

**THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP  
EMPOWERMENT BEHAVIOR AND  
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ON LECTURERS  
SELF-EFFICACY IN A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN  
SAUDI ARABIA**

by

**ALHARBI, MUTAD LAFI H**

**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**April 2019**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Praise be to Allah who said in His book; the holy Quran “And remember also the time when your Lord declared, „If you are grateful, I will, surely, bestow more favours on you (14:8). Peace and blessings be upon his servant and his messenger Mohamed that said "He has not thanked Allah who has not thanked people." It is my pleasure now that Allah has granted me the completion of this thesis to give thanks to Allah almighty for facilitating the completion and success of this thesis. I would also like to extend my heartfelt gratitude and great appreciation to my beloved parents for their never-ending care and dedication to me, their sincere prayers and constant encouragement, may Allah reward them greatly and generously.

Furthermore, sincere thanks to my brothers and sisters, my wife, my sons and my daughter for their patience and understanding of my shortcomings arising from the conditions of my studies abroad.

My utmost gratitude and acknowledgement goes to the formidable scientific edifice in Malaysia i.e., the Universiti Sains Malaysia, the Honorable Vice Chancellor and the staff members of the university, along with the School of Educational Studies; its dean and staff members and of course it is my pleasure to acknowledge Associate Professor Dr. Aziah binti Ismail my supervisor for her tutorship and concerns, her endless time and effort, her advice and guidance to make sure that this thesis is completed as required, she walked with me step by step, I found in her all the generosity of ethics and good conduct. May Allah reward her dearly for all his efforts.

I would to extend my sincerely thanks to my examiners right from the protectors, proposal as well as pre-viva for their kind efforts and thoughts in assisting me in my research endeavor. Their kindness will never be forgotten. I would also like to thank the Vice chancellors, her deputies, and all the relevant directors as well all the academic and known academic staffs that had helped in facilitating the my tasks in the process of completing my study and overcoming all the difficulties faced during my PhD journey. Last but not the least, I would like to give thanks to all my colleagues who supported me in completing this thesis; they were ever so encouraging, supporting, guiding, advising and thoughtful.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	iv
LIST OF TABLES .....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xii
ABSTRAK .....	xiii
ABSTRACT .....	xv

### CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction .....	1
1.2 Background of the Study .....	2
1.3 Statement of Problem .....	16
1.4 Research Objectives .....	22
1.5 Research Questions .....	22
1.6 Hypotheses .....	23
1.7 Significance of the Study .....	24
1.8 Limitation and Delimitation of the Study .....	26
1.9 Operational Definition of the Terms used in the Study .....	27
1.9.1 Knowledge Management .....	27
1.9.2 Self-efficacy .....	28
1.9.3 Leadership Empowerment .....	29
1.10 Summary .....	30

## CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	Introduction.....	31
2.2	The development of Higher Education System in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia .....	31
2.3	Academic Leadership.....	36
2.4	Leadership and empowerment .....	42
2.5	Empowerment .....	44
2.5.1	Leadership Empowerment: Definition and concepts .....	44
2.5.2	Kanter’s Structural Empowerment Theory .....	46
2.5.3	Model of leadership empowerment behavior.....	48
2.5.4	Previous studies on empowerment in Saudi.....	51
2.5.5	Previous findings on Leadership Empowerment .....	53
2.6	Self-efficacy .....	56
2.6.1	Definition and concept of self-efficacy.....	56
2.6.2	Model of self-efficacy.....	57
2.6.3	Self-efficacy Theory.....	60
2.6.4	Previous findings of self-efficacy .....	63
2.7	Knowledge .....	65
2.7.1	Definition and concept of knowledge .....	65
2.7.2	Types of knowledge .....	70
2.7.3	Definition and concept of knowledge management.....	71
2.7.4	SECI Model of knowledge management .....	73
2.7.5	Dimensions of Knowledge Management.....	80
2.7.6	Resource-Based Theory .....	86
2.7.7	Previous findings of knowledge management .....	89
2.8	Previous findings of the interrelation between variables .....	93
2.8.1	Leadership empowerment and self-efficacy .....	93
2.8.2	Relationship between Knowledge Management and Self- Efficacy .....	95

