



The Role of Knowledge Management in Cultural Capital Investment in Saudi Universities: Requirements and Challenges

Mukarram ABDULJALIL¹, Nabil KOMOSANY², Ismail BAHKALI³

¹ Faculty of Arts and Humanities, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah 21589, Saudi Arabia;

 mukarram2021@gmail.com (corresponding author)

² Faculty of Arts and Humanities, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah 21589, Saudi Arabia;

 nkomosany@kau.edu.sa

³ Faculty of Arts and Humanities, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah 21589, Saudi Arabia;

 ibahkali@kau.edu.sa

Abstract: In the age of the knowledge economy, knowledge management has become essential for organizational competitiveness and sustainability, particularly through its role in fostering innovation, creativity, and strategic development. Within this context, the creative economy has emerged as an extension of the knowledge economy, with the cultural economy forming a central component. This shift positions the cultural sector at the heart of economic activity and underscores the strategic role of universities as key institutions for producing, managing, and investing in knowledge. This study examines the role of knowledge management in advancing cultural capital investment at King Abdulaziz University. The study focuses on identifying explicit requirements, major challenges, and strategic opportunities that enable universities to leverage their cultural assets. It situates the inquiry within existing literature, which increasingly highlights the economic significance of cultural capital but notes a scarcity of empirical research addressing its relationship with knowledge management in higher education settings. Using a quantitative case study methodology, survey data were collected from 240 academic and administrative leaders. The findings reveal several key barriers to cultural capital investment, including insufficient incentives, the absence of an integrated institutional strategy, limited interdepartmental coordination, and a lack of sustainable funding mechanisms. At the same time, the study identifies essential requirements, such as strengthening partnerships with the private sector, developing long-term funding sources, and establishing mechanisms that support the transformation of cultural assets into value-generating investments. The results indicate that creating a dedicated Cultural Capital Center and integrating the cultural economy into the university's strategic framework are critical steps for translating cultural capital into measurable institutional and economic benefits. This study contributes to the literature by demonstrating how knowledge management can function as a strategic enabler for cultural investment within universities, particularly in the Arab region, where such studies remain limited.

Keywords: knowledge management; cultural capital; knowledge economy; cultural economy; innovation.

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Introduction

Within the knowledge economy, knowledge is recognized as the primary economic resource. As a result, knowledge management is essential for organizational competitiveness and sustainability, particularly through fostering innovation and creativity. Numerous countries and international organizations have incorporated the knowledge economy into their strategic plans in response to this transformation (European Commission, 2010; OECD, 1996; Schwab & Zahidi, 2020; UNESCO, 2015; World Bank Institute, 2007).

The creative economy operates within the broader framework of the knowledge economy, with the cultural economy as a key component. This structure positions the cultural sector as central to economic activity, challenging the traditional view of culture as a luxury

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accessible only to the upper class. The United Nations General Assembly (2023) notes that the creative economy represented 3.1% of global GDP, 3% of global trade in goods, and 21% of global trade in services in 2020. This type of economy creates millions of jobs worldwide and encompasses several activities related to the knowledge economy, creativity, technology, cultural heritage, and collective and individual creativity. EY (2015) reports that cultural and creative industries generate approximately US\$2,250 billion in annual revenues, accounting for roughly 3% of global GDP. They also employ around 29.5 million people worldwide, a figure that exceeds total employment in the automobile industries of Europe, Japan, and the United States combined. More recently, UNESCO (2025) reports that cultural and creative industries now contribute approximately 3.39% of global GDP, underscoring their growing economic impact worldwide.

As Bucci et al. (2014) observe, culture was historically regarded as a luxury accessible only to the upper class and often promoted by governments. Creativity has become a central pillar underpinning economic activity and production processes. Innovation is widely recognized as the primary outcome of knowledge exchange within any sustainable organization. Many companies now prioritize creativity and innovation as the main sources of competitive advantage. Undoubtedly, creativity requires exceptional skills, aesthetic sensibility, and continuous development. Bucci and Segre (2011) note that many goods and services now carry intangible added value derived from elegant design and symbolic meaning. Creativity—with its aesthetic and intangible value—has become the main driver of success for these goods and services. Success is thus no longer based on traditional cost-based competition but on creativity and aesthetic distinction.

Bucci and Segre (2011) further argue that economic growth depends not only on education but also on creativity. Creative individuals are also more adaptable to change, as the innovative use of skills and knowledge acquired through education plays an independent role in this adaptability. Thus, the crucial question is: Where does creativity come from? They confidently assert that cultural capital is the primary source of creativity and that its accumulation contributes positively to economic growth by developing human capital. Cultural and human capital thus operate interactively, fostering both the production of goods and the acquisition of skills and expertise.

Salvaggio (2024) states that cultural institutions have a long-term role that extends beyond the aesthetic function. This role is embodied in community engagement and contributes to local and national economic development through activities such as cultural tourism and knowledge-based and cultural industries. In this context, Saudi Vision 2030 emphasizes investment in the knowledge economy more broadly, including the cultural sector, and highlights the need to leverage the cultural potential and assets. It states that the Kingdom aims to “Grow Saudi contribution to arts and culture” across all fields, including painting, sculpture, theatre, music, literature, performing arts, filmmaking, and traditional national heritage (Quality of Life Program, 2021, p. 23). The Vision also underscores the strategic role of education and higher learning institutions in achieving these national objectives (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2016).

