

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN THE UK HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: WHAT TYPE OF OUTCOMES DO HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS ATTAIN?

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Abstract. *This research paper sought to examine the role and contribution of Knowledge Management (KM) in UK Higher Education Institution (HEI) partnerships outcomes. The author conducted a qualitative research making use of semi-structured interviews with nine elite respondents who for the purpose of this research were defined as individuals that have been involved in initiating, developing and managing HE partnerships at executive levels. The analyses demonstrate that HEI partnerships may produce a wide range of outcomes depending on the external factors, purpose, length, specialism, and priorities of the collaboration. Nevertheless, this research has identified 18 partnership outcomes which are grouped into three categories such as academic, financial and marketing and managerial outcomes. Results of the research infer that performing in accordance to partner's expectations helps overcome trust related issues thus building confidence in partners. The establishment of confidence might lead towards exploring other collaborative possibilities and therefore be able to have a combination of academic, financial and marketing and managerial outcomes at the same time. Results show that nurturing and supporting the application of KM activities is essential in allowing the HE partners to share, transfer, apply and absorb the knowledge needed to attain the intended partnership outcomes. The extent to which knowledge is exchanged and distributed within and across HEI partners might encourage the development of new products and services which in return helps an HEI to minimize risk through portfolio diversification and establish a sustainable business model.*

Keywords: *Academic Outcomes; Financial and Marketing Outcomes; HE Partnership; Knowledge Management; Managerial Outcomes.*

Introduction

According to Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) (2017) Higher Education (HE) in the UK is of a high importance considering its impact in society and the economic development that derive as result of the diversity of knowledge and expertise found amongst educational institutions. As the HE sector is becoming fiercer Universities are continuously exploring alternatives to ensure sustainable market development. According to HEFCE (2017), HEIs in the UK differ in size, ethos, expertise, mission, and vision and are highly autonomous. Nevertheless, the UK HEIs experience common challenges which according to HEFCE (2017) are related with the student cap,

funding cuts, market diversification, technological enhancement and sustaining high-quality research to mention few. These challenges have increased the competitiveness of the HE sector and encouraged HEIs' to exploit opportunities of partnering in order to transform the challenges into opportunities through a combination and utilization of physical, financial and intellectual resources. According to HEFCE (2017), the collaboration between HEIs is designed with the purpose of attaining outcomes that an HEI would not be able to achieve individually and therefore seeks to join efforts with another HEI in order to attain the desired outcomes. However, the nature of partnership outcomes can differ depending on the level of interaction, engagement, and trust established between HEI partners. Although establishing a clear understanding towards the desired outcomes to be achieved through a partnership is fundamental, Ankrah et al. (2013) argue that HEIs should also be resilient in adapting and altering their actions in accordance to the partner's expectations. The willingness and ability of a HEI to support the transition into a partnership may lead towards additional outcomes that HEIs' did not consider at early stages however add value to both institutions and enhance their individual position in the HE sector. Therefore, it is important to establish an understanding of the type of outcomes that HEIs' could attain as acknowledging the potential outcomes could provide an opportunity for HEIs' to develop a more effective strategy and be able to enhance the allocation of resources for the potential outcomes.

Research context

The development of HEI partnerships involves a high level of exchanging knowledge across partners. The extent to which the required knowledge is circulated, stored and used is a significant indicator of the success of the partnership. Thus it is important to understand and take a holistic approach in designing and using Knowledge Management (KM) activities related to knowledge accessibility, repository, sharing, transferring, integration, application, and evaluation.

This research paper seeks to examine the role and contribution of KM in UK HE partnership outcomes. Using a tree analogy Elezi (2017) proposes a conceptual model, named KM Partnership Tree (see appendix 1). The conceptual model aims to explain the role of KM in facilitating the development of HE partnerships by presenting the Behavioral KM Constructs, which includes elements of culture, trust, absorptive capacities, and communication, as the foundation of a partnership development. Afterward, the conceptual model continues to list the institutional and partnership factors required accompanied by the KM activities needed to be applied in order to facilitate the integration of HEIs'. The ultimate purpose of this work is to understand the nature of the partnerships outcomes, and using the tree analogy of the conceptual model to be able to identify the outcomes (fruits) of the KM Partnership Tree.

