

CREATING MULTIPLE FITS BETWEEN BUSINESS STRATEGY, KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY AND
KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER ACTIVITIES.

Fits between Business Strategy, Knowledge Strategy and Knowledge Transfer

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge management has gained immense popularity within the last decade. Knowledge is considered to be one of the key strategic resources that firms possess. It is undisputedly accepted that knowledge resource can help a firm attain competitive advantage. Knowledge Management is gaining momentum as companies are incorporating various knowledge management strategies into their overall strategic postures. Although organizations are undertaking many initiatives of knowledge management, they are still unsure which knowledge strategies should be fitted with different business strategies so that firm's performance can be enhanced. This conceptual paper tries to identify the right fit between knowledge strategies with business strategies, and proposes; that fits, at two levels should be created i.e. Level 1 fit between business-knowledge strategies and Level 2 fit between business-knowledge (BK) strategies and Knowledge-transfer (KT) activities. It is argued that only by creating these two levels of fits will a firm be able to achieve superior performance.

Key Words: Knowledge Management, Knowledge Transfer activities, Miles and Snow Strategic Orientation, Strategic Fit, Tacit and Explicit Knowledge, Human and System strategy of KM.

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INTRODUCTION

Knowledge in today's world is considered as one of the most important strategic weapon that businesses use to achieve superior performance(Choi & Lee, 2002).Overall knowledge and specifically knowledge management has generated a lot of interest within the last years(Alavi and Leidner, 2001)amongst academicians and business practitioners as they try to understand and develop appropriate fits to integrate knowledge management strategies with business strategies. Knowledge Management and the resulting Knowledge Management strategies that a firm pursues should be strongly related to the overall objectives of the firm through application of its business strategies(Davenport et al., 1998; Zack, 1999).It won't be incorrect to state that a right fit between knowledge management strategies and firms' business strategies is the lynchpin to improve overall business performance. Yet there is serious vagueness, both in literature and in practice regarding how and what type of fit is necessary. One of the most important question still not being properly addressed by practitioners andacademicians is "how" Knowledge management can be used by a firm or "how can a firm successfully incorporate" various Knowledge management strategies into its overall business. Most studies and research initiatives have yet failed to incorporate the dynamic characteristic of knowledge management strategies (Hansen et al., 1999; Jordan & Jones, 1997) and though there are enormous discussions undertake, there is still relatively very less empirical evidence available (Choi & Lee, 2002)on knowledge management strategies and its fit with business strategies.

Organizational knowledge and its use as a resource plays a pivotal role to create and sustain a competitive advantage by a firm in the new economy(see e.g., Birkinshaw and Sheehan (2002); Davenport et al. (1998); Hansen et al. (1999); Miles et al. (1997); Teece (2000); Nelson & Winter (1982); Penrose, (1959); Teece, 1981)). Undisputedly there has been a lot of supporting evidence that Knowledge Management can directly lead to improvement in firms performance(e.g. see Zack, 1999). Robinson et. al. (2004) argues that knowledge management provides a firm with synergistic benefits at the strategic and operational levels and according to Tiwana (2000), knowledge assets which are mostly intangible in nature do actually represent a significant proportion of the market value of some organizations and in reality it is these assets which are subject to imperfect imitation due to their tacit dimension (Polanyi, 1966; Hall and Sapsed, 2005). Yet Knowledge management cannot work in isolation; rather it has to create a coherent blend with the overall business strategy. Different businesses adopt different types of strategic orientations(e.g. see Porter 1980, Miller, 1981, Venkatraman, 1989, Miles and Snow 1978 etc.) to cope with the fickle business environment. Thus an important question that arises here is, what types of knowledge strategies will fit better with the specific business strategies. Zack (1999) argues that “the most important context for guiding knowledge management is the firm’s strategy,” and this link, “while often talked about, has been widely ignored in practice.” Given the gaps in research for establishing a coherent link between business strategies and knowledge management strategies further research is therefore of paramount importance to create such a link(s).

The knowledge management strategies presented in literature seem somewhat similar in nature, and thus a common perception prevails that a standardized knowledge management approach exists that has a universal applicability (Davenport, et al. (1998); Paik and Choi (2005); Soo et al. (2002)). The validity of this perception is certainly challengeable or otherwise it would entail that every business operates and competes in a similar fashion and a similar way (Franken and Braganza, 2006) in every industry. If different types of knowledge management strategies are required to fit with different business strategies, then extreme caution and a deeper analysis is required to realize the appropriateness of their combined fit. Although literature talks about creating fits between knowledge management strategies and business strategies, there is a strong presence of vagueness as to how this fit can actually be achieved. By fit we mean that a correct match between various theoretically defined combinations of variables will eventually lead to a positive outcome, while having a lack of such a match will eventually lead to unfavorable outcomes (Venkatraman, 1989). For this fit and match to happen, a right enabling environment is required within an organization. The problem faced by many organizations is that not only are they unclear about various knowledge initiatives (Davenport et al., 1998), such initiatives are usually implemented often on an impromptu basis (Robinson et al., 2004), without having the right enabling environment for knowledge transfer to happen, and therefore not endowing the true potential for the firm. Al-Gharibeh, (2011) argues that managers have to further understand knowledge transfer activities can only take place if a conducive business environment exists for knowledge transfer to happen. Most studies undertaken in the area of business-knowledge strategy fit have declared business performance as a natural outcome of Business-Knowledge strategy fit (e.g. see Martina, Tilo, Helmut,

2007). However this conception seems problematic as there are several factors which can mediate or moderate the relationship between strategic fit and firm's performance(Sveiby and Simons, 2002).

In order to understand how a business-knowledge strategy can be translated into superior performance, it is necessary to identify the activities through which knowledge will be transferred/leveraged within the organization to create value. It is pertinent to further understand that different knowledge transfer activities correspond differently with different business-strategy fits depending upon the kind and nature of the knowledge required. This paper will also attempt to identify the most appropriate knowledge activities which can best fit with differentBusiness-Strategies.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to propose a framework of dual strategic fits between business strategy, knowledge management strategy, and knowledge transfer activities to attain superior performance by a firm. Such a framework will first create a *Level 1* fit between different business strategies and knowledge management strategies (B-K). It will then create a *Level 2* fit between business-knowledge (B-K) strategy fit and knowledge transfer (K-T) activities. The framework will then link these two fits with organizational performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowledge:

Without the correct and continuous creation of knowledge, businesses can be entrapped in poor performance (Choi & Lee, 2002). Several working definitions and taxonomies of knowledge have been put forth in research repositories and books (e.g. see Polanyi, 1962, 1966; Zander and Kogut 1995; Dixon, 2000; Gunnlaugsdottir, 2003). Knowledge that firms possess has to be iteratively analyzed as an ongoing process and should be updated regularly due to its intrinsically indeterminate nature that keeps it changing continuously (Blackler, 1995; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Philosophers have long debated on the meanings, definitions and dimensions of what actually knowledge actually is (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Reviewing the traditional epistemology of knowledge Nonaka (1994) defines knowledge as the “justified true belief”, a concept first introduced by Plato in his *Meno*, *Phaedo* and *Theaetetus*. Various typologies on knowledge have been developed (Alavi and Leidner, 2001) and different scholars have tried to explain it with varying viewpoints. Davenport and Prusak, (1998) define knowledge “as a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information”. Sveiby (1998) defines knowledge as the ability of persons to evaluate information around him and then act in an efficient manner. Depending on the context with which we look at knowledge, it is a resource located either in an individual or collective mind, or something that is ingrained in a routine or a process. Long and Fahey (2000), have distinguished knowledge as human knowledge; which refers to, what do people know of or know how to do, social knowledge; existing in various relationship, an individual has with others or the cohorts

they belong to and finally, structured knowledge; rooted in systems, processes, tools and routines and practices of an organizations.

Tacit and Explicit Knowledge:

For the sake of better understanding, a good starting point to explain what knowledge is. (Polanyi, 1966) states that one can classify knowledge as either being tacit or explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is the know-how stored in the minds of the people's that is personal and is obtained through education, learning and relevant experience. Tacit knowledge is personal and is always context-specific knowledge held by a person and therefore it is commonly referred in literature as personal knowledge or human knowledge. Tacit knowledge can be defined as "knowledge that is non-verbalized, mainly intuitive, and unarticulated" (Polanyi, 1967). As it originates from personal experience; it is mostly slanted and difficult to formalize (Nonaka et al., 2000). As it is of intrinsic nature, such kind of knowledge is therefore difficult to be structurally formal and hard to communicate as it resides on various intangible factors such as self belief, self perspectives and differing value systems (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Thus it is not possible to separate, store, and disseminate the entire knowledge possessed by somebody (Davenport and Donald, 1999; Polanyi, 1966), as according to Polanyi "We know more than we can tell" (Polanyi, 1966). Tacit knowledge is learned through sharing it with others through collaborative experiences (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) and participation and "doing" is a mandatory facet. This applied, action-oriented knowledge or "know-how" (Newell et al. 2002) is based upon practice, acquired through personal experience, seldom expressed or articulated openly.

