

# Providing a Pattern for Planning and Leading Knowledge Management in Special Holding Companies

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## Abstract

It is widely recognized that knowledge is an essential strategic resource for a firm to retain sustainable competitive advantage. Knowledge management systems usually will be responsible for this role. Organizations for effective and efficient management of knowledge must have a documented strategic plan. Holding companies (HCs) differ in their nature and behavior from other types of companies. However, due to the specific features and conditions of Holding Companies in our country, the usual Knowledge management strategic planning methods are not appropriate and it's necessary to design a method to suit them. This paper has tried to use strategic control perspective, and presented a four-step methodology for planning strategic knowledge management programs at Holding Companies. The findings indicate a four-step methodology (including a general formulation, organizing, classifying companies based on the maturity level of knowledge management and integration of operational planning at the level of the subsidiary companies) based on strategic control to plan and lead knowledge management in holding companies due to the maturity level of knowledge of in subsidiary companies.

**Keywords:** Strategic Planning, Knowledge Management, Holding (Holding Company), Strategic Management, Knowledge Management Maturity

## Introduction

Today, there are the concerns of knowledge management as a business strategy. However, what and how to manage their intangible resources is still confusion (Elearn, 2009). On the other hand knowledge as a strategic resource agencies will be conducive to maintaining a sustainable competitive advantage. So there is much evidence that organizations are increasingly investing in knowledge management and systems development in these areas so that they can better take advantage of this resource (Davanport, 2003; Sarvary, 1999).

Today, considering knowledge as a strategic resource has caused the attention of senior managers in the field of knowledge management strategy such that according to figures, the discussion of knowledge management has been introduced as one of the main strategies of the top 500 Fortune members (Heidari, 2004). However, the discussion of knowledge management strategies is not redundant and useless like other words and it is the major concern (Earl, 2001; Hansen & Nohria, 1999). Increasing body of knowledge management research in this field has caused a range of strategies to develop new approaches in order to have a knowledge management strategy (Chio et al., 2008). The twenty-first century is a knowledge economy and this has given rise to a new type of organization, the knowledge intensive organization. With knowledge a core strategic resource in these organizations, a new approach was needed that could help to effectively manage this new resource. Knowledge management to help staff and benefit from the knowledge to enhance organizational knowledge developed (Parboteeah and Jackson, 2011).

In this paper, the objective is not announcing the necessity of knowledge management strategy, this is very clear and there are several sources, but the authors stressed that companies should be categorized according to the different criterion and then provided appropriate with characteristics and circumstances of each category (small, medium and large / consulting, services, manufacturing etc / Holding, subsidiary, etc.) (Kamara et al., 2002; Baptista et al., 2006; Carrillo, 2000).

One of these increasing variety of companies, that due to their different nature requires distinct programs, (And so far due to the lack of attention to this principle, have created major problems in the country), are companies entitled Holding. Holding companies are different in terms of the nature and behavior from other types of companies. Their role is in the protection, management and budgeting for subsidiary companies (Hanafizadeh, 2008).

Because planning is not only within the company itself and it is necessary to plan for subordinate companies, therefore, in this paper it is tried to provide a native model appropriate to the circumstances of Iran holding companies and in following this model is used in a local holding company in order to plan and conduct knowledge management process. The contents of this paper will be described in Section II and in the literature review, discussion, strategic planning, knowledge management are introduced, holding companies are defined and a variety of styles for planning are classified. At the end of this section, strategic control model is introduced as the accepted model of the holding company as a based programming model. In the third section, the methodology is designed to introduce the four steps of the methodology. The fourth section outlines the details of using this model in a highly strategic holding company in the country. In the fifth section, some implementation issues arising from the case study is presented in the form of a duct sections. Finally, Section VI is devoted to conclusions and present future research areas.