Literature review

KM is treated as a scientific approach that allows individuals, teams, and institutions to optimize the use of information at inter and intra-institutional levels. The application of KM helps institutions to strengthen their competitive advantage by making the most of the intellectual capacities, expertise, and resources in order to enhance market share and profitability. Management theories explain that KM is a multifaceted area which involves a range of activities with the purpose of generating and managing knowledge. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), KM is defined as "the capability of an

organization to create new knowledge, disseminate it throughout the organization and embody it in products, services, and systems". The evolving nature of economies, from an agricultural economy to industrial economy and knowledge economy in the early 2000s has placed more emphasis on educational institutions, which are seen as the centers of knowledge, in equipping the future workforce with the right set of skills and knowledge required to support the knowledge economy. However, with differences noted amongst HEIs in terms of expertise, resources, location, opportunities and challenges the competition is becoming fiercer, and establishing and maintaining a competitive advantage, harder. Therefore, many HEIs have considered the formulation of partnerships as an approach to overcome competition and make a better use of institutional resources in order to attain the desired outcomes in the most cost-effective manner. Nevertheless, the success of a partnership strongly relies on the ability of partners managing the existing knowledge which due to several reasons related to culture, trust, absorptive capacities, and communication (Elezi, 2017) may cause misunderstandings, disagreements and/or raise barriers in exchanging knowledge adequately. Therefore, the application of KM principles within a partnership context may assist not only with the achievement of initial partnership outcomes but as discussed by Yarime et al. (2012) but could allow HEIs to explore and consider possible outcomes as a result of synergy established amongst partners.

Altbach (2015) and Lozano et al. (2013) explain that effective application of KM in HEI partnerships has had a positive impact in enhancing students' recruitment campaigns, learning experience and performance as well as training and development opportunities for administrative and teaching staff. However, Fullwood, Rowley & Delbridge (2013) explain that due to complex nature of partnerships is very important for universities to undertake an inclusive approach and involve staff of different levels in sharing and transferring knowledge across teams and departments. Doing so aids the processing of absorbing new knowledge and contributes to collection of different insights and expertise which eventually leads towards the generation of new institutional knowledge (Sulisworo, 2012, Ankrah et al. 2013; Fullwood, Rowley & Delbridge, 2013, Elezi & Bamber, 2016).

KM in HEI partnership development

The development of partnerships amongst HEIs has been a strategy that is increasingly becoming more relevant due to market challenges and opportunities experienced in the education sector. Several studies have shown that during the formulation and management of HEI partnerships there is a significant amount of changes that occur within and between institutions and that management of knowledge capital is crucial (Gibb, Haskins & Robertson, 2012; Dalkir, 2013; Fullwood, Rowley & Delbridge, 2013; Etzkowitz & Ranga, 2015). As discussed by Hislop (2013) the role of KM takes prominence when aiming to design institutional and inter-institutional systems and activities that are required to support HE partnerships in exchanging and accessing the right information with the purpose of attaining the desirable partnership outcomes. Fullwood, Rowley, and Delbridge (2013) explain that a partnership consists of two or more institutions that decide to work together on the basis of a defined and agreed strategy that guarantees added value to the delivery of existing products and services. Li et al. (2014) emphasize that partnerships assess alternatives for improving the use of resources in order to expand their portfolios and generate new products and services. Li et al. (2014) and Fullwood, Rowley, and Delbridge (2013) argue that formulation of

partnerships present opportunities to attain new knowledge whilst sharing financial risks. Bryson (2016) discusses that establishment of HEI partnerships allows institutions to merge intellectual capacities in aiming to make the most of market opportunities, diversify portfolios, enhance the quality of services offered to students and diversifies students' bodies.

