

# EVALUATION OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN RELIGIOUS TOURISM: A CASE STUDY IN SOME TOURISM COMPANIES IN KARBALA

**ABSTRACT:** This study examines the impact of improving knowledge management processes in religious tourism, focusing on tourism enterprises in Karbala, Iraq. Specifically, it explores organisational knowledge management practices in relation to innovation in religious tourism services and the enhancement of organisational performance. Using the Knowledge Assessment Methodology for Processes (KAMP) and survey data collected from key tourism companies in Karbala, the research investigates three primary areas: the types of knowledge management practices adopted by these organisations for tourism development, the effects of these practices on the organisations and their employees, as well as on tourists, and the challenges faced by these organisations in implementing knowledge management practices. Additionally, the study seeks to establish the relationship between knowledge management and customer satisfaction and explores the potential of leveraging knowledge management to create a competitive advantage in religious tourism. Data collection involved the administration of surveys and interview questionnaires to selected tourism companies, providing valuable insights into knowledge management in this specific market segment. The findings reveal that, despite barriers to the adoption of knowledge management practices, their implementation can significantly enhance the quality of religious tourism services. The study concludes with recommendations for improving knowledge management practices in tourism enterprises to better address the evolving needs of religious tourism.

**Keywords:** Knowledge Management Processes, Religious Tourism, Sample of Tourism Companies.

## 1. Introduction

To achieve excellence and provide institutions with a competitive advantage through optimal utilisation of the human element, knowledge management processes are recognised as among the most significant contemporary administrative strategies and approaches (Imhanzenobe, Adejumo, & Ikpesu, 2021). Institutions must consistently strive to deliver high levels of performance to adapt to ongoing developments and challenges, acknowledging the importance of survival and continuity in an environment characterised by complexity and constant change across economic, political, social, and technological domains.

Human capital represents the most valuable resource for organisations, possessing the greatest potential to elevate them to international standing (Gerhart & Feng, 2021; Luo, Zhuo, & Xu, 2024). By leveraging intellectual and cognitive capabilities, knowledge management enables institutions to grow, adapt, and achieve excellence within the context of the knowledge society (Alfawaire & Atan, 2021). Tourism is one of the industry's most dependent on human interaction for its services (Ragazou et al., 2023). As a vital source of national wealth, it significantly contributes to the economies of numerous nations worldwide.

Tourism-related organisations, particularly travel agencies, play a pivotal role within local communities. Given the substantial number of tourism-related enterprises in the Karbala Governorate, the industry warrants attention due to its contribution to the region's economic prosperity (Zwead, 2023). In light of these considerations, this research is divided into four sections. The first section addresses the scientific methodology of the study, encompassing the research problem, its significance, and objectives. The second section presents the theoretical conceptual framework for knowledge management processes and the enhancement of religious tourism. The third section examines the practical aspects and findings derived from statistical analysis. Finally, the fourth section outlines the most significant conclusions and recommendations based on the findings.

In the context of modern organisations, achieving business excellence relies on the efficient utilisation of capabilities that can enhance the value added for tourism customers. This value arises from the effective management of two intangible resources: human capital and knowledge assets, both of which are critical for making sound and effective decisions. There is an increasing recognition that many organisational

Hana Jasim Mohammed<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Al-Qadissiyah University, Collage of Administration & Economics-Department of Business, Iraq.  
Email: hana.muhammed@qu.edu.iq

activities are cognitive in nature, with knowledge emerging as a key strategic asset. It plays a vital role in addressing challenges, improving learning, enhancing performance efficiency, and fostering customer loyalty. In light of these considerations, the following research questions are proposed:

- To what extent is knowledge management currently implemented within the organisations under investigation?
- What is the role of knowledge management, and which key dimensions are crucial for enhancing the tourism industry?
- How can knowledge management processes contribute to the improvement of tourism?

This study highlights the significance of religious tourism within the Iraqi context, where knowledge of its potential impact on the labour market and economy remains limited. By focusing on knowledge management processes, the research aims to raise awareness among employees in tourism organisations, thereby enhancing the appeal of the tourism sector and increasing tourist numbers. The outcomes emphasise the role of religious tourism in driving economic development and prosperity, while encouraging organisations to support knowledge management initiatives. Such a shift towards strengthening religious tourism is instrumental in fostering a better understanding of its importance among key stakeholders, aligning with contemporary management theories. Additionally, enhancing human resource capabilities is a crucial factor in improving both the quality and quantity of religious tourism, which, in turn, benefits the organisations under investigation.

