge and jointly create new knowledge” (Hooff and De Ridder, 2004 p.118). In this study, knowledge sharing is the dissemination and sharing of knowledge and ideas in work in the interest of accomplishing the organisation's goals.

1.9.3 Organizational Culture

The organizational culture encompasses of several dimension and attributes known as clan culture, bureaucratic culture, the market culture, the adhocracy culture (Chang and Lee 2007). Thus, this study emphasizes these dimensions to investigate the influence of internal and external culture on the performance of higher educational intuitions.

1.9.4 Organizational Performance

Encompasses three specific areas of firm outcomes: (a) financial performance (profits, return on assets, return on investment, etc.); (b) product-market performance (sales, market share, etc.); and (c) shareholder return (total shareholder return, economic value-added, etc.) (Richard et al. 2009). In the current study, the organizational performance is the organisation's overall non-financial performance, focusing on internal operations, and learning and growth (Alzahrani and Althaqafi, 2020).

1.10 Organization of the Research

This research will be consisting of five chapters includes:

Chapter 1: in this chapter, the background of the study, problem statement, research questions and objectives are presented, including the research significance and scope in the context of Saudi Arabia higher education sector. The definitions of the research variables are also provided with the desired framework.

Chapter 2: a literature review on the research variables, which are organizational performance, strategic management, knowledge sharing and organizational culture are presented. Theoretical and hypothesis development discussed. Finally, a conceptual framework was drawn in this chapter

Chapter 3: the methodology of the research is discussed. Therefore, the research design, development of measurement items with sampling techniques and data analysis approach were presented. Finally, the pilot study results are stated.

Chapter 4: this chapter discusses the data analysis procedure with the rate of the response, hypotheses testing and the findings. The reliability test procedures defining Cronbach's alpha coefficient and EFA / CFA of the validity are presented.

Chapter 5: Discussion and findings on the findings, contribution, and the implication of the study are presented. Some recommendations on developing the performance of those organizations in the public sector in Saudi Arabia are discussed. Finally, suggestions for future research are illustrated.

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Appendix A Questionnaire

Dear participant,

Thank you for giving us some of your time and filling out our search questionnaire. I am a Ph.D student at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia under the scholarship program from Princess Noura Bint Abdulrahman University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

This research aims to investigate the impact of strategic management, organizational culture, and knowledge sharing on the performance of universities in Saudi Arabia.

Information and opinion given in this questionnaire will be of great importance for the achievement of the research objectives, and it will be treated confidentially. There is no right or wrong answer in this questionnaire. Please choose the answer that is in line with your opinion honestly and objectively. Note that the information received will only be used for scientific research purposes.

Your participation, and cooperation in this questionnaire is greatly appreciated and in the event of any inquiry or information needed, please do not hesitate to contact me:

Email: amool.84@hotmail.com

Thank you in advance for participating in this questionnaire

Yours Sincerely,

Amal Hassan Alhazmi

Ph.D. Candidate in Azman Hashim International Business School

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

Section: A Demographic information

1. Gender

- Male Female

2. Qualifications

- Bachelor
 Master
 PhD
 Others Please Specify

3. Current job position?

- Top level
 Middle level
 Lower level

4. Your Current Department

- Please Specify

5. Provide current university name.

- Please specify _____

6. Your current job experience in same university

- Less than 1 year
 2 to 3 years
 4 to 7 years
 8 to 10 years
 11 years to 13 years
 More than 13 years

7. Your job experience in academic field

- Less than 1 year
- 2 to 3 years
- 4 to 7 years
- 8 to 10 years
- 11 years to 13 years
- More than 13 years

8. Age

- 18 - 28 years old
- 29 - 39 years old
- 40 - 50 years old
- 50 - 60 years old
- Above 60 years

Section B: Measurement Items

Strategic Management		
Strategic Implementation		
S. No	Items	Source
1	The development of clear rules and procedures to guide strategic plans.	Aboramadan and Borgonovi, (2016)
2	The development of short term objectives, (equal or less than one year-based objectives).	
3	The allocation of sufficient financial, human and other resources to implement the strategies and plans.	
4	The establishment of clear activities or steps needed to accomplish the short term goals.	
5	The adjustment of the university structure to adapt with new changes brought by their new strategic plans and decisions.	
6	The support from leadership to implement strategies.	
7	The university culture (core values, beliefs and norms) enables us to implement our strategic plans.	
Strategic Evaluation		
1	The development of a monitoring system.	Aboramadan and Borgonovi, (2016)
2	Monitoring the strategic plans on regular basis.	
3	The identification of performance measures and standards.	
4	The evaluation of the outcomes of the strategies and plans.	
5	The modification of strategies, if needed, as a result of the evaluation.	
6	The communication of the evaluation results to the stakeholders.	
7	The consideration of the community satisfaction in the evaluation of the strategy.	
8	The reliance on consultants in the evaluation to ensure objectivity and transparency.	
9	The use of various evaluation techniques such as strategic audit, performance appraisal and benchmarking.	

