

Employing Digitalization to Achieve Effective Knowledge Management in Economic Institutions : A Case Study of Algerian Water Company (ADE) - Constantine Unit

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Abstract:

This study examines the impact of digitalization on knowledge management implementation at the Algerian Water Company (ADE) - Constantine Unit. Using a questionnaire distributed to 70 employees, the study investigated the relationship between digitalization and knowledge management through dimensions of leadership support, organizational culture, and technological processes. The descriptive analytical results revealed a strong positive correlation between digitalization adoption and successful knowledge management implementation.

Keywords: Modern Digitalization; Knowledge Management Methodology; Algérienne Des Eaux (Algerian Water Company).

Jel Classification Codes : M15, D83, L95, O33.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the world has witnessed rapid technological advancements that have led to fundamental transformations in how organizations operate and manage their resources. Amid this accelerated digital transformation, knowledge has emerged as a strategic resource no less important than traditional resources. This has driven economic institutions to seek effective methods for managing this vital asset. Modern digitization is one of the key pillars that organizations rely on to enhance their competitive capabilities and improve their performance. With the growing volume of data and information that organizations handle daily, leveraging modern digital technologies has become essential for effective knowledge management. Algerian institutions, like their counterparts worldwide, face significant challenges in keeping pace with this digital transformation and utilizing it effectively in their knowledge management processes. In this context, the Algerian Water Company serves as a model of economic institutions striving to adopt modern digital technologies in managing their operations and knowledge. Constantine's Unit represents a significant case study for understanding the reality of digital adoption in improving knowledge management, particularly given its diversity of operations and the volume of data it handles.

2. Methodological framework of the study

The methodological framework of the study includes several essential elements that form the pillars upon which the research is built. The following is a detailed presentation of these elements, beginning with the research problem which represents the fundamental starting point of the study.

2.1 Research Problem

The study's problem revolves around the following main question : To what extent does the implementation of modern digitization affect the successful execution of knowledge management in the Algerian Water Corporation - Constantine Unit ?

2.2 Study Hypotheses

The hypotheses related to the study can be formulated as follows:

- There is a statistically significant impact of modern digitalization employment on the successful implementation of knowledge management methodology in the Algerian Water Company.
- There is a positive impact of leadership support in activating digitalization employment for knowledge management.
- There is a positive relationship between the organizational culture supporting digitalization and knowledge management success.
- There is a positive impact of infrastructure and technological processes on knowledge management effectiveness.

2.3 Study Importance

This study derives its importance from both theoretical and practical perspectives. From a theoretical standpoint, it contributes to the growing body of knowledge regarding the intersection of digitalization and knowledge management in economic institutions. The research addresses a critical gap in understanding how modern digital transformation impacts knowledge management practices, particularly in the context of Algerian public institutions.

From a practical perspective, the significance of this study emerges from its focus on analyzing the real-world implementation of digital technologies in knowledge management within the Algerian Water Company.

2.4 Study Objectives

The objectives of this research are defined as follows:

- Analyze the relationship between modern digitization employment and knowledge management effectiveness.
- Evaluate the level of digital technology implementation in the studied organization.
- Identify factors affecting the successful implementation of knowledge management.

2.5 Study Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive analytical approach, where:

- A questionnaire was designed including two main axes.
- A sample of 70 employees was selected from Constantine Unit.
- Data was analyzed using appropriate statistical methods.