The understanding of the expected partnership outcomes could enhance the development of collaborative strategies between HE partners in terms of clarity, resources, and quality. Also, the identification of partnership outcomes may assist HEIs' logistically in regards to planning and controlling techniques required to successfully attain the desirable outcomes. Considering that HE sector is experiencing ongoing changes imposed as a result of legal frameworks and/or market developments, it has become very important for HEIs to create and apply effective strategies in order to address the strategic and technical challenges and take full advantage of market opportunities. Li et al. (2014), Fullwood, Rowley and Delbridge (2013) and Bryson (2016) explain that universities should seek to be resilient and encourage the sharing and transferring of knowledge not only to improve the operations between partners but importantly cope with changes and be able to promote innovative practices, products, and services that otherwise HEIs would not be able to achieve individually.

Several scholars have pointed out the pressure that HEIs experience in addressing scarce resources and the importance of stakeholders' support in ensuring a competitive position in the HE sector (Jones & Sallis, 2013; Li et al. 2014; Bryson, 2016). Similarly, Fullwood, Rowley, and Delbridge (2016) highlight that HEIs seek to establish a profile of highly reputable institutions that offer products and services of good value for money. If KM is applied effectively in HEI partnerships, then these institutions will be able to minimize the implications of environmental risks related to the new undertakings and new product development promoted to the HE market. Effective HEI partnerships demonstrate a positive effect on institutions' knowledge repositories and intellectual capacities which are essential in enhancing the quality of academic products and services as well as the reputation of a University (Sakamoto & Chapman, 2012; Fullwood, Rowley and Delbridge, 2013; Li et al. 2014).

Research methodology

The purpose of this research is to identify the outcomes of collaborative projects undertaken between HEIs. Ontologically this research embraces a subjective stance thus allowing for its epistemology to derive from a biased viewpoint. The author designed and conducted a qualitative research, gathering data through semi-structured interviews held with nine elite interviewees (EI) who for the purpose of this research were defined as individuals who have been involved in initiating, developing and managing HEI partnerships at executive levels. According to Bryman & Bell (2015) and Saunders (2011) embracing a qualitative research through the application of semi-structured interviews allows the researcher to gather insights from the participant and be able to probe at a deeper extent while gathering responses first hand. The application of semi-structured interviews helped the researcher gather examples and more detailed answers on the experiences of EI in managing HEI partnerships. Table 1 provides a brief overview of EIs professional profiles, explaining the position held, responsibilities, years of experience in HEIs and an approximate amount of income generated in the HEI partnerships participants were involved in.

Table 1- Elite interviewees' professional profile

EI No	Position held within the HE institution	Responsibilities	Years of experience in HE institution(s)	Amount of income generated
1	Assistant Director for Development and Innovation	Seek opportunities for partnership development and generate income streams	20	Circa £25 million
2	Vice Principal	Guide and support the HE teams in compliance with regulations and quality standards	27	Circa £7 million (in the last 7 years)
3	Corporate Development Director	Head of curricula development Developing strategic partnerships	18	Circa £15 million
4	Finance and Operations Director	Managing finances and operations People and resource management	10	Circa £10 million
5	Director of Academic Affairs and director of Research Institute	Managed academic teams and researchers in designing, delivering and evaluating teaching and research courses	28	Not less than £ 9 million
6	Pro Vice-Chancellor	Led and managed the development of academic partnerships within the UK and internationally Strategic Planning Committee	15	Circa £6 million
7	Executive Dean of Research Graduate School	Led and managed teams and assured that HE partners complied with the quality standards	26	Circa £48 million
8	Dean of Academic Affairs	Managing the academic responsibilities in a partnership	22	Circa £14 million
9	Executive Vice Principal Curriculum Planning and Quality	Overseeing curricula and quality side	20	Circa £8 million

Each of the interviews lasted approximately 15 minutes and was voice recorded and transcribed in order to proceed with thematic analysis where the author aimed to identify common patterns and extract themes and concepts noted amongst respondents' answers to further analyses and discuss in section 5.