Explicit knowledge on the other hand is the “know-what” which we come across in usage of formal language, print or media and resides upon established work processes commonly incorporating a people-to-documents approach. Explicit knowledge is discrete or "digital." It is available in records of the past in archives of libraries and digital databases so that it can be retrieved on a sequential basis(Nonaka, 2004).Such knowledge holds all the codified knowledge obtainable from the so-called non-human storehouses in the forms of business manuals of processes and procedures, digital and online databases and customer management systems(Polanyi, 1966;Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995),and given this nature making it easier to disseminate and transfer(Simonin, 1999)or stored and shared with and between people or departments of an organization or embodied in the firms standard operating procedures(Nelson and Winter, 1982; Martin and Salomon, 2003a).Explicit knowledge is commonly referred to as *codified knowledge* or *systems knowledge*.

Knowledge management:

Knowledge in its self is not only enough for an organization to have; rather there should be proper systems and process in place which can effectively manage knowledge. Knowledge management promises to help companies become efficient and innovative than their competition. Previously knowledge management had a very narrow corridor of focus in a narrow spectrum of IT related and technology focused activities(O’Leary, 2001; Gottschalk, 2000), but today, as organizations have learnt and benefited from its true intangible and tangible value, utility and importance, knowledge management is increasingly being recognized as an integrated concept relating to the “*active*

management of intellectual assets, either in the form of explicit knowledge held in artefacts or as tacit knowledge possessed by individuals or communities”(Snowden, 1998). It is defined as “any process of creating, acquiring, capturing, sharing and using knowledge, wherever it resides, to enhance learning and performance in organizations”(Scarborough et al., 1999).As discussed previously, that knowledge is inherently indiscriminate undergoing continuous changes (Picot, 1998),properly managing such knowledge becomes a pivotal concern for business practitioners and academicians.Demarest (1997)argues that those firms who did not incorporate knowledge management systems within their organizations, will be unable to create and sustain competitive advantage and will eventually lose their market positions to such firms who have actively practicing in knowledge management. This notion has been further supported by the survey of multi industry organizations conducted by KPMG consulting which found, that 43% of firms who were surveyed had a KM initiative already up and running and one out of ten of these firms considered the KM initiatives that they took to be totally changing the ways in which they conduct business(KPMG Management Consulting, 1998). Robinson et.al (2004)in their empirical study based on the IMPaKT approach found that different types of benefits can be expected from KM that are both operational or strategic in nature. But good things don’t come cheap. Given the necessity and benefits of KM, serious costs and commitments are also to be undergone with KM and due considerations needs to be given before implementing a KM strategy.Davenport et al. (1997)argued that KM is expensive and thus can only get sustain if it can be clearly associated to extrinsic economic and financial rewards generated from it or only if such initiates are able to provide a clear competitive advantage to the firm.

Knowledge management strategies:

As knowledge is an important resource for any organizations, this resource has to be strategically managed through a process termed as knowledge management which in turn aligns firms' knowledge strategies with its business strategies which eventually would lead to superior performance. Organizations adopt various knowledge management strategies that foster development and utilization of knowledge assets through the thus resulting in knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, knowledge application, and knowledge integration (Zack, 1999). Knowledge strategies can be defined as a set of strategic choices which will direct and shape the organization's learning process and subsequently determine the firm's knowledge resources (Hansen et al., 1999; Zack, 1999a). An organization's strategy of knowledge management is not arbitrary but depends of the "*way the company serves its clients, the economics of its business, and the people it hires*" (Hansen et al., 1999).

As knowledge can either be tacit or explicit, two different knowledge management strategies stand out and discussed at lengths in the repositories of literature. These strategies are referred to as *codification strategy* or *personalization strategy*, both differing in their respective KM objective and knowledge type (Greiner and et.al, 2007). Codification strategy collects and stores knowledge in databases, and provides the available knowledge in an explicit and codified form (Greiner et al., 2007) to knowledge users. In contrast, the objective of personalization strategy is to transfer, communicate and exchange knowledge through personal networks and interactions between organizations employees and their external customers and suppliers. Personalization relies upon the tacit and implicit knowledge of individuals and is more

focused on the sharing of knowledge mainly through direct person-to-person interactions. Personalization could perhaps be simply described as a “people-to-people” approach (Hansen et al., 1999).

Systems vs. Human Strategies

As one of the objectives of this paper is to identify the correct knowledge management strategies that can create the right fit inter-alia with the different business strategies of the firm, the paper first looks at the various dimensions of the knowledge management strategies and their focus. Such knowledge strategies can fall over two dimensions which reflect their focus (Hansen et al., 1999; Zack, 1999a). The first dimension looks at how the organization can create, store and share the firm's explicitly documented knowledge. The main emphasis of this strategy is on codifying and storing knowledge and the use of information technology comes into play (Davenport, Long, & Beers, 1998; Lee & Kim, 2001; Liebowitz & Wilcox, 1997; Swan, Newell, & Robertson, 2000). In this paper such explicitly held or codified strategy will be referred to as a *systems strategy*, as their focus is to store the accumulated knowledge of a firm under defined systems, procedures and processes and to make it available for reuse through IT applications, manuals etc. The second dimension of knowledge management strategies focus on sharing of knowledge that is based upon human or personal interactions. These interactions are based on the social networks that are created within the internal organizational elements mainly its human elements comprising of teams and cross functional groups (Swan et al., 2000) and external stakeholders including suppliers and customers etc (Sveiby and Simons, 2002), and helps share various types of knowledge

through person to person interactions (Hansen et al., 1999). In this paper such tacit or personal strategies will be referred to as the *human strategy*.

Systems Strategy of Knowledge management:

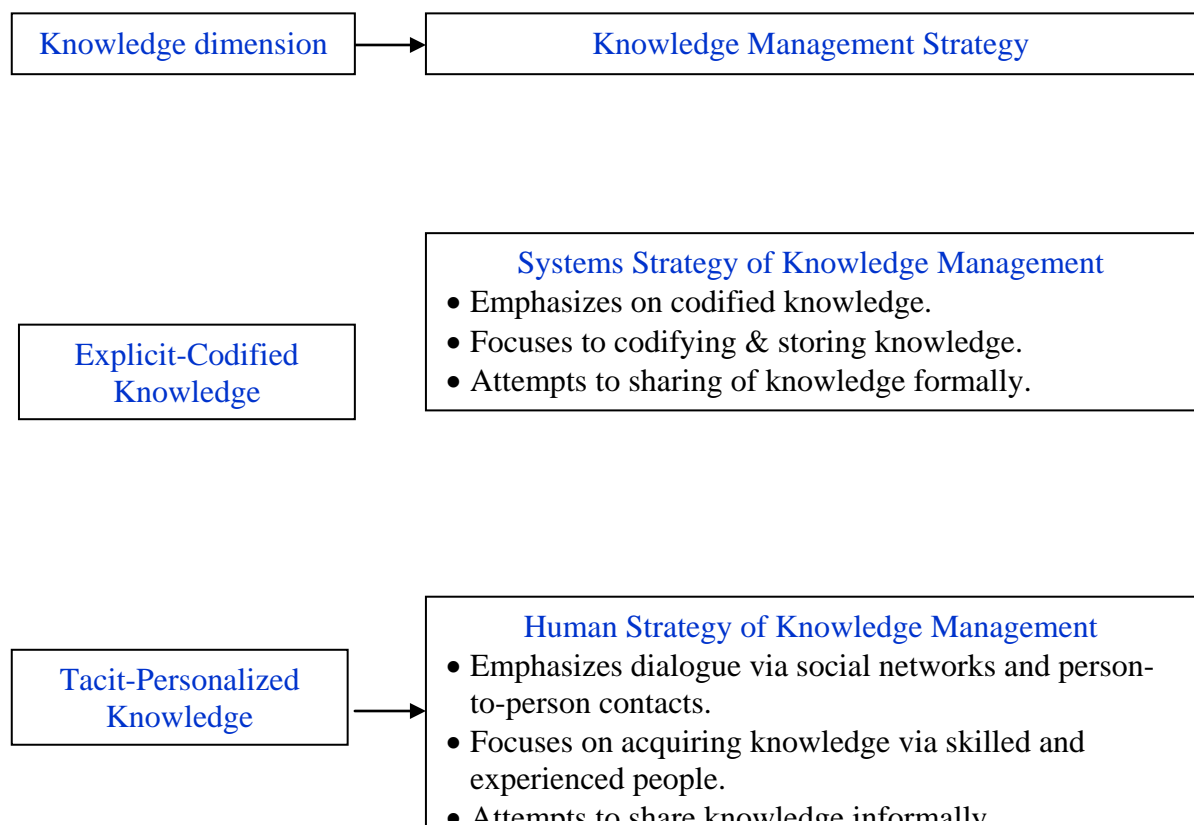
Polanyi (1967) originally categorizes knowledge into two types: tacit and explicit. Explicit knowledge is easily formalized and can be articulated (Hippel, 1994; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) which can be facilitated by the use of available information processing technologies (Liebowitz & Wilcox, 1997) and focuses on codifying and storing knowledge via information technology and sharing of knowledge formally (Choi & Lee, 2002) with properly placed systems and procedures. According to the empirical investigation undergone by Choi & Lee, (2002), firms that falling under this category of a highly system strategy-oriented group will constantly increase and update the codification of their knowledge and will also manage such codified knowledge in a formal and public fashion.