3. Modern Digitization

3.1 Concept and Dimensions

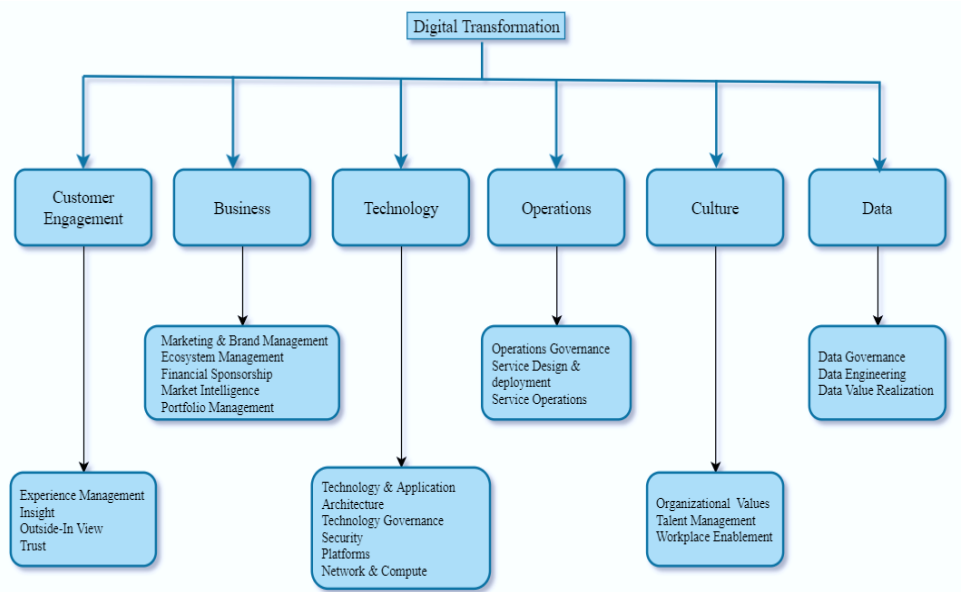
Digitization is a transformative concept that encompasses the process of converting analog information into digital formats (Picard, 2011, p. 63) and enables process automation through information communication technologies (Hess, Matt, Benlian, & Wiesböck, 2016, pp. 103-119). Through its implementation, digitization has created numerous pathways for achieving business-IT alignment, including enhanced technology adoption frameworks, refined software selection methodologies, and sophisticated data and information integration through information systems (Imgrund, Fischer, Janiesch, & Winkelmann, 2018, p. 36). Research by Imgrund et al. (2018) demonstrates that digitization has brought about substantial enhancements in how organizations utilize IT, implement strategic technological initiatives, and manage their information processing capabilities. This digital evolution represents the initial phase of a comprehensive digital transformation journey, propelled by the convergence of social, mobile, cloud, and smart technologies, alongside the increasing demands for big data applications, automation, and integration systems (Sebastian, et al., 2017, p. 147).

From these definitions, it becomes clear that digitalization leverages modern digital technologies to innovate business models and processes, thus paving the way for new opportunities in wealth creation and sustainable development. Digitalization is also perceived as the transformation of processes into digital formats, effectively bridging the gap between humans and information and communication technologies. Moreover, it involves employing artificial intelligence to achieve higher economic and social outcomes with enhanced efficiency and productivity. (Sediki, 2023, p. 115)

According to the figure 1, the main dimensions of digital transformation, is the process of using technology to engage customers

better, improve processes, and utilise people for better organisational outcomes. Digital Transformation can be classified into 6 dimensions as depicted below:

Fig.1. Digital Transformation - Key Dimensions



Source: (Naveen , 2022, p. 19)

Customer Engagement : Customers are evaluated on their ability to perceive an organisation as their digital partner. Customers use their preferred channels of interaction to command their connected future lifestyles both online and offline.

Customer perception and trust will be positively impacted when a company uses insights and behaviour to provide customer and business value. The term "Customer" in this context refers to an individual or a party that receives or produces either (1) an item/service for consumption (end consumer) or (2) an intermediate item/service for further processing (reseller or agent).

Business : Developing a comprehensive digital strategy aligned with the business's overall strategy.

The key to excellence in digital transformation is clearly defining the challenges and continuously improving. Further, this includes digital

strategy integration with operational planning, monitoring, and learning to deliver organisational coherence. This can be achieved through the alignment of brand management, ecosystem management, finance and investment, market intelligence, portfolio innovation, stakeholder management, and strategic management activities and strategies.

Technology : This dimension measures an organisation's ability to establish, maintain, and continuously transform a technology environment that is aligned with supporting and achieving its objectives.

We achieve excellence by pursuing a progressive technology strategy that dynamically aligns with business objectives. More adaptive technology governance that delivers those objectives, robust security that anticipates future threats, and clearly defined data management - as the basis of analytics that delivers insights from which competitive advantage is derived – are achieved to scale rapidly.

Operations : This dimension assesses the performance of the organisations' day-to-day activities that drive the execution of their strategies.