**2. Literature Review**  
**1.2. Introduction to Knowledge Management**

Knowledge management (KM) has emerged as a critical concept in achieving organisational success, particularly within service-based industries (Alfawaire & Atan, 2021; Imhanzenobe et al., 2021). It is defined in vocational academia as the purposeful, professional, or project-based accumulation, organisation, and distribution of information, aimed at enhancing decision-making processes, efficiency, and innovation. According to KM frameworks, such as those proposed by Mertins, Heisig and Vorbeck (2001) and Shahzad et al. (2016), these processes emphasise integration into a unified system that delivers valuable knowledge. In the contemporary service environment, KM is essential for fostering collective intelligence, organisational renewal, and customer-centric solutions.

**2.1.1. Creative Knowledge Creation**

The process of generating and transmitting knowledge is a fundamental aspect of knowledge management. For an organisation to remain competitive, it must possess the capacity to create new knowledge. Daily insights are often derived from engagement in projects and various activities. Knowledge is accumulated through diverse methods, some of which are explicitly linked to systematic procedures or technological tools. By acquiring new information, organisations improve their ability to innovate, generate knowledge, and create value (Barua, 2018).

**2.2. Knowledge Storage**

Knowledge storage encompasses both soft and hard mechanisms for preserving personal and institutional knowledge, ensuring its easy retrieval. The documentation of policies allows access to codified knowledge without necessitating direct interaction with its creator. This process not only saves time and organisational resources but also enhances overall performance (Caroline, Mugun, & Loice, 2015).

**2.2.1. Knowledge Transmission**

Also known as knowledge dissemination or distribution, this process involves systematic methods for sharing knowledge with employees who need it, while removing irrelevant information from storage. Such practices facilitate the effective absorption of knowledge by recipients, whether in contexts such as salary, retirement benefits, or organisational events like knowledge fairs (Maier, 2007).

**2.2.2. Knowledge Utilization**

Knowledge plays a crucial role in organisational performance, supporting decision-making and task completion. Its application depends on the existing knowledge acquired through discovery, acquisition, and sharing processes. Even when the knowledge is not fully understood, it can still inform decisions and actions. This application is enabled by routine and contextual procedures that prioritise specific recommendations rather than direct knowledge exchange (Becerra-Fernandez & Sabherwal, 2010).

**2.3. Religious Tourism: An Overview**

Religious tourism is one of the oldest forms of travel, deeply embedded in cultural and spiritual traditions. It plays a pivotal role in the economic and social development of regions such as Karbala, where pilgrimages to sacred sites generate local revenue and foster cultural exchange. This form of tourism is not

only driven by religious obligations but also by a desire for peace, spiritual growth, and cultural exploration (Kim, Kim, & King, 2020). The global expansion of the sector is reflected in the diversity of participants and the sustainability of revenues generated by products such as Hajj and Umrah.

**2.3.1. Promoting Religious Tourism**

In centuries, religious tourism has remained one of the oldest and most popular types of tourism. Particularly prevalent in Islamic countries, this type of tourism contributes significantly to the industry's revenues. It is based on the concept of pilgrimage, having a strong cultural and social effect on the host communities due to religious tourism (Rubio-Gil & Esteban Curiel, 2008). It is often coupled with acts of religion, such that individuals will make long voyages to places considered holy as an act of devotion and homage to their faith. These journeys usually involve ritual, promises, and offerings that are central to the adherent's faith and can only be done in a certain place. Many authors have reported the importance and impact of religious tourism for centuries.

**2.3.2. Religious Tourism: A Structured Perspective**

Religious tourism is a structured form of tourism in which individuals travel from outside a state or its capital to visit sacred sites. The purpose of these journeys can vary, encompassing the fulfilment of religious obligations, the pursuit of spiritual insights, or the desire to learn about the religious traditions of the destination. This type of tourism resonates with the spiritual aspirations and values of the visitors, providing them with a sense of fulfilment and a deeper connection to their faith (Source: Prepared by the Researchers based on the above Sources).

**2.3.3. Factors Enhancing Religious Tourism**

Increasing tourist sites is vital for boosting religious tourism, as they provide access to archaeological and cultural landmarks and essential services. Their unique features, distinct from those in the home country, attract tourists. Key factors such as natural, social, and economic conditions, along with proximity to key attractions, influence tourism growth. Expanding sites enhances accessibility and opportunities for growth (Mustafa, 2004). Ongoing development of competencies is crucial for organisations to adapt to change and enhance internal and external capabilities. Rapid changes demand continual improvement of human resources and skills, positioning organisations more competitively.