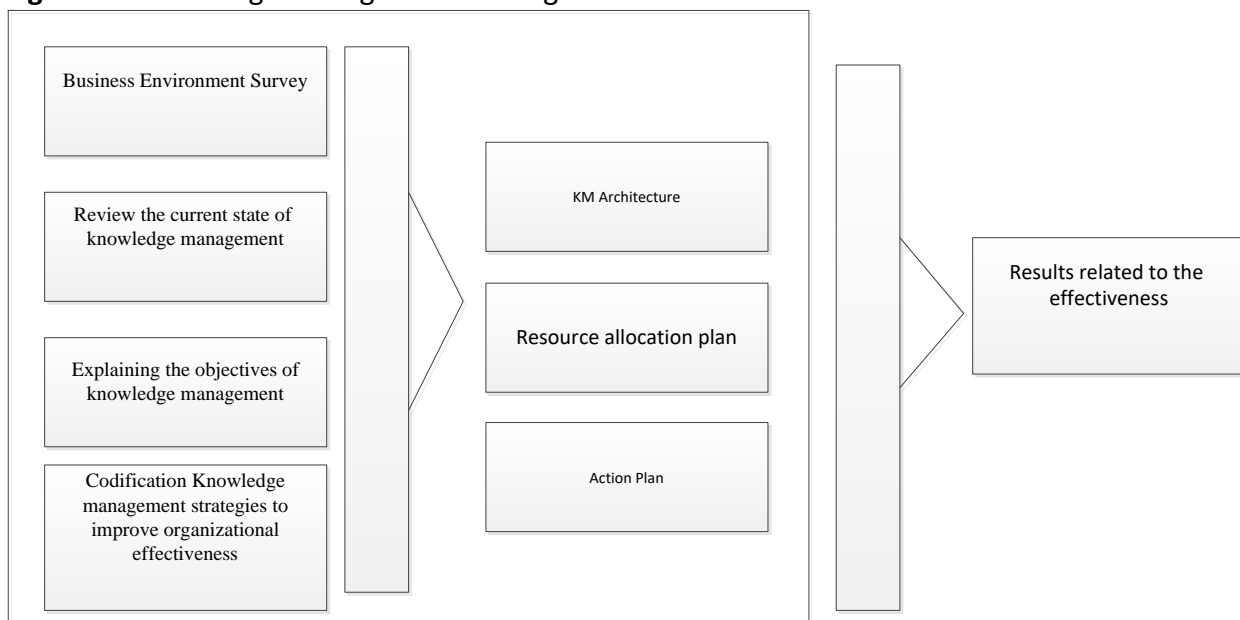
### **Review of Literature**

According to the paper, which provides a methodology to guide the planning and discussion of knowledge management in the holding company level, it is necessary to prime the reader to become familiar with the literature on strategic planning in the field of knowledge management. Then, holding companies and their differences should be known and finally browsing styles in holding companies in the areas of planning, overall planning approach to knowledge management in the company is established.

### Strategic Planning of Knowledge Management

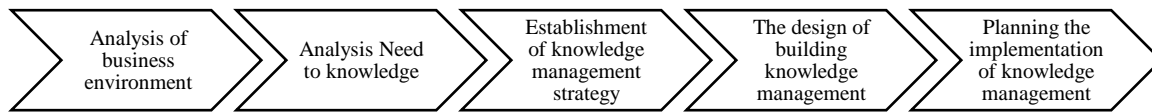
Knowledge management is not only a knowledge of the technical aspects and the aspects of structural, cultural, and technological processes are considered. Knowledge strategic planning is defined as "the creation and production process perspective, organizational knowledge, knowledge management, good planning and organizing a series of activities and resources for its implementation", (Kim et al., 2008). Exactly as planning strategic information systems is one arrangement for the successful development of strategic information, strategic knowledge planning is necessary for effective knowledge management. Knowledge management goals and strategies should reflect the organization's goals and strategies. They should be able to modify and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of your organization's business processes and requirements. During the process of strategic planning, organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are examined. Thus, strategic planning of knowledge is part of knowledge management. Figure 1 represents the roles and effects of strategic planning (Kim et al., 2008).

**Figure 1 - Knowledge management strategies**



Knowledge strategy planning approach forces organizations to identify the core knowledge and develop the infrastructure to manage it. Organizational infrastructures are to support aspects of the underlying basis of human, organizational, managerial, cultural and technical knowledge. Knowledge-based organizations attempt to integrate systemic knowledge processes into work processes. One means of achieving this is to intertwine work process with knowledge processes to improve overall performance and effectiveness. Wig proposes that improvements in organizational effectiveness are mainly the result of the wise use of an organization's intellectual capital (IC) assets and KM processes. His view is "the purpose of Knowledge Management is the systemic, explicit, and deliberate building, renewal, and application of IC assets to maximize the enterprise's knowledge-related effectiveness and returns from these assets (Chester, 2011).