Operations excellence is achieved by integrating smart processes with agile change management to continually foster timely and cost-effective actions based on real-time insights and analytics.

Culture : Culture is related to the ability of an organisation to create an environment where each member of the organisation can contribute to achieving digital transformation, and to working in a way that maximises organisational success, productivity, and happiness.

Leadership plays a vital role in determining, demonstrating, and promoting the values of the required culture, as well as supporting robust standards and governance, which help to keep the organisation focused on its objectives and enable employees to be empowered in their responsibilities.

Data : The Data dimension evaluates the organisation's ability both strategically and operationally to effectively use data and information assets to maximise business value.

These 6 dimensions are further divided into sub-dimensions as

illustrated in the above diagram. Each of these sub-dimensions is responsible for a particular sub-domain within an organisation. Additionally, it is necessary to define criteria for each subdomain and meet them to achieve successful transformation. We can derive criteria based on analysis of particular sub-domain and organisational objectives. (Naveen , 2022, pp. 20-21)

3.2 Digital transformation in economic institutions

On the other hand Digitalization which is also known as Digital transformation is a combination of both procedures of Digitization and Digital innovation with an intention of improving existing products with advanced abilities (Yoo, Boland, Lyytinen, & Majchrzak, 2012, p. 89)

As per Holotiuk and Beimborn, (2017), Digitalization explains the synchronization of business and IT strategy of an organization and the incorporation of information technology into the business strategy.

Hence, it can be said that digital transformation in economic institutions represents a comprehensive approach that combines both digitization processes and digital innovation, aimed at enhancing existing products with advanced capabilities while aligning business and IT strategies. This transformation involves the integration of information technology into the core business strategy, creating a synchronized ecosystem where technological advancement and organizational objectives work in harmony.

The approach fundamentally changes how organizations operate and deliver value, making it a crucial element in modern economic institutions' development and competitive advantage.

3.3 Modern digitalization tools and techniques

Companies can use many digital transformation tools to improve their efficiency and profitability. Some of these tools include:

3.3.1 Process Automation : Process automation tools allow businesses to automate manual and repetitive tasks, thereby reducing the time and costs associated with these tasks. Some of the most popular process automation tools include UiPath, Automation Anywhere, and Blue

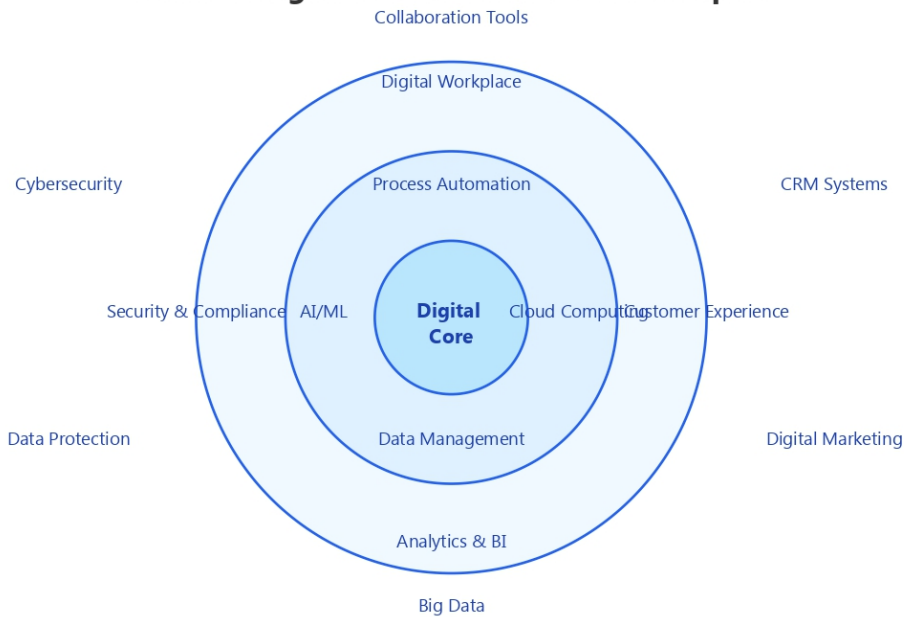
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3.3.2 Data analytics tools: allow businesses to collect, analyze, and use data to make informed decisions. Tableau, Power BI, and Google Analytics are the most popular data analysis tools.