The higher education system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia comprises a wide network of public and private universities that play a central role in national development, research productivity, and the transition toward a knowledge-based economy. While universities operate within a unified regulatory framework under the national higher education governance structure, the new university system introduces a strategic shift by granting institutions greater administrative, financial, and academic autonomy, alongside strengthened governance and accountability. This reform aims to enhance institutional efficiency, improve the quality of education and scientific research, and align directly with the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030 in promote competitiveness, resource diversification, and knowledge-economy development.

Within this framework, King Abdulaziz University represents a leading national institution with a strong orientation toward the knowledge economy and cultural and

creative investment. Its consistent presence in major international rankings—such as QS, Shanghai, and Times Higher Education—reflects its global academic standing and supports its selection as an appropriate case study. By capturing the perspectives of senior academic and administrative leaders, this study identifies key challenges and requirements related to knowledge management in supporting investment in cultural capital. Moreover, the applicability of the findings extends beyond the studied university, as the new university system promotes convergent governance structures and institutional practices across Saudi universities, thereby enhancing the transferability of the study's results to comparable higher education contexts.

Cruz et al. (2019) note that although higher education institutions are widely recognized for their interaction with commercial and economic sectors through knowledge-transfer policies and mechanisms, their engagement with the cultural and creative sectors remains limited. This gap is largely due to the absence of clear public policies that link the two sectors. Undoubtedly, the university constitutes a fertile environment for the formation and nurturing of cultural capital in its three forms. It is the incubator of scholars and thinkers, as well as creative individuals—artists, writers, and musicians—thus producing valuable cultural goods and assets, which is a tangible form of cultural capital. It is also a primary source of training and qualification, contributing to skill development, language learning, and the transfer of knowledge and expertise, representing the embodied form. Furthermore, the university is the main—and often the only—provider of higher educational qualifications and academic degrees, in line with the institutionalized form.

Accordingly, a university can be regarded as the central incubator of cultural capital. Universities function as both producers and sources of cultural capital in all its forms, serving as ideal spaces for cultural enrichment and the cultivation of cultural influence. This study posits that knowledge management is the principal instrument for converting cultural capital into tangible economic and intellectual gains at universities, especially in the context of the growing knowledge economy. By recognizing cultural capital as a cornerstone of creativity and innovation, KAU demonstrates the potential for universities to integrate knowledge management with investment in cultural capital to achieve both national strategic goals and institutional competitiveness. However, the effective mobilization of cultural capital through targeted knowledge management remains an underexplored area, highlighting the need to identify operational barriers and requirements.

Consequently, this study seeks to explore the role of knowledge management in supporting investment in cultural capital by examining the key challenges that hinder the effective use of knowledge management practices at King Abdulaziz University. In parallel, the study aims to identify the institutional, organizational, and operational requirements necessary for employing knowledge management as a strategic mechanism to enhance investment in cultural capital within the university.

Literature review

Knowledge management

Girard and Girard (2015) examined 100 definitions of knowledge management collected from 13 countries and 23 disciplines. After a structural analysis of the most frequently repeated words in these definitions, the most common verbs were created, shared, managed, and used. In addition, it revealed that the most common nouns were knowledge, process, organization, and information. Based on these findings, the authors presented two definitions using words that occurred at least 30 times in the study. The first definition was: "Knowledge management is the process of creating, sharing, using, and managing an organization's knowledge and information." The second definition was: "Knowledge management is the process of managing the creation, sharing, and use of organizational knowledge and information" (Girard & Girard, 2015, p. 14).

Many scholars argue that knowledge management is fundamental to achieving strategic and sustainable competitive advantage (Omotayo, 2015). According to Igbinovia and Ikenwe (2018), knowledge management enhances organizational efficiency, improves performance, encourages idea sharing, supports innovation, and strengthens decision-making processes, thereby contributing to overall organizational gains. Krstić and Petrović (2012), as cited in Igbinovia and Ikenwe (2018), further emphasize the central role of knowledge management in fostering organizational innovation and promoting a knowledge-based culture that drives creativity and growth. This is crucial as effective KM is directly linked to fostering organizational creativity and enhancing performance in higher education institutions (Alzghoul et al., 2023), enabling the translation of academic assets into competitive advantage (Chaudhary et al., 2023). Moreover, integrating KM into the management of intangible assets is essential for developing the dynamic capabilities needed to operate successfully in the modern knowledge economy (Muhammad & Salma, 2021).

Building on these perspectives, Bratianu (2022) offers an advanced theoretical framework for knowledge strategies, arguing that knowledge is a multidimensional resource encompassing intellectual, emotional, and spiritual components. He demonstrates that traditional, technology-oriented approaches are no longer sufficient within complex, rapidly changing environments. Instead, he proposes dynamic knowledge strategies that focus on knowledge flow, organizational partnerships, cultural context, leadership, and capacity building, highlighting how managers can transform latent knowledge into actual organizational value.

In this context, these core KM processes provide the foundation for examining their application in higher education institutions. Several regional studies have addressed this topic. For instance, Aqili (2021) investigated knowledge transfer at the Faculty of Arts, King Abdulaziz University, and found that it relies mainly on the internal communication network and the internet, noting that limited awareness of KM benefits is a key obstacle. Meanwhile, Al-Qahtani (2016) reported that the foundations for building a knowledge society in Saudi universities are available at a moderate level. Similarly, Al-Faqih (2017) found that knowledge management implementation at Jazan University was relatively high, while the challenges faced were moderate.