To achieve the desired objectives, several models have been proposed for the knowledge strategic planning as an example of methodology steps (p2-ksp) that is oriented process in Figure 2 (Kim et al., 2008).

**Figure 2** - Schematic of the strategy and methodology (based on p2KSP)

### **Holding Companies**

The current complex situation in the business world, organizations very different capabilities (financial, technical capacity, human resources, technological capabilities, etc.), unstable market environment, companies trying to gain a greater share of the market and the possibility of entering into new and profitable activities have led to the concept of integration of group companies to utilize each other's capabilities and activities of the holding companies (Atabaki, 2002). In English, "holding" is synonym for "CORPORATE" and PARENT "" and in Persian language, perhaps it is synonymous with "universal" or "mother" (Atabaki, 2002; Saghafi, 2010).

Although there are numerous definitions in the literature for holding companies (Hnafizadeh et al., 2008). In general, holding organizations are a "group of companies in which a company owned and operated and is only responsible for the administration of all companies' (Saghafi, 2010). Holding companies have grown dramatically over the past 30 years. The economic impact of companies is important in different sectors and many countries are known with their companies' names (Madani Pur, 2009).

For reasons that will make up the state owned sector Venture Holding Company seeks to establish itself diverse and in program planning and evaluation of Holding Company, the reasons should be taken into consideration. Main reason will be found in reference (Office of the National Foundation for Entrepreneurship Development and Cooperation, 2010).

### **Planning on Holding Companies**

One of the major tasks of the parent company is strategic planning of the units so that; it is consistent with the overall plan of the parent company and certainty of movement to provide Subdivisions towards the objectives stated. Because reflecting management performance and decisions on the results is also effective on parent company (headquarters), management of a typical company is different with management of a holding company.

Therefore, the decisions on holding companies are always complex and ambiguous and sometimes accompanied by controversy, which requires organizations to implement new models of strategic planning and management. Therefore for better decisions and actions, in addition to the assessment of the parent company, there should be wider knowledge from subsidiaries (Saghafi, 2010). Hence, enabling organizations tend to operate within the holding frame and enjoying each other's capabilities, thereby they also overcome their problems and global compete in higher levels. It is important to note that so doing, becoming a holding company, several programs previously compiled and organizational structure of companies would not respond to the current situation, and the revision of the foregoing shall be required (Atabaki, 2002).

Since the holding companies took different categories and each has its own characteristics, appropriate styles of planning and organizing are also designed and implemented (Office of the National Foundation for Entrepreneurship Development and Cooperation, 2010).

Of course, this style is to be scheduled in different areas benefiting and the purpose of this section is a review on these approaches and identify an appropriate model for planning in the area of knowledge management in holding company.

Scientists categorized different styles of management in three kinds based on responsibility and the tasks in different levels. In the following, we will briefly explain each of these models (Atabaki, 2002; Asadi & Karimi, 2008).

1) Model of strategic planning: strategic planning is the most focused one. In strategic planning model, organization community has designer role and makes clear each group or company responsibilities. Smaller companies have undertaken the task of executing different parts of the original design.

2) Financial control model: financial control is the most extreme delegation type. The Committee acts as a mother who only appears in the role of a shareholder or the bank.

3) Strategic management model: strategic control model is placed between two previous models and more organizations are using it in the world. This isn't an independent style, but also is a bridge between strategic planning and financial control. In this model, organization committee forms the strategies; therefore, the minimal role of the parent organization is defined as follows.