Research results

The answers gathered from the EIs explain that the majority of partnerships are developed with the purpose of increasing market share and diversifying income streams. EI and EI3 explain that HEIs are very keen to expand market accessibility nationally and internationally with the purpose of recruiting more students, develop new academic programs, introduce new degrees and promote internship programs as ways of strengthening a University's position in the face of competition. For instance, EI5 stated that:

"Another partnership outcome is... income generation, development of new curricula, new income streams, knowledge transfer through different colleges and universities as a result of different partnerships and collaborative projects that we are involved in. Collaborate with other institutions to figure out if there is any opportunity for us to work on and get information on areas of activities where we could establish a win-win situation for both of the parties."

EI2, EI4, EI7 and noted that although a partnership has a financial tag attached to it in terms of costs and benefits, the financial perspective is not the only encouragement for HEIs to become involved in partnerships. EI2 highlighted that partnerships are often encouraged as a result of institutional needs and external factors which although are directly related to finances also bring attention to the element of quality. Additionally, EI2, EI3, and EI8 explained that in their experiences HEI partnership outcomes have improved the institution's presence in the domestic and international markets. The promotion received from collaboration with a highly reputable University has allowed the other partner to benefit from the visibility and market accessibility of the partner and be able to attract more students and/or staff.

Another outcome from HEI partnerships was related to the utilization of resources and facilities of the other HE partner which could include engineering centers, IT platforms, laboratories, libraries and other intellectual capacities found in a University system. E1 also noted that some partnership outcomes have generated joint degrees where students have the opportunity to have a learning experience that takes place across different countries and enhancing their employability skills. Furthermore, EI4, EI6, EI8, and EI9 highlighted that additional partnership outcomes were related to the developments of new departments, validation of courses, and the development and training of staff in order to satisfy partner's expectations and attain the partnership's aim. EI 4 stated that:

I remember one of the main reasons we opened up the engineering department was due to the demand that we were receiving from our partners for engineering courses and therefore we started to design engineering courses and opened up completely a new organizational structure and a new department for engineering degrees which were delivered to staff of Oil companies from Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Oman".

Similarly, EI6 discussed the course validation as one of the recent outcomes of the partnership his institution is involved in and stated that:

"We collaborated for a very short period of time with a college in the UK with a program studying horses. Now, we do not do anything with horses in our University due to the lack of resources as there are no courses with horses or horse management related. So we did not adopt their course but we helped them to complete the program that they were working on, in order to meet the validation requirements and we produced the degree that they needed and you could argue that it is an output for us couldn't you?"

Moreover, EI9 discussed that her institution has managed to introduce new qualification (degree apprenticeships), create knowledge repositories, and reduce any institutional risk by enhancing the portfolio diversification as a result of the partnerships they have participated in. EI2 expound that outcomes of a partnership are also experienced at an institutional level through the improvement of internal processes applied for quality measurements, staff, and student recruitment as well as enhance teaching and learning practices accompanied by university student services. EI5 and EI8 pointed out that a very important outcome consists of developing personal and professional relationships with educational agents who can supply Universities' recruitment offices with potential students. EI5 stated that:

"So typically you'll get relationships from outside the project if you like and this... we would be able to work together on other projects in other areas".

Similarly, EI8 stated that:

"This allowed me to work on networking, promote the university and develop relationships with potential suppliers of students. What we also developed was the opportunity for students to go and spend one year within the industry which at the time was not common... and this was part of the programs we designed ... So we developed an Internship Program and that is one of the outcomes".