**3.4. Integration of Knowledge Management in Religious Tourism**

The application of KM in religious tourism has emerged as a transformative approach, enabling organisations to better serve visitors and enhance operational efficiency. Research (e.g., Abu Zureik (2017); Al-Ameri, Al-Qaisi and Al-Maamouri (2020)) It underscores the fact that the knowledge management (KM) process—encompassing knowledge creation, storage, dissemination, and application—plays a pivotal role in delivering superior service quality and enhancing tourist satisfaction. Numerous case studies have highlighted the potential of KM in fostering innovation within tourism operations. However, the industry continues to face challenges due to a lack of awareness about comprehensive KM practices and limited technological adoption at various destinations.

**2.5. Theoretical Frameworks**

Theoretical models such as Nonaka's SECI Model and Wiig's Knowledge Management Model offer foundational frameworks for understanding the role of KM in tourism. Nonaka's model is distinctive in that it presents knowledge as a cyclical process, encompassing socialisation, externalisation, combination, and internalisation. In contrast, Wiig's model emphasises the strategic management of processes involved in creating and maintaining knowledge. When applied to religious tourism, these models illustrate how structured KM processes can enhance service delivery, improve customer experiences, and drive organisational growth.

**2.6. Research Gaps**

While extensive research exists on knowledge management (KM) and general tourism, KM in religious tourism remains underexplored. Limited attention has been given to adapting KM to the cultural and spiritual aspects of destinations like Karbala. Additionally, the role of advanced technologies like AI and big data in optimizing KM processes for religious tourism is overlooked. These gaps highlight the need for further research on region-specific KM applications and technological integration in this sector, particularly to address the unique challenges and opportunities within religious tourism contexts.

**2.7. Hypothetical Model Development**

To achieve the objectives of the study, a conceptual plan must be devised to identify knowledge management procedures, their role in enhancing religious tourism in the Karbala Governorate, and the interrelationships

between them. This plan is illustrated in the figure, which encompasses two key categories of variables:

1. Independent Variable: Knowledge Management Procedures

This includes knowledge creation, storage, distribution, and application, which are integral to the knowledge management process (Abdi & Senin, 2015; Abu Zureik, 2017; Al-Ameri et al., 2020).

2. Dependent Variable: Enhancing Religious Tourism

This involves expanding the number of tourist destinations, increasing the clientele, and improving operational efficiency, as per the frameworks outlined by Muead and Mahamood (2006), Radzikowski (2010), Al-Fadl (2013), Hakim and Khalida (2015), Al-Yasiri (2019), and Al-Qurashi and Mutlaq (2008). To address the research problem and facilitate the development of potential solutions, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

H1: There is a significant correlation between knowledge management procedures and the aspects of enhancing religious tourism.

H1a: There is a significant correlation between knowledge generation and the aspects of enhancing religious tourism.

H1b: There is a significant correlation between knowledge storage and the aspects of enhancing religious tourism.

H1c: There is a significant correlation between the dissemination of knowledge and the aspects of enhancing religious tourism.

H1d: There is a significant correlation between the application of knowledge and the aspects of enhancing religious tourism.

H2: The aspects of enhancing religious tourism are significantly influenced by knowledge management procedures.

H2a: Knowledge generation significantly influences the aspects of enhancing religious tourism.

H2b: Knowledge storage significantly influences the aspects of enhancing religious tourism.

H2c: The dissemination of knowledge significantly influences the aspects of enhancing religious tourism.

H2d: The application of knowledge significantly influences the aspects of enhancing religious tourism.

All core knowledge management processes will be thoroughly discussed in the later sections of this paper. These will include the following: the initiation processes to establish, transfer, or renew necessary knowledge resources within an organisation; the

acquisition processes for new learning or external best practices aimed at improving personal or organisational performance; the sharing processes designed to create collective intelligence and enable organisational renewal; the utilisation processes to enhance informed decision-making and effectively coordinate action within an organisation; and, finally, the evaluation processes to monitor and correct errors in the other knowledge management processes.

Researchers have approached the topic of knowledge management processes from various perspectives, incorporating their individual viewpoints, specialisations, and intellectual interests. Due to these differences, achieving a comprehensive understanding of the concept has been challenging. As discussed later, one of the most important of these concepts is presented in Table 2, which illustrates religious tourism from the perspectives of a group of scholars and thinkers. Through the previously discussed concepts, it is clear that the pursuit of comprehensive knowledge involves various efforts to achieve both explicit and implicit understanding. Knowledge management, in essence, entails the systematic handling of activities and processes such as acquisition, creation, utilisation, codification, storage, transfer, and sharing of knowledge within an organisation. These processes do not always follow a linear sequence; rather, they often occur simultaneously and in a dynamic manner.

