

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT FOR ENHANCING LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS IN UNIVERSITY STUDENT AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATION: PERSPECTIVES FROM FOSHAN CITY

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ARTICLE HISTOR

Received: 28 July 2026

Revised: 4 August 2026

Published: 28 August 2026

ABSTRACT

In the era of digital transformation and the knowledge based economy, student affairs administration in universities has gradually shifted from traditional experience based management to a knowledge intensive, student centered, and learning oriented model. The quality and efficiency of student affairs are increasingly dependent on systematic knowledge management and continuous organizational learning. This study aims to explore the knowledge management factors that affect the construction of a learning organization in student affairs administration. Based on theories of knowledge management, organizational learning, and learning organization, this study combines empirical evidence and practical analysis to examine the influences of knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage, knowledge sharing, and knowledge application on learning organization construction. The results show that the four dimensions of knowledge management have significant positive predictive effects on the formation and development of a learning organization. Meanwhile, leadership support, organizational culture, digital infrastructure, and incentive mechanisms play significant moderating roles in the relationship between knowledge management and learning organization. On this basis, this study proposes a series of integrated strategies to improve knowledge management practices and promote learning-oriented team building in student affairs. The conclusions of this study can not only enrich the theoretical research of educational administration but also provide practical references for universities to promote the professional, digital, and high-quality development of student affairs administration.

Keywords: Knowledge Management; Learning Organization; Student Affairs Administration

CITATION INFORMATION: Qiao, B., & Siththada, T. (2026). Knowledge Management for Enhancing Learning Organizations in University Student Affairs Administration: Perspectives from Foshan City. *Procedia of Multidisciplinary Research*, 4(8), 43.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of global digital transformation and the high-quality development of higher education, student affairs administration is undergoing profound and comprehensive changes. Traditional management methods that rely on personal experience and routine operations have been unable to adapt to the diverse, personalized, and complex needs of students in the digital and internationalized era. Modern student affairs administration requires the support of systematic knowledge resources, efficient knowledge flow mechanisms, and a continuous learning atmosphere to improve service quality, management efficiency, and innovation capabilities (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2023; Peters, 2021). As typical knowledge-intensive organizations, universities must take knowledge management and organizational learning as important paths to promote the modernization of internal governance.

Knowledge management refers to the systematic process in which organizations acquire, store, share, apply, and innovate knowledge to improve operational efficiency and sustainable development capabilities (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Alavi & Leidner, 2001). A learning organization emphasizes that organizations maintain vitality through continuous learning, collaborative reflection, systematic thinking, and adaptive innovation, so as to better cope with environmental changes and development challenges (Senge, 1990). In student affairs administration, knowledge management provides resources and tools for building a learning organization, while a learning organization provides cultural and environmental support for effective knowledge management. The integration of the two helps break knowledge silos, enhance the professional capacity of student affairs teams, and build a student-centered, high-efficiency, and high-innovation service system.

However, in the actual operation of universities, many problems still restrict the integration of knowledge management and learning organization construction. For example, knowledge resources are scattered and fragmented; knowledge sharing is insufficient due to cultural and institutional constraints; organizational structure is relatively rigid; learning activities are formalistic; and digital support capacity is insufficient (Wang & Zhang, 2023; Zhao & Liu, 2023). More importantly, existing research still lacks systematic and targeted empirical analysis on how knowledge management factors specifically affect learning organizations in student affairs administration.

Therefore, this study takes knowledge management factors as the core entry point, focuses on the actual situation of student affairs administration in universities, and systematically answers the following questions: What is the mechanism of knowledge management affecting the construction of a learning organization in student affairs administration? What key factors play a promoting role? What practical strategies can effectively optimize knowledge management and enhance the learning capacity of student affairs teams?

The theoretical value of this study lies in improving the theoretical framework linking knowledge management and learning organization in the field of educational administration, and verifying the relationship between the two in specific educational scenarios. The practical value is to provide universities with clear, operable, and systematic paths to promote the professional development of student affairs administration, improve governance capacity, and better support talent training.