3.3.3 Communication and collaboration : Communication and collaboration tools allow employees to work together and share information efficiently. Some of the most popular communication and collaboration tools include Slack, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom.

3.3.4 Cloud Solutions : Cloud solutions allow companies to store and access data remotely, making information easier to access and reducing the costs associated with data storage. Some of the most popular cloud solutions include Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud Platform. (Antonio, 2024, p. 39)

Fig.2. Modern digitalization tools and techniques
Modern Digitalization Tools and Techniques



Source: Prepared by researchers

The digital ecosystem begins with the central core, which represents the foundation of digital transformation. It is surrounded by the inner layer, which includes process automation, data management, artificial

intelligence, and cloud computing. As for the middle and outer layers, they encompass the digital workplace and collaboration tools, customer relationship management (CRM) systems, analytics and business intelligence, along with security and compliance including cybersecurity and data protection. These layers also include digital marketing and big data.

Each layer builds upon the previous one, showing how different digital tools and technologies interconnect to create a comprehensive digital ecosystem. The blue color gradient indicates the depth and integration of these components, with darker shades representing core functionalities and lighter shades showing supporting technologies.

This structure emphasizes how modern organizations can systematically implement digital transformation, starting from the core and expanding outward to more specialized tools and applications.

4. Knowledge Management

4.1 Concept and importance of knowledge management

According to Al-Ali & Qandilji (2008, p. 12), knowledge management involves "creating an 'enriching' environment in the organization that facilitates the process of creativity and transfer, focusing on creating a supportive organizational culture, and with the support of visionary senior leadership and motivating employees to share knowledge and work to increase loyalty to customers." Its importance lies in enhancing administrative communication and developing human resource efficiency, particularly readiness for change and adaptation to technological transformation. Additionally, according to the (Federal Authority for Government Human Resources, 2017):

- Human capital: It includes employees' skills, talents, and knowledge.
- Information capital: It includes databases, information systems, and architecture Information technology infrastructure.
- Institutional capital: It includes institutional culture, leadership, and work Collective and commitment to achieving strategic goals.

4.2 Knowledge management processes

Knowledge Management (KM) processes are essential for the effective implementation and enhancement of information systems and organizational performance. These processes include knowledge acquisition, creation, sharing, transfer, and application, which are critical for both private and public sector organizations.

Below is a table showing knowledge management processes:

Table 1. knowledge management processes

Key Knowledge Management Processes	Knowledge Sharing and Acquisition : Knowledge sharing is the most frequently studied KM process, followed by knowledge acquisition and application. These processes are crucial for the success of information systems, particularly in e-business and knowledge management systems
	Knowledge Creation and Transfer : The creation and transfer of knowledge are vital for generating customer value and enhancing organizational capabilities. These processes involve absorptive capacity and strategic integration, which help organizations leverage their knowledge resources effectively
Barriers and Facilitators	Technological and Socio-Organizational Factors: The effectiveness of KM processes is influenced by technological infrastructure, social capital, leadership, and organizational culture. Positive organizational contexts that support these factors tend to enhance KM processes, while negative contexts can hinder them.
	Individual and Organizational Levels: KM processes operate at various levels, including individual, group, and organizational. The management of knowledge at these levels is crucial for addressing inefficiencies and improving workflow through embedded KM practices.
Impact on Organizational	Public Sector Performance : In the public sector, KM processes significantly impact operational, quality, and innovation performance. A comprehensive KM framework can help public sector organizations improve their performance by effectively managing knowledge creation, capture, sharing, and application.
	Business Process Improvement: Embedding KM into business

Performance	processes can lead to significant improvements by identifying and eliminating inefficiencies, known as waste points. This approach enhances the flow of knowledge and improves overall process efficiency.
Challenges and Future Directions	Research Gaps : Despite the advancements in KM research, there is a need for further exploration of KM processes in different contexts, such as international joint-ventures and public sector organizations. Future research should focus on developing more objective measures to assess the impact of KM processes.
	Integration with Business Processes: There is a growing trend towards integrating KM with business processes to enhance organizational learning and performance. This integration requires a shift in organizational culture and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Source: (Al-Emran, Mezhyuev, & Shaalan, 2018, pp. 179-186)

knowledge management processes are integral to enhancing organizational performance and information systems. By addressing barriers and leveraging facilitators, organizations can effectively manage and utilize their knowledge resources to achieve strategic objectives.