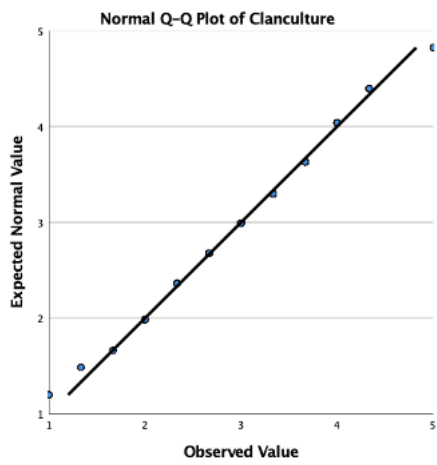
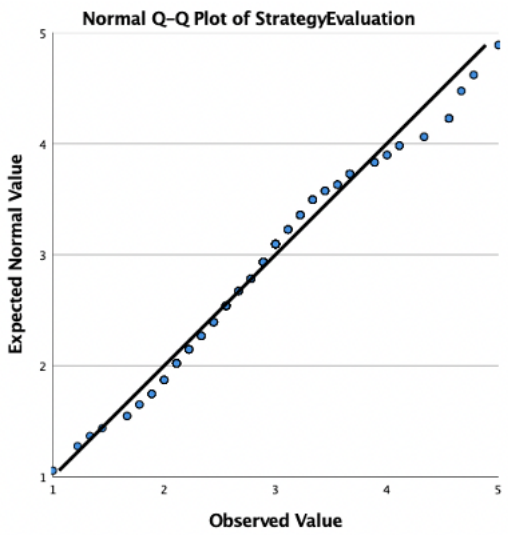
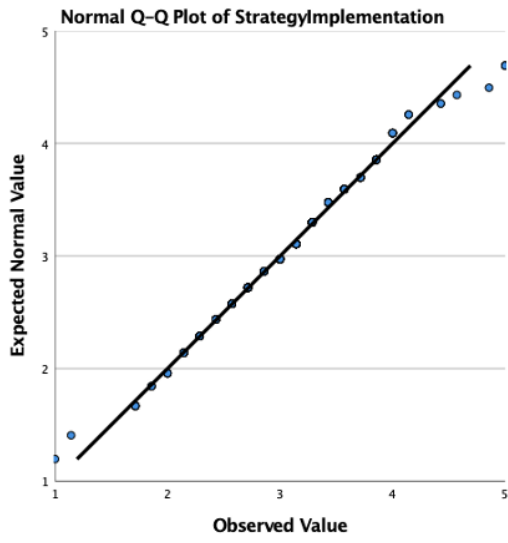
Organizational Culture		
Clan culture		
S. No	Items	Source
1	My company highly emphasizes humanity and respect to every member just like a large family.	Chang and Lee (2007)
2	My company highly emphasizes development of human resource, being kind to employees and encouraging teamwork cooperation.	
3	The coherent power of my company is employees' loyalty and devotion to my company and high emphasis on teamwork cooperation.	
Market Culture		
1	The coherent power of my company is high emphasis on work performance and targeted achievement.	Chang and Lee (2007)
2	All company members can pay close attention to work performance and achievement orientation.	
Adhocracy Culture		
1	All company members are vested with the spirit of innovation and adventure.	Chang and Lee (2007)
2	My company aggressively makes R&D effort for novel products and strategies in the hope of becoming the innovator among peering industries.	
Bureaucratic Culture		
1	My company is well regulated and all members severely obey work codes for daily tasks	Chang and Lee (2007)
2	The power to enhance the coherence of my company is high emphasis of organization codes and policies and the maintenance of normal administrative operation	