The processes of knowledge are typically recognised within a specific time frame. Most scholars and researchers agree that the effectiveness of knowledge management depends on processes that facilitate the accessibility, storage, enhancement, distribution, and integration of knowledge to achieve desired outcomes. The core objective of knowledge management is to refine these processes, transforming informational inputs—whether sourced internally or externally—into accessible, storable, and distributable knowledge. This involves maintaining, retrieving, and integrating information for future use. Researchers, such as Mertins et al. (2001), describe these processes as forming a closed-loop system, which serves as the foundational framework of knowledge management, consisting of various interconnected components.

3. Research Methodology

The research methodology employed in this study is considered a descriptive analytical research design, focusing primarily on enhancing religious tourism through knowledge management processes. Questionnaires were distributed to employees of selected tourism

firms in Karbala, which predominantly concentrate on religious tourism, aligning with the objectives of the current research. A purposive sampling technique was utilised to target individuals who have direct responsibility for managing tourism businesses. A specialised questionnaire was developed for this purpose, designed to capture the essential elements of knowledge creation, storage, dissemination, and application in enhancing tourist services. The questionnaires were completed by 50 employees working in 23 tourism companies across various organisational positions. This targeted sample ensures a sufficient representation of tourism companies within the study area of Karbala. The

collected responses were analysed statistically using SPSS to identify patterns of correlation between the core knowledge management processes and key elements in advancing religious tourism, such as expanding the coverage of tourist attractions, improving communication with customers, and enhancing supply chain efficiency. The study population consists of tourism companies in the Karbala region, the majority of which are religious in nature. The targeted sample for this research includes employees from travel and tourism companies in the Karbala district. A total of 50 questionnaires were distributed, which are suitable for statistical evaluation, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Samples of Research.

| No.   | The Company's Name              | No. of Forms |
|-------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| 1     | Land of Heritage Company        | 14.0         |
| 2     | Nineveh Land Company            | 1.0          |
| 3     | Arm International Company       | 1.0          |
| 4     | Liwaa Al-Taf Company            | 2.0          |
| 5     | Al-Helou Tourism Company        | 2.0          |
| 6     | Ataa Al-Khair Company           | 1.0          |
| 7     | Duyouf Al-Safi Company          | 1.0          |
| 8     | Al-Asil Company                 | 1.0          |
| 9     | Qamar Quraish Company           | 1.0          |
| 10    | Barakat Al-Yassin Company       | 1.0          |
| 11    | Al-Hadi Company                 | 3.0          |
| 12    | Al-Barqa Company                | 2.0          |
| 13    | Al-Safi Al-Dhahabia Company     | 1.0          |
| 14    | Anwar Al-Mustafa Company        | 2.0          |
| 15    | Jannat Al-Waha Company          | 1.0          |
| 16    | Legend of the East Internationa | 1.0          |
| 17    | Al-Athar Company                | 1.0          |
| 18    | Al-Sahl Al-Rusubi Company       | 2.0          |
| 19    | Al-Sarh International Company   | 3.0          |
| 20    | Al-Taama Company                | 5.0          |
| 21    | Al-Mayar Company                | 1.0          |
| 22    | Ur United Company               | 1.0          |
| 23    | Sama Sumer Company              | 2.0          |
| Total |                                 | 50.0         |

Source: Self-Developed.

The study adhered to ethical considerations throughout the entire process. Participants were provided with a clear explanation of the research's nature and objectives, and their responses were guaranteed anonymity. Participation was voluntary, and no individual's identity was disclosed. To ensure the reliability and validity of the results, the study upheld academic integrity by transparently reporting data collection, analysis, and reporting procedures.

3.1. Descriptive Analysis and Cronbach Alpha

To assess the validity and consistency of the questionnaire, a Cronbach's alpha test was conducted