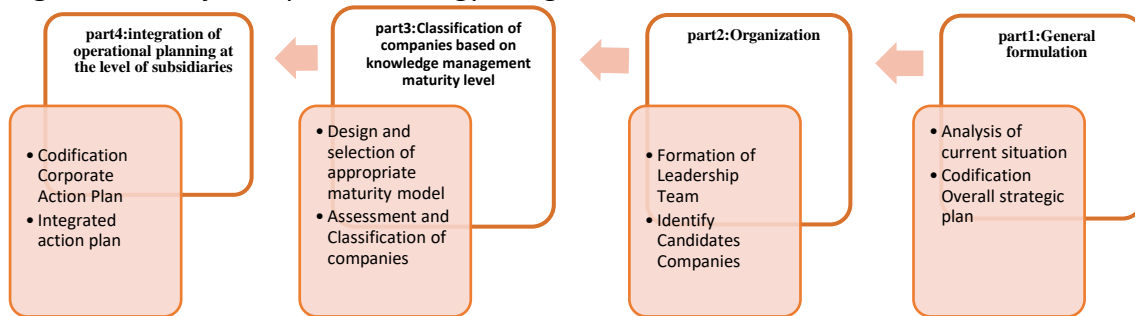
Among holding organizations, strategic control model is the most popular style. Because the parent organizations tend to model financial control to move towards a model of strategic planning and strategic management models, in this model, companies can adjust their plans based on the parent organization's strategies and organization will review and control them so overall responsibility for the formulation of action plans and recommendations is for the company and a covered subsidiary. On one hand, organization committee with experienced experts provides consulting services to the subsidiaries. In the strategic control model, results of operations will be monitored continuously, and the criterion for evaluating a company director is merely their performance.

Based on the above, approach that is the basis of knowledge management methodology to plan and conduct discussions will be based on the strategic control model.

### **Methodology**

The methodology of this study aims to the evaluation of the overall corporate strategy and the role of knowledge in holding companies, the existing knowledge gap has been identified and using knowledge maturity determination in subsidiary companies, a model is provided to develop knowledge management in these companies. According to the arguments presented in the above section, the light of strategic planning in holding companies with related programming style, different from the usual structure, and this is due to the structure, functions and relationships of these organizations. In this regard, this section attempts to provide a methodology suitable for strategic planning, knowledge management is appropriate. In this regard, this section attempts to provide a methodology suitable for strategic planning, knowledge management is appropriate. Therefore, the methodology is designed to guide the management plan of the company is a parent company which is specialized subset. This methodology is designed in three sections according to Figure 3. Each of these sections is discussed.

Figure 3 - a major step methodology designed



### Part 1: General Formulation

Designing an effective management system begins with the formulation of appropriate strategies (Gopal and Gagnon, 1995). In order to develop appropriate strategies to manage organizational knowledge, knowledge that can be used for purposes it is necessary to consider several factors. For this purpose it is necessary to organize the knowledge resources and capabilities to strategically assess and explore gaps and provide appropriate strategies to deal with them in consideration (Zack, 2002). Considering the sensitivity and complexity of doing so requires using a specific process model. So far, several models for strategic planning knowledge management is proposed that, in general, the three main steps of the present situation, strategies and action plans to clean them that (Kim et al., 2003; Grant, 1991).

In the first step, the state of the overall corporate strategy and the role of organizational knowledge to be evaluated to determine knowledge gaps. In the second step, the results identified in the first step, strategies and objectives of management are specified. A key position in the overall strategy to develop a knowledge or step specifies an exchange of knowledge (Hansen and Nohria, 1999). The strategy of knowledge is carefully documented and stored in the database. Knowledge repository to support a recovery system and a communication network is easily accessible to your users. The strategy of individual knowledge sharing, organizations are looking to create a bed that individuals can exchange and transfer of knowledge between each other. Individual organizations usually do not use one of these two strategies is usually one of these strategies, as the original and the other is used as an aid. Third, it is necessary to have a structure and operational plan for the implementation of knowledge management goals and strategies identified in the previous step is specified (Kim et al., 2003).

### Part 2: Organizing

After determining an organization's knowledge management strategy is to develop and implement management plans. One of the key success factors and institutional support for knowledge management and organizational leaders are senior managers or in other words (Ming, 2006). The issue of how to provide the necessary resources in terms of what culture is important in order to institutionalize knowledge management, therefore, it is necessary to be organized at two levels, at the macro level requires a specialized holding company formed a strategic team. The next level is needed to administer the program, representatives of the subsidiary companies to manage knowledge in their firms to be determined. These agents are required to have the necessary qualifications. Because the literature on human resource competencies necessary to determine the three categories of knowledge, skills and abilities

is used, the features of knowledge management in Table 1 together with literature review is classified.

