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Knowledge Management Levels, Organizational Agility, Corporate Social Responsibility, And Performance Effectiveness Enhancement At Rajabhat Universities In The Rattanakosin Group

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Abstract

This academic article presented the concept of knowledge management levels, organizational agility, corporate social responsibility, and performance effectiveness enhancement at Rajabhat Universities in the Rattanakosin Group. The objective was to synthesize theories and concepts related to knowledge management, organizational agility, and corporate social responsibility affecting the performance effectiveness of Rajabhat Universities in the Rattanakosin Group as higher education institutions playing a vital role in local development in a rapidly changing and highly competitive urban context. This study conducted a review of relevant national and international literature and research to analyze and integrate these findings into an academic conceptual framework tailored to the specific context of Rajabhat Universities.

The synthesis results indicated that knowledge management was a key part of the university's human resource development, innovation, and operational quality improvement; organizational agility was a strategic tool that helped the university adapt to and respond to changes in technology, policy, and societal expectations; and corporate social responsibility was a key factor in sustainably connecting the university's mission with the community and stakeholders. Systematically integrating these three concepts fostered performance effectiveness across all the core missions of higher education institutions.

The knowledge derived from this article can serve as a policy and practical framework for enhancing the management of Rajabhat Universities in the Rattanakosin Group to strengthen competitive advantages, expand roles in local development, and support the operations of higher education institutions with effectiveness and long-term sustainability.

Keywords: knowledge management, organizational agility, corporate social responsibility, performance effectiveness enhancement, Rajabhat Universities in the Rattanakosin Group

1. Introduction

The global community is facing rapid transformations across multiple dimensions, including economic, social, political, technological, and environmental sectors. In particular, continuous advancements in technology and digital innovation have created impacts at all levels, from individuals and organizations to national scales. The digital revolution has

ushered in new challenges, such as the transformation of work processes, big data management, the integration of artificial intelligence in business operations, and borderless communication. Consequently, both public and private organizations, including higher education institutions, must urgently adapt to maintain their competitiveness and preserve their vital roles in driving the economy and society at both national and global levels. Higher education institutions, therefore, are no longer merely centers for producing graduates and disseminating knowledge; they must also develop expertise, technology, and innovation to respond to societal needs and enhance their role in driving sustainable national development across all dimensions.

Organizational performance effectiveness is the cornerstone of modern university management. Higher education institutions carry diverse missions, including teaching management, research, academic services, and arts and culture preservation with effective management across all dimensions to meet the needs of students, communities, and society comprehensively and sustainably. A critical factor affecting a university's performance effectiveness is Knowledge Management (KM) as a vital process of gathering, storing, transferring, and applying knowledge systematically and continuously. An effective KM system will enhance personnel potential, operational quality, and full application of accumulated expertise. Simultaneously, Organizational Agility (OA) directly affects success in the modern era. Highly agile organizations can respond rapidly to change, adapt appropriately, and maintain a continuous competitive advantage. However, many Rajabhat Universities still face challenges related to complex bureaucratic structures, rigid traditional cultures, and a lack of mechanisms that foster flexibility. These hurdles often lead to slow operations and an inability to adapt effectively to change. When an organization achieves operational effectiveness, it naturally extends to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), a vital mission for Rajabhat Universities, as a crucial linkage between the university, community, and society; effective CSR will enhance corporate image, build institutional credibility, foster ongoing collaboration with both internal and external stakeholders, and build the long-term relationship with the community. Despite its importance, in practice, many universities lack continuity in their CSR activities and have yet to truly integrate them into their core missions. Consequently, these efforts often fail to create a fully sustainable positive impact on society and the community. Therefore, if Rajabhat Universities can systematically elevate their CSR performance in alignment with their corporate strategy, it will strengthen both their administrative foundations and their long-term social contribution sustainably.

This article focuses on Rajabhat Universities, which are public higher education institutions under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation. The study examines knowledge management, organizational agility, and corporate social responsibility, yielding significant insights that enhance the comprehension of organizational operations as a crucial resource for executives and stakeholders in higher education institutions to promote increased organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

Rajabhat Universities

Rajabhat Universities are public higher education institutions under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation (MHESI), under the Rajabhat University Act, B.E. 2547 (2004). From their humble beginnings as "Teachers' Colleges," they transitioned into "Rajabhat Institutes" and achieved "University" status in 2004. Rajabhat Universities

play a vital role in producing and developing educational personnel, including driving sustainable community and local development aligning with the Royal Policy of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX), who intended for them to serve as “Universities for Local Development” (Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2018).