Intellectual capital and knowledge management

Numerous studies have examined intellectual capital within the triad of human, structural, and relational components. For example, the findings of Zhang et al. (2022), based on an analysis of 349 questionnaires from high-tech companies, showed that knowledge sharing has a significant positive impact on all three components of intellectual capital, and that human and structural capital positively influence dual innovation. Similarly, Ibarra-Cisneros et al. (2023) found that organizational culture and leadership significantly influence knowledge management, intellectual capital, and innovation. This suggests that higher education institutions should create conditions that support the efficient management of knowledge enablers, as these are essential sources for generating and disseminating knowledge, contributing to the development of academic staff, institutional growth, and overall performance.

In another related study, Suparwadi et al. (2024) examined the impact of intellectual capital on knowledge management and innovation. Surveying academic leaders at 21 public universities in Indonesia, the study revealed that intellectual capital significantly affects knowledge management and innovation, which, in turn, positively influences organizational performance. Additionally, Tu et al. (2025) reported a positive relationship between intellectual capital and supply chain resilience, as well as between intellectual capital and knowledge sharing within the supply chain. Likewise, in a study of 295 Italian companies emerging from academic institutions over ten years, Carmine et al. (2025) examined the relationship between intellectual capital and economic performance. Their

findings indicated that human capital—particularly accumulated experience—significantly contributes to improved economic outcomes.

Notably, Bratianu (2025) offers a nuanced understanding, tracing its development from the work of Edvinson, Stewart, and Sveiby, who highlighted the role of intangible resources in value creation through this triad. Recent transformations—such as digitalization, innovation, remote work, and sustainability—have exposed the limitations of this traditional model. Bratianu argues that linear logic is no longer sufficient to explain contemporary organizations, which function as nonlinear systems. In these systems, small changes can have significant effects, and dynamic forces and cognitive entropy shape outcomes. He challenges the view of intellectual capital as a simple sum of its components, emphasizing that knowledge, experience, and relationships interact in nonlinear and complementary ways. He proposes integration as an alternative to the linear approach. Finally, he calls for a shift from viewing knowledge as a static, stored asset to understanding it as a dynamic, evolving, and interactive entity. Intellectual capital, he concludes, must be reconceptualized as dynamic and grounded in complexity principles.

Bratianu (2025) identifies three stages in the use of knowledge metaphors. In the first stage, knowledge is treated as a fixed asset, managed through formal procedures and accounting measures, emphasizing its latent potential. In the second stage, knowledge becomes a dynamic resource, flowing across organizational elements and shaped by social interactions, processes, and organizational changes, introducing the concept of time. The third stage transforms potential intellectual capital into its actual form through knowledge management, producing tangible value as kinetic intellectual capital. At the individual level, the author proposes a theory of knowledge fields integrating intellectual, emotional, and spiritual knowledge. These types are interchangeable, as illustrated by the RESK model, generating rational, emotional, and spiritual intellectual capital. He concludes that traditional models are limited and stresses the integration of complexity, emotion, and spirituality to capture the true value of knowledge and strengthen organizational resilience.

Cultural capital

Cultural capital cannot be considered in isolation from other forms of capital, particularly intellectual, social, and linguistic capital, as these are interconnected and interdependent. While knowledge management acts as a catalyst for transforming potential intellectual capital into kinetic intellectual capital (Bratianu, 2025), it similarly enables the strategic development and leveraging of cultural capital to generate tangible value. Cultural capital encompasses multiple dimensions. It primarily refers to cultural industries, goods, and assets that can be invested in and converted into economic value, while also including the intangible dimension of accumulated cultural knowledge in its aesthetic, spiritual, critical, and tasteful forms. A literature review identifies three main types of cultural capital: (1) objectified, such as books, paintings, heritage collections, heritage buildings, and archaeological sites; (2) embedded, including expertise, knowledge, and languages; and (3) institutionalized, such as academic degrees, leadership positions, patents, and awards (Bourdieu, 1986; Throsby, 1999). Bourdieu (1986) originally introduced the concept to explain differences in academic achievement based on social and cultural background, and it has since evolved in both scope and application.

With the rise of digital and electronic capital, these forms increasingly converge. Merisalo and Makkonen (2022) highlight that Merisalo's (2016) study represents the first framework linking Bourdieu's theory to digital capital, redefining it as a form of intangible capital grounded in individuals' skills and experiences in digital investment. This includes tangible assets such as devices and infrastructure, as well as intangible capabilities, generating social and economic benefits through platforms like social media and e-commerce. Calderon Gomez (2021) further identifies two types of digital capital—tangible and intangible—following the conceptual lineage of Bourdieu (1986) and Throsby (1999). The concept was later incorporated into models of economic growth,

with a focus on its integration with human and material capital to enhance productivity and support sustainable economic development (Throsby, 1999, 2015). Throsby (1999, p. 167) defines cultural capital as "an asset which embodies, stores or gives rise to cultural value in addition to whatever economic value it may possess".

Kaszynska (2024) emphasizes the importance of understanding cultural capital through the lens of cultural value, arguing that a conceptual definition of cultural value must precede any comprehensive understanding of cultural capital. She contends that traditional economic concepts and methods are insufficient for measuring cultural value, despite economists' attempts to assign monetary value to cultural assets. Cultural value itself remains only partially understood from an economic perspective. A systematic review by Hale et al. (2023) further links cultural capital to creative industries, social class, knowledge, values, attitudes, norms, beliefs, spatial characteristics, and the exercise of power. In this study, cultural capital is defined as tangible and intangible cultural assets that can be strategically invested and leveraged to achieve economic and competitive advantages.