(Kumari et al., 2021). Coefficient values met the 0.7 threshold, confirming reliability and stability. Table 2 presents internal reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, kurtosis, skewness, and code descriptions for study variables, ensuring suitability for the research. The Cronbach's Alpha values, ranging from 0.7610 to 0.9290, demonstrate a high level of internal consistency, confirming the reliability of the variables measured. Notably, the independent variable—knowledge management processes (X) and its components—knowledge distribution (X1), knowledge storage (X2), knowledge generation (X3),

and knowledge application (X4)—all exhibit strong reliability. Similarly, the dependent variable—improving religious tourism (Y) and its dimensions—increasing tourist sites (Y1), increasing customers (Y2), and improving performance efficiency (Y3)—also show excellent reliability. The obtained kurtosis values range from -0.229 to 1.833, suggesting that the data distribution is very close to normal, although it exhibits a slight positive kurtosis. The skewness values, ranging between -1.906 and -0.726, indicate a slight negative skew, meaning that responses tend to cluster towards higher values. Overall, the results confirm that the data is reliable and exhibits near-normal distribution, making it suitable for further analysis and interpretation.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis and Normality Test.

| Cronbach's Alpha | Kurtosis | Skewness | Coding | Variables                              |
|------------------|----------|----------|--------|----------------------------------------|
| 0.7610           | 1.0780   | -1.906   | X      | Knowledge Management Processes         |
| 0.8500           | 0.4630   | -1.341   | X1     | Knowledge Distribution                 |
| 0.9220           | 1.1750   | -1.547   | X2     | Knowledge Storage                      |
| 0.8200           | 0.9610   | -1.092   | X3     | Knowledge Generation                   |
| 0.8860           | -0.229   | -0.726   | X4     | Knowledge Application                  |
| 0.7890           | 1.8330   | -1.194   | Y      | Improving Religious Tourism            |
| 0.8990           | 0.7240   | -0.800   | Y1     | Increasing the Number of Tourist Sites |
| 0.9290           | 0.5320   | -0.853   | Y2     | Increasing the Number of Customers     |
| 0.9270           | 0.8410   | -0.759   | Y3     | Improving Performance Efficiency       |

Source: Self-Developed.

3.2. Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

Table 3 presents an analysis of knowledge management processes within the organisation, including the arithmetic means and standard deviations for each question. The overall mean score for knowledge management processes (X) is 2.7150, reflecting a moderate level of implementation. In terms of knowledge

distribution (X1), the mean values range from 2.6000 to 2.7800, indicating that training workshops led by experts are considered the most effective means of disseminating knowledge. However, other methods such as documentation and communication processes are used to a moderate extent.

Table 3: Statistical Analysis of Knowledge Management Processes and their Components.

| Deviation | Arithmetic Mean | Questions                                                                                     | Item |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 0.205610  | 2.71500         | Knowledge management processes in the organization                                            | X    |
| 0.543980  | 2.70000         | Efforts are made by our organization to share knowledge across all levels of administration.  | X11  |
| 0.543980  | 2.70000         | The tourism department uses diverse methods to document, communicate, and educate employees.  | X12  |
| 0.638880  | 2.60000         | The organization encourages the adoption of innovative ideas related to employment.           | X13  |
| 0.545480  | 2.78000         | Training workshops led by experts help in disseminating knowledge effectively.                | X14  |
| 0.411230  | 2.69500         | Distribution of knowledge within the organization.                                            | X1   |
| 0.350510  | 2.86000         | Information storage and retrieval are characterized by accuracy and speed.                    | X21  |
| 0.496520  | 2.72000         | The organization employs advanced methods to store knowledge digitally.                       | X22  |
| 0.453560  | 2.72000         | Our organization maintains knowledge repositories and links new information to existing data. | X23  |
| 0.464670  | 2.78000         | Knowledge is preserved for sharing at the most appropriate time.                              | X24  |
| 0.275900  | 2.77000         | Processes related to the storage of understanding and knowledge.                              | X2   |
| 0.670060  | 2.40000         | Employee expertise is a primary source of knowledge acquisition in the organization.          | X31  |
| 0.435190  | 2.88000         | Knowledge is acquired through modern systems like the internet and other resources.           | X32  |
| 0.592810  | 2.66000         | Collaboration with other travel agencies contributes to knowledge acquisition.                | X33  |
| 0.635350  | 2.62000         | Researcher expertise plays a vital role in acquiring knowledge.                               | X34  |
| 0.307890  | 2.64000         | Processes involved in creating new knowledge for the organization.                            | X3   |
| 0.340470  | 2.92000         | Timely application of knowledge supports our organization's progress.                         | X41  |
| 0.735400  | 2.50000         | Modern devices and equipment facilitate the application of knowledge in tourism.              | X42  |
| 0.404060  | 2.80000         | Internal resources are utilized effectively to apply knowledge in tourism operations.         | X43  |
| 0.494870  | 2.80000         | Successful application of knowledge depends on employee efficiency.                           | X44  |
| 0.244790  | 2.75500         | Processes for applying knowledge within the organization.                                     | X4   |

Source: Developed by the Researchers based on the Results of the SPSS Program V.25.