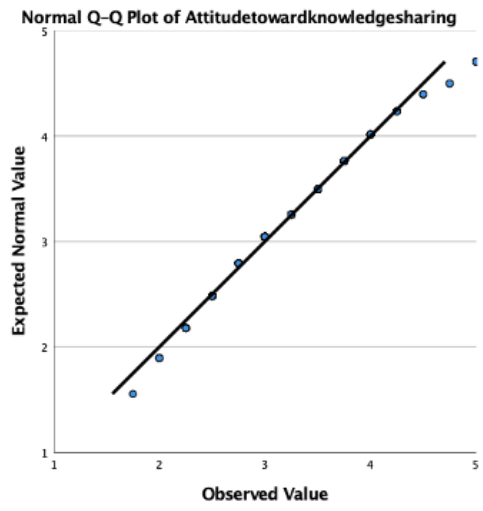
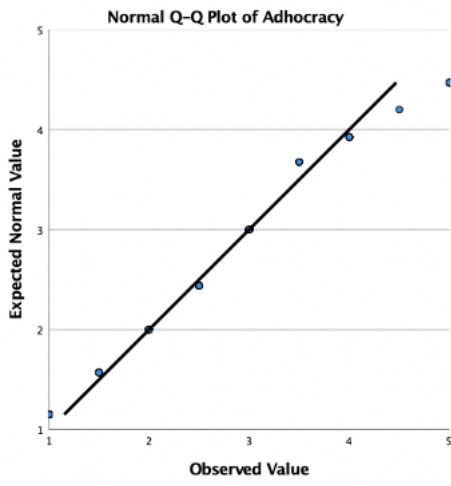
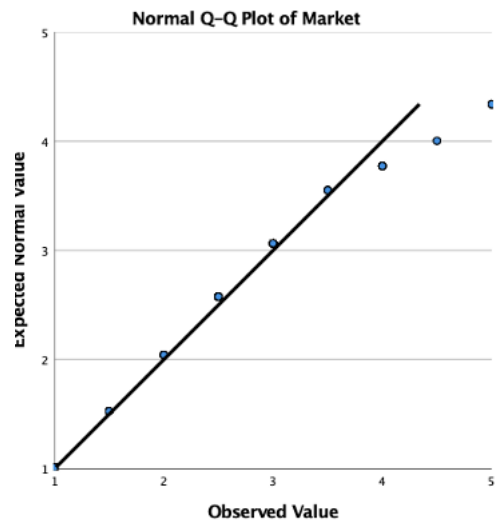
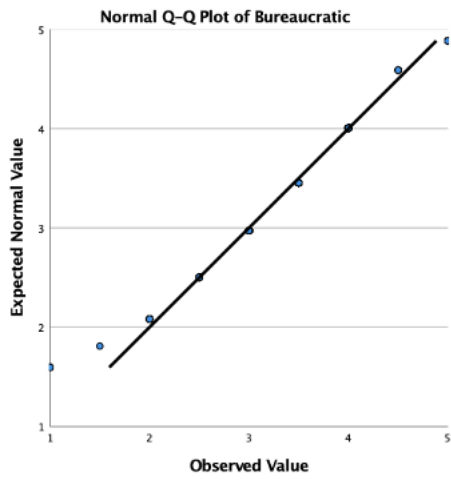
Knowledge Sharing		
Attitude toward knowledge sharing		
1	If I share my knowledge with other colleagues, I feel very beneficial.	Agyemang et al. (2016)
2	If I share my knowledge with other colleagues, I feel very pleasant	
3	If I share my knowledge with other colleagues, I feel very meaningful	
4	It is a wise move if I share my knowledge with my co-colleagues.	
Knowledge sharing behaviour		
1	I will immediately share knowledge with colleagues, who are my friends.	Agyemang et al. (2016)
2	I share a lot of professional knowledge and expertise to other colleagues.	
3	I share a lot of personal experiences to other colleagues.	
4	I share a lot of new ideas with other colleagues.	
5	I share a lot of new methodology of task performance with other colleagues.	
6	I share books and others materials that are beneficial to our course/programme with other colleagues.	
Performance of Higher Education Sector		
Learning and growth		
1	The University develop its academic, administrative and technical systems to suit students' needs.	Abod, (2017) and Aboramadan and Borgonovi, 2016).
2	The University seeks to take advantage of modern technologies and means of communication in the Education Service.	
3	The university is working to develop the competencies of the scientific and vocational faculty members.	
4	The University organizes courses for the administrative staff and employees in order to improve their efficiency in order to raise the quality of the services they provide.	