Chi and Vu (2024) highlighted the potential for developing cultural capital through diverse English language learning activities, both formal and informal. Their study further demonstrated that cultural capital plays a pivotal role in enhancing human, social, psychological, and identity capital, all of which are essential for improving graduate employability. Similarly, Zbucnea (2020) examined the relationship between knowledge management, cultural entrepreneurship, and potential competitive returns, emphasizing the role of knowledge management as a strategic tool for entrepreneurs in the cultural sector. The study revealed a widespread lack of understanding of knowledge management among individuals with artistic talents or interests in the arts and culture, while also demonstrating its critical importance in building a competitive advantage in cultural entrepreneurship. Moreover, the study identified a gap in academic research, highlighting the absence of clear methodologies for applying knowledge management in the cultural sector.

Xing and Chi (2021) explored the impact of cultural capital on economic growth in China, finding that cultural capital has a significant effect, surpassing even that of human capital. Building on these findings, Krutpuksee et al. (2024) investigated the causal impact of capital and entrepreneurial capabilities on the sustainability of social enterprises, with a focus on cultural capital. Their results indicated that cultural, human, and social capital have statistically significant effects on sustainability, explaining 38.9% of the variance. In contrast, entrepreneurial capabilities related to achievement, planning, and leadership explained 62.9% of the variance. Similarly, Bucci et al. (2014) demonstrated that investment in cultural capital positively influences economic growth. His model of internal growth positions cultural capital as a central component, extending beyond traditional models that often overlook cultural factors.

Based on the preceding discussion of intellectual and cultural capital, we can extend Bratianu's (2025) concept of "potential intellectual capital" to cultural capital, conceptualizing a potential cultural capital that can be transformed into kinetic, value-generating cultural capital. In line with this paper's focus on maximizing the activation and strategic investment of cultural resources, we introduce the concept of "cultural cloud seeding." This metaphor illustrates the deliberate stimulation and nurturing of cultural capabilities within the university to generate abundant cultural knowledge, which can subsequently be harnessed and converted into economic and social value through targeted knowledge management strategies.

Cultural cloud seeding is the process of intentionally cultivating and mobilizing cultural potential knowledge in the university. It involves orchestrated interventions—such as cultural events, workshops, dialogues, collaborative projects, digital and social interactions, and cross-disciplinary engagement—that act as catalysts, much like drones dispersing silver iodide or dry ice to induce rainfall in cloud seeding. This metaphor

highlights the role of directed strategic action in transforming latent resources into tangible outcomes.

Investing in cultural capital within the university entails leveraging a wide range of culture-related domains, which can be categorized according to UNESCO's 2025 Framework for Cultural Statistics. Core sectors include cultural and natural heritage, cultural knowledge, performing arts, visual arts, publishing, audiovisual media, design, and music. Cross-cutting sectors encompass cultural education, cultural management, and cultural tourism. Through such interventions, universities become active incubators of cultural capital, complementing intellectual capital, fostering innovation, and creating both economic and societal value. Consequently, Knowledge Management (KM) assumes a pivotal role in optimizing this cultural capital investment, thereby raising critical questions about implementation requirements and institutional challenges that this paper aims to address by examining the views of academic and administrative leaders at one of Saudi Arabia's leading universities.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research approach within a case-study design to investigate how King Abdulaziz University invests in cultural capital. A structured questionnaire was utilized as the primary data collection instrument, providing quantifiable evidence to address the study questions and achieve the study's objectives.

Sample and data collection

In line with the study's nature and primary objectives, the study targeted academic and administrative leaders at King Abdulaziz University. A purposive sampling strategy was applied, concentrating on selected faculties, deanships, and centers, as outlined below.

Faculties: The study focused on the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, the Faculty of Economics and Administration, the Faculty of Tourism, and the Faculty of Architecture and Planning.

Deanships: Participants were drawn from the Deanship of Graduate Studies, the Deanship of Student Affairs, the Deanship of Scientific Research, and the Deanship of Library Affairs (currently the Library Affairs Administration).

Centers: The sample included representatives from the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, the Center for Digital Transformation, the Center for Human Skills Development, the Center for University Education Development, the Center for Hand-Made, the Center for Innovators for Studies and Research, the Center for Scientific Publishing, and the Center for Arabization and Translation.

The total sample consisted of 240 participants, encompassing both male and female academic and administrative leaders across the mentioned sectors. The participants represented a range of leadership positions, including deans, vice-deans, department heads and supervisors, directors, deputy directors, and unit heads (see Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1. Distribution of the study sample by leadership position

Leadership position	Number
Dean	8
Faculty/ Deanship Vice Dean	23
Center Director	8
Deputy Center Director	7
Department Head/ Department Supervisor (Female)	48
Administration Director	32
Deputy Administration Director	25
Unit Director	77
Other	12
Total	240

Source: own processing

Table 2. Distribution of the questionnaire among the study sample

Sample	Questionnaires				
	Percentage	Valid	Excluded	Returned	Distributed
240	81.25%	195	3	198	240

Source: own processing

The tables above outline the composition of the study sample, which comprised 240 academic and administrative leaders across the specified sectors. A total of 240 questionnaires were distributed, of which 198 were returned. After excluding three incomplete responses, 195 valid questionnaires remained for statistical analysis, representing an 81.25% response rate. This high response rate is considered satisfactory in survey-based research, enhancing the reliability and credibility of the study's findings.