Currently, there are thirty-eight Rajabhat Universities nationwide, categorized into various regional groups. Among these, five Rajabhat Universities in the Rattanakosin Group are significant because they are located in Bangkok and the metropolitan area, which is the nation’s hub for economy, politics, education, and culture, including

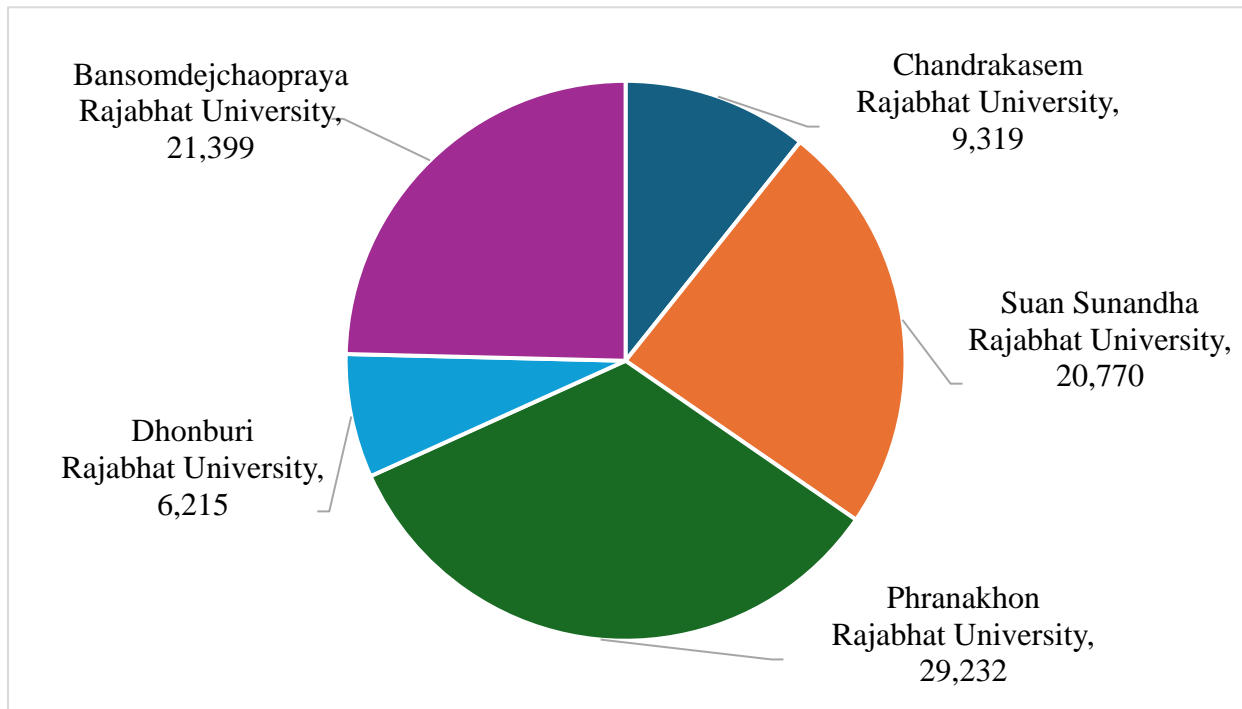
- 1) Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University
- 2) Chandrakasem Rajabhat University
- 3) Phranakhon Rajabhat University
- 4) Dhonburi Rajabhat University
- 5) Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University

Each of these five universities possesses distinct strengths and areas of expertise. For instance, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University is prominent in business administration and hospitality services; Chandrakasem Rajabhat University emphasizes producing teachers and educational personnel; and Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University is renowned for Thai music and arts and culture (Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation, 2022). According to 2023 data from MHESI, the thirty-eight Rajabhat Universities nationwide have a total combined enrollment of over 540,000 students, reflecting the overall growth of the Rajabhat system. Rajabhat Universities in the Rattanakosin Group account for approximately 90,000 of these students, distributed as follows:

- Chandrakasem Rajabhat University: 9,319 students
- Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University: 20,770 students
- Phranakhon Rajabhat University: 29,232 students
- Dhonburi Rajabhat University: 6,215 students
- Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University: 21,399 students.

