

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND INNOVATIVE MANAGEMENT ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF SME BUSINESS

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## Abstract

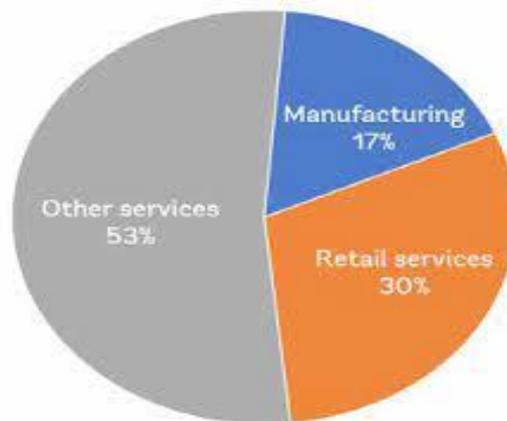
The objective of the current study is to examine the role of knowledge management and innovative management on organizational performance. To achieve this objective, the current study examined the relationship between internal knowledge, external knowledge, knowledge management, innovative management and organizational performance. Furthermore, the mediating role of innovative management is considered between knowledge management and organizational performance. Results of the study approached by using quantitative research and a questionnaire were used for data collection. Population of the study is small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) working in Thailand and employees were considered as the respondents. 225 questionnaires were used in data analysis. It is found that; internal knowledge and external knowledge has important role to promote knowledge management among SMEs. Furthermore, knowledge management and innovative management has the potential to promote organizational performance. Results of this study have major importance for practitioners to enhance SMEs performance through knowledge management and innovation management.

**Keywords:** Internal knowledge, external knowledge, knowledge management, innovative management, organizational performance, SMEs.

## 1. Introduction

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are non-subsiary, independent firms which are based on less than a given number of employees(VORONKOVA, KUROCHKINA, FIROVA, & BIKEZINA, 2018). This number differs across countries. The most common upper limit designating an SME is 250 employees(Douchek, Nedomova, Luc, & Novak, 2020). These companies play an important role in any business industry. Almost every business industry is consisted of SMEs which has central importance for that industry. Because these companies have contribution to generate revenue and has substantial support in various other matters to the industry. Therefore, the importance of these companies cannot be neglected in any case(Chong & Perumal, 2022). These companies could be based on service sector, manufacturing sector as well as retail sector. Worldwide, these small companies are contributing significantly as the revenue collected from these companies has handsome contribution to the global economy along with several other benefits related to the home nation and local community development.

Currently in Thailand, there are several types of SMEs are working including services, manufacturing and retail related companies(Uddin, 2018). Every type of company has its own importance in the given field. The government is also focusing on SMEs to promote the overall contribution of these companies. By recognizing the importance of these companies, it is always remained on the priority. Several initiatives are taken in Thailand to promote these companies. Figure 1 shows the contribution of these companies in various types of businesses. These companies are important for Thailand because it has major role in economic development through different product manufacturing by these companies and exported to other countries which produce revenue. In this way, SMEs have major participation in economic development by generating handsome amount of revenue(Kraus et al., 2020). These companies are also important in Thailand because this type of companies participating in economic development of local areas by providing several employment opportunities to the people.



**Figure 1: SMEs Thailand**

However, the organizational performance (Mahlaha, Sukdeo, & Mofokeng, 2020) of these companies is fluctuating in last decade. All these companies have achieved important growth in last decade, however the performance sustainability is low. With the pace of significant growth, the performance of these companies must be higher as compared to other companies; however, it is needed to promote organizational performance through various strategies. Although, SMEs are contributing in all fields including; services, manufacturing as well as retail. However, still it is needed to promote the performance of these companies with the help of different strategies

Organizational performance of SMEs working in Thailand can be promoted with the help of knowledge management and innovative activities. To promote the performance, it is always needed to manage information properly (Gunasekera & Chong, 2018). The information gathered from internal resources as well as external resources are needed to refined and extract the valuable knowledge for innovative idea management. There are always several ideas by the employees of the organization, however, it is important to manage these ideas and choose them in appropriate way. Therefore, it is needed to enhance innovation management as the role of

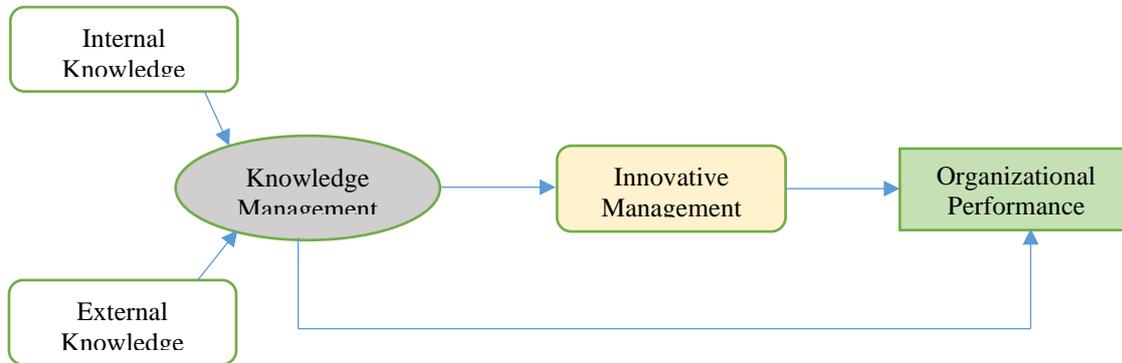
innovation has key to promote performance. Similar with innovation management, the knowledge management is also key to promote innovation management. Therefore, according to this study, it is needed to promote knowledge management and innovation management to enhance SMEs organizational performance.

In this way, the objective of the current study is to examine the role of knowledge management and innovative management on organizational performance. To achieve this objective, the current study examined the relationship between internal knowledge, external knowledge, knowledge management, innovative management and organizational performance. Number of studies have carried out research on performance of these companies (Davicik, Cardinali, Sharma, & Cedrola, 2021; Nofiani, Indarti, Lukito-Budi, & Manik, 2021), however, it is needed to enhance innovative management which must be focused by the companies. Several studies considered organizational performance; however, it is not considered in relation to the internal knowledge, external knowledge and innovation management. Therefore, this study has major significance for the practitioner's, academicians and the management of SMEs to promote organizational performance.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Framework Development**

The theoretical framework of the current study is given in Figure 2. There are several relationships proposed in this framework based on independent variables, mediating variable and dependent variable. All these relationships are proposed by observing various literature gaps. Most importantly, the current study considered the integration between knowledge management and innovative management and observes the effect on organizational performance of SMEs in Thailand. It is important because number of previous studies considered knowledge management, innovation management and organizational performance (Rezaei, Khalilzadeh, & Soleimani, 2021; Shahzad, Qu, Zafar, & Appolloni, 2021), however, the integration between knowledge management and innovative management and its effect on organizational performance which is not addressed in previous studies. Furthermore, the current study introduced internal knowledge and external knowledge as important dimensions of knowledge management which is rarely addressed to examine the effect on innovation management. These relationships in the framework are based on the resource-based view. According to the resource-based view, resources of the business always lead to the success. The resources may include tangible resources as well as intangible resources. Similarly, the current study also proposed various resources which are based on intangible resources such as knowledge management, innovative management, internal knowledge and external knowledge. Consistent with resource-based view, this study also proposed that these resources have the ability to promote organizational performance. The relationship between these variables is highlighted in Figure 2.



**Figure 2: Theoretical framework of the study**

## 2.2 Hypotheses Development

Knowledge management is the procedure of organizing, creating, using, as well as sharing collective knowledge within an organization. Successful knowledge management includes maintaining information in a place where it is easy to access. Among the management of knowledge with the help of proper organisation of the knowledge as well as creation of the knowledge is most important to promote various operations. Similarly, the organisation as well as creation of the knowledge is only fruitful if the implementation of knowledge to get benefit is most important. Therefore, the creation of knowledge among SMEs (Veiga, Figueiredo, Ferreira, & Ambrósio, 2021) is only helpful if it is implemented on a right way. Furthermore, the sharing of knowledge between employees as well as internal stakeholders of the company also has key importance. There are lot of information for the employees, but the management of valuable information is most important. The extraction of valuable knowledge from the information is one of the challenges for companies. Thus, the management of knowledge can help to extract valuable ideas.

The current study proposed that the management of knowledge can be managed with the help of internal knowledge as well as external knowledge. The internal knowledge is based on the knowledge inside the boundaries of the company. Internal knowledge grounded on the knowledge of the employees which is helpful to generate ideas. The knowledge among the employees can be enhanced and valuable ideas can be extracted through discussion between the employees. The communication between the employees is most helpful in this matter to manage knowledge properly (LaGree, Houston, Duffy, & Shin, 2021). Furthermore, external knowledge is based on the knowledge from the market. The sources of external based on the suppliers of the company, distributors of the company, and external partners of the company as well as various other stakeholders of the company. The information given from customers of the company always have special importance because it helps the company is to shape the products as well as services according to the needs of the customer. Simply it helps to generate customized products which can help to satisfy the customers. Therefore, knowledge from the internal organization resources and external sources can help to manage knowledge. It has the ability to promote knowledge management activities of the companies. Therefore, the current

study proposed that both the internal knowledge and external knowledge has positive role to enhance knowledge management (Hameed, Nisar, & Wu, 2021) which lead to propose following;

**Hypothesis 1:** Internal knowledge has positive influence on knowledge management.

**Hypothesis 2:** External knowledge has positive influence on knowledge management.

knowledge management activities among the companies can lead to generate innovative ideas (Lam, Nguyen, Le, & Tran, 2021). The innovative management among the companies can be promoted with the help of knowledge management. Knowledge of various operations help to generate various ideas which can be implemented to promote innovation among the organisations. The innovative ideas management without the knowledge management have no outcomes. As addressed in previous studies that knowledge management is strongly connected with innovation activities of the organisation (Lei, Khamkhoutlavong, & Le, 2021; Shahzad et al., 2021). Therefore, knowledge management among the organisations is most effective to manage innovations. Knowledge management do not have only effect on innovation management but it also has effect on organisational performance. It has significant and direct effect on innovation management and organisational performance. Furthermore, it also has an effect on organisational performance through innovative management because knowledge management promote innovative management which further causes to increase organisational performance. In this way, innovative management playing a mediating role between knowledge management and organisational performance. The innovative management is justified with the help of recommendations provided by Baron and Kenny (1986). According to Baron and Kenny (1986), three paths must be significant to justify the mediating variable. In this way, the current study observed that previous studies shows that knowledge management has significant effect on organisational performance and innovative management. Innovative management also has a significant effect on organisational performance. Therefore, all the three paths are significant to justify innovative management as mediating variable. Finally, following direct and indirect hypotheses are proposed;

**Hypothesis 3:** Knowledge management has positive influence on innovative management.

**Hypothesis 4:** Knowledge management has positive influence on organizational performance.

**Hypothesis 5:** Innovative management has positive influence on organizational performance.

**Hypothesis 6:** Innovative management mediates the relationship between knowledge management and organizational performance.

### 3. Research Methodology

There are several ways to measure organizational performance which is addressed among previous studies (El-Kassar & Singh, 2019). Variable measures in any study are most important and have effect on the results. Previous studies show the financial measures as well as non-financial measures to evaluate the performance of any company. Since the current study is based on primary data and nature of the other variables is significantly related to the primary

data, therefore, a questionnaire designed on 7-point Likert scale to measure organizational performance in this study based on the sales, assets, revenue and performance in relation to the competitor. Furthermore, innovation management is based on to consider the strategies taken by the companies to promote innovation. It includes the internal strategies as well as policies of the company to manage various innovative ideas to enhance performance. Knowledge management is measured by extracting the valuable knowledge from the information received from internal resources as well as external resources. To measure knowledge management, the intention of the employees is also considered towards the management of knowledge. Furthermore, internal knowledge is measured based on the knowledge inside the company related to the employees of the company. External knowledge is measured by considering the information given by the supplier of the company, distributor of the company, customers of the company and other stakeholders of the company. Along with organizational performance this study also adopted 7-point Likert scale to measure internal knowledge, external knowledge, knowledge management and innovative management.

The current study is focusing on the organizational performance of SMEs working in Thailand; therefore, the population of this study is the SMEs of Thailand. The variables considered in this study are quiet fit with all types of SMEs such as services, manufacturing and retail SMEs. Therefore, all these three types of companies are considered in this study. The data collection is made from these companies and employees were considered as a respondent. Finally, after the development of questionnaire, the current study distributed 550 questionnaires with the help of area cluster sampling. Finally, 225 valid questionnaires were received.

#### **4. Data Analysis**

As reported in previous studies that data screening is most important in any research study (Ashara & Mustaffa, 2019; Won, Wan, & Sharif, 2017) because it has significant role to remove the errors in the data. The existence of various errors in the data may have affect on the outcomes of the study and it is the possibilities that errors may change the results of the study. In this way, to observe the importance of the data screening, the current study carried out data screening before to examine the relationship between variables. Internal knowledge has five missing values, management has three missing values and innovation management has three missing values. During data screening, it is also found that knowledge management has three outliers and external knowledge has four outliers. All these errors related to the missing value and outlier are removed from the data by following the recommended techniques. Finally, data statistics are given and Table 1.

**Table 1: Data Statistics**

	No	Missin	Mea	Media	Mi	Ma	Standard	Excess	Skewnes
	.	g	n	n	n	x	Deviatio	Kurtosi	s
							n	s	s
IKN1	1	0	3.152	3	1	7	1.468	-0.736	0.013
IKN2	2	0	3.38	3	1	7	1.871	-0.654	0.477
IKN3	3	0	3.38	3	1	7	1.648	-0.314	0.317
IKN4	4	0	3.354	3	1	7	1.747	-0.646	0.242
EKN1	5	0	3.291	3	1	7	1.715	-0.909	0.079
EKN2	6	0	3.57	3	1	7	1.853	-0.671	0.317
EKN3	7	0	3.361	3	1	7	1.808	-0.39	0.552
EKN4	8	0	3.411	3	1	7	1.886	-0.824	0.293
KM1	9	0	3.316	3	1	7	1.772	-0.389	0.468
KM2	10	0	3.487	3	1	7	1.838	-0.657	0.351
KM3	11	0	3.032	3	1	7	1.464	0.12	0.702
KM4	12	0	3.095	3	1	7	1.363	0.742	0.871
KM5	13	0	3.139	3	1	7	1.295	0.955	0.815
IM1	14	0	3.057	3	1	7	1.351	0.689	0.719
IM2	15	0	2.987	3	1	7	1.345	0.383	0.606
IM3	16	0	3.108	3	1	7	1.385	0.208	0.555
IM4	17	0	3.051	3	1	7	1.292	0.729	0.741
OP1	18	0	3	3	1	7	1.401	0.055	0.516
OP2	19	0	3.12	3	1	7	1.384	0.352	0.635
OP3	20	0	3.082	3	1	7	1.441	0.16	0.662
OP4	21	0	3.089	3	1	7	1.389	0.349	0.699
OP5	22	0	3.171	3	1	7	1.342	0.08	0.477
OP6	23	0	3.108	3	1	7	1.32	0.338	0.55

The current study addressed the relationship between variables by using structural equation modeling (SEM) with the help of statistical tool namely; partial least square (PLS). In this

process, this study preferred to confirm reliability and validity before to examine the relationship between variables. The process to check the factor loadings is given in Figure 3 in which outer model shows the factor loading of the scale items. It is clear from Figure 3 that internal knowledge is measured by using four items. External knowledge is measured by using four items. All these items have factor loading above 0.8. The current study considered 0.7 as minimum level to achieve for factor loading. Furthermore, knowledge management is measured by using five items. Similarly, organizational performance is measured by using six items. All these items for knowledge management and organizational performance have achieved minimum level. Furthermore, innovative management is measured by using four items and none of the items is below 0.8. This process of factor loading is considered by using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) which is most popular technique to examine the factor loading as reported in previous study (Afthanorhan, 2013; Hair et al., 2019).

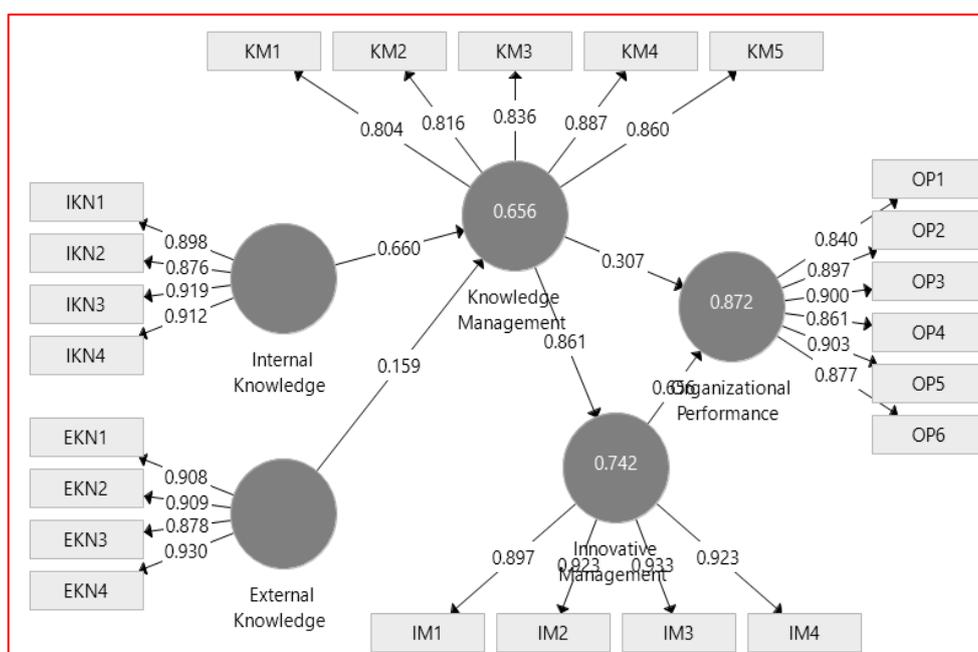


Figure 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

**Table 2: Factor Loadings, Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)**

Constructs	Items	Loadings	Alpha	CR	AVE
External Knowledge	EKN1	0.908	0.928	0.949	0.822
	EKN2	0.909			
	EKN3	0.878			
	EKN4	0.93			
Internal Knowledge	IKN1	0.898	0.923	0.946	0.813
	IKN2	0.876			
	IKN3	0.919			
	IKN4	0.912			
Innovative Management	IM1	0.897	0.939	0.956	0.845
	IM2	0.923			
	IM3	0.933			
	IM4	0.923			
Knowledge Management	KM1	0.804	0.896	0.923	0.707
	KM2	0.816			
	KM3	0.836			
	KM4	0.887			
	KM5	0.86			
Organizational Performance	OP1	0.84	0.942	0.954	0.775
	OP2	0.897			
	OP3	0.9			
	OP4	0.861			
	OP5	0.903			
	OP6	0.877			

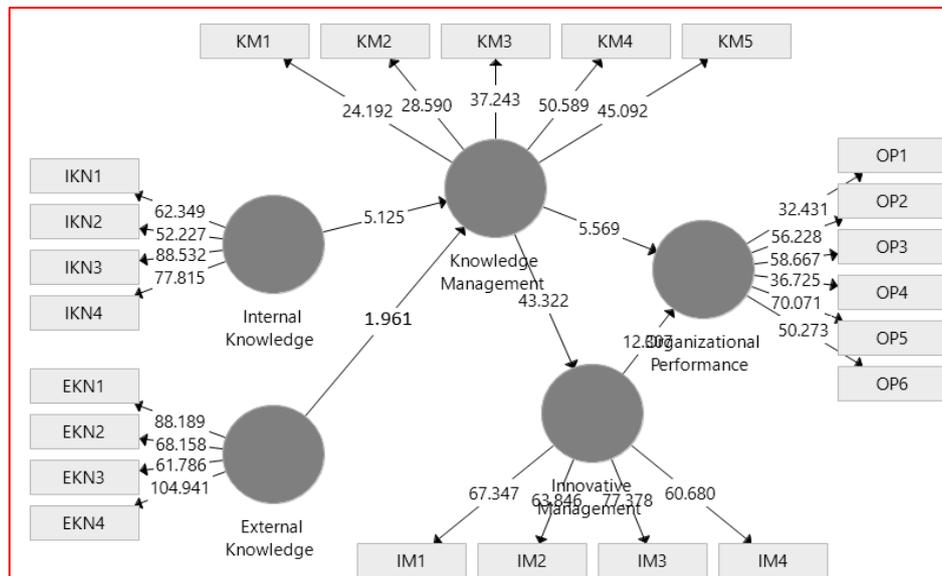
It is not enough to confirm the factor loading to check the reliability and validity, therefore the current study also examined reliability with the help of composite liability (CR) which must be above 0.7. It is also given in Table 2 which indicates that all the variables, namely; external knowledge, internal knowledge, innovation management, knowledge management and organizational performance have composite liability higher than 0.7. This study also checked the average variance extracted (AVE) which must be above 0.5. It is also confirmed that AVE is higher than the minimum threshold level which confirmed the convergent validity. Along with the convergent validity, the current study considered the discriminant validity which is

given in Table 3. Discriminant validity is examined by using HTMT<sub>0.85</sub> ratio in which none of the value should be above 0.85.

**Table 3: Discriminant Validity (HTMT<sub>0.85</sub>)**

	External Knowledge	Innovative Management	Internal Knowledge	Knowledge Management	Organizational Performance
External Knowledge					
Innovative Management	0.666				
Internal Knowledge	0.509	0.729			
Knowledge Management	0.81	0.734	0.816		
Organizational Performance	0.616	0.778	0.696	0.742	

The confirmation of reliability and validity with the help of CFA allowed the current study to proceed to check the relationship between independent variable, mediating variable and dependent variable. The process of hypotheses testing is given in structural model which is highlighted in Figure 4 and results of the direct hypotheses are given in Table 4. It is found that internal knowledge has significant effect on knowledge management with t-value of 5.125. External knowledge is also having a significant effect on knowledge management with t-value 1.961. Furthermore, it is given that knowledge management has significant effect on innovative management and organizational performance with t-value 43.32 and 5.569, respectively.



**Figure 4: PLS Structural Model**

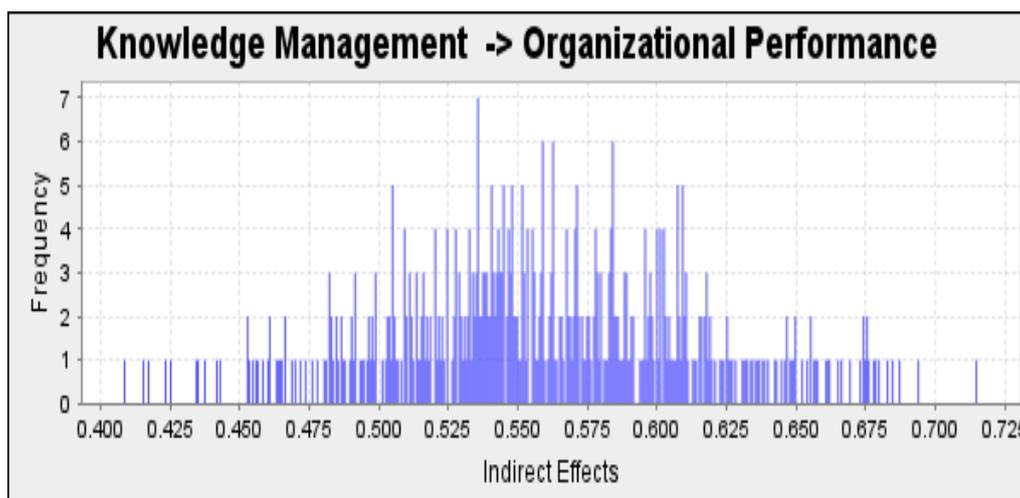
**Table 4: Direct Effect**

	<b>Original Sample (O)</b>	<b>Sample Mean (M)</b>	<b>Standard Deviation (STDEV)</b>	<b>T Statistics ( O/STDEV )</b>	<b>P Values</b>
External Knowledge -> Knowledge Management	0.159	0.158	0.081	1.961	0.05
Innovative Management -> Organizational Performance	0.656	0.653	0.053	12.307	0
Internal Knowledge -> Knowledge Management	0.66	0.662	0.129	5.125	0
Knowledge Management -> Innovative Management	0.861	0.861	0.02	43.322	0
Knowledge Management -> Organizational Performance	0.307	0.311	0.055	5.569	0

There are several indirect effects given in Table 5, however the current study considered only one indirect effect of innovative management. The indirect effect of innovative management is examined between knowledge management and organizational performance. The results shows that innovative management is a mediating variable between knowledge management and organizational performance with t-value 11.601. This indirect effect is also given in histogram shown in Figure 5. It indicates that innovative management transfer the positive effect of knowledge management on organizational performance. In addition, this study observed the variance explained in organizational performance which is given in Figure 3. It shows that r-squared value of organizational performance is 0.872 which indicates that all the variables; internal knowledge, external knowledge, knowledge management and innovative management is expected to bring 87.2% change in organizational performance.

**Table 5: Mediation Effect**

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Internal Knowledge -> Knowledge Management -> Innovative Management	0.568	0.57	0.113	5.01	0
External Knowledge -> Knowledge Management -> Innovative Management -> Organizational Performance	0.09	0.088	0.076	1.18	0.239
Internal Knowledge -> Knowledge Management -> Innovative Management -> Organizational Performance	0.373	0.373	0.085	4.397	0
Knowledge Management -> Innovative Management -> Organizational Performance	0.565	0.562	0.049	11.601	0
External Knowledge -> Knowledge Management -> Innovative Management	0.137	0.136	0.117	1.173	0.241
Internal Knowledge -> Knowledge Management -> Organizational Performance	0.203	0.204	0.049	4.109	0
External Knowledge -> Knowledge Management -> Organizational Performance	0.049	0.05	0.045	1.084	0.279



**Figure 5: Indirect effect histogram between knowledge management and organizational performance**

## 5. Conclusion

Findings of the current study fulfil the objective of the study. Findings of the study reported that the combination between knowledge management and innovative management has vital importance for organizational performance of SMEs. To promote the organizational performance of SMEs, it is important along with the management of various innovative idea. As it is highlighted by the results that knowledge management has positive effect on organizational performance and innovative management. Management also has positive effect on organizational performance. Therefore, it is evident that knowledge management contributes towards the management of innovative ideas which further causes to increase organizational performance, therefore, innovative management of various ideas among SMEs can transfer the positive role of knowledge management on organizational performance. On the other hand, the challenge of knowledge management can be managed with the help of internal knowledge as well as external knowledge. For the management of internal information within the boundaries of the organization and external knowledge from the suppliers, distributors and various other stakeholders can help to improve knowledge management activities.

## 6. Implications of the Study

This study contributed in the theory with the help of introducing several important relationships which was ignored by the previous studies. Although other studies considered knowledge management and innovation management, however, the combination between knowledge management and innovation management is rarely addressed in relation to the organizational performance of SMEs. Furthermore, in rare cases any study documented the mediating role of innovative management between knowledge management and organizational performance. In this way, this study highlighted several implications for the practitioners. The study has major importance for the management of these companies to promote organizational performance. As the study proved that knowledge management is key to promote organizational performance. Therefore, it is important for the management of these companies to management with the help of external sources and internal knowledge sources which is recommended by the current study.

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