Research instrument

The study employed a structured questionnaire comprising five sections, designed to collect comprehensive data on various aspects of knowledge management and investment in cultural capital. For this paper, only two sections are analyzed: (1) Challenges facing the use of knowledge management in supporting investment in cultural capital, and (2) Requirements for enhancing the role of knowledge management in supporting investment in cultural capital. These sections were selected to provide focused insight into the factors influencing the effective management and utilization of cultural capital at King Abdulaziz University.

Validity

The questionnaire was reviewed by five expert referees with experience in knowledge management. These experts evaluated the questionnaire's items for relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness across all study dimensions and variables. In addition, a linguistic expert reviewed the questionnaire to ensure accuracy, clarity, appropriate vocabulary usage, and the elimination of grammatical, morphological, spelling, and semantic errors. Based on their feedback, modifications, additions, and deletions were made, and the questionnaire was finalized for pilot testing to verify its statistical validity and reliability.

Internal consistency

The questionnaire was administered to a pilot sample of 30 individuals who were not part of the main study population but shared similar characteristics, circumstances, and environmental contexts. The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Internal consistency was assessed using Pearson's correlation coefficient to determine the degree of consistency of each item within its respective section. All results were positive and statistically significant, as detailed in the tables below.

Table 3 shows the Pearson correlation coefficient between each statement in Section Three 'Challenges Facing the Employment of Knowledge Management in Supporting Investment in Cultural Capital' and the total score of the section. All correlation coefficients are positive and statistically significant at levels ranging from 0.01 to 0.05. This indicates the consistency of the statements and their strong relationship to their respective sections, enhancing internal consistency and increasing the reliability and credibility of the study results.

Table 3. Pearson correlation between items in the section 'Challenges facing the use of knowledge management to support investment in cultural capital'

No.	Items	Pearson's correlation
1	Lack of sufficient incentives to support knowledge management projects related to cultural capital	0.741*
2	Lack of appropriate tools and technologies for collecting and analyzing cultural data	0.639*
3	Weak communication between knowledge management and other departments concerned with the culture	0.853**
4	Lack of information related to cultural capital at the university	0.785**
5	Insufficient appreciation of the value of cultural capital and the importance of investing in it	0.673*
6	Lack of a clear, comprehensive knowledge management strategy to support investment in culture	0.892**
7	Difficulty measuring existing cultural capital	0.881**
8	Lack of partnerships with external parties that can support cultural capital	0.835**
9	Lack of knowledge of innovations and best practices in cultural capital management	0.886**
10	Lack of sustainable training programs that support the development of staff and academics in the field of knowledge management	0.870**

Note: ** High statistical significance at the 0.01 level. * High statistical significance at the 0.05 level.

Source: own processing

Table 4 displays the Pearson correlation coefficients between each item and the total score for the section 'Requirements for enhancing the role of knowledge management to support investment in cultural capital at the university'. All correlation coefficients are positive and statistically significant, ranging from 0.01 to 0.05. This indicates strong consistency among the items and their alignment with the corresponding section, thereby enhancing internal consistency and increasing reliability and confidence in the study's results.

Table 4. Pearson correlation between items in the section 'Requirements for enhancing the role of knowledge management to support investment in cultural capital at the university'

No.	Items	Pearson's correlation
1	Establish a central electronic knowledge management platform to collect, document, and facilitate access to and exchange cultural knowledge	0.900**
2	Offer training programs that focus on the principles and practices of knowledge management and cultural capital	0.883**
3	Activate collaborative networks between various academic departments to integrate and apply cultural knowledge into projects that promote the knowledge economy	0.698*
4	Establish specialized educational programs in cultural management and the cultural economy to transform cultural knowledge into economic opportunities	0.710*
5	Organize cultural exhibitions and conferences within the university to showcase cultural research and projects, and transform them into investment opportunities	0.870**
6	Establish an advisory unit concerned with knowledge management and transforming cultural capital into successful business projects	0.854**
7	Encourage partnerships with the private sector to support cultural projects and transform cultural capital into value-added economic investment.	0.899**
8	Include cultural capital investment at the university within strategies for transitioning to a knowledge economy	0.888**
9	Establish a Cultural Capital Center to support cultural innovation and provide cultural initiatives, consultations, and studies	0.908**
10	Allocate an appropriate budget to activate the role of knowledge management in supporting investment in cultural capital	0.788**

Note: ** High statistical significance at the 0.01 level. * High statistical significance at the 0.05 level.

Source: own processing

Cronbach's alpha coefficient is widely recognized as one of the most reliable and commonly used measures of internal consistency for assessing the reliability of research instruments. To evaluate the questionnaire's reliability, Cronbach's alpha was calculated using SPSS. The results were high and statistically significant, as shown in the table below, confirming the tool's reliability and its suitability for data collection.

Table 5 shows that Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0.945 to 0.973, indicating a high level of reliability. This means that the items are interconnected, internally consistent, and reliably measure the concepts and dimensions for which they were designed. Based on the above data, the tool appears highly reliable, enhancing confidence in the results obtained.