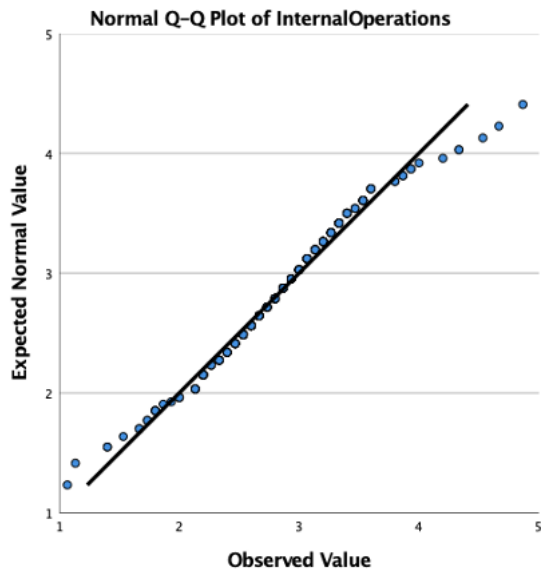
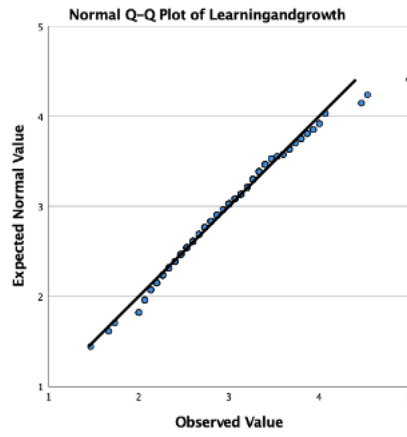
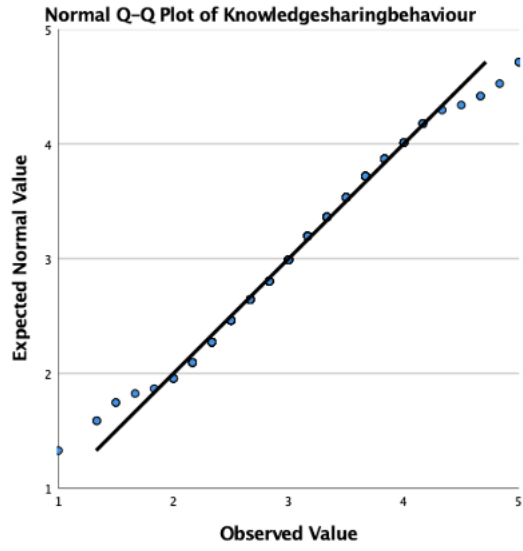
5	The University seeks to develop and improve students' learning to ensure their competitiveness in the workplace market.	
6	The University offers equal opportunity for students to be sent to foreign prestigious universities for scholarships.	
7	The university helps students develop their knowledge and skills so that they meet the requirements of the competitive labour market efficiently.	
8	The university is working on analysing the quality of extension and academic services offered to students for further excellence.	
9	The University supports the innovations and inventions of students through competitions and participation in exhibitions locally and internationally.	
10	The university helps students with low achievement by holding courses that motivate them to develop their abilities and stimulate their motivation.	
11	There is a clear and specific policy on student admission in disciplines.	
12	The faculty members participate in decision-making within the university.	
13	The university recruits staff with the right skills, experience to achieve the planned outputs of programs.	
14	The university attracts international partners for the organization's programs.	
15	The university attracts private sector partners for the organization's programs.	

Internal operations		
1	The university management seeks to develop administrative services provided for students.	Abod, (2017) and Aboramadan and Borgonovi, 2016).
2	The University supports scientific research and supports research activities among students.	
3	The university works to follow up students after graduating to provide job opportunities.	
4	The University facilitates admission, registration, deletion, and modification of courses.	
5	The University management supports students' innovations, inventions, and work Creativity.	
6	The University seeks to identify and meet students' needs.	
7	Academic extension services are offered to students by specialists.	
8	The University offers training courses for students to develop their skills and improve their learning.	
9	The University seeks to develop the field training to develop student competencies in accordance with the requirements of the labor market.	
10	The university provides modern teaching aids, and supplies laboratories and with the required equipment.	
11	The university uses proper activities to transform non-financial resources of the programs into outputs.	
12	The university programs provides a number of products/services as planned.	
13	The university programs contribute to achieving the overall objective of your organization.	
14	The university commits to quality systems and standards in programs delivery.	
15	The university provides innovative services and projects.	