2.8.3	Leadership Empowerment and Knowledge Management .....	97
2.9	Theoretical Framework .....	99
2.10	Conceptual Framework .....	102
2.11	Summary .....	105

### **CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

3.1	Introduction .....	106
3.2	The Research Design.....	106
3.3	Research Framework.....	108
3.4	Population and Research Sampling.....	111
3.4.1	Research population .....	111
3.4.2	Research Sampling Procedures .....	112
3.5	Research Instruments .....	115
3.5.1	Questionnaire .....	115
3.6	Pilot Study.....	120
3.6.1	Validity of Instrument .....	121
3.6.2	Reliability of instrument .....	123
	Leading by Example .....	124
3.7	Data Collection Procedure .....	125
3.8	Data Analysis Procedure.....	126
3.8.1	Data Analysis .....	129
3.9	Data Screening.....	131
3.9.1	Normality test.....	131
3.9.2	Factor Analysis .....	132
3.9.2(a)	Factor Analysis of Leadership Empowerment Instrument .....	133
3.9.2(b)	Factor Analysis of Knowledge Management .....	137
3.9.2(c)	Factor Analysis of Lecturer Self Efficacy .....	140

3.9.3	Intercorrelation among Dimensions of Variables .....	141
3.10	Summary of the Chapter .....	144

## **CHAPTER 4 - FINDINGS**

4.1	Introduction .....	145
4.2	Demographic of respondents .....	145
4.3	Descriptive analysis .....	147
4.3.1	The level of leadership empowerment practiced in Saudi public university.....	147
4.3.2	The level of KM practiced in Saudi's public university .....	148
4.3.3	The level of lecturers' self-efficacy in research, teaching, and service in the selected Saudi's public university.....	149
4.4	Hypotheses testing .....	150
4.4.1	The significant difference of self-efficacy in research, teaching, and service among lecturers with different gender .....	150
4.4.2	The significant difference of self-efficacy in research, teaching, and service among lecturers with different age.....	152
4.4.3	The significant difference of self-efficacy in research, teaching, and service among lecturers with different academic qualification.....	155
4.4.4	The significant difference of self-efficacy in research, teaching, and service among lecturers with different working experience in university.....	158
4.4.5	The significant influence of leadership empowerment on self-efficacy.....	162
4.4.6	The significant influence of KM on self-efficacy .....	165
4.4.7	The significant influence of LE on KM .....	167
4.4.8	The role of KM as a significant mediator on the relationship between empowerment and lecturers' self-efficacy.....	170
4.5	Summary of findings.....	181
4.6	Summary of the chapter .....	184

## **CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1	Introduction .....	185
5.2	Summary of the Findings .....	185
5.3	Discussion .....	187
5.3.1	Leadership empowerment behavior among leaders in the selected Saudi public university .....	187
5.3.2	Knowledge management in Saudi public university .....	189
5.3.3	Lecturer's self-efficacy in Saudi public university .....	190
5.3.4	The influence of leadership empowerment on the lecturers' self-efficacy .....	192
5.3.5	The influence of knowledge management on lecturer self-efficacy .....	195
5.3.6	The influence of leadership empowerment on knowledge management .....	198
5.3.7	The mediating effect of knowledge management on the relationship between leadership empowerment and lecturers' self-efficacy .....	200
5.4	Implications .....	203
5.4.1	Theoretical Implication .....	203
5.4.2	Practical Implication .....	205
5.5	Recommendation for future research .....	210
5.6	Conclusion .....	211

<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	213
-------------------------	-----