Number of students of Rajabhat Universities in the Rattanakosin Group for the Year 2023

Figure 1: Number of students of Rajabhat Universities in the Rattanakosin Group for the Year 2023



The core missions of Rajabhat Universities in the Rattanakosin Group include producing graduates of high quality and integrity, conducting research to generate knowledge and innovation, providing academic services to society and local communities, preserving arts and culture, and driving local development. Furthermore, this university group faces greater challenges than Rajabhat universities in other regions due to intense competition, high societal expectations, and the pressures of rapid transformation within major urban areas encompassing economic, social, technological, and educational shifts. Consequently, Rajabhat Universities in the Rattanakosin Group have to enhance their organization comprehensively, which involves improving administrative efficiency, enhancing organizational agility, strengthening knowledge management, and implementing intensive and continuous corporate social responsibility (CSR) intensely to meet their missions and roles effectively and sustainably (Sasithorn Butdee, 2020).

Concepts and Theories Related to Knowledge Management

Knowledge Management (KM) refers to the systematic process of generating, gathering, storing, sharing, and applying knowledge to develop the organization, enhance the operational efficiency, foster the innovation, and maintain long-term competitiveness (Dalkir, 2017).

The key components of knowledge management consist of three main pillars as follows:

- 1) People: The source of knowledge and the primary actors in generating, sharing, and applying it.

2) Process: The procedures and methods for managing knowledge, such as gathering, storing, sharing, and applying it.

3) Technology: The tools or systems that support the storage and transfer of knowledge, such as database systems, cloud computing, or internal social networks (Alavi & Leidner, 2001).

A theory related to knowledge management is the SECI Model by Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995), which explains the four stages of knowledge conversion as follows:

1) Socialization (Tacit-to-Tacit): Sharing tacit knowledge through experiences, such as training or collaboration.

2) Externalization (Tacit-to-Explicit): Converting tacit knowledge into explicit forms, such as manuals or documentation.

3) Combination (Explicit-to-Explicit): Organizing and integrating explicit knowledge, such as developing work plans or data systems.

4) Internalization (Explicit-to-Tacit): Transforming explicit knowledge back into tacit knowledge through practical application until it becomes a skill.

This theory emphasizes that knowledge is not derived solely from documents or databases but is also generated through experiential sharing and continuous collective learning within the organization.

Furthermore, the Resource-Based View (RBV) by Barney (1991) identifies knowledge as a strategic resource that can create a Sustainable Competitive Advantage with four characteristics (VRIN): Valuable, Rare, Inimitable, and Non-substitutable. If the organization knows how to use its knowledge well, it can gain a long-term edge over its competitors.

Roles of Knowledge Management in Organizations

Knowledge Management (KM) is not only vital for business corporations but is also vital for higher education institutions, particularly Rajabhat Universities with critical mandates in producing graduates, conducting research, and providing academic services. In this context, KM will enhance educational quality, administrative efficiency, and the establishment of collaborative networks with communities. Furthermore, it enables organizations to respond to societal changes both effectively and sustainably (Dalkir, 2017).

Consequently, knowledge management plays a vital role in modern organizations, especially the educational sector. Universities have to leverage KM to enhance their personnel, research, and academic services, driving sustainable institutional growth and adapting to the change of society efficiently.

Concepts and Theories Related to Organizational Agility

Definition of Organizational Agility

Organizational Agility (OA) refers to an ability of an organization to respond to the changes in both internal and external environments with speed, flexibility, and efficiency to maintain continuous operations and competitiveness within an ever-changing environment (Tallon & Pinsonneault, 2011).

Furthermore, organizational agility is not only short-term adaptation, but it also encompasses having a flexible vision, proactive management, and strategic decision-making rapidly and accurately to foster growth and create sustainable long-term value (Doz & Kosonen, 2010).

Components of Organizational Agility

According to the concept of Sharifi & Zhang (1999), organizational agility consists of four core dimensions as follows:

- 1) **Sensitivity to Change:** The ability to detect and perceive opportunities or threats arising from both internal and external shifts, such as technological advancements, customer needs, or economic conditions.
- 2) **Responsiveness:** The speed and efficiency in adjusting strategies, work processes, and organizational structures in responding to occurring changes.
- 3) **Flexibility:** The capability to adapt resources, structures, or operational methods in responding to diverse and uncertain situations.
- 4) **Competitiveness:** The ability to create and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage, even when facing significant changes or volatility.

Organizational Agility Framework of McKinsey & Company (2015)

McKinsey & Company (2015) put forward an Organizational Agility Framework that stresses the need for a balance between stability and change. McKinsey indicates that organizational agility does not mean constant flux; rather, it requires maintaining certain stable elements such as infrastructure, core values, and governance systems, while simultaneously fostering dynamic capabilities like innovation, rapid decision-making, and continuous learning. Consequently, an agile organization possesses a structure and culture that facilitate both swift change and robust stability at the same time.