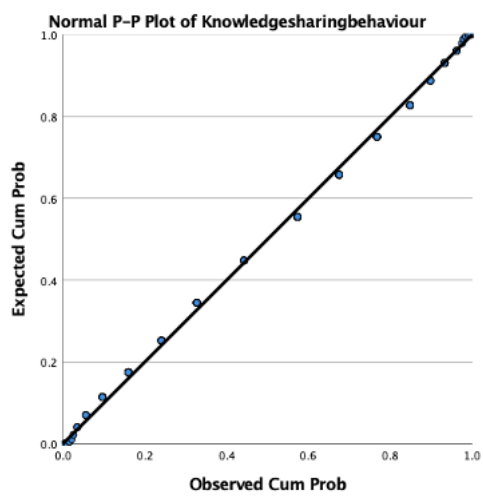
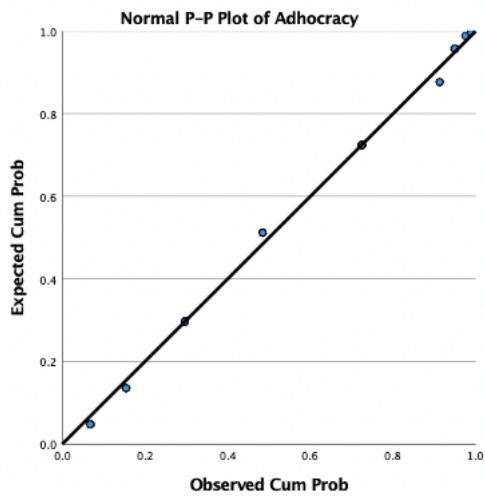
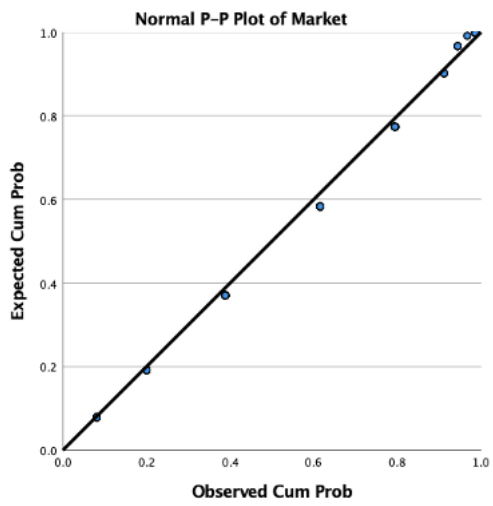
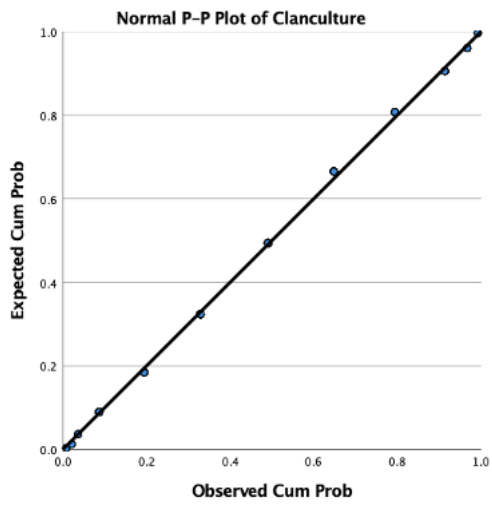
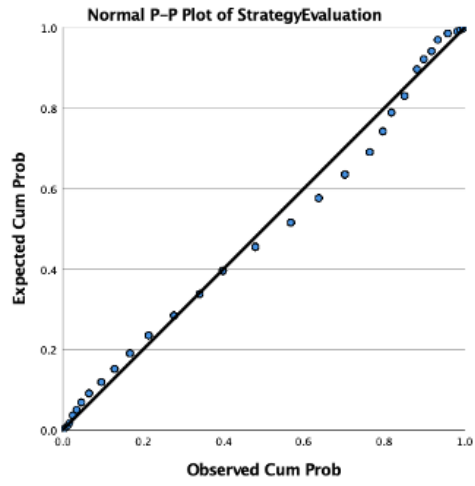
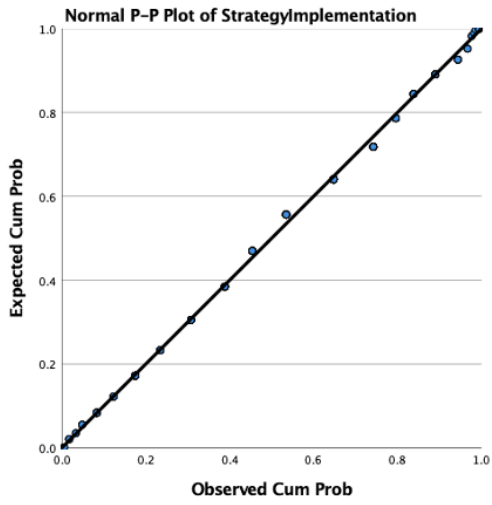
Appendix B Q-Q plots