## **APPENDICES**

## LIST OF TABLES

		<b>Page</b>
Table 3.1	The Population of Education Faculties Members at the KF University .....	112
Table 3.2	The population of Education Faculties Members at the University KF .....	113
Table 3.3	Items of Lecturer Self Efficacy .....	116
Table 3.4	Items of Leadership Empowerment (LE) .....	117
Table 3.5	Dimensions of Knowledge Management .....	118
Table 3.6	The conclusion of content validity by the expert panel .....	122
Table 3.7	Cronbach Alpha values for Lecturers Self-efficacy .....	124
Table 3.8	Cronbach Alpha values for Leadership Empowerment .....	124
Table 3.9	Cronbach Alpha values for Knowledge Management .....	124
Table 3.10	Level of descriptive analysis according to Nunally (1986) .....	127
Table 3.11	Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis of Variables .....	131
Table 3.12	The Structural Factor and Loading Factor of Varimax Orthogonal Leadership Empowerment .....	135
Table 3.13	The Structural Factor and Loading Factor of Varimax Orthogonal Knowledge Management .....	138
Table 3.14	The Structural Factor and Loading Factor of Varimax Orthogonal Self-efficacy .....	140
Table 3.15	Intercorrelation among Leadership Empowerment Dimensions .....	142
Table 3.16	Intercorrelation between Dimensions of Knowledge Management .....	143
Table 3.17	Intercorrelation among Self Efficacy Dimensions .....	144
Table 4.1	Demographic Distribution of Respondents .....	146
Table 4.2	Interpretation of Mean Score Range .....	147
Table 4.3	The Level of Leadership Empowerment .....	148

Table 4.4	The Level of Knowledge Management .....	148
Table 4.5	The Level of Lecturer Self Efficacy .....	149
Table 4.6(a)	The Level of Self Efficacy between Male and Female Lecturers .....	151
Table 4.6(b)	The Independent Sample t-test .....	152
Table 4.7(a)	The One-way ANOVA Test for Self-Efficacy among Lecturers with Different Age .....	153
Table 4.7(b)	Post Hoc LSD Tests between Age Groups .....	154
Table 4.8(a)	The One-way ANOVA test for Self-Efficacy among Lecturers with Different Academic Qualification .....	156
Table 4.8(b)	Post Hoc LSD Tests between Academic Qualification Groups .....	157
Table 4.9(a)	ANOVA for Self-Efficacy among Lecturers with Different Year of Working Experience .....	158
Table 4.9(b)	Post Hoc LSD Tests between Work Experience Groups .....	159
Table 4.10(a)	The Influence of LE on SE .....	163
Table 4.10(b)	The Influence of LE on SE dimensions .....	164
Table 4.11(a)	The Influence of KM on SE .....	166
Table 4.11(b)	The Influence of KM on dimensions of SE .....	167
Table 4.12(a)	The Influence of LE on KM .....	168
Table 4.12(b)	The Influence of LE on dimensions of KM .....	169
Table 4.13	The results of the Hierarchical Regression Analyses of Knowledge Acquisition as a Mediator on the Relationship between Leading by Example and Research .....	175
Table 4.14	The results of the Hierarchical Regression Analyses of Knowledge Application as a Mediator on the Relationship between Participative decision making and Research .....	176
Table 4.15	The results of the Hierarchical Regression Analyses of Knowledge Acquisition as a Mediator on the Relationship between Leading by Example and Professional Services .....	177
Table 4.16	The results of the Hierarchical Regression Analyses of Knowledge transfer as a Mediator on the Relationship between Leading by Example and Professional Services .....	178

Table 4.17	The results of the Hierarchical Regression Analyses of Knowledge Acquisition as a Mediator on the Relationship between Leading by Example and Professional Services .....	180
Table 4.18	Summary of Findings .....	181
Table 4.19	Summary of HRM Analysis .....	183

## LIST OF FIGURES

		<b>Page</b>
Figure 2.1	Bandura’s Triadic Reciprocal Determinism .....	61
Figure 2.2	Hierarchy of Knowledge (Source: Newell et al., 2009, p.3) .....	68
Figure 2.3	SECI Model (Source: Nonaka & Takeuchi,1995) .....	76
Figure 2.4	Conceptual Framework .....	102
Figure 3.1	Research Framework .....	108
Figure 3.2	Mediator Model (Baron & Kenny, 1986) .....	110
Figure 3.3	Flowchart of Data Collection Procedure .....	126
Figure 4.1	Summary of Variables Identification for Mediator Test (for Dimension 1 of Self Efficacy: Research) .....	172
Figure 4.2	Summary of Variables Identification for the Mediator Test (For Dimension 3 of Self-Efficacy: Professional Services) .....	173