Table 1 –

*Knowledge, Skills and Abilities of Knowledge Management Officer (Awazu et al., 2004; Thomas & Davenport, 2010)*

abilities	skills	Knowledge
Ability to communicate effectively	Planning and scheduling skills	Familiarity with the concepts of knowledge management
The ability of solving problem	Change management skills	Understanding the implications of KM
Systems Thinking		Introduction to Strategic Planning
		Introduction to Project Planning and Control
		Introduction to Information Systems
		Introduction to Document Management
		Introduction to Change Management
		Familiar with the IC

Given these characteristics, it is necessary to work with the subsidiary company representatives as possible should be chosen. So the organization is required to meet the conditions specified in the form of a written letter to the chief executives of the subsidiary companies are notified.

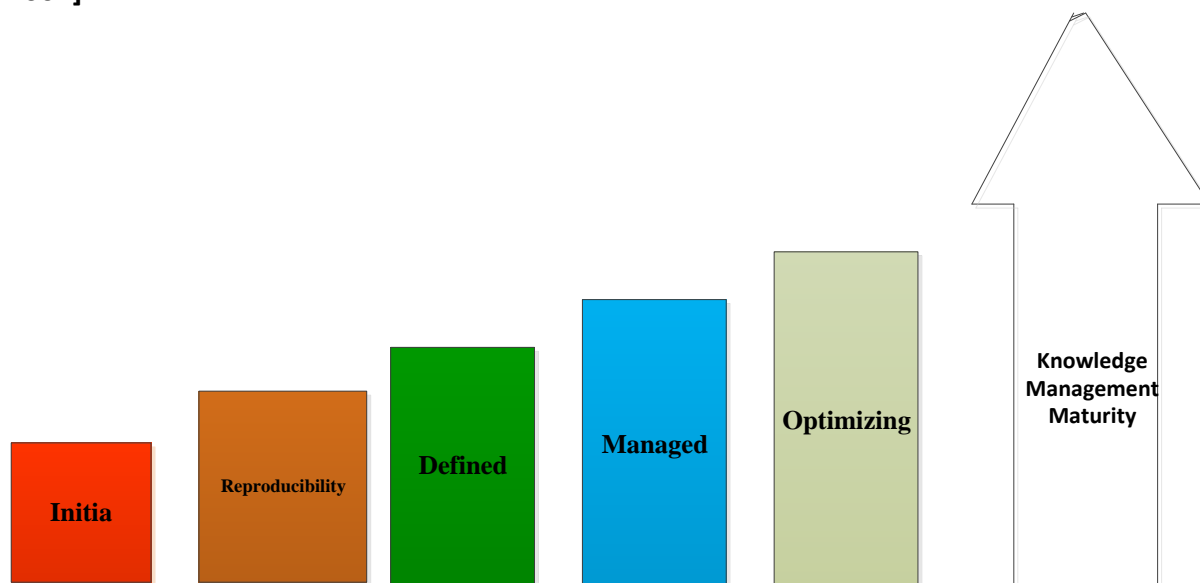
- Part 3: Classification of companies based on knowledge management maturity level

Another important factor in promoting the development and application of knowledge management in the subsidiaries is required to be taken into consideration, There is no corporate level. This is due to various reasons such as senior managers, corporate vision, scope of activities, establishing and comes back. This lack makes the flat potential. Knowledge Maturity models are an appropriate tool to accomplish this category. Maturity models in general how to develop an entity over time to describe, this attribute can be any desired subject, including an organizational unit, and technology is a process (Khatibian and Hasangholi, 2010). Because implementation of knowledge management to achieve optimal point requires frequent and significant changes in process, structure and culture, so it is unlikely to be achieved in a sudden change of the continuous improvement based on developmental stages and step-step takes place. The evolutionary process in which knowledge management takes place over time, the knowledge management maturity is interpreted. In a knowledge management maturity model defines the steps that are necessary to achieve optimal organization on its path to the knowledge management. The general pattern of movement based on a maturity model is thus organized according to their

current status in the maturity model makes clear, Then, based on the characteristics defined for the next step action plan to achieve it defines.