Importance of Organizational Agility in the Educational Context

Although the concept of organizational agility originated in a business context, now it is increasingly being adopted by universities and higher education institutions worldwide as driven by the rapid transformations, including intensifying inter-institutional competition, shifts in educational technology, evolving student and societal expectations, and changes in educational policy.

Agility within a university will facilitate the designing of new curricula, responding to government policies, and adapting internal management to align with contemporary contexts effectively (Teece et al., 2016).

Organizational agility is a vital concept in an era of rapid business and social change, emphasizing the capacity to perceive, adapt, respond, and compete sustainably. In the context of Rajabhat Universities, promoting organizational agility is essential for improving academic capabilities and providing social services more efficiently.

Concepts and Theories Related to Corporate Social Responsibility

Definition of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) refers to the approach or strategy the organization uses to conduct activities by considering the impacts on society, the environment, and all groups of stakeholders to create mutual benefits for both the organization and society, including promoting sustainable development (Carroll & Shabana, 2010).

In general, CSR encompasses both legal mandates (activities required by law) and ethical initiatives that an organization undertakes voluntarily to build a positive corporate image and foster strong relationships with the community and stakeholders.

Theories Related to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Carroll's Pyramid of CSR (1991), proposed by scholar Archie B. Carroll, categorizes corporate social responsibility into four distinct levels as follows:

- 1) **Economic Responsibility:** The foundation of the pyramid, focusing on maintaining profitability for organizational survival and economic stability.
- 2) **Legal Responsibility:** The obligation to comply with all relevant laws and regulations, such as labor laws, taxation, and environmental protections.
- 3) **Ethical Responsibility:** The commitment to conduct operations ethically, transparently, and fairly, even in areas not explicitly mandated by law.
- 4) **Philanthropic Responsibility:** The voluntary engagement in social activities that benefit the community, such as donations, volunteering, and other philanthropic initiatives.

Benefits of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for Organizations

Numerous studies have demonstrated that CSR provides significant benefits to organizations, as follows (Carroll & Shabana, 2010):

- 1) Enhancement of corporate image and credibility
- 2) Increased competitive advantage
- 3) Strengthening relationships with communities and stakeholders
- 4) Mitigation of legal and environmental risks
- 5) Encouragement of long-term growth and stability

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the University Context

While the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) originated in a business context, now it is increasingly being adopted by universities and higher education institutions worldwide and includes providing academic services to communities, implementing environmental conservation within campuses, promoting volunteerism and youth development, and designing curricula that emphasize ethics and sustainability. The universities that consistently engage in CSR initiatives will enhance their reputation and build trust among students and parents (Yusliza et al., 2019).

CSR is a vital concept that all organizations should prioritize, especially in an era where society and consumers are highly conscious of corporate responsibility. The CSR concept will

enable organizations to operate ethically, create positive social and environmental impacts, and strengthen their long-term competitive advantage sustainably.

Concepts and Theories Related to Organizational Performance Effectiveness

Definition of Organizational Performance Effectiveness

Organizational performance effectiveness refers to the ability of the organization to achieve goals and objectives across all operational dimensions and is measured by the degree of success attained in both outcomes and processes (Daft, 2010).

Effectiveness is distinct from efficiency: effectiveness emphasizes achievement of goals (doing the right things), but efficiency emphasizes the optimal use of resources to minimize waste (doing things right). Consequently, a highly effective organization is one that can achieve its target goals and generate desired outcomes, even if it requires significant resource consumption.

Components and Indicators of Organizational Effectiveness

The literature review identifies several widely recognized models for measuring organizational effectiveness as follow:

1) Goal Approach: Etzioni (1964) proposed that organizational effectiveness is measured by the attainment of predefined goals. An organization is considered effective if it achieves its targets, such as production quotas, profit increases, or market share expansion.

2) Systems Resource Approach: Yuchtman & Seashore (1967) proposed that effectiveness should be measured by the ability to acquire essential resources and organizational survival, emphasizing the capacity to attract resources from the environment, such as capital, raw materials, or personnel.

3) Process Approach: Steers (1977) proposed that effectiveness should be considered by the smoothness of internal organizational processes, such as management efficiency, collaboration, employee satisfaction, and the quality of internal communication.