**PENGARUH PENGUPAYAAN KEPIMPINAN DAN PENGURUSAN  
PENGETAHUAN TERHADAP EFIKASI KENDIRI PENSYARAH DI  
UNIVERSITI AWAM ARAB SAUDI**

**ABSTRAK**

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji tentang saling perkaitan antara tingkah laku pengupayaan kepimpinan, pengurusan pengetahuan dan efikasi sendiri pensyarah di sebuah universiti awam di Saudi. Selain itu, peranan pengurusan pengetahuan sebagai mediator terhadap hubungan antara tingkah laku kepimpinan pengupayaan dengan efikasi sendiri pensyarah turut dikaji. Kaedah tinjauan yang menggunakan soal selidik telah digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data kajian ini. Seramai 354 orang pensyarah telah dipilih sebagai responden kajian melalui persampelan rawak mudah untuk menjawab soal selidik kajian. Data-data yang telah dikumpulkan telah dianalisis menggunakan perisian IBM SPSS 21 untuk analisis statistik deskriptif (min dan sisihan piawai) dan analisis statistik inferensi (t-test, ANOVA sehala, korelasi, regresi dan regresi berganda berhierarki). Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa amalan tingkah laku kepimpinan pengupayaan dan efikasi sendiri pensyarah adalah pada tahap yang tinggi di universiti awam yang terpilih di Arab Saudi. Namun amalan pengurusan pengetahuan dalam organisasi tersebut adalah pada tahap sederhana tinggi. Umur, kelayakan akademik dan pengalaman bekerja dikenal pasti mempunyai pengaruh terhadap efikasi sendiri pensyarah. Dapatan turut menunjukkan terdapat pengaruh yang signifikan bagi tingkah laku pengupayaan kepimpinan dan pengurusan pengetahuan terhadap efikasi sendiri pensyarah. Selain itu, pengurusan pengetahuan didapati memainkan peranan sebagai mediator yang signifikan terhadap hubungan antara tingkah laku pengupayaan kepimpinan dengan efikasi sendiri pensyarah.

Berdasarkan dapatan kajian, dapat dirumuskan bahawa pemimpin perlu mempamerkan tingkah laku pengupayaan mereka terhadap pensyarah untuk meningkatkan efikasi sendiri mereka. Selain itu, universiti perlu meningkatkan kecekapan pengurusan pengetahuan di dalam organisasi tersebut bagi membantu meningkatkan efikasi sendiri pensyarah kerana kewujudan pengurusan pengetahuan yang cekap dan berkesan dapat membantu pemimpin untuk melaksanakan pengupayaan dengan berkesan serta sekaligus membantu guru untuk meningkatkan efikasi sendiri mereka.

**THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP EMPOWERMENT BEHAVIOR AND  
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ON LECTURERS SELF-EFFICACY IN A  
PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN SAUDI ARABIA**

**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to investigate the interrelation of leadership empowerment behavior, knowledge management and lecturer self-efficacy in a public university in Saudi Arabia. In addition, the role of knowledge management as a mediator on the relationship between the leadership empowerment behavior with lecturer self-efficacy is also examined. The survey methods using a questionnaire was employed in collecting data in this study. A total of 354 lecturers were selected as respondents using simple random sampling to answer the research questionnaire. The gathered data was analyzed using IBM SPSS 21 software for descriptive statistical analysis (mean and standard deviation) and inference statistical analysis (t-test, One-way ANOVA, correlation, regression and hierarchical double regression). The findings reveal that the leadership empowerment behavior and lecturers' self-efficacy are practiced at the high level in the selected Saudi Arabia public university. However, the knowledge management in the organization is practiced at moderate high level. The extraneous variables i.e. age, academic qualifications and work experience are identified as having significant effect on lecturer self-efficacy. The findings also show that there is a significant influence on leadership empowerment behavior and knowledge management on lecturer self- efficacy. In addition, knowledge management is identified as significant mediator on the relationship between leadership empowerment behavior and lecturer self-efficacy. Based on the findings, it can be conclude that university leaders need to demonstrate their empowerment behavior to lecturers to

improve lecturers' self-efficacy. Additionally, the university needs to improve the efficiency of knowledge management within the organization as the existence of an efficient and effective knowledge management can assist leaders to practice empowerment effectively and could help lecturers to improve their self- efficacy.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