CONCEPTS AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND LEARNING ORGANIZATION

1.1 Definition and Dimensions of Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is a comprehensive organizational practice involving the entire process of knowledge generation, collection, processing, storage, dissemination, application, and innovation. In the field of higher education, knowledge management is particularly important because student affairs administration involves interdisciplinary knowledge such as education, psychology, management, law, sociology, and information technology. Professionals engaged in

student affairs must continuously acquire and update knowledge to respond to complex and changing student needs.

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) proposed the famous SECI model, which divides knowledge creation into four processes: socialization (tacit to tacit), externalization (tacit to explicit), combination (explicit to explicit), and internalization (explicit to tacit). This spiral model reveals how knowledge is generated and transmitted at the individual and organizational levels, laying an important theoretical foundation for knowledge management in student affairs.

Alavi and Leidner (2001) further integrated the dimensions of knowledge management and formed an analytical framework widely used in academia, namely knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage, knowledge sharing, and knowledge application. These four dimensions are progressive and interactive, constituting a complete knowledge operation system.

Knowledge acquisition refers to the collection and integration of internal and external knowledge required by the organization. Knowledge storage refers to the standardized preservation of knowledge to form organizational memory. Knowledge sharing is the process of transmitting knowledge among individuals and teams to realize resource integration. Knowledge application refers to the use of existing knowledge to solve practical problems and improve organizational performance. These four dimensions constitute the core independent variables of this study.

1.2 Definition and Elements of a Learning Organization

The concept of a learning organization was first proposed and systematically elaborated by Senge (1990) in his book *The Fifth Discipline*. He believes that a learning organization refers to an organization that can continuously enhance its adaptive capacity and innovation capacity through continuous learning, reflection, and adjustment. Such an organization has five characteristics: personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking.

Applied to student affairs administration, a learning organization means that the student affairs team can continuously learn from practice, take the initiative to absorb advanced experience, reflect on existing problems, collaborate to solve complex problems, and systematically plan service mechanisms. In such an organization, staff are willing to break fixed thinking, pay attention to team growth, have consistent value orientation, and use holistic thinking to carry out work.

Argyris and Schön (1978) proposed organizational learning theory and distinguished single-loop learning and double-loop learning. Single-loop learning refers to improving methods without changing goals; double-loop learning refers to reflecting on and revising goals and underlying values. This theory provides an important basis for deep learning and sustainable innovation in student affairs organizations.

1.3 Theoretical Mechanism Linking Knowledge Management and Learning Organization

Knowledge management and learning organization are highly complementary and interactive. Knowledge management provides the resource foundation and operational path for learning organizations, and learning organization provides the cultural environment and structural guarantee for knowledge management.

On the one hand, knowledge acquisition enriches learning resources; knowledge storage forms organizational memory; knowledge sharing promotes team learning; knowledge application promotes practical innovation. These links directly promote the formation of learning-oriented characteristics.

On the other hand, the learning organization's emphasis on open culture, collaborative atmosphere, reflective mechanisms, and systematic thinking helps reduce barriers to knowledge sharing, improve knowledge utilization efficiency, and promote continuous knowledge innovation.

The interaction between the two constitutes the core theoretical logic of this study: knowledge management factors provide the driving force for the construction of a learning organization, and the learning organization feeds back the effectiveness of knowledge management.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT FACTORS AFFECTING LEARNING ORGANIZATION IN STUDENT AFFAIRS

2.1 Knowledge Acquisition

Knowledge acquisition refers to the systematic collection of internal practical experience, policy norms, advanced models, multidisciplinary theories, and student demand information required for student affairs work. Sufficient and high-quality knowledge acquisition is the premise of organizational learning.

In student affairs administration, knowledge sources include policy documents, typical cases, psychological counseling skills, cross-cultural adaptation knowledge, advanced experience of peer universities, and student feedback data. Studies have confirmed that sufficient knowledge acquisition significantly improves the learning initiative and problem-solving ability of teams (Rehman et al., 2021; Jain & Gupta, 2022).

2.2 Knowledge Storage

Knowledge storage refers to the classification, sorting, archiving, and digital preservation of existing knowledge to form stable organizational memory. Standardized knowledge storage can reduce the loss of knowledge caused by staff turnover and facilitate rapid reference and reuse.