EI5 continued to discuss that HEI partnerships also produce outcomes related to academic research which is mainly shared and promoted through academic forums, conference, journal articles and/or books. The academic outcomes are quite important as they add value to the institution particularly when undergoing through the assessment frameworks applied in the UK (Teaching Excellence Framework and Research Excellence Framework). EI5 stated that:

"So the idea was if you're going to get involved in a project do you think you'll be able to get a publication out of it...do you think you can get something that can be an output for the REF (Research Excellence Framework) so that will drive a lot of academics now."

Responses gathered from EI5 and EI6 bring to attention that other partnership outcomes experienced by HEIs have included accessing research funding, creating industry prototypes and improving the quality of institutional systems.

Analysis and discussion

The responses collected from EIs explain that although HEI partnerships are initiated as a result of a particular purpose because of development of trust, synergy, mutual respect and interest and performance HE partners are keen to explore other collaborative opportunities and or/projects. It is important to highlight that a rigorous application of KM activities wherever applicable allows the partnership to develop stronger and establish sustainable business operations.

According to Li et al. (2014) and Fullwood et al. (2013) developing a partnership indicates that there will be changes, alterations, and adjustments in respect to working practices and how individuals, departments, and institutions think and act. Therefore, there is a realistic opportunity that through partnership integration, institutions and individuals will realize that joint efforts and resources could also lead towards attaining additional outcomes that were not considered at the early stages of partnership development. It is noted that although the motivation for a partnership development may rely on financial grounds there could be a combination of outcomes attained as a result of collaboration. This research infers that the outcomes of HEI partnerships appear to be of an academic, financial and marketing and managerial background and are further discussed in sections 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 respectively.

Financial and marketing outcomes

Results show that financial outcomes are experienced at a partnership level meaning that all involved partners directly or indirectly attain financial benefits from working collaboratively. As shown in figure 1, one of the fundamental financial and marketing outcomes focuses on increasing market share and accessibility as a response to competition. Fitzgerald et al. (2016) discussed that undertaking a collaborative approach allows HEIs to explore alternatives for minimizing risks and be able to establish new income streams. Research funding and diversification of income streams was another financial and marketing outcome which allows Universities to participate in funding schemes and support one of their fundamental purposes which consists of knowledge creation for the benefit of society. The knowledge created is sometimes reflected through the development of industry prototypes which was classified as another outcome.

Importantly, HEI partnerships have a positive impact in enhancing the international presence and reputation which provides a great opportunity to promote University's products and services through public relationships and promotion activities. A further outcome consists of developing relationships with agents and student suppliers which may help in developing effective and long-lasting recruitment channels. The continuous changes experienced at socio-economic levels set pressure on Universities' recruitment officers and the establishment of effective relationships with educational agents and/or agencies becomes very important.



Figure 1- Financial and marketing HEI outcomes

It is essential to establish a good understanding of what are the financial and marketing outcomes in a partnership. Doing so not only helps the partners to explore possible collaboration alternatives right at an early stage but aids with resource planning and allocation and identifies areas where further work may be required. For instance, a University may have consolidated its market share and accessibility, however considering market opportunities may require a stronger promotion of its products and services, possibly at an international level. Sakamoto & Chapman (2012) argue that successful partnerships are able to capture and deliver to a larger student population because of the variety of subjects and programs offered as a result of the collaboration. Having said this, the recruitment of new students for certain academic programs and levels is an important outcome that allows Universities to overcome challenges that relate to the design, delivery, and continuation of academic courses.

Academic outcomes

The results gathered from the EIs explain that in addition to financial and marketing outcomes, HEI partnerships attain a range of outcomes that are related to the academic spectrum as shown in figure 2. However, it should be noted that the academic outcomes rely on the effectiveness upon which KM activities are used. Through collaborations and exchange of intellectual capacities, expertise, resources, and institutional infrastructure Universities are able to design and deliver dual academic programs. As explained by Elezi (2017) KM in partnerships requires the application of rigorous KM activities known as knowledge accessibility, repository, sharing, transferring, integration, application, and evaluation.