Table 5. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for each section

Section	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Section One: Identifying the reality of knowledge management at King Abdulaziz University	20	0.973
Section Two: Identifying the role of knowledge management in supporting cultural capital investment at King Abdulaziz University	20	0.960
Section Three: Challenges facing the use of knowledge management to support investment in cultural capital	10	0.945
Section Four: Requirements for enhancing the role of knowledge management in supporting investment in cultural capital at the university	10	0.958
Overall Scale	60	0.959

Source: own processing

Results

To answer the question, what are the challenges facing knowledge management in supporting investment in cultural capital? The means and standard deviations of the participants' responses to the items in a specific section (i.e., Challenges facing knowledge management in supporting investment in cultural capital) were calculated. The results are presented in the table below (Table 6).

Table 6. Means and standard deviations of participants' responses to items in the section 'Challenges facing knowledge management in supporting investment in cultural capital'

No.	Statement	Mean	Standard deviation	Agreement degree	Rank
1	Lack of sufficient incentives to support knowledge management projects related to cultural capital	4.11	0.627	Agree	1
2	Lack of appropriate tools and technologies for collecting and analyzing cultural data	4.06	0.606	Agree	4
3	Weak communication between knowledge management and other departments concerned with the culture	3.87	0.860	Agree	10
4	Lack of information related to cultural capital at the university	4.09	0.643	Agree	3
5	Insufficient appreciation of the value of cultural capital and the importance of investing in it	3.99	0.654	agree	9
6	Lack of a clear, comprehensive knowledge management strategy to support investment in culture	4.04	0.683	Agree	5
7	Difficulty measuring existing cultural capital	4.10	0.608	Agree	2
8	Lack of partnerships with external parties that can support cultural capital.	4.02	0.617	Agree	7

9	Lack of knowledge of innovations and best practices in cultural capital management	4.03	0.625	Agree	6
10	Lack of sustainable training programs that support the development of staff and academics in the field of knowledge management	4.01	0.650	Agree	8
Section 'Challenges facing knowledge management in supporting investment in cultural capital'		4.12	0.761	-	-

Source: own processing

Table 6 shows the means and standard deviations of the participants' responses to the items in the section 'Challenges facing knowledge management in supporting investment in cultural capital'. The results indicate that the overall mean of participants' responses to the items was 4.12, and a high degree of agreement, while the standard deviation was 0.761, indicating the homogeneity of participants' responses to the items in this section. The table demonstrates that the means of the items in this section ranged between 3.87-4.11, and the item "Lack of sufficient incentives to support knowledge management projects related to cultural capital" came in first place, with a mean of 4.11 and a high degree of agreement. This result indicates the need to establish financial incentives and allocate a dedicated budget to support knowledge management projects that foster investment in cultural capital.

The item "Lack of a clear, comprehensive knowledge management strategy to support investment in culture" ranked second, with a mean of 4.10 and a high degree of agreement. This indicates the need for a clear knowledge management strategy to support investment in the cultural sector. The item "Weak communication between knowledge management and other departments concerned with culture" ranked third with a mean of 4.09 and a high degree of agreement. This result underscores the need to establish effective coordination and communication mechanisms between knowledge management units and culture-related departments to strengthen the role of knowledge management in fostering investment in the university's cultural capital.

The item "Lack of sustainable training programs that support the development of staff and academics in the field of knowledge management" ranked fourth, with a mean of 4.06 and a high degree of agreement. The item "Lack of adequate appreciation for the value of cultural capital and the importance of investing in it" was placed fifth with a mean of 4.04 and a high degree of agreement. The item "Lack of partnerships with external entities that can support cultural capital" ranked sixth, with a mean of 4.03 and a high degree of agreement. The item "Difficulty measuring existing cultural capital" ranked seventh, with a mean of 4.02 and high agreement.

The item "Lack of knowledge about innovations and best practices in managing cultural capital" ranked eighth, with a mean of 4.01 and a high degree of agreement. This was followed by the item "Lack of information related to cultural capital at the university." It ranked ninth, with a mean of 3.99 and a high degree of agreement. The item "Lack of appropriate tools and technologies for collecting and analyzing cultural data" ranked tenth and last, with a mean of 3.87 and a high degree of agreement. It seems this result is attributable to the university's strong technical infrastructure. This finding, as shown, indicates that the most significant challenges are not technical but rather stem from the lack of a clear knowledge management strategy for investing in cultural capital.

Table 7 presents the means and standard deviations of the participants' responses to the items in the section 'Requirements for enhancing the role of knowledge management to support investment in cultural capital'. The results indicate that the overall mean of the participants' responses to the items in this section was 4.55 and a (very high) degree of agreement, while the standard deviation was 0.658, indicating the homogeneity of the

participants' responses to the items in this section. The table shows that the item meanings in this section range from 4.49 to 4.58

Table 7. Means and standard deviations of participants' responses to items in the section 'Requirements for enhancing the role of knowledge management in supporting investment in cultural capital'

Items	Mean	Standard deviation	Agreement degree	Rank
Establish a central electronic knowledge management platform to collect, document, and facilitate access to and exchange cultural knowledge	4.49	0.741	Strongly Agree	10
Offer training programs that focus on the principles and practices of knowledge management and cultural capital	4.517	0.612	Strongly Agree	6
Activate collaborative networks between various academic departments to integrate and apply cultural knowledge into projects that promote the knowledge economy	4.507	0.595	Strongly Agree	8
Establish specialized educational programs in cultural management and the cultural economy to transform cultural knowledge into economic opportunities	4.502	0.620	Strongly Agree	9
Organize cultural exhibitions and conferences within the university to showcase cultural research and projects, and transform them into investment opportunities	4.54	0.635	Strongly Agree	4
Establish an advisory unit concerned with knowledge management and transforming cultural capital into successful business projects	4.52	0.620	Strongly Agree	5
Encourage partnerships with the private sector to support cultural projects, transforming cultural capital into value-added economic investments	4.58	0.597	Strongly Agree	1
Include cultural capital investment at the university within strategies for transitioning to a knowledge economy	4.512	0.636	Strongly Agree	7
Establish a Cultural Capital Center to support cultural innovation and provide cultural initiatives, consultations, and studies	4.55	0.650	Strongly Agree	3
Allocate an appropriate budget to activate the role of knowledge management in supporting investment in cultural capital	4.56	0.625	Strongly Agree	2
Section 'Requirements for enhancing the role of knowledge management in supporting investment in cultural capital'	4.55	0.658		