As for X2, or knowledge storage, the scores are relatively higher, ranging from 2.7200 to 2.8600, while information storage and retrieval has been performed strongest, characterised by accuracy and speed. This reflects the organisation's use of advanced technology for storage and the preservation of repositories for archives. In terms of knowledge acquisition, the mean values range from 2.4000 to 2.6200, indicating a slightly lower performance. Employee expertise, travel agency collaboration, and modern systems enhance performance, yet need improvement. Knowledge application (X4) shows higher variability (2.50–2.92). The highest mean value is associated with applying knowledge promptly to advance organisational work, while the remaining dimensions, such as the use of company resources and employee productivity, show moderate performance. Overall, the findings suggest that while knowledge storage and application processes are relatively effective, improvements in knowledge acquisition and distribution are necessary to optimise organisational performance.

Table 4 provides a statistical analysis of efforts aimed at enhancing religious tourism and improving performance efficiency, based on the arithmetic means and standard deviations of various related questions. The grand mean for efforts to improve religious tourism (Y) is 2.7356, indicating a moderate emphasis in this area. The administrative team's performance in boosting

visitor numbers (Y11) recorded a mean of 2.7600, highlighting their contribution. Collaboration with other entities to build the tourist base (Y12) scored a mean of 2.6000, while the provision of essential resources at tourist sites to support development (Y13) scored 2.7200, indicating fairly good progress in providing for these destinations.

Regarding the third objective of increasing the number of tourist sites (Y1), the mean is 2.6933, reflecting a moderate effort. Measures proposed to increase visitor traffic achieved the highest mean of 2.9000, indicating the implementation of appropriate measures. Specifically, the comprehensive plan for increasing the number of tourists (Y22) and measures for increasing the client base (Y23) received means of 2.7800 and 2.6000, respectively. Concerning performance efficiency (Y3), the administration's efforts to enhance performance levels (Y31) scored a mean of 2.9400, considered highly effective. However, solutions related to performance issues (Y32) scored 2.5400, suggesting a moderate level. In the field of training programmes designed to improve overall performance (Y33), the calculated mean stands at 2.7800, indicating that training programmes are particularly effective in increasing efficiency. Cumulatively, the results indicate moderate performance across all dimensions, but more focused enhancement efforts are needed in areas such as collaboration and performance efficiency.

Table 4: Descriptive Analysis of the Variable of Improving Religious Tourism.

| Deviation | Arithmetic Mean | Questions                                                                                          | Item |
|-----------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 0.244760  | 2.73560         | Efforts to enhance religious tourism.                                                              | Y    |
| 0.591090  | 2.76000         | The administrative team at the tourist destination plays a key role in increasing visitor numbers. | Y11  |
| 0.534520  | 2.60000         | Our administration collaborates with other entities to help them grow their tourist base.          | Y12  |
| 0.572860  | 2.72000         | The tourist site is equipped with all essential resources to foster development and growth.        | Y13  |
| 0.445890  | 2.69330         | Expanding the number of tourist sites.                                                             | Y1   |
| 0.416500  | 2.90000         | Management utilizes diverse strategies to attract more visitors.                                   | Y21  |
| 0.464670  | 2.78000         | Comprehensive planning by management aims to boost the number of tourists.                         | Y22  |
| 0.699850  | 2.60000         | Initiatives are undertaken by management to increase the client base.                              | Y23  |
| 0.420780  | 2.76000         | Measures to grow the number of patrons.                                                            | Y2   |
| 0.313640  | 2.94000         | Administration demonstrates the capability to improve performance levels.                          | Y31  |
| 0.542480  | 2.54000         | Solutions are provided to address efficiency-related challenges in performance.                    | Y32  |
| 0.581690  | 2.78000         | Management organizes training programs to enhance overall performance.                             | Y33  |
| 0.379820  | 2.75330         | Initiatives aimed at improving performance efficiency.                                             | Y3   |

Source: Prepared by the Researchers based on the Outputs of the SPSS V.25.

3.3. Regression Analysis

After completing the calculation of the research variables and conducting a descriptive analysis, the next step involves testing the research hypotheses.

This process begins with examining the correlation hypothesis, followed by the impact hypothesis, to explore the relationship between the independent variable (knowledge management processes) and

the dependent variable. The correlation hypothesis posits that “there is a significant correlation between knowledge management methods and the development

of religious tourism.” The results obtained from the analysis are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Results of the First Hypothesis Test Regarding Correlation.

| Item  | R     | P     | Significance | Results |
|-------|-------|-------|--------------|---------|
| x → y | 0.297 | 0.036 | Significant  | Accept  |

Source: Prepared by the Researchers based on the Outputs of the SPSS V.25.