4.3 Requirements for effective knowledge management implementation

Effective knowledge management (KM) implementation requires a strategic approach that integrates people, processes, and technology. Here are the key requirements and strategies for successful KM implementation:

Critical Success Factors:

- **People-Oriented Factors:** Successful KM initiatives often depend on the involvement of dedicated champions and effective communication of benefits to staff. Integrating KM into the business and ensuring staff understand its value are crucial for effectiveness (Bishop, Bouchlaghem, Glass, & Matsumoto, 2008, pp. 16-29).
- **Organizational Alignment:** Aligning KM strategies with the overall business strategy is essential. This includes fostering a supportive organizational culture and structure that encourages knowledge sharing and innovation. (Sayyadi, 2020, p. N/P)

Strategic Approaches:

- Role of Chief Knowledge Officers (CKOs): Effective CKOs align contributions from key organizational actors, promote knowledge networks, and deliver a purposeful message to support KM initiatives (Raub & Wittich, 2004, pp. 714-724).
- Frameworks and Models: Implementing a well-defined framework or model can guide the KM process. This includes stages such as diagnosis, design, implementation, improvement, and evaluation (Maramba & Smuts, 2020, p. 28).

Technological and Environmental Considerations:

- Technological Innovation : The perceived benefits, complexity, and compatibility of KM systems are significant technological factors influencing implementation. Support from top management and a conducive organizational culture are also critical (Wang & Wang, 2016, p. 96).
- Environmental Factors: Competitive pressure and the external business environment can drive the need for effective KM systems.

Implementation Process:

- Holistic Approach: A comprehensive approach that integrates people, processes, and technology is recommended. This includes managing cultural changes and aligning KM strategies with business goals.
- Continuous Improvement: Regular evaluation and improvement of KM practices ensure they remain effective and aligned with organizational objectives. (Rubenstein-Montano, Liebowitz, & Buchwalter, 2022, pp. 235 - 245)

5. Field study

We adopted the descriptive analytical approach, where we distributed 70 questionnaires between electronic and paper, from which we retrieved 64 suitable for analysis.

The study was conducted during the period from March to September 2024.

We processed the data using SPSS25 to calculate the validity and reliability of performance, as well as calculate the arithmetic mean

5.1 Validity and reliability of the study tool

- **Construct validity of the study instrument**

Among the dimensions of structural validity of the study instrument, we conducted structural validity testing by calculating correlation coefficients between each dimension and all variables of the study. If the correlation coefficient is strong and significant, we can say that the questionnaire has a high degree of structural validity. The following table illustrates this:

Table 2. Testing the Structural Validity of Study Variables

Correlation Relationship	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Significance Level
Leadership support for knowledge management	0.833	0.000**
Organizational culture	0.779	0.000**
Process technology	0.752	0.000**
Knowledge management implementation processes	0.856	0.000**
Availability of new ICT (NTIC)	0.783	0.000**

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS25 outputs

It is evident from the table above that all correlation coefficients are statistically significant at the significance level of 0, with values ranging between 0.752 and 0.856, which indicates the existence of a strong positive correlation between the variables (leadership support for knowledge management, organizational culture, process technology, knowledge management implementation processes, and information and communication technology availability). Therefore, the study instrument has validity and internal consistency, and is suitable for measuring the reality of knowledge management implementation in the institution under study and testing the proposed hypotheses.

- **Reliability of the study tool using Cronbach's alpha method**

To determine the correlation and verify the consistency of the questionnaire statements, "Cronbach's Alpha coefficient" was used, which

is considered a statistical measure important for determining the validity of this questionnaire and its ability to be redistributed to other samples within different spatial and temporal boundaries.