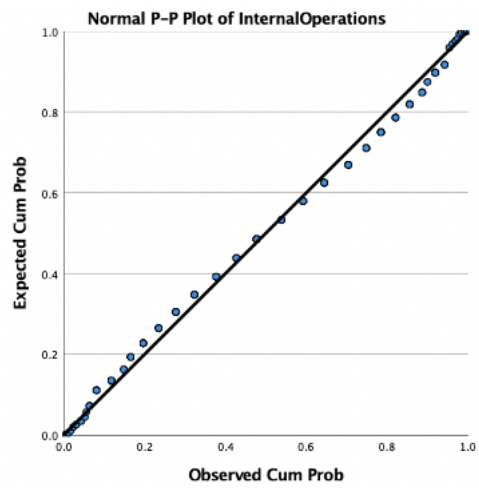
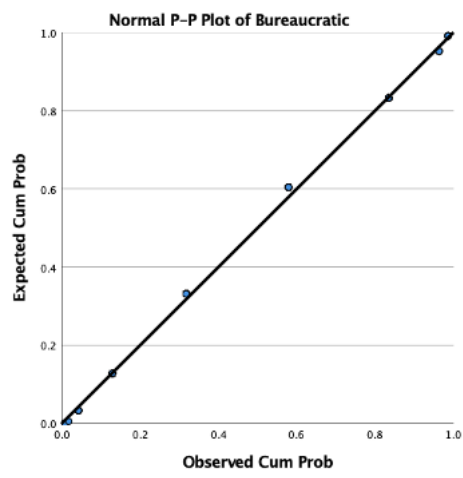
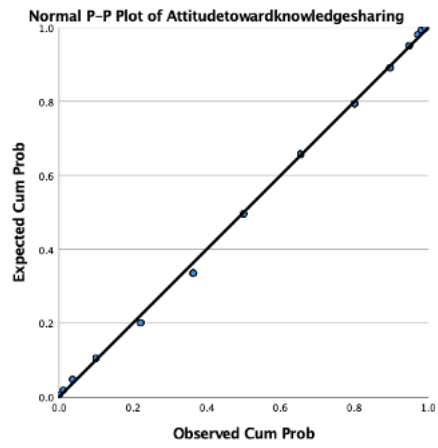
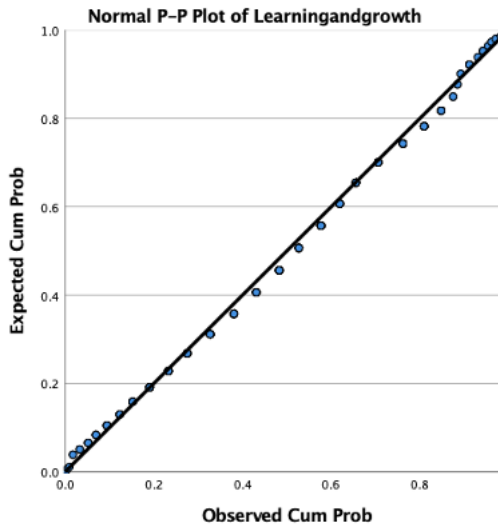






Appendix C P-P plots





LIST OF PUBLICATION

1. **Alhazmi**, A. H., & Kamarudin, S. (2021). An Overview of the Current Educational Strategies for Women: A Prospective from Saudi Arabian vision 2030. *Review of International Geographical Education Online*, 11(5), 2728-2738.