4) Strategic Constituencies Approach: Connolly, Conlon & Deutsch (1980) proposed that an organization is effective only when it satisfies the expectations of key stakeholder groups, such as customers, shareholders, government agencies, and the community.

5) Competing Values Framework (CVF): Quinn & Rohrbaugh (1983) categorized this effectiveness model into four dimensions as follows:

- Internal Process Model: Emphasizes stability, control, and internal efficiency.
- Rational Goal Model: Emphasizes planning, goal achievement, and measurable productivity.
- Open Systems Model: Emphasizes innovation, growth, and environmental adaptation.
- Human Relations Model: Emphasizes cohesion, human resource development, and employee morale.

The CVF is regarded as the most comprehensive and flexible model, as it emphasizes the balance of effectiveness across multiple dimensions.

Balanced Scorecard (BSC) and Organizational Performance Effectiveness

Kaplan & Norton (1992) developed the Balanced Scorecard (BSC), a systematic framework for measuring and managing organizational effectiveness across four key perspectives as follows:

- 1) Financial Perspective: financial outcomes, such as revenue, profitability, and return on investment (ROI).
- 2) Customer Perspective: customer satisfaction, retention, and loyalty.
- 3) Internal Process Perspective: efficiency and quality of internal operational processes.
- 4) Learning & Growth Perspective: human capital development, organizational learning capabilities, and innovation.

The BSC offers an in-depth look at organizational performance by balancing tangible outcomes with the internal capabilities required for future development.

Effectiveness in the Context of Higher Education Institutions

In the context of universities and higher education institutions, effectiveness refers to the successful performance of four core dimensions as follows:

- 1) Graduation Outcomes
- 2) Research and Innovation
- 3) Academic Services
- 4) Cultural Preservation

Institutional effectiveness indicators typically include graduate quality (employment rates, academic achievement), the quantity and quality of research publications, the number of community service activities, and cultural and artistic outcomes. Moreover, student and stakeholder satisfaction are considered essential metrics of quality and social acknowledgment (Richard et al., 2009).

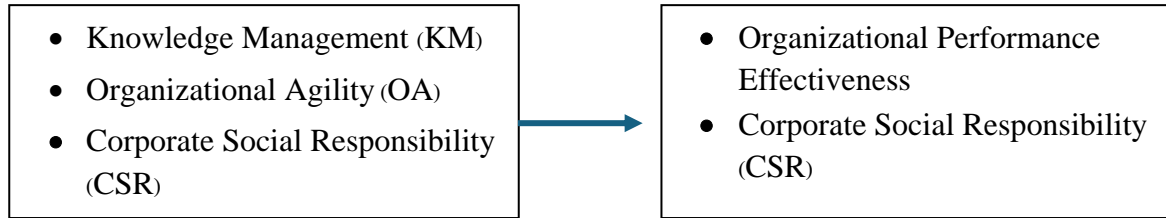
Organizational effectiveness is a vital concept that reflects overall success in all operational aspects, from achieving strategic goals and internal management to satisfying stakeholders. In the context of universities, assessing effectiveness has to encompass all four core dimensions and utilize diverse measurement tools, such as the Balanced Scorecard or the Competing Values Framework, to ensure comprehensive and balanced results.

New Knowledge

This article improved the integration of existing concepts by adapting them to the specific context of Rajabhat Universities in the Rattanakosin Group, which serves as a significant source of context-based knowledge strength.

Integrated New Knowledge

The integrated framework is as follow:



In the context of being a “University for Urban Local Development,” Knowledge Management (KM) was required as the foundation, Organizational Agility (OA) as the mechanism, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as the social linkage to achieve performance effectiveness.

Conclusion

This academic article aimed to synthesize concepts and theories regarding knowledge management, organizational agility, and corporate social responsibility affecting the operational effectiveness of Rajabhat Universities in the Rattanakosin Group. The findings revealed that knowledge management was a foundational pillar for human resource development, innovation, and operational quality enhancement of the university; organizational agility was a strategic mechanism enabling the institution to adapt and respond effectively to shifts in technology, policy, and societal expectations; and corporate social responsibility was a key driver in sustainably linking the university’s mission with the community and stakeholders. When these three concepts were systematically integrated, they fostered performance effectiveness across all the core missions of higher education institutions. The study reflected that developing Rajabhat Universities in the Rattanakosin Group in an era of change required integrated management emphasizing organizational learning, structural flexibility, and corporate social responsibility to strengthen the higher education institution, which serves as a key mechanism for the sustainable development of Thai local communities and society.

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