Table 3. Measuring the reliability and validity of the study using Cronbach's alpha coefficient

Axis	Number of Statements	Reliability
Leadership support for knowledge management	07	0.798
Organizational culture	05	0.765
Process technology	06	0.687
Knowledge management implementation processes	07	0.807
Employing Digitalization	05	0.852
Overall questionnaire reliability	30	0.923

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS 25 outputs

The overall reliability coefficient of the questionnaire is very high, as it reached 0.923, which is a high and appropriate value and greater than the acceptable value of 0.700. The reliability coefficients for the questionnaire axes ranged between 0.687 and 0.852, which indicates that the study tool has a high degree of internal consistency, showing high reliability and can be relied upon in the field study as shown in table number (03).

- **Split-Half Reliability Method for the Study Tool**

The split-half method relies on dividing the questionnaire into two halves and then calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient (R), which is then corrected using either the Spearman-Brown coefficient or the Guttman split-half coefficient, as shown in table (04). We calculated the validity and reliability of the study tool using two methods to prove the credibility of the data and the validity of this questionnaire for application.

Table 4. Measuring the Reliability and Validity of the Study Tool Using Split-Half Method

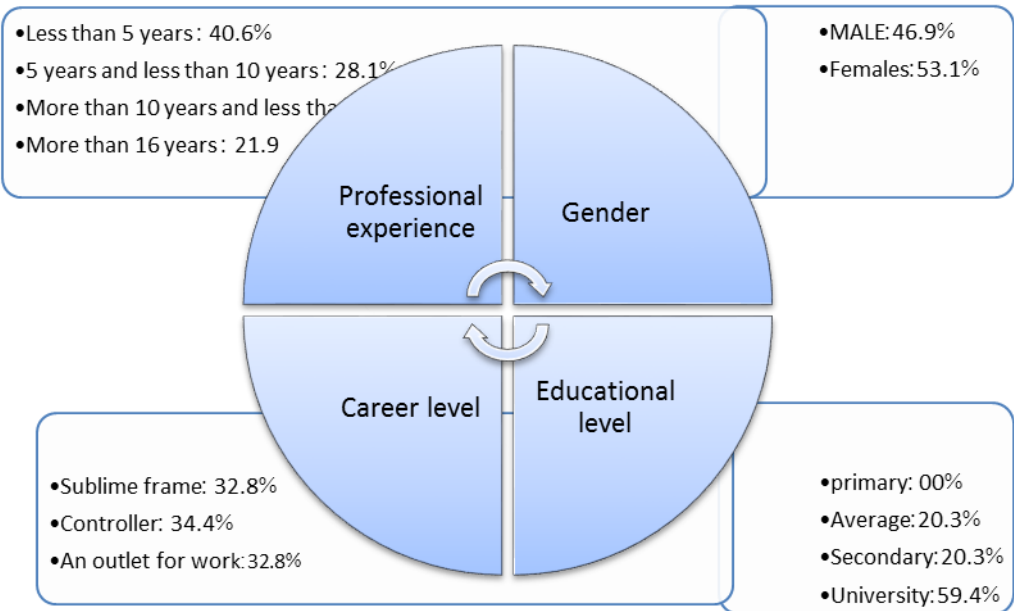
Sample Size	Correlation Coefficient	Correction Using Guttman Split-Half Equation
64	0.702	0.824

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS 25 outputs

It is evident from the previous table that the correlation coefficient reached 0.702, which required correction using the Guttman split-half coefficient because the variance and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient were unequal for the two groups. The Guttman coefficient reached 0.824, which indicates that the questionnaire has a high degree of reliability and can be relied upon in the field study.

5.2 Statistical description of the study sample

Fig.3. Distribution of sample members according to the study



Source: Prepared by researchers after reviewing the questionnaire results

The data shows a fairly balanced gender distribution with males at 46.9% and females at 53.1%. Regarding educational levels, there's a notable concentration at the university level (59.4%), followed by secondary education (20.3%). No respondents had only primary education.

For professional experience, the largest group had 5-10 years of experience (28.1%), while 21.9% had more than 16 years. Only 6.40% had less than 5 years of experience.

In terms of job levels, there's a relatively even distribution between management positions (32.8%), supervisory roles (34.4%), and operational staff (32.8%), suggesting a well-balanced organizational hierarchy.