Testing the first primary hypothesis shows that knowledge management processes advance religious tourism. The correlation coefficient was 0.29, with a p-value of 0.036, below 0.05. Thus, the first primary hypothesis is supported. The second hypothesis posits

that “knowledge management has an effect on the enhancement of religious tourism.” This hypothesis was evaluated using simple regression analysis, and the results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Results of Testing the Second Primary Hypothesis Regarding the Impact.

| Item  | A     | B     | R²   | T Calculated | T Tabular | F Calculated | F Tabular | Significance | Result |
|-------|-------|-------|------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|--------|
| x → y | 1.777 | 0.353 | 0.08 | 2.153        | 2.021     | 4.633        | 4.03      | Significant  | Accept |

Source: Prepared by the Researchers based on the Outputs of the SPSS V.25.

Table 6 shows that religious tourism and knowledge management procedures are linked. The t- and F-tests support this finding. At a significance level of 0.05, the calculated t-value of 2.153 surpasses the critical value of 2.021, and the calculated F-value of 4.633 exceeds 4.03. Religious tourism increases by 0.353 for every unit increase in knowledge management procedures, according to the regression coefficient (B). The R² value of 0.08 indicates that knowledge management processes contribute 8% to the improvement of religious tourism. These findings support the second key idea.

4. Conclusion

This paper highlights the importance of knowledge management in enhancing the quality and productivity of religious tourism services in Karbala. The findings show that human resources and knowledge assets play a crucial role in improving customer satisfaction and organisational performance through effective knowledge management practices. By adopting these practices, tourism firms can gain a competitive advantage, contributing to regional economic development. Practically, the study suggests that tourism organisations focus on knowledge sharing and invest in training human capital. Policymakers and stakeholders are encouraged to create frameworks for implementing knowledge management approaches in line with international practices. This research has several limitations. First, it involved only fifty respondents from tourism companies in Karbala, meaning the results may not be generalisable

to other regions or a larger population. Additionally, the focus on religious tourism and its knowledge management processes might overlook other critical factors in the tourism sector, such as cultural, political, or technological aspects. The use of self-administered questionnaires could introduce response bias, as participants may answer based on their knowledge or perceptions rather than actual practices. The study also focuses on a cross-sectional analysis, without considering data over time, and does not account for the impact of economic conditions or policies on tourism development. For future research, further studies could explore how innovative technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data analytics can enhance knowledge management in religious tourism. Additionally, research in other religious tourism destinations could provide valuable insights into best practices and industry standards, offering a broader understanding of effective strategies in the sector.

References

Abdi, K., & Senin, A. A. (2015). The Impact of Knowledge Management on Organizational Innovation: An Empirical Study. *Asian Social Science*, 11(23), 153-168. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v11n23p153>

Abu Zureik, F. N. M. (2017). *The Role of Knowledge Management Processes in Improving Organizational Creativity in the Regular Courts* [Master's Thesis in Leadership and Administration, Al-Aqsa University, Gaza, Palestine]. <https://library.alkafeel.net/dic/details/13420>

Al-Ameri, S. M. M., Al-Qaisi, S. J. K., & Al-Maamouri, S. J. K. (2020). The Impact of Knowledge Processes on the Technological Innovation: An Applied Study at UR Public Company. *Journal of Economic Sciences*, 15(58), 31-69. <https://doi.org/10.33762/0672-015-057-009>

Al-Fadl, M. A.-H. (2013). Development of Religious Tourism in the Najaf Governorate in Light of the Internal and External Environmental Influences for the Period From 2003-2010. *Journal of Islamic Sciences*.

Al-Qurashi, Z. A., & Mutlaq, A. K. (2008). A Study of the Elements of Islamic Religious Tourist Attractions in the Holy Cities of Najaf and Karbala, a Comparative Study. *Journal of Administration and Economics*, (71), 232-273. <https://search.mandumah.com/Record/421888>

Al-Yasiri, H. Q. M. (2019). Arbaeen Pilgrimage and its Impact on the Development of Religious Tourism in Iraq. *Al-Sabt Journal*, 5(2), 53-74. <https://doi.org/10.52790/2239-005-002-018>

Alfawaire, F., & Atan, T. (2021). The Effect of Strategic Human Resource and Knowledge Management on Sustainable Competitive Advantages at Jordanian Universities: The Mediating Role of Organizational Innovation. *Sustainability*, 13(15), 8445. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13158445>