For instance, Li et al. (2014) argue that the development of academic dual programs helps Universities to attain a stronger competitive advantage. However, as noted in Elezi's (2017) work, the development of HEI partnerships requires a significant amount of knowledge exchange between partners and the application of KM activities is essential in applying effective KM within a partnership scenario. The dual degree programs appear more attractive to students who see these programs as good value for money and have the opportunity to participate and engage in multidimensional socio-academic environments through exchange programs or other alternatives. In addition, from an academic perspective the most common outcomes are related to the course development (i.e. Bachelor, Master and Ph.D. programs) and course validation which come as a result of market opportunities but my lack in expertise or quality standards from one of the partners. Having said this, the development of new academic programs and course validation may lead HEI partners towards new outcomes were in response to market demands and opportunities a University could develop new qualifications and departments.

Furthermore, in response to labor market changes and requirements, in terms of employability skills and transferability of technical and soft skills Universities are focusing in providing the student with industrial experience as an approach to contribute to the development of student through a combination of theoretical and practical understanding. According to Etzkowitz & Ranga (2015) Universities are strengthening ties with industry through a range of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) which primarily aim to bridge academia and industry for further development but also equip students with industry insights and prepare them for the job market.

Thus, Universities have been working collaboratively to design internships and placements that address the industry's expectation in terms of employability skills.

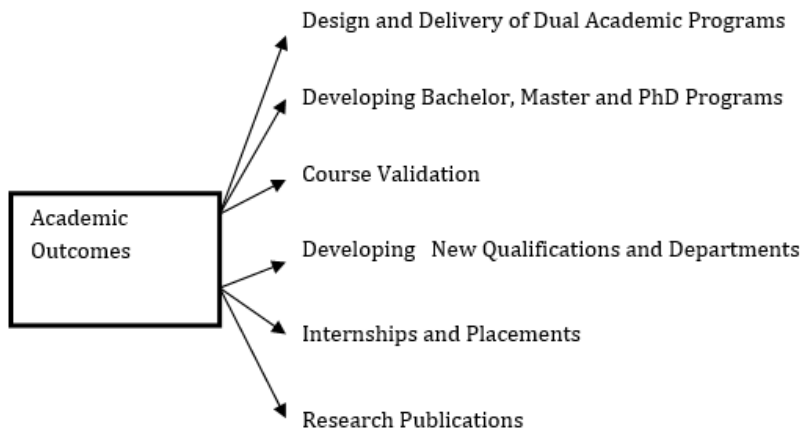


Figure 2- Academic HEI outcomes

HEFCE (2017) explains that UK HEI staff are increasingly experiencing pressure on producing research publications in order to prepare Universities for the REF assessment as it is amongst the main assessment criteria. Having said that, the pressure set by universities in publishing has encouraged the development of partnerships between Universities at an individual and departmental level where the focus is to collaboratively produce scientific work published in high ranking scientific journals or books. The REF assessment values more any research undertaken between individuals working for different Universities as an approach of encouraging collaboration and knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer across UK Universities. Although these are academic outcomes, still have financial implications for the partner institution. However, the purpose is to understand what possible outcomes a partnership could attain from an academic perspective which can then be used by the senior management to design and apply effective KM strategies to support and facilitate the achievement of academic outcomes.

Managerial outcomes

The development of partnerships brings positive results in terms of managerial practices for a given HEI. As partners have to establish a good level of synergy between their operations and actions there is an expectation that some managerial practices will experience changes. Thus, the partnership generates managerial outcomes which help partners improve institutional efficiency and effectiveness and be in line with the partner's expectations. One of the main managerial outcomes in HEI partnerships consists of improving University student services. However, in order to enhance student services, there is a compilation of activities that require improvements mainly related to the quality of processes and procedures regarding recruitment and selection policies for HE staff and students. For instance, one of the HE partners might require the other partner to redesign or develop new recruitment and selection processes for recruiting lectures of a certain specialism that interested HE partner has no previous experience on. As discussed by Li et al. (2014) initial concerns of an HE partner while considering partnership opportunities are related to the capabilities of the partner to deliver at the