Source: own processing

The item "Encouraging partnerships with the private sector to support cultural projects, to transform cultural capital into value-added economic investments" came in first place, with a mean of 4.58 and a (very high) degree of agreement. This result reflects the participants' awareness of the importance of forming partnerships with the private sector to invest in cultural capital and maximize its economic value. The item "Allocating an appropriate budget to activate the role of knowledge management in supporting investment in cultural capital" ranked second, with a mean of 4.56 and a "very high" approval rating. This result is consistent with the item ranked first among the challenges and reinforces the need for a budget to activate knowledge management in support of cultural projects. The item "Establishing a cultural capital Center to support cultural innovation and provide cultural initiatives, consultations, and studies" ranked third with a mean of 4.55 and a "very high" approval rating. This result underscores the importance of a specialized entity to support knowledge management in investing in cultural capital and launching cultural and creative projects.

The item "Organizing cultural exhibitions and conferences within the university to showcase research and cultural projects and transform them into investment opportunities" was positioned fourth, with a mean of 4.54 and a "very high" approval rating. The item "Establishing a consulting unit concerned with knowledge management and transforming cultural capital into successful business projects" ranked fifth, with a mean of 4.52 and a "very high" approval rating. The item "Providing training programs related to knowledge management principles and practices and cultural capital" was positioned sixth with a mean of 4.517 and a "very high" approval rating. The phrase "Including cultural capital investment in the university as part of the strategies for transitioning to a knowledge economy" ranked seventh, with a mean of 4.512 and a "very high" approval rating.

The item "Lack of knowledge about innovations and best practices in cultural capital management" ranked eighth, with a mean of 4.01 and a "very high" approval rating. This was followed by the item "Establishing specialized educational programs in cultural management and the cultural economy to transform cultural knowledge into economic opportunities", which ranked ninth, with a mean of 4.502 and a "very high" approval rating. The item "Establishing a central electronic platform for knowledge management to collect, document, and facilitate access to and exchange cultural knowledge" ranked tenth and last, with a mean of 4.49 and a "very high" approval rating.

Discussion of the findings

Based on the study's findings, the challenges facing knowledge management in investing in cultural capital can be classified into four main categories, as outlined below.

Strategic and organizational challenges

This category highlights weaknesses in senior management frameworks, the absence of a clear strategic vision, and limited institutional coordination among different departments. A key strategic challenge is the lack of a comprehensive and clearly articulated knowledge management strategy that explicitly supports investment in cultural capital. Closely related to this is the insufficient institutional awareness of the value of cultural capital and its strategic importance, which represents both a strategic and a cultural challenge. In addition, structural and organizational challenges exist at both internal and external levels. Internally, weak communication and limited integration between knowledge management units and departments responsible for cultural activities hinder effective collaboration and alignment. Externally, one of the most significant organizational challenges is the scarcity of partnerships with external entities capable of supporting, developing, and commercializing cultural capital.

Professional and training challenges

This category relates to individual capabilities, skill development, and motivation to engage in cultural knowledge management actively. One of the most prominent challenges is the lack of material and moral incentives to support knowledge management initiatives related to cultural capital, which directly affects staff motivation and engagement. Additional challenges concern training and professional development, particularly the absence of sustainable and systematic training programs that enhance the competencies of academic and administrative staff in knowledge management and cultural capital investment.

Informational challenges

This category reflects deficiencies in the collection, analysis, and evaluation of cultural data at both internal and external levels. Internally, there is a shortage of systematically documented information related to cultural capital. Externally, limited awareness of

international innovations and global best practices in cultural capital management constrains learning and benchmarking. Moreover, challenges related to evaluation and measurement were identified, as the findings indicate significant difficulties in measuring cultural capital and assessing its economic, social, and intellectual impacts.

Technical challenges and requirements

Despite the university's relatively strong digital infrastructure, several technical challenges persist. These include the limited availability of specialized technologies and tools that effectively support knowledge management processes, particularly those required for the efficient collection, analysis, storage, and management of cultural data.

Considering the study's findings, the requirements for enhancing the role of knowledge management in supporting investment in cultural capital can be grouped into four main areas.

Strategic and structural framework

This area focuses on strengthening the institutional vision, redefining organizational roles, and establishing supportive structures. Key requirements include integrating cultural capital investment into the university's strategic orientation toward the knowledge economy. Structurally, this entails establishing dedicated institutional units for cultural investment, such as a specialized center for cultural capital that supports cultural innovation through initiatives, consultations, and applied cultural studies. It also includes the creation of a specialized knowledge management consulting unit tasked with transforming cultural capital into viable economic projects and activating collaborative networks among academic departments to integrate cultural knowledge into interdisciplinary projects that promote the knowledge economy.