Human Strategy of Knowledge management:

Building up on Polanyi's (1967) view of explicit and tacit knowledge, tacit knowledge is not easy to formalize and communicate (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). It is transferred through personal contact, mental models, technical expertise and life experience. It is quite evident that that human strategy is utilized to foster tacit knowledge only. Human strategy of knowledge management emphasizes dialogue through social networks and person-to-person contacts. It focuses on acquiring knowledge via experienced and skilled people and attempts which are made to share knowledge informally (Choi & Lee, 2002). The focus of this strategy is to extract and acquire the internal knowledge

possessed by experienced and skilled people inside (or outside) the organization and then share it via informal interactions (Jordan & Jones, 1997). Thus it can safely suggested that a human strategy can be considered effective to foster tacit knowledge.

Figure 1 shows the features of knowledge management strategies based on knowledge dimensions.



Business strategies (with emphasis on Miles and Snow)

For more than three decades, formulation of strategy has been the cornerstone of the overall process of strategic management (Mintzberg, 1973) while the key objective of the strategic management process has been to find '*how effective strategies are shaped within the firm*' (Chakravarthy & Doz, 1992). The task of taxonomy for generic strategies is a characteristic of much of the literature on strategic management (Hatten & Schendel, 1977; Herbert & Deresky, 1987; and Miller & Dess, 1993). Different businesses adopt different types of strategic orientations (e.g. see Porter 1980, Miller, 1981, Venkatraman, 1989, Miles and Snow 1978 etc.) to cope with the changing business environment. One way of defining strategic orientation is the strategic course of direction that a firm adopts, so that it can generate the right types of behaviors which then lead to attainment of superior firms' performance (Gatignon & Xuereb, 1997; Menguc & Auh, 2005). Each strategic orientation has its own unique characteristics which further require a right mix of supporting activities, processes and practices. Why is the study of various context of strategic orientation so important to a firm? According to (Voss & Voss, 2000) to understand the link between strategy and performance; the strategic orientations of the firm has to be examined. What managers of a firm want to achieve and accomplish will therefore depend on the different emphasis they put on the strategic behaviors and the selection of strategic orientations they will pursue (Olson, Slater, & Hult, 2005). Many well know typologies by renowned scholars (e.g. see Miles & Snow, 1978; Miller, 1981; Porter, 1980; Venkatraman, 1989a)

have emerged in strategy literature. Porter (1980) differentiated three generic types of strategic orientations i.e. cost leadership, differentiation and focus. Venkatraman (1989b) identified six different sets of strategic choices directly relating to a firm's profitability i.e. aggressiveness, analysis, defensiveness, proactiveness, futurity and riskiness. Miles and Snow (1978) presented a framework of strategic orientation consisting of four topologies named as defender, prospector, analyzer and reactor.

For the purpose of this paper the strategic orientation framework presented by Miles and Snow's (1978) is selected, as this framework has stood up to rigorous academic testing for over thirty years. Venkatraman (1989) reiterates this by stating that "*the topologies presented by Miles and Snow reflect a broad and holistic perspective to strategy conceptualization*". Furthermore Miles and Snow topology is also extensively adopted in strategy research (see e.g. Snow and Hrebiniak 1980; Shortell and Jazac 1990; Ramaswamy et al. 1994; James and Hatten 1995). Miles and Snow (1978: pp. 29) taxonomies of strategic orientation have recognized four generic or "ideal" organization forms which they epitomized as *defenders, prospectors, analyzers* and *reactors*. Many scholars (e.g. see Conant et al. (1990); DeSarbo et al (2005); Hambrick (1982, 2003); Zahra and Pearce (1990); Zajac and Shortell (1989)) have further validated this through empirical testing and established that defender, prospector and analyzer type organizations can be found in every industry sectors; be it small, medium or large sized organization; in public, private and non-profit organizations across all continents.

The following are extracted from Miles & Snow (1978):

Defender type organizations: Defender organizations compete in a very narrow product-market domain thus resulting in a stable organizational form that has a stable structure. Top management teams (TMT) are expert in their predefined organization's boundary of operation paying strict attention towards achieving an efficient production and distribution system that is embodied with minimization of overhead costs and strict control systems. These organizations fortify their position by offering products which are competitively priced or those that are of superior quality. Defenders perceive developments in their niche market as stable, hence disregarding developments which are happening outside their market domain. Most of their efforts and investments are channelized towards improving operational efficiencies. It is actually due to this narrow focus that these organizations seldom need to make major alteration in their technology, structure, or methods of operation. Instead they devote primary attention to improving the efficiency of their existing operations to lower their costs down (Miles & Snow, 1978.)

Prospector type organizations: Prospector organizations are the opposites of defender type organization and are constantly identifying, capitalizing or exploiting new market opportunities in response to the external environmental trends. Prospectors regularly experiment with potential responses to emerging environmental trends. Top management teams perceive their market environment as constantly changing and seeks to exploit such changes for the betterment of their firms. At times, prospectors are often the enablers or creators of change and uncertainty, hence putting their

competitors in an uncomfortable zone persistently. Having a strong concern for product and market innovation, prospectors are usually not always efficient in costs and controls of the systems they have. One explanation to this can be that their core concern is to maintain their innovator image in the marketplace, and not to be a cost leader. To be innovative, Prospectors tend to monitor a broad range of trends and events that take effect in the marketplace so that they can enable themselves to stay at the forefront of new product and market developments. Their highly knowledgeable and entrepreneurial oriented workforce incorporates high degree of flexibility in their business processes, shunning away from standardization and routinized processes. These firms tend to be more creative through their people, adopting self organizing and evolving structures, and incorporates a reward system that particularly favors R&D and marketing (Miles & Snow, 1978.)

Analyzer Type organizations: Analyzer type organizations are hybrid (or mix) in nature as they operate on two types of product-market domains; one which is relatively stable (Defender) and the other that is relatively dynamic and changing (Prospector). They occupy an *in-between* position across these two extremes by using the strengths of both the Prospector and Defender approaches. They cautiously follow prospectors into new product-market domains, and also carve out and defend a stable niche in the market by adopting the defenders approach. In their stable areas, these organizations operate in a standardized and efficient manner through formalized structures and processes. In their more turbulent areas, top managers watch their competitors closely for new ideas, and then they rapidly adopt or leapfrog on those which appear to be most promising. As analyzers have a dual market focus, such a strategy is often more complicated to peruse

and is complex to implement because of the opposing nature of its operational and administrative requirements (Miles & Snow, 1978).

Reactor type organizations: Reactor type organizations are the ones in which the management although is capable to witness the changes in the environment, yet they are inconsistent in adapting to such changes or are unable to coup up with environmental uncertainties. As they do not have a consistent response to the entrepreneurial problem these types of organizations usually end up having a residual strategy which is a result of applying inappropriately either a defender, prospector or analyzers strategy (Miles & Snow, 1978).