These demographics indicate a well-educated workforce with substantial professional experience, and a good balance across gender and organizational levels.

5.3 Testing the trends of the study sample

Table 5. Testing the trends of the study sample

Number	Paragraphs	Arithmetic average	Standard deviation
01	Institutions are always researching and implementing new methods of work	2.54	1.24
02	Knowledge and experience (not seniority) are considered assets	2.62	1.23
03	Our knowledge and experience are measured in our organization	2.91	1.30
04	There exists in our organization a department or individual whose task is creating and organizing knowledge	3.27	1.31
05	We collect and organize information about our clients (citizens) for use in our work	2.81	1.24
06	Our knowledge about the external environment and similar institutions is constantly renewed	3.06	1.21
07	We participate in decision-making in our organization	2.39	1.29
Leadership support for knowledge management		2.8	1.26
08	We have opportunities to try out our ideas	3.27	1.15
09	All workers at all levels submit proposals	3.23	1.16
10	Work matters can be discussed with company officials	2.45	1.15
11	Those with experience have a prominent position in the organization	2.83	1.37
12	There is an atmosphere of cooperation in the institution	2.84	1.18

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Organizational culture		2.92	1.20
13	We have information programs that help in the work	2.34	1.15
14	We have an Internet network that facilitates communication within the organization	2.70	1.22
15	We have a website for the organization and an email for communication	2.72	1.28
16	The institution has an organized electronic archive	2.94	1.26
17	The organization deals with customers via the Internet	3.01	1.27
18	Our organization has new communication systems	2.90	1.19
Process technology		2.76	1.22
19	There are effective ways to gain knowledge from outside the organization	3.17	1.16
20	We have effective means of identifying knowledge within the organization	3.39	1.09
21	We have a good communication system within the organization that supports knowledge exchange	2.89	1.07
22	Workers form small teams to work and exchange	2.21	1.10
23	Encouraging workers to receive new knowledge and develop their skills	3.22	1.21
24	Providing incentives to retain experienced and knowledgeable workers	2.38	1.05
25	Providing incentives to attract new workers who possess knowledge	3.58	1.27
Knowledge management implementation processes		2.97	1.13
26	We have media and communication networking programs that support the	3.27	1.33

	work		
27	There is information technology that facilitates our work remotely	3.17	1.18
28	Internet speed helps in communication	3.30	1.17
29	Good communication system for exchanging information	3.39	1.25
30	Senior management supports remote work	3.41	1.19
Employing Digitalization		3.31	1.22

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS 25 outputs

The knowledge management assessment results as follows:

The findings show that the organization achieves moderate to good performance across most aspects of knowledge management. Employing Digitalization stands out particularly well with an average of 3.31, showing notable excellence in supporting remote work and communication systems. The organization also recorded positive results in attracting knowledgeable employees (3.58). However, there is room for improvement in teamwork and collaboration between small groups, which recorded the lowest average (2.21), along with a challenge in retaining experienced employees (2.38).

5.4 The correlation and simple regression analysis between degitilazation and Knowledge Management

Table 6. The correlation and simple regression analysis

Knowledge Management	Digitalization				
	Correlation Coefficient (R)	Coefficient of Determination (R ²)	Regression Coefficient	F Value	Significance (sig)
	0.607	0.368	0.395	36.17	0.000

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS 25 outputs

Based on the statistical results, there is a significant positive relationship between degitilazation and Knowledge Management ($R=0.607$, $p<0.001$), with ICT explaining 36.8% of the variance in knowledge management performance within the organization.

6. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the relationship between degitilazation and Knowledge Management practices within organizations. Through statistical analysis of survey data, the research revealed a significant positive correlation between degitilazation capabilities and knowledge management effectiveness ($R=0.607$, $p<0.001$). The findings demonstrated that ICT infrastructure explains of the variance in knowledge management performance, highlighting its crucial role as an enabler of knowledge management practices. Notable strengths were identified in remote work support and communication systems, while areas requiring improvement included team collaboration and employee retention. These results underscore the strategic importance of investing in degitilazation infrastructure to enhance knowledge management capabilities, while also suggesting the need for balanced attention to human and organizational factors.

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