Human development and education

This area emphasizes human capacity building and the development of academic and professional competencies needed to invest in cultural capital. Training requirements include designing and implementing specialized programs in knowledge management and cultural capital to activate latent cultural resources. In addition, establishing academic programs in cultural management and the cultural economy is essential to transform cultural knowledge into structured, knowledge-based economic outputs.

Technological and knowledge infrastructure

This pillar focuses on providing the technological tools and platforms needed to organize, document, and exchange cultural knowledge. A central requirement is the development of an integrated electronic knowledge management platform dedicated to collecting, documenting, and facilitating access to cultural knowledge, and supporting knowledge sharing and collaboration across the institution.

Funding and external partnerships

This pillar addresses the need to secure financial resources and build effective partnerships to support cultural investment. Internally, it requires allocating an adequate and sustainable budget to activate the role of knowledge management in cultural capital investment. Externally, it involves fostering partnerships with the private sector and cultural institutions to transform cultural capital into economic opportunities. It also includes collaboration with external entities to organize cultural exhibitions, conferences, and events within the university, showcasing research outputs and cultural projects and converting them into tangible investment opportunities.

Conclusions and recommendations

This study aimed to shed light on challenges and requirements for knowledge management in supporting investment in cultural capital in higher education institutions, using King Abdulaziz University as a case study. Considering the global shift toward a knowledge economy, universities play a pivotal role and are considered the key sources for knowledge production, promoting creativity and innovation. Thanks to its significant position, King Abdulaziz University is undoubtedly a prominent model in this regard. Cultural capital is a fundamental resource that supports competitiveness, creativity, and sustainability, but investing in and managing it strategically is challenging. Therefore, this paper aims to identify the most important requirements and challenges facing the use of knowledge management to support investment in cultural capital at King Abdulaziz University.

Results revealed several challenges facing knowledge management in supporting investment in cultural capital, including: a lack of incentives to support knowledge management projects related to cultural capital, the absence of a clear, comprehensive knowledge management strategy to support cultural investment, and weak communication between knowledge management and other departments involved in culture. The results also revealed a set of requirements, most notably: encouraging partnerships with the private sector to support cultural projects, transforming cultural capital into value-added economic investments, and allocating an appropriate budget to activate knowledge management to support investment in cultural capital and in addition, establishing a Cultural Capital Center to support cultural innovation and provide cultural initiatives, consultations, studies, and organizing cultural exhibitions and conferences within the university to showcase cultural research and projects, to turn them into investment opportunities.

Considering the study results, the following recommendations are proposed to fully optimize the role of knowledge management in investing in cultural capital. Establishing organized digital cultural knowledge: Developing digital libraries of literary, artistic, and musical works, including digital repositories and online stores for cultural and creative content such as books, videos, podcasts, and educational and cultural games. Creating interactive platforms to share cultural and artistic knowledge and systematically documenting patents, awards, and cultural research.

Moreover, developing knowledge integration networks: Establishing partnerships with internal and external cultural and production institutions and organizing specialized conferences and workshops for knowledge exchange in areas such as arts, photography, film, publishing, design, tourism, and other cultural industries. Constructing networks of experts and professional communication platforms, and developing marketable cultural products, including exhibitions, short films, and podcasts.

In addition, building partnerships and fostering cultural entrepreneurship: Creating incubators and Centers for creative businesses (e.g., advertising, design, cultural tourism, handicrafts), supporting student projects and cultural entrepreneurship in collaboration with external companies and institutions. Reinforcing the university's role as a hub for creativity, innovation, and economic development in the cultural sector, while participating in international exhibitions and competitions, and winning cultural awards to enhance institutional prestige and cultural capital.

Practical and theoretical implications

Given the scarcity of studies addressing the role of Knowledge Management (KM) in activating this investment within regional academic environments, this paper aims to bridge this knowledge gap by identifying and analyzing the key institutional requirements and procedural challenges facing KM in effectively investing in cultural capital. The study's significance and merit stem from its reliance on comprehensive quantitative data

collected from 240 participants representing leading academic and administrative figures at King Abdulaziz University, a pioneering institution in Saudi Arabia.

The analysis revealed key challenges, most notably a lack of incentives, the absence of a comprehensive KM strategy, and weak communication among cultural departments. Conversely, the study identified essential requirements, such as encouraging partnerships with the private sector, allocating appropriate budgets, and establishing a specialized center for cultural capital to transform cultural assets into value-added economic investments. This analysis will provide a foundation and a reliable theoretical basis for building KM strategies and developing future business models for regional universities. Given the structural similarities among Saudi universities, these findings offer insights that are broadly generalizable to other higher education institutions across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Limitations and future research directions

Despite the valuable contributions this study makes in identifying the requirements and challenges facing knowledge management in investing in cultural capital, it is important to clearly point out the limitations that may affect the scope and generalizability of the findings. The main methodological limitation is that the study is limited to identifying and analyzing the challenges and requirements necessary to support investment in cultural capital, without proceeding to the stage of developing a comprehensive practical model for knowledge management, which the authors are working on in future studies. Nevertheless, this analysis establishes a strong theoretical foundation for a future integrated model that enables knowledge management to invest in cultural capital in universities.

Based on the study's findings, existing literature, and developments in the knowledge and creative economies, future research should strengthen both theory and practice by refining conceptual models, addressing empirical gaps, and enhancing the integration of knowledge management with cultural capital investment, particularly through broader university samples and proposed models for higher education institutions.

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