It is important to note here that since reactor strategy essentially lacks a particular set of cogent strategies, predictions on their behaviors cannot be made. As Miles and Snow have explained that reactors strategies are in fact a residual of remaining organizations which are unable to follow any of the above mentioned strategies (Shortell & Zajac, 1990), this paper will exclude the Reactor strategies from formal consideration in strategy formulation.

Although literature has identified several typologies of strategic orientations and the associated business strategies with it, many gaps still prevail as to which type of strategic orientation should be combined with the knowledge strategies so that an optimal "fit" can be created. This paper puts forth this argument based on extant literature, that differing combinations of business-knowledge strategies will yield differing results on a firm's performance. Porter (1980, 1985) argues that in practical terms, it is through various strategic orientations that business creates a match between

their internal and external environments and it is this match that finally determines the firm's performance. Studies (see e.g. Aloulou and Fayolle 2005; Grinstein 2008; Li et al. 2008) suggest that further research still needs to be focused on the different choices and combinations of strategic orientations that firms can pursue given different situations (Grinstein 2008: 126).

Firms Performance:

Firm's performance in simple terms can be defined as the cumulative output of the total activities that it undertakes. Firm's performance is an aggregate of various constructs which are effected by different strategies and activities, each having a different effects on the dimensions of organizational performance (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Ray, Barney, & Muhanna, 2004). Since knowledge has been acknowledged as a strategic resource of a firm, knowledge management strategy should be viewed as a mediating factor between business's strategy and performance. Knowledge management is an essential part of continuous performance improvement (Robinson et. al., 2004), as knowledge can provide a firm with the capabilities to identify, examine and capture market opportunities (Massingham, 2004) which will ultimately provide the firm with superior performance. Sveiby (1998) argues that knowledge management strategies working inter alia with business strategies cannot generate the right results unless the right knowledge transfer activities are placed within the organization. Therefore the performance of the firm will not only be dependent on the right fit of business-knowledge strategies but will also require the right knowledge transfer activities to be undertaken by the firm if it wants to achieve superior performance.

Knowledge management and business strategy:

Previous discussion in this paper has led us to infer that a firm's knowledge strategy should be encompassed in its overall business strategy and should work in correct alignment with business strategy. Knowledge management initiatives will only be successful if managers of the firm choose the right knowledge management strategy in accordance to their business strategy and are able to create the important alignment of knowledge management and the firm's overall all business strategy it seeks to undertake (Greiner et al., 2007). KM should be tightly related to objectives and business strategies of the organization or subunit of the organization (Davenport et al., 1998; Zack, 1999). This suggests that a viable fit between knowledge management strategies and business strategies is critical to improve firms' performance as Demarest (1997) has argued that firms without correct knowledge management strategies would be unable to maintain a competitive advantage. This has been further supported by Franken and Braganza (2006) that knowledge management cannot be a choice of convenience; rather it must be carefully scrutinized and then closely aligned with the organizational form and its strategic orientation in order to be effective. Therefore, knowledge management strategy has to be firmly linked with the business strategy in order to generate economic rents. Several authors clearly indicate the importance of mutually aligning business strategy and KM efforts and how this alignment helps enhance organizational performance (e.g., see Earl, 2001).

Having established the importance of the link between knowledge management strategies and business strategies, it is still not very evident that which knowledge management strategy should be linked with particular business strategies as

differing combinations between business-Knowledge (B-K) strategies may lead to differing results. Furthermore, as knowledge management is complex and intangible in nature, it is difficult to directly determine which aspects of a firm's competitive strategy can be translated into the specific knowledge management activities and how (Wu and Lin, 2009). Further complicating the situation, many managers still face difficulties in deploying knowledge management strategies, as it is extremely difficult to directly correspond to which intangible knowledge management activities directly lead to improved corporate performance (Davenport and Prusak, 1998; Hansen et al., 1999; Zack, 1999b.; Grant, 1991). Past studies have so far not been able to clearly address this linkage between knowledge management strategies and organizational performance or linking business strategy and knowledge management. Though it has often been talked about, still it has been overtly ignored in practice (Davenport, DeLong, & Beers, 1998; Ruggles, 1998).

Knowledge management activities for knowledge transfer

The role of KM is to facilitate, co-ordinate and leverage knowledge, whether tacit, individual or external, so that it is readily available as an organizational asset (Robinson et al., 2004.) Business leaders are by default required to be innovative so as to capture the combined wisdom and intellect of their employees, customers, and shareholders (Parent et al., 2000), either from inside the firm or from outside. The people and workplace culture are the key drivers which will ultimately determine the success or failure of KM (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). But this notion is complicated by the inbuilt characteristics of knowledge which according to (Al-Ghassani et al., 2002) can have several dimensions e.g. individual and group knowledge, internal and

external knowledge, and tacit and explicit knowledge etc. Knowledge which is generated inside the firm is extremely valuable as it is unique, specific, and tacitly held within organizational members (Wu and Lin, 2009) and hence difficult for competitors to imitate, making it a strategically viable asset. Common sources of external knowledge include publications, universities, government agencies, professional associations, knowledge brokers etc. Externally-oriented organizations always try to create opportunities of exploring knowledge through dialogs with its customers, suppliers and stakeholders so that two way knowledge exchange can take place (Sveiby 1998).

This paper has so far attempted to argue that a right fit of *Level 1* between business-knowledge (BK) strategies is required for a firm to effectively manage knowledge. The next question put forth is; that, is this right fit between B-K strategies enough or should there be a collaborative enabling environment (Sveiby and Simians, 2002) which facilitates knowledge transfer (KT) through various activities so that the potential of business-knowledge (BK) strategies can be fully realized? It is argued here that if the correct KT strategies are not put into place, the ultimate purpose will be lost. Gold et al. (2001) suggested that knowledge infrastructure and knowledge processes are the two pivotal capabilities required for effective realization of KM with firm's performance. Although appropriate KT strategies could improve on a firm's ability to nurture and share knowledge across the organization, these strategies only will not ensure that the firm is making the best decisions of its resources or that it is managing the right knowledge in the right way (Beckman, 1999; Hansen et al., 1999; Zack, 1999). Therefore it is argued in this paper, that a second level fit needs to be created between BK-Strategies and KT-activities that will lead to superior performance by a firm.

Knowledge Transfer (KT) Activities:

Keeping in view the above argument this paper takes into consideration the knowledge based theory of the firm to guide in strategy formulation by Sveiby(1998), which states that people use their *capacity to act* in order to make value in two directions: by transferring and converting knowledge internally and externally. Sveiby (1998) suggests that when people have to express themselves, they create external and internal structures, or (Weick, 1997, 1983) being construed through interactions amongst each other. From an organizational stand point, every time such an interaction takes place, knowledge is doubled. Organizational boundaries are diminished when its customers, suppliers and other stakeholders are interwoven into the overall big picture of the firm(Sveiby and Simons, 2002). It can be hence argued that from a firms' perspective, knowledge transfer and knowledge conversion can take place at three levels: "*the individual competence, the internal structure and the external structure*"(Sveiby1998).Sveiby (1998) has identified that nine basic knowledge transfers (KT) can occur which can create value for organizations, but usually are neither coordinated nor incorporated into the overall coherent strategy of the firm, as various legacy systems and cultures exist in organizations which actually do block such leverages. The nine types of knowledge transfer (KT) activities as proposed by Sveiby and Simons (2002)will now be discussed briefly and later incorporated into the overall theoretical framework so that a second level fit can be created between BK-KT strategies.

*KT1] Between individuals:*KT1 is concerned with communications between employees and addresses how to best transfer competence between people. Key enablers include trust, willingness to share know-how, enabling team activities, inductions programs, job rotations, social interactions and oral communications as the preferred ways of such KT activities.

KT2] From individual to external structures: KT2 is concerned with how organizations employees transfer knowledge to the outer world and addresses how can organization's employees can improve competence with customers, suppliers and other stakeholders. Key enablers include employees helping customers better understand the product, bypass red-tape, enabling job rotations with customers, conduct seminars and providing customer education and improving firms reputation.

KT3: From external structures to individuals: KT3 augments how can organization's customers, suppliers and other stakeholders augment competence of employees who learn through feedbacks on new ideas, experiences, new technical knowledge from customers, suppliers and communities. Organization develops formal systems to capture such knowledge. Key enablers include good personal relationships with customers, and anticipating through interactions the future customer needs. KT3 compliments KT2.

KT4: From Competence to internal structure: KT4 is concerned with the transfer of internal competence held tacitly by the employees into data systems. The key strategic question addresses how a firm can improve conversion of individually held competencies into systems, tools and templates. Key enablers include activity-focused tools, templates, formal processes and systems so that they can be shared and disseminated across the firm.