Everywhere around the world, tertiary education institutions (TEIs) are the foundation to advance understanding, proficiency, and principles of education via research, teaching and personality advancement using upright, respectful and citizenship education (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006). More recently, there has been a demand for a greater focus on career development. Thus, tertiary education should equally prepare students for life-long endeavors and occupational growth (Bourmer & Flowers, 1997). As an organization that provides premier education, TEIs particularly universities, are models of a knowledge-based society where education supports custom and tradition (Atakan & Eker, 2007). Therefore, the main responsibility of a university is the creation, production, and reproduction of knowledge (Boulton & Lucas, 2011). For ages, this key purpose of education supports and stimulates human perception of the ecological and social environments. TEIs offers a foundation for scientific, socio-cultural, technological and traditional advancements which human beings persistently enjoyed (Grizans, 2009).

The contribution of individuals, groups, and communities towards the advancement of education since the birth of modern history has made society identify education as a sustainable tool for the achievement of significant development (Howells, 2007). This acknowledgment resulted in the upsurge of societal awareness about the significance of university education and proliferation in the creation of more academic environments worldwide. Notwithstanding the widespread genesis of their

subsistence and functions, universities vary in the aims and objectives of their establishment. Every university has distinctive social and educational objectives. The entrance prerequisites and academic benchmarks also differ, depending on institutionally specified aims and objectives (Johnson & Bell, 1995; Sommerlad & McDonald, 1998). Furthermore, the uniqueness and the effectiveness of university roles to the communities are influenced by aspects of its management process, mainly the lecturers' work attitude. Thus, within the university cycle, this study is intended to investigate the interrelation between three main aspects within the organization management and human resource domains, i.e. leadership empowerment, lecturer's self-efficacy, and knowledge management (KM) in education colleges in a public university in Saudi Arabia.

## **1.2 Background of the Study**

Saudi Arabia's educational program was founded after the establishment of Saudi Arabia in the year 1932. Due to the fact that the country was underprivileged at that time, the education system began with an elementary system which consisted of only 12 schools and 700 students. The educational system in Saudi Arabia has changed intensely after the discovery of vast amounts of oil in 1938. This has resulted in the formation of about 365 schools with 42,000 students learning in 1950 (Simmons & Simmons, 1994). In line with the aim of the country's educational goal, the Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Education was established in 1954 to serve all levels of education by managing the educational development in the country (Alamri, 2011).

Based on the demands for higher level educational, the first public university, in 1957, King Saud University was established and inaugurated in the capital of Saudi

Arabia, Riyadh. Over a period of 20 years, this establishment was followed by the formation of six other universities. By 2008, 20 government and 4 private universities had been established with the enrolment of 622, 314 students (Ministry of Education, 2008; Almari, 2011; Mahmoud Abdullah Saleh, 1986). In 2013, the Central Department of Statistics and Information (CDSI) had reported that Saudi Arabia was home to 25 public universities, with the total enrolment of 1,165,091 students, among whom 1,064,880 were studying at the undergraduate level (Clark, 2014). The rapid development of the country leads to the growth of higher education institutions because higher education is one of the key pillars affecting the development of the country (Saudi Ministry of Education, 2008). According to Mahmoud Abdul Saleh (1986), since Saudi Arabia is rapidly growing, education for industrialization is accentuated as the key to modernization, a high standard of living and full employment. Higher education has become the primary mechanism in providing the workforce needs at present and in the future.