expected quality standards. The capability concerns of a partner are associated with the facilities and resources as well as institution's intellectual capacities and systems. Therefore, the integration and synergy developed amongst HEI partners' leads towards an institution being able to utilize partner's facilities and resources which may involve classrooms, laboratories, online libraries and/or IT facilities. In addition, the application of KM activities encourages the development of knowledge repositories due to the exchange of know-how and other relevant knowledge needed to carry out collaborative tasks and attain partnership's outcomes.



Figure 3- Managerial HEI outcomes

Moreover, it is essential for HE partners who seek to enter into partnerships to demonstrate the level of expertise and quality standards required by the partner who is expected to offer assistance with the academic technicalities of developing and delivering new courses or programs. Being able to recruit the correct caliber of academic staff is expected to have a direct impact on the improvement of teaching and learning practices which are amongst the main criteria Universities are assessed on. In return, the improvement of teaching and learning practices will set a University in a more competitive position which sets the institution in better-negotiating positions for future collaborative opportunities as well as strengthens its reputation within the HE sector. Another outcome that derives from HEI partnership relates to staff training and development programs which seek to address issues and concerns related to managerial practices and activities of an academic and administrative nature.

Research implications

The identification of partnership outcomes may be beneficiary at strategic and operational levels. At a strategic level, the implications of this research may be considered from the executive managers responsible for the development and management of partnerships in regards to institutional policies and procedures of collaborative work. At times, individuals may want to become involved in collaborative projects, however, the institution's policies and procedures may be rigid and thus delay the progression of the partnership and raise barriers between partners and questioning the desire of the developing the project. While the implications at a strategic level are related to the institutional policies and procedures of designing a partnership, at an operational level implications are more of a "hands-on" approach.

Operationally, institutions may need to assess the effectiveness of day to day activities with communication and managerial practices being the main focus. The identification of possible partnership outcomes may be used to clarify the communication channels in the context of roles and responsibilities, frequency and medium used to facilitate the exchange of knowledge within and across partner institutions. Although HEIs involved in a partnership may have previous experiences due to the differences noticed amongst institutions it may be required to reconsider institution's managerial practices in accordance with the expertise, resources, and culture of the partner in order to aid the partnership synergy.

Conclusions

This paper sought to deepen the understanding of the nature of outcomes that HEIs attain when working collaboratively. As a result of a fierce competition and the socio-economical and legal changes within the HE landscape, educational institutions are exploring opportunities to join forces in adding value to their products and services. The fundamental justification for the development of an HEI partnership is related to the betterment of financial conditions and risk minimization. However, this research aimed at providing a robust view that goes beyond the financial benefits and elaborated on a range of outcomes that directly and indirectly have an impact of the financial profitability and intellectual wealth created as a result of applying KM activities in collaborative projects. Having established a decent understanding of the potential outcomes that could derive from HEI partnerships may help institutions to embrace and apply effective managerial practices. Application of effective managerial practices would be possible through a clear indication of what partnership outcomes partners are working towards and be able to allocate the adequate resources, provide the required planning and assign the right expertise to complete the necessary actions. Doing so is of a high importance, particularly in the early stages of the partnership where individuals are concerned with the financial risk and communication channels are not consolidated yet. Comprehending the potential outcomes opens opportunities to examine if institutions need to readjust or redesign their academic and managerial practices in order to achieve the ultimate purpose of the partnership. As the development of a partnership indicates change and integration for individual institutions, chances are that institutions will alter their institutional practices resulting in academic and managerial practices that add value to their educational products and services. Being aware of potential outcomes may help institutions to save cost, operate more efficiently and effectively and therefore increase the prospect of formulating a successful partnership.

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Appendix 1- Knowledge management partnership tree