KT5: From internal structures to individual competence: KT5 compliments KT4. Once competence is captured in the system through KT4, it should be made available to individuals for the purpose of “*capacity to act*”. This is achieved through KT5. The key concern here is how individual performances can be improved by using the systems, tools and templates developed by the firm. Key enablers include improvements in human-computer interface systems, action based learning, simulations, e-learning and experimentation.

KT6: Within external structures: KT6 relates to how an organization enables conversations among customers, suppliers and other stakeholders so that their competence can be improved. The key question is to determine how can conversions between customers, suppliers and other stakeholders help to improve their individual competence. Enablers include partnering, alliances and joint ventures, improving organizational image, brand equity enhancements, improving quality and conducting product seminars and building external communities of practice.

KT7: From external to internal structures: KT7 is concerned with the knowledge gains, that a firm can get from its external family and how to convert this learning into action. The key question here is how the competence from customers, suppliers and stakeholders can improve the inbuilt organizational systems, tools, processes and products. Key activities include empowering inbound call centers, creating alliances to generate new ideas for new products, R&D alliances etc, improving customer knowledge and competitive intelligence.

KT8: Internal to external structure: KT8 compliments KT7, by addressing the strategic question of how can organization’s systems, tools and processes and products improve competence of customers, suppliers and other stakeholders. Enablers include making

organization's systems, tools and processes effective to serve the customers, creating extranets with customers and suppliers, product tracking & establishing helpdesks.

KT9: Within internal structures: KT9 is concerned with how the organizations systems, tools and processes and products can effectively be integrated with each other. Key enablers include streamlining databases, building integrated IT systems, improving office layouts etc.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Level 1 Fit: Business-Knowledge (BK) Strategy fit

Although the knowledge management literature recognizes that knowledge management strategies must follow competitive strategies for companies to develop sustainable competitive advantages through utilization of their unique knowledge assets (Hansen, Nohria and Tierney (1999); Teece (2000)), it provides no frameworks for effectively aligning appropriate knowledge management models with organizations' strategies, structures and processes, i.e. organizational forms (Franken and Braganza, 2006). In the absence of such alignment frameworks, organizations may be at risk in adopting a knowledge management strategy that in reality is not right for its form and, subsequently, are unable to realize full benefits of knowledge management (Davenport, De Long and Beers (1998); Hansen, Nohria and Tierney (1999)).

Based on the above literature, we present a framework which tries to incorporate various combinations that are necessary to ascertain the two levels of fit. *Level 1* fit will be created to match different business strategies taken from Miles & Snow (1978)

typology of strategic orientations and establish their link with the knowledge management strategies presented by Choi & Lee, (2002) so that an appropriate B-K strategy fit can be created. A second level fit i.e. *Level 2* fit will be built upon the *Level 1* fit, which represents the fit between business-knowledge (B-K) management strategies and the knowledge transferring (K-T) activities using the framework proposed by Sveiby and Simons (2002) so that superior performance can be attained.

ALIGNING BUSINESS STRATEGY (BS) WITH KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT (KM)

STRATEGIES TO CREATE BUSINESS-KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY (B-K) FIT

BK1] Defender type organizations fit with KM Strategies:

Defender organizations operate in a narrowly defined product-market domain, under a stable environment, with a highly expert top management focusing on efficient production and distribution, overhead minimization and strict control systems. Due to their narrow focus, these organizations seldom need to make major adjustments in their technology, structure, or methods of operation and devote primary attention to improving the efficiency of their existing operations to lower their costs down. This reflects that such organizations are more concerned with explicit knowledge of knowledge which adheres to a codification system to collect knowledge, stores it in databases, and provides the available knowledge in an explicit and codified form. The codification strategy is assumed to be successful for these companies whose business strategy requires re-using existing knowledge (Hansen et al., 1999; Malhotra, 2004). As these firms' operate in a narrow product market domain which creates a rather stable environment (Miles and Snow, 1978), they usually face with programmed decisions to help them better operate in these domains. Such organizations need to create proper systems utilizing the use of information technology (Davenport, Long, & Beers, 1998; Lee & Kim, 2001; Liebowitz & Wilcox, 1997; Swan, Newell, & Robertson, 2000). They will also incorporate other well defined forms, templates, procedures and processes (Sveiby and Simons, 2002) to create the appropriate systems, undergo continuous improvements in their focused domain and have their core skills in specialized knowledge. Organization

whose business strategy requires process efficiency relies primarily on a codification strategy (Greiner et al., 2007). Their objective is to emphasize on codified knowledge, storing knowledge and attempting to share such knowledge formally through appropriate systems(Choi & Lee, 2002). Based on this we develop our first hypothesis as follow:

H1:Defender strategy will best fit with the systems oriented strategy for knowledge management.

BK2] Prospector organizations fit with KM Strategies:

Prospector firms are constantly striving to search new market opportunities in response to general environmental trends, continuously seeking to locate and exploit new product and market opportunities by regularly experimenting and pioneering products for new markets. They perceive their market environment as constantly changing and often act as creators or enablers of change within their industry, and their core concern is to maintain their innovator image. They tend to stay at the forefront of new product and market developments by relying on their highly knowledgeable and entrepreneurial staff, incorporating a high degree of flexibility in their business thus shunning away standardization or routinized processes, working in self organizing structures.Their objective of differentiation is to generate something unique in the market place by sharing various types of knowledge through person to person interactions (Hansen et al., 1999). This suggests that such organizations focus more on tacit knowledge possessed by individuals or communities' that are based upon human or personal interactions of social networks, so that new ideas can be discussed and shared

for attaining differentiation amongst teams and cross functional groups (Swan et al., 2000). Such organizations emphasize dialogue via social networks and person-to-person contacts and focus on acquiring knowledge via skilled and experienced people in attempts to share knowledge informally. Greiner et al., (2007) further reaffirm this view by stating that an organization whose business strategy requires product/process innovation should rely primarily on a personalization strategy. This leads to the development of our next hypothesis as follow:

H1a: Prospector strategy will best fit with the human oriented strategy for KM

BK3] Analyzer organizations fit with KM Strategies:

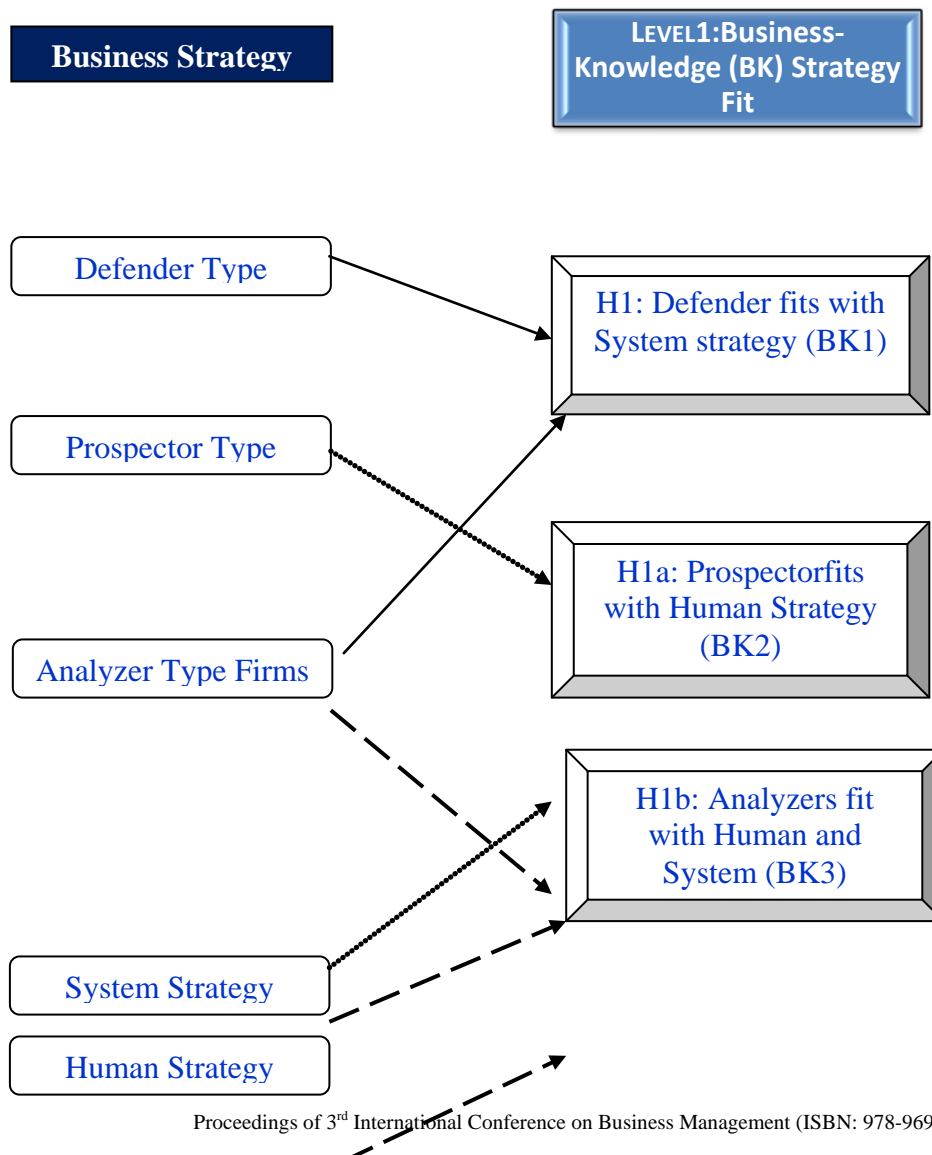
Analyzers work are hybrid type organizations, developing new products for new markets and existing products for currently served markets by combining the strengths of both the Prospector and Defender. In their stable areas, these organizations operate routinely and efficiently through use of formalized structures and processes which reflects the use of Systems strategy of knowledge management. In their more turbulent areas, top managers keep an eye on developing trends in the marketplace and rapidly adopt those that appear to be the most promising for product and market development by using their entrepreneurial and creative workforce. Such activities involve personal interaction with existing customers, suppliers and other stakeholders. This suggests that Analyzer type organizations will use a combination of both KM strategies of systems and humans, where systems strategy will help them to focus on their existing markets, and the human strategy will help such organizations capture market information on