All universities in Saudi Arabia are managed by the Ministry of Higher Education, which was founded in 1975 under the Royal Decree Nr 1/236 (Saudi Arabia Ministry of Education, 2008). According to the decree, the administration of universities in the country by the Ministry of Higher Education will be based on the Saudi Arabia policies. In other words, the administration of universities becomes centralized by adopting government policies as the main guideline. According to Alamri (2011), the Saudi Arabia Ministry of Higher Education acts as the leading authority that is responsible for directing university education in accordance with the central policies that all universities have to abide. Additionally, it has an obligation to oversee tertiary education at the university level and its advancement. This role

includes the coordination of departments and the award of certificates, inspiring research and innovation, and inventing procedures and guidelines, which must be complied with by all tertiary education institutions.

In 2016, the Saudi Vision 2030 was launched as an effort to reduce Saudi Arabia dependence on oil and instead to develop a modern, productivity-led economy. This long-term economic blueprint is a designed social and economic policies in the effort to free the Saudi country from being totally dependent on oil export and moving to a sustainable economic future by promoting a knowledge-based economy. Moreover, the thriving economy in Saudi Arabia requires the public universities to play their pivotal roles in providing a skilled workforce which is aligned with the market's needs. The Saudi government will continue to invest in education and training for universities' academic and administrative staffs to serve the students in higher education so that they can comply with the market's demands. Efforts are continuously made by the Saudi's Education Department to place at least five public universities in Saudi among the best universities in the world while improving the Saudi Universities' performance in the Times Higher Education World University Ranking and the Web metrics Ranking of World Universities. The improvement in the quality of performance by these universities will indirectly fulfil the Saudi government's aims to close the gap between the requirement of the job market and the higher education's outputs.

In its quest to ensure fast growth and rapid development of tertiary education, the Saudi's Ministry of Higher Education is routinely engaged in efforts to uplift the standards of tertiary education. This is a strategic endeavor to train quality graduates

who can set in motion research and innovation for sustainable development in Saudi Arabia and subsequently have an impact across the globe. The Ministry is continuously innovating tertiary education in Saudi Arabia to enable students and the academic faculties to compete favorably with their counterparts in the Gulf countries and the developed economies (Ministry of Higher Education, 2010).

In addition to the existing efforts, many new knowledge-intensive projects have been initiated by the Saudi Arabia government aimed at expanding its policy to have more knowledge workers (k-workers) among its own citizens. One outstanding initiative that was launched is the Knowledge Economic City (KEC) project situated in Madinah, which aims to serve the Saudi's economic diversification policy. This bold strategic move also seeks to rejuvenate Madinah's role as an international focal point for Islamic scholarship, cultural and knowledge hub. The government of Saudi Arabia uses the project to improve the standards of living of the local population through wealth creation, to sustain gratification and health. This is achieved through the creation of a multi-sectoral blueprint that provides opportunities for growth and prospects in the economy, education, housing, health and wellbeing for its citizens (Knowledge Economic City, 2012).

Since the Saudi's employment law has changed to take into account the Saudization policy to gradually replace foreign workers with its own citizens, the demands for more qualified local workforce especially k-workers to be trained at the universities level have increased (Ahmed, 2016). The policy also demanded that the development of k-workers must be in tandem with the expansion of information and communication technology in Saudi Arabia. Thus, in response to this challenge, the

Saudi's universities need to be effective, efficient and productive in order to accomplish the human resource development policy.

Meanwhile, the pivotal concept of human resource development, including in tertiary education, is finding the most appropriate method to not only retain but also to ensure that the workforce remains current, energetic and resourceful. The key is to ensure that the workforce discharges its duties and responsibilities adequately, in a sustainable fashion, and in tandem with the evolutions of today's fast-evolving global environment in terms of social, economic, political, scientific and technological advancements (Peretomode & Chukwuma, 2012).

Since the universities have been given the responsibilities to execute the drive for more competitive national k-workers, lecturers are the key agents in ensuring a high level of self-efficacy as this aspect is significantly related to the organization output. In the higher education context, the output is referred to as students' performance and organization productivity (Cakiroglu, Cakiroglu, & Boone, 2