(Awazu et al., 2004). But since knowledge management is building a smaller base for much of the knowledge is tacit and intangible differences in knowledge management maturity models have been presented. Under the five-stage model of Figure 4 will be considered to knowledge management in organizations (Hsieh et al., 2009; Kaner & Karni, 2004). The five stages are as follows

**Figure 4 - Levels of Knowledge Management Maturity [Hsieh et al., 2009; Kaner & Karni, 2004]**



#### Level 1: Initial Level

At this stage of knowledge management activities are conducted in a non-systematic and coincidental, and the image of the company is scheduled.

#### Level 2: The level of reproducibility

In this pilot project the company is called knowledge management. At this level, discipline and sense of responsibility are the main activities.

#### Level 3: Defined Level

At this level gradually standardized processes by which they use effectively the knowledge management would be obtained.

#### Level 4: Managed

At this level, application of knowledge in the organization, integration and deployment is achieved at different levels.

#### Level 5: Optimizing

In the area of knowledge management and organizational continually expands. In the area of knowledge management and organizational continuously increasing. To date, several models have been developed for knowledge management maturity in organizations. New features and advantages and disadvantages of each of these models is derived from a general design perspective it is. Therefore it is necessary to select or design a model that first subsidiary classification contains features strategic team management is integral to the overall vision and strategy and overall objectives of the second suit is intended to be. In addition to these features, consider the model must be able to demonstrate an acceptable level, the company



accurately. This requires an appropriate assessment methods to determine the level of knowledge management maturity model is next. After considering these models based company that has been assessed and classified according to the model surface.

Therefore it is necessary to subordinate categories of companies to choose or design a model that

the first contains the essential features of the overall view of knowledge management strategies,

and secondly, in accordance with the overall strategy and objectives is intended. This requires an appropriate assessment method to determine the level of knowledge management maturity model is next. After taking these companies based on the evaluation model based on model surfaces are classified.

#### **Part 4: Integration of Operational Planning at the Level of Subsidiaries**

After determining the level of participation at this stage is necessary corporate action plan to improve the knowledge level to be determined. This action plan aimed at improving company based maturity model considered is a set time interval. It is necessary for the operation of a specific framework designed to program all aspects of operations to be specified. Finally, integration of these programs and the resources (money, time and manpower required to monitor or enforce section, etc.) in case they decide to convey the subsidiary companies.

#### **Conclusions**

Knowledge management, like many other categories of management, rather than a science, is an art. Each organization, with respect to the structural characteristics, organizational culture, knowledge management maturity level of technology and style is needed, And so full of models and modeling programs developed by other companies or general software for this operation would not discuss the role of art and design in the system is much. The findings indicate a four-step methodology (including a general formulation, organizing, classifying companies based on the maturity level of knowledge management and integration of operational planning at the level of the subsidiary companies) based on strategic control to plan and lead knowledge management in holding companies due to the maturity level of knowledge of in subsidiary companies.

The main origin of this article, the need to develop strategies and operational plans appropriate for certain types of companies (holding companies) in the world, has been located. Approach to strategic planning in holding companies with different style planning in the conventional and because of differences in the structure, relationships and responsibilities are. Accordingly, the first literature review, planning and control subjects were examined at the level of the holding company, and the lack of an agreed methodology for knowledge management strategy in these types of companies, researchers decided to design a model to suit local conditions and their holding companies.

The general steps of the methodology included: 1) the overall strategy of the organization holding gap in subsidiary companies 2) the right to organize and implement management plans 3) organizations are classified according to the level of knowledge management maturity 4) determine action plans to improve the level of knowledge with respect to the company's knowledge management maturity model, within a specified time. Since the base is less structured knowledge management and tacit knowledge is a large part of it consists of a five-stage model (initial, repeatable, defined, managed, optimized) has been considered as knowledge management maturity levels. However, discussion of planning in general and

particular knowledge management strategy, the company is holding new topics and requires extensive research. The application of the model to other holding companies can identify potential gaps and provides more concrete steps to fix them.

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