competitors through the interaction with external stakeholders and structures. This leads to the development of our next hypothesis as follow:

H1b: Analyzer strategy will best fit with both system and human oriented strategy of KM

Based on the above three hypothesis crated, *figure 2* presents the creation of *Level 1* fit between business strategies and knowledge management strategies (B-K).

Figure2: Level 1 Fit Between Business strategies and knowledge strategies.



Level 2 Fit: Aligning BK strategies with Knowledge Transfer (KT) activities to create BK-KT fit.

As discussed above, by just matching the business strategies with various knowledge management strategies is not enough to translate into business performance. Certain Knowledge transfers need to be incorporated into the model so that they can better leverage and mediate the BK fit. The role of KM is to facilitate, unlock, co-ordinate and leverage knowledge, whether tacit, individual or external, so that it becomes available as an organizational asset (Robinson et al., 2004). Typically, knowledge management should consider several components such as knowledge management strategy, knowledge levers, knowledge enablers and organizational outcomes to develop an integrated model. Knowledge sources may lie within (internally) or outside (externally) to the firm's environment which can help organizations to generate true competitive advantages. It is therefore argued that only *Level 1* fit between B-K strategies is not enough. Unless the right knowledge transfers (KT) strategies and enablers are not put into place, the ultimate purpose of *Level 1* fit will be lost. Therefore it is proposed that firms need to create a *Level 2* fit between Business-Knowledge (BK) strategies and Knowledge-Transfer (KT) activities so that the true potential and benefit of knowledge can be ascertained combining the internal competencies, internal structures and external structures within inside and outside the organization. Sveiby (1998) argues that people use their *capacity to act* in order to make value in two directions: by transferring and converting knowledge internally and externally to the organization and knowledge transfer and knowledge conversion takes place at three levels: *"the individual competence, the internal structure and the external structure"*(Sveiby and

Simons,2002). The KT activities usually exist in organizations, but the legacy systems and culture may hinder, block or sometimes disintegrates the overall knowledge transfer process. Thus it is imperative to have a clear prioritized selection of such KT strategies

BK1-KT] BK1 (Defender-System strategy) fit with KT strategies.

As the defender system strategy requires high operational efficiencies to be explicitly managed between internal employees, it is suggested that following knowledge transfer activities be matched with BK1 strategies:

*KT4-From Competence to internal structure:*so that internal competence held tacitly by the employees can be transferred into data systems focusing on activity-focused tools, templates, formal processes and systems to be shared and disseminated across the firm.

*KT5-From internal structures to individual competence:*that helps such competencies be made available to individuals for the purpose of “*capacity to act*” and effect how individual performances can be improved by using the systems, tools and templates held by the firm. Such activities can help service the existing narrowly defined product-market domain of defenders to work better with knowledge management strategies.

KT9-Knowledge transfer within internal structures: which create enablers which include streamlining databases, building integrated IT systems, improving office layouts so that systems strategy can be fitted well with defender strategy.

KT7: From external to internal structures: whichfacilitate transfer of knowledge gained byfrom external family of customer’ssuppliers and stakeholders and convert such learning into actions to improve the inbuilt organizational systems, tools, processes and products developed by the system strategy of KM.

We argue that the above four KT strategies when incorporated with BK1 will lead to better translation of knowledge within Defender type organizations using codified knowledge and systems strategy. This leads to the development of the second hypothesis as follow:

H2: Companies following defender-system strategy (BK1) should emphasize more on Knowledge transfer through KT4-KT5-KT9 & KT7 knowledge transferring activities.

BK2-KT] BK2 (Prospector-Human strategy) fit with KT strategies.

As established that Prospectors type organizations tend to focus more on the tacit, personalized human strategies of knowledge management, it is suggested that following knowledge transfer activities should be matched with BK2 strategies:

KT3-From external structures to individuals: Which can be at the starting point of any organization which seeks to innovate and differentiate its products and services. Various definitions of marketing argue that strategies of the firm should be customer centric. A good starting point for Prospector firms should be the feedbacks ascertained from their customers regarding unmet needs and upcoming trends; from suppliers, who can be an excellent source of information regarding new products and services offered by competitors and new materials available. External structures can augment the competence of the firm's employees and help employees learn through feedbacks on new ideas, experiences and new technical knowledge.

KT1-Between individuals: Hencefostering better communications internally and addressing how to best transfer competence betweenorganizational members. Such tacitly held knowledge sharing activities can lead to the development of new ideas, new processes and eventually the new products required by prospectors to maintain their innovator image. Social interactions will remain at the forefront of the human strategy so that Pioneering products for new markets can be developed by the organization.

KT2-From individual to external structures: Thiswill help the organization transfer the information and usage of new products and new services to the customers for better understanding. This activity will also involve external suppliers to help them better understand what the organization plans to achieve, and what sorts of new materials and resources may be required from the firms. KT2 activities will further enhance the organizations efforts to maintain its image as an innovator. By transferring knowledge from individuals to external structures, the organization through its human strategy can ensure availability of people, resources and assets and all new knowledge created by the firm is transferred to its external structures completely.

KT6: Within external structures: Once prospectors have developed new products and services, and helped external structures to understand the features, benefits and differentiating characteristics through KT2, they should then focus on diffusion of innovation within the new markets by creating communities of personal interactions and conversations within the external structures, so that those external customers can better understand key feature and unique benefits. Efforts in this regard can incorporate developing key opinion leaders, reference groups or running online blogs and social networking communities. This leads to the development of the next hypothesis as follow:

H2a: Companies following prospector-human (BK2) strategy should emphasize more on KT3-KT1-KT2 & KT6 knowledge transferring activities.

BK3-KT] BK3 (Analyzer-Human-System strategy) fit with KT strategies.