Barua, B. (2018). Impact of Knowledge Creation on Organizational Performance in the Service Organizations of Bangladesh. *The International Journal of Management*, 7(4), 11-20. <https://www.theijm.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/1105.pdf>

Becerra-Fernandez, I., & Sabherwal, R. (2010). *Knowledge Management: Systems and Processes Foreword By Cyrus F. Gibson*. M.E. Sharpe, Inc. <https://epdf.pub/queue/knowledge-management-systems-and-processes.html>

Caroline, K. S., Mugun, B. J., & Loice, M. (2015). Knowledge Storage, Retrieval and Employee Performance: The Moderating Role of Employee Engagement. *International Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship Research*, 3(6), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.37745/ijssber.2013>

Gerhart, B., & Feng, J. (2021). The Resource-Based View of the Firm, Human Resources, and Human Capital: Progress and Prospects. *Journal of Management*, 47(7), 1796-1819. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206320978799>

Hakim, B. J., & Khalida, D. (2015). The Possibility of Applying the Dimensions of Marketing Relationships with the Customer in Raising the Institution's Competitive Performance. *Algerian Journal of Economic Development*, 2(2), 91-104. <https://asjp.cerist.dz/en/article/5195>

Imhanzenobe, J., Adejumo, O., & Ikpesu, O. (2021). A Review of Knowledge Management and Its Application in the Contemporary Business Environment. *African Journal of Business Management*, 15(10), 274-282. <https://doi.org/10.5897/AJBM2021.9223>

Kim, B., Kim, S., & King, B. (2020). Religious Tourism Studies: Evolution, Progress, and Future Prospects. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 45(2), 185-203. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2019.1664084>

Kumari, A., Ranjan, P., Chopra, S., Kaur, D., Upadhyay, A. D., Kaur, T., et al. (2021). Development and Validation of a Questionnaire to Assess Knowledge, Attitude, Practices, and Concerns Regarding COVID-19 Vaccination Among the General Population. *Diabetes & Metabolic Syndrome: Clinical Research & Reviews*, 15(3), 919-925. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dsx.2021.04.004>

Luo, J., Zhuo, W., & Xu, B. (2024). The Bigger, The Better? Optimal NGO Size of Human Resources and Governance Quality of Entrepreneurship in Circular Economy. *Management Decision*, 62(8), 2472-2509. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MD-03-2023-0325>

Maier, R. (2007). *Knowledge Management Systems: Information and Communication Technologies for Knowledge Management*. Springer Berlin, Heidelberg. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-540-71408-8>

Mertins, K., Heisig, P., & Vorbeck, J. (2001). *Knowledge Management: Best Practices in Europe*. Springer Berlin, Heidelberg. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-04466-7>

Muead, A. K., & Mahamood, R. (2006). *Marketing of Technical Knowledge Between Business Organization*. Case Study: Hospitals In Jordan Marketing Ustug Prfesionalnych Tom 6poznan, Poland.

Mustafa, M. M. I. (2004). Rehabilitation of Historical Tourist Areas in Cities and a Course in Tourism Development. In *The First International Conference on Architectural Conservation Theory and Practice March 14-16*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321860359>

Radzikowski, W. (2010). *Role prograsji i Rozwoju W. produckcij I. Marketing*. Pwn, W-Wa.

Ragazou, K., Garefalakis, A., Papademetriou, C., & Passas, I. (2023). Well-being Human Resource Model In The Collaborative Economy: The Keystone of ESG Strategy In The Tourism Sector. *International Conference on Tourism Research*, 6(1), 251-260. <https://doi.org/10.34190/ict.6.1.1066>

Rubio-Gil, Á., & Esteban Curiel, J. d. (2008). Religious Events as Special Interest Tourism. A Spanish Experience. *Pasos*, 6(3), 419-433. <http://riull.ull.es/xmlui/handle/915/30871>

Shahzad, K., Bajwa, S. U., Siddiqi, A. F. I., Ahmid, F., & Raza Sultani, A. (2016). Integrating Knowledge Management (KM) Strategies and Processes to Enhance Organizational Creativity and Performance. *Journal of Modelling in Management*, 11(1), 154-179. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JM2-07-2014-0061>

Zwead, A. A. H. (2023). Tourism Potential in the Middle Euphrates Governorates (Karbala, Nabul, and Najaf) and Ways to Develop Them. *Zien Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 24, 10-25. <https://zienjournals.com/index.php/zjssh/article/view/4374>