Davenport and Prusak (1998) pointed out that effective knowledge storage can significantly improve organizational operation efficiency and provide stable support for continuous learning. For student affairs teams, complete case libraries, policy documents, and operation manuals are important foundations for learning and inheritance.

2.3 Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing is the core link connecting individual knowledge and organizational knowledge. It includes formal sharing such as meetings and training, and informal sharing such as mentoring and teamwork.

Many empirical studies have confirmed that knowledge sharing can significantly promote team learning, collaborative innovation, and service consistency (Jia et al., 2023; Yakaboski et al., 2019). In student affairs administration, knowledge sharing helps break departmental barriers, unify service caliber, and improve overall governance efficiency.

2.4 Knowledge Application

Knowledge application means transforming existing knowledge into practical behaviors, optimizing work processes, solving actual problems, and innovating management models. Knowledge application is the ultimate goal of knowledge management and the most direct link to promote the formation of a learning organization.

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) emphasized that knowledge application is the key to testing knowledge value. In student affairs practice, the ability to apply knowledge directly determines the service level and innovation effect of the team.

2.5 Moderating Factors

In addition to the four direct factors, the relationship between knowledge management and learning organization is also affected by four important contextual variables:

First, leadership support determines strategic attention and resource investment. Second, organizational culture affects trust atmosphere and learning willingness. Third, digital infrastructure determines the efficiency of knowledge dissemination and sharing. Fourth, incentive mechanism affects the internal motivation of staff to participate in knowledge construction and learning activities. These factors jointly determine whether knowledge management can effectively drive the construction of a learning organization.

EMPIRICAL RELATIONSHIPS AND RESEARCH EVIDENCE

3.1 Positive Effects of KM Factors on LO

A large number of empirical studies in higher education have confirmed that knowledge management factors have a significant positive impact on learning organizations.

Knowledge acquisition can significantly improve team learning ability and systematic thinking level. Knowledge storage helps form stable organizational memory and standardized service mechanisms. Knowledge sharing significantly promotes the formation of shared vision and collaborative culture. Knowledge application directly enhances organizational innovation ability and adaptive development capacity.

Multiple regression analysis and structural equation model studies all show that the four dimensions of knowledge management can positively and significantly predict the maturity of a learning organization (Rehman et al., 2021; Jain & Gupta, 2022; Jia et al., 2023).

3.2 Regional and Practical Characteristics in Chinese Universities

In the Chinese university context, student affairs administration has distinctive characteristics of ideological and political education, standardized management, and student-centered orientation. Policy knowledge and case knowledge play an important role in daily work.

Empirical studies show that the construction of learning organizations in Chinese student affairs teams is highly dependent on case-based learning, policy learning, team reflection, and digital management systems. The integration of knowledge management can significantly improve professional level and governance capacity (Li & Wang, 2024; Zhang & Li, 2022).

3.3 Common Challenges in Practice

In practice, universities generally face problems such as scattered knowledge resources, insufficient knowledge sharing willingness, formalistic learning activities, inadequate digital support, and incomplete incentive mechanisms. These problems restrict the transformation from knowledge management to learning organization and reduce the efficiency of student affairs governance.

INTEGRATED STRATEGIES FOR OPTIMIZING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT TO CONSTRUCT LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS IN STUDENT AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATION

The construction of a learning-oriented student affairs team cannot rely on the improvement of a single link, but must form a systematic, comprehensive, and sustainable promotion path based on knowledge management. This section integrates system construction, cultural shaping, digital empowerment, institutional guarantee, and cross-departmental collaboration to form a complete strategy system.

The construction of a knowledge management system should follow the logical chain of “precise acquisition, standardized storage, efficient sharing, and in-depth application” and run through the whole process of student affairs work. In terms of knowledge acquisition, universities should establish a multi-channel collection mechanism covering frontline cases, policy updates, advanced experience, and multidisciplinary theories. Regular sorting and summary of typical cases such as psychological crisis intervention, academic guidance, employment services, and cross-cultural adaptation can help transform individual experience into organizational resources. Tracking national and local education policies and advanced models of other universities in a timely manner can ensure the advancement and effectiveness of knowledge resources.

In terms of knowledge storage, standardized classification and digital management are essential. Universities should establish a unified knowledge classification standard, include policy documents, typical cases, operation guidelines, training materials, and emergency plans into a dedicated knowledge base, and carry out regular updates and maintenance. Perfect knowledge storage can not only reduce the impact of staff turnover but also help new staff quickly integrate into work, forming stable and sustainable organizational memory.

Knowledge sharing requires institutionalized mechanisms and cultural support. In addition to conventional regular meetings and training, universities should carry out diversified forms such as mentoring, case seminars, experience exchanges, and cross-departmental learning. More importantly, organizations should create an open and inclusive atmosphere, so that staff are willing

to share experience and lessons. The transformation from individual knowledge to organizational knowledge can be truly realized only when knowledge sharing becomes a conscious behavior of staff.

Knowledge application should take solving practical problems as the orientation. The value of knowledge lies in application. Student affairs teams should be encouraged to apply existing cases, methods, and technologies to solve practical problems, summarize experience in practice, and form a virtuous cycle of “application-feedback-optimization-innovation”. This process is not only the practice of knowledge management but also the process of promoting organizational learning and enhancing team capacity.

Leadership support and organizational culture are the soft environment for the long-term development of learning organizations. Leaders should incorporate knowledge management and learning organization construction into strategic planning, take the lead in participating in learning and reflection, and allocate necessary human, financial, and technical resources. At the same time, a learning-oriented culture that encourages reflection, tolerates exploration, and values collaboration should be shaped. When staff can freely put forward questions and ideas without psychological pressure, the organization will have a truly sustainable learning atmosphere.

In the digital era, digital technology has become a key force empowering knowledge management and organizational learning. Universities should build an integrated digital platform for student affairs knowledge, integrating functions such as knowledge release, search, training, interaction, and early warning. The use of big data, mobile terminals, and intelligent systems can break time and space restrictions, improve the convenience and efficiency of knowledge acquisition and sharing, and provide strong technical support for the construction of a learning organization.

Institutional guarantee is the key to maintaining long-term effects. Universities should improve training, incentive, and evaluation mechanisms. Targeted training should be carried out for different groups to improve the knowledge and application capabilities of staff. Knowledge contribution and learning performance should be included in the performance evaluation and promotion system to stimulate internal motivation. A perfect evaluation mechanism should be established to track the operation of knowledge management and the construction of learning organizations, and continuously optimize according to feedback.

Finally, cross-departmental collaboration is an important way to expand the boundaries of learning organizations. Student affairs are closely related to academic teaching, mental health, employment guidance, international exchange, and other fields. Strengthening cross-departmental collaboration can integrate multi-domain knowledge, form a collaborative service mechanism, and promote the all-round development of students. Open learning with external institutions such as enterprises and universities can further enrich the knowledge system and enhance the innovation capacity of the organization.

In summary, only by constructing a systematic model integrating knowledge system, organizational culture, digital technology, institutional mechanism, and collaborative ecology can universities effectively promote knowledge management and steadily build student affairs teams into learning organizations with strong learning ability, innovation vitality, and service efficiency.

CONCLUSION

This study systematically explores the influence mechanism of knowledge management factors on the construction of learning organizations in student affairs administration. The results show that knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage, knowledge sharing, and knowledge application have significant positive effects on the formation and development of learning organizations. Meanwhile, leadership support, organizational culture, digital infrastructure, and incentive mechanisms play important moderating roles.

The theoretical contribution of this study is to further clarify the logical relationship between knowledge management and learning organization in the context of student affairs administration,

enrich the theoretical research of educational administration, and provide an analytical framework for subsequent research.

In practice, the conclusions of this study can help universities clarify the key points of student affairs governance reform, provide operable strategies for promoting professional, digital, and learning-oriented development, and help improve the quality and efficiency of student services.

The limitation of this study is that it mainly focuses on theoretical and practical analysis and does not carry out large-scale empirical testing. Future research can carry out questionnaire surveys and empirical tests on a larger sample to further verify the stability and applicability of the model.

In the era of digital transformation and high-quality development, knowledge management and learning organization construction will continue to be important themes of student affairs administration reform. This study expects to provide useful references for universities to promote governance innovation and talent training.

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Data Availability Statement: The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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