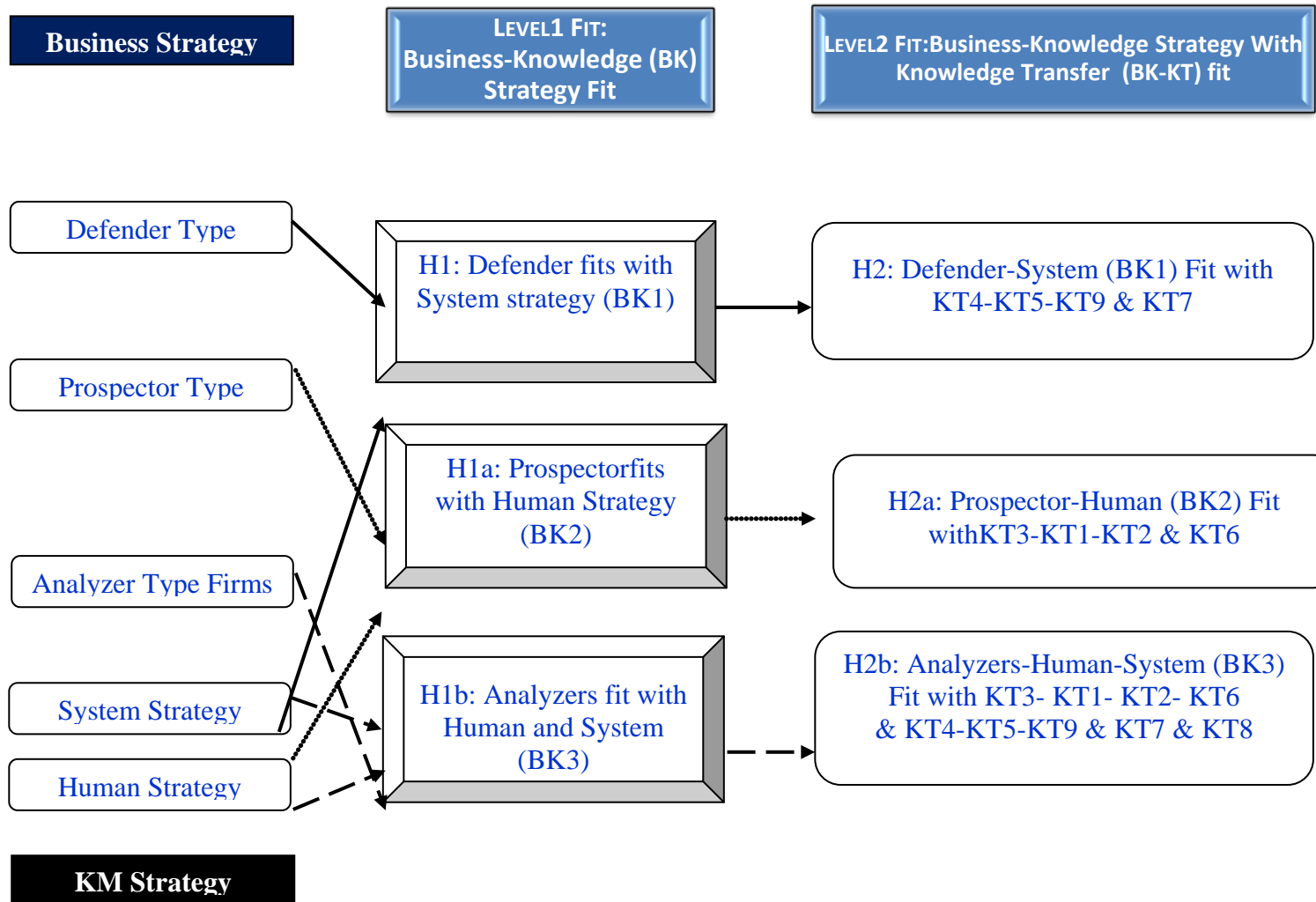
Analyzers use a combination of both Defender and Prospectors type strategies and incorporate both human and system strategy of KM, there for knowledge transfer (KT) activities identified above for BK1 and BK2 will be incorporated in BK3 strategies. Apart from those KT8 can further boost the BK3 strategy.

KT8: Internal to external structure: As analyzers work with a dual strategic approach, they have to pay extra attention that both their existing and new markets are served completely. For such type of firms it is suggested to develop a matrix type of organizational structure form that is moderately and centrally controlled. Such a structural arrangement makes it easy to transfer the organization's systems, tools and processes and products to improve competence of customers, suppliers and stakeholdersexisting at the two parallel levels (existing & new). Thus the firm can offer new products for new markets & existing products for currently served markets. It can use the Human strategy for Product and market development and use systems strategy for market penetration. This leads to the development of the next hypothesis as follow:

H2b: Companies following Analyzer-System-Human strategy(BK3) fit should emphasize more on the combination of KT4-KT5-KT9-KT7 & KT3-KT1-KT2 & KT6 along with KT8 knowledge transferring activities.

Based on the above hypothesis developed, figure 3 presents the creation of *Level 2* fit between business-knowledge strategies (B-K) and knowledge-transfer activities (KT).

Figure3: Level 2 Fit Between Business- knowledge (BK) strategies& Knowledge-Transfer (KT) activities.



Performance:

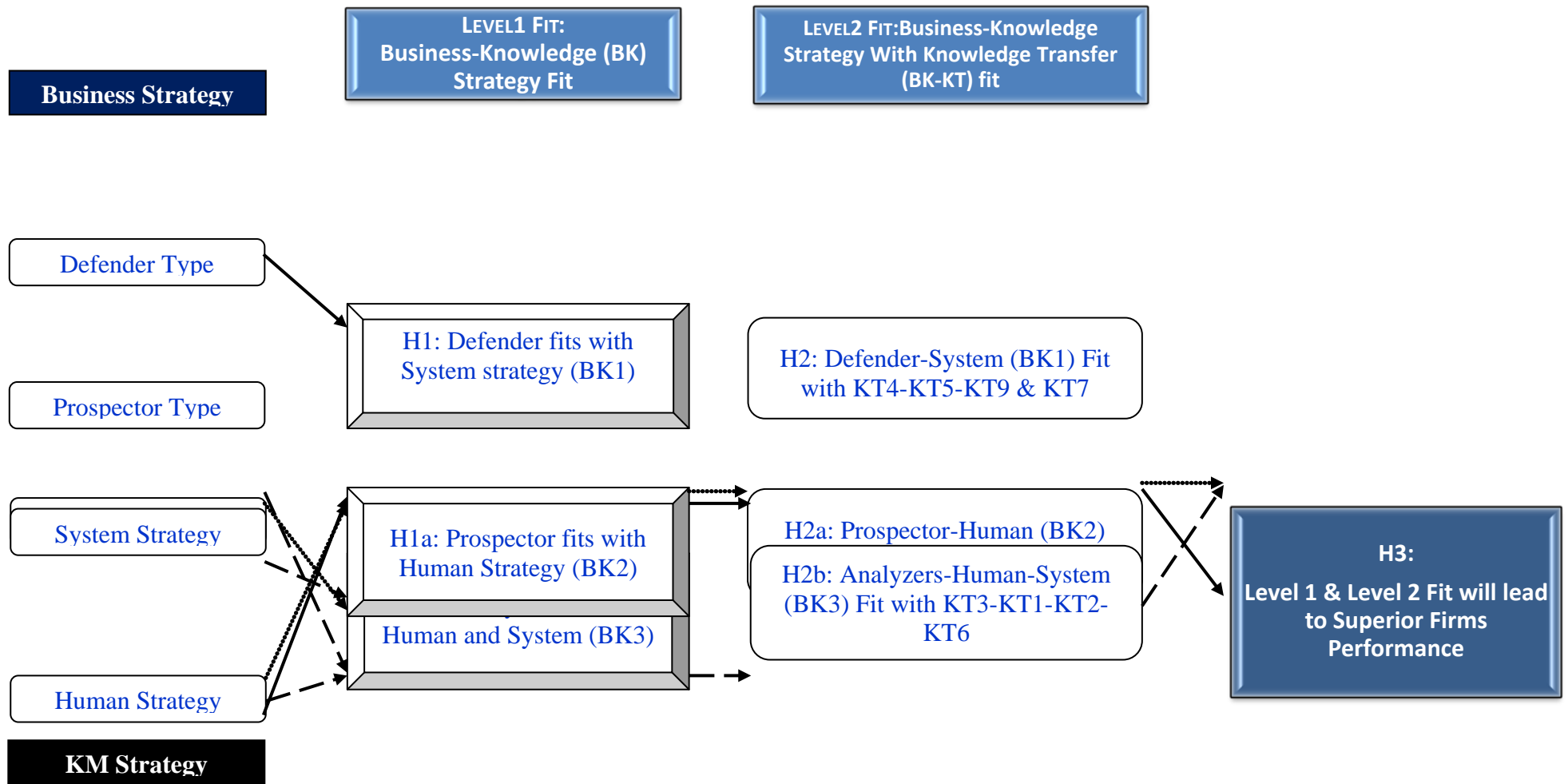
The ultimate goal of each business activity or strategy adopted should have a positive outcome in terms of firm's performance. Firm's performance can be measured in terms as objective and subjective dimensions or in terms of financial and non financial performance. Many scholars (Hambrick, 1983; Miller & Friesen, 1978; Venkatraman, 1989) have argued that the performance of a firm can be directly influenced by various concepts and measurements of strategy and strategic choices. Morgan & Strong, (2003) characterize business strategy as a way a firm will decide how to compete, in a way that it can achieve and maintain its competitive advantage in the industry. In doing so, the firm needs to articulate a combination of resources. One of such resources is Knowledge. Yet knowledge alone cannot lead to superior performance by only combining the knowledge resource into the overall strategy.

This paper therefore has suggested that only when the right knowledge transfer activities are initiated and undertaken for different mixes of business-knowledge strategy, only then will a firm be able to achieve the goal of superior performance. The right fit between business and knowledge strategies at *Level 1* along with the correct knowledge transfer activities at *Level 2* will ultimately direct the firm in its true sense to create and maintain its competitive advantage and ultimately achieve superior performance. This leads to the developed of our third hypothesis as follow:

H3: *Level 1* and *Level 2* strategic fits will lead towards superior business performance.

Based on the third hypothesis developed, *figure 4* presents the creation the theoretical model of this paper which suggests that by crating the dual fit at *Level 1* and *Level 2* between business-knowledge strategies (B-K) and knowledge-transfer (KT) activities, superior performance can be attained.

Figure4: Level 1 and Level 2 Fit Between Business- knowledge (BK) strategies& Knowledge-Transfer (KT) activities will lead to superior performance.



FUTURE RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

This conceptual paper suggests that further empirical research needs to be conducted to test the proposed framework. It is suggested that this could be achieved by carrying out a large-scale survey among managers responsible for business strategy and knowledge management in organizations. The outcomes from such an empirical investigation can lead to development of better processes for creating a fit between business strategies and knowledge strategies and further develop the right knowledge transfer activities so that superior performance can be achieved by such firms. For such sort of research to be conducted the following methodology is presented.

Methodology:

The research paradigm will follow the positivist paradigm. The logic and reason for using the positivist approach is that positivist's state that knowledge should be developed objectively by studying the causal relationships between observable phenomena's (Bryman, 2008).

*Research type:*The nature of the research will be exploratorywith the objective to explore the effects of business-knowledge strategies and Knowledge-transfer activities on performance and to test the proposed framework of dual strategic fits at *Level 1* and *Level 2*, in order to attain superior performance. The dependent variable for the research will be firm's performance, while the independent variables will include:

Independent Variable 1: Business strategy and knowledge strategy fit.

Independent Variable 2: Business-Knowledge strategy fit with Knowledge Transfer activities

*Research Strategy:*The research strategy to be adopted will be quantitative method based on deductive reasoning. For this purpose, literature review and hypothesis have already been developed and will be tested after the administration of data collection and conclusion will be extracted from its results.

*Research design:*The research design will comprise of cross section survey of population of interest and will generate responses in one go at a single point in time from the sample organization using self administered questionnaires.

Measurement & Instrument: For the purpose of survey, the instrument developed by Miles & Snow (1978) will be used by breaking down the Miles and Snow (1978) paragraph form disciplines into variables which describe strategic behaviors of the firm. These are adopted from Azhar (2008) to analyze the strategic orientation of a firm based on defender, prospector, analyzer and reactor type firms and this questionnaire will include the twelve questions related to strategic orientation.

For the purpose to identify the Knowledge strategies a survey instrument will be designed keeping in mind the variables selected by the empirical study undergone by Choi & Lee (2002) and its internal validity will be pre-tested by measuring the Cronbach's alpha. To measure the Knowledge transfer activities incorporated by a firm, another instrument will be developed keeping in mind the nine knowledge transfer activities presented by Sveiby (1998) and its internal validity will be pre-tested by measuring the Cronbach's alpha. Firm's performance will be measured by calculating the financial ratios using information given in publicly available financial books of the company. The ratio analysis of the main financial indicators will include ROI, ROA, ROCE, Altman Z Score and ROS. To assess the non-financial performance of the firm, the instrument presented by Dyer and Reeves's (1995) can be used. This instrument measures organizational performance on 1 to 5 rating scale

against three non-financial indicators i.e. product/service quality, customer satisfaction, and technological innovation. The three questions related to self-reported non-financial performance indicators of the firms can be used for this section.

Population: Primary Population of interest will constitute business organizations that are listed in Lahore stock exchange (LSE) and Lahore Chamber of Commerce (LCCI). Sampling list will be obtained from the websites of LSE and LCCI and the sampling frame will constitute firms belonging to both the manufacturing and service sector organizations. Population of interest and unit of analysis will constitute all managers and above representing the manufacturing and service firms located in Lahore.

Sampling frame: The sampling frame will be the manufacturing and service firms registered with the LSE and LCCI.

Key Informants: Functional managers, SBU heads and TMT (top management teams) of the various organizations relating to manufacturing and service sectors listed on the LSE and LCCI will comprise of key informants. Managers from the corporate level, business unit level and functional level because these are the ones that are directly involved in strategy formulation and strategy implementation in organizations and are considered as a reliable source to answer questions regarding the overall strategic orientation and knowledge strategies of the firm and knowledge transfer activities undertaken during the implementation phase.

Sampling technique: A random sampling technique will be used which will derive a sample from the list of LSE and LCCI where every organization will have an equal chance to be selected in the sampling frame.

*Sample size:*The sample size will be determined by using the logic presented by Heir et al (2010) Multivariate data analysis. A total sample size of 300 respondents working at various levels of the firm will be used which will cover the requirements of this future research.

*Data collection:*Data will be collected through self-administered questionnaires sent through postage or email (whichever is convenient to the respondent). The survey instrument along with a cover letter will be posted to companies with a self-addressed postage paid envelope (if required by mail). The same will be sent electronically to those respondents who would prefer such communication.

*Data Analysis:*Results will be analyzed through SPSS. After data entry and data codification, the first step of data analysis will be to arrange the data for standardization, normalization. To test the internal consistency and reliability Cronbach alpha will be used, as the variables that have been used previously have to be retested for both internal consistency and reliability. Further to this, various data analysis techniques can be used including Pearson correlation analysis, regression analysis, discriminant analysis, factor analysis etc

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Knowledge is one of the most important resources that an organization can possess in today's competitive and highly dynamic environment. Pascarella (1997) refers knowledge from an organizational view point, as being invisible in nature, yet something directly driving a firm's bottom line. Knowledge management helps a firm to utilize its knowledge resource which is either held in a codified form of systems, manuals, digital libraries and literature, or is compartmentalized in the minds of its experienced and skilled entrepreneurial organizational members, customers or other stakeholders (see e.g. Davenport & et.al (1997), Nonaka (2007), Sveiby and Simons (2002)). Knowledge will provide added value to a firms, only if it channelizes positive actions and correct decisions (O'Dell and Grayson, 1998). Yet this is not enough. Knowledge strategies either being human or systems strategies need to be incorporated into the overall strategic orientation of the firm. Different knowledge management strategies have to be fittingly blended with the overall organizational strategy (Greiner et.al., 2007). Literature identifies that the key link between a firms strategy and its performance can be examined by looking at the strategic orientations which this firm will adopt (Avci, Madanoglu, & Okumus, 2011; Voss & Voss, 2000). Different strategic orientations will require a different blend or combination of knowledge strategies. Prudence does demand that different situations require different knowledge management strategies (Haggie and Kingston, 2003). Hence organizations needs to first create a *Level 1* fit between knowledge strategies (KS) and Business Strategies (BS). Combined together we have referred such a fit as *Level 1* fit between B-K strategies. Further exploring the literature repositories, we have argued that only the *Level 1* fit is not enough for a firm to achieve superior performance. Rather an enabling environment needs to be created which will help the firm select the right type of knowledge transfer activities. From the perspective

of knowledge management there has to be a pool of various knowledge transfer activities to be performed so as to translate the synergistic effect of business and knowledge strategies into superior performance (Sveiby and Simons, 2002) and eventually sustained competitive advantage. This we refer to as *Level 2* fit between BK strategies and KT strategies. Only if both *Level 1* and *Level 2* fit will be created, will a firm be able to achieve superior performance and sustained competitive advantage over the competition. Superior performance will depend on the adequacy of the 'fit' between the organization's strategic orientation, and its resources it utilizes to create such a fit (Miles and Snow, 1978, 1984). For this the right selection of knowledge transfer activities need to be incorporated into the overall picture. Gold et al. (2001) suggested that knowledge infrastructure and knowledge processes are the two pivotal capabilities required for effective realization of KM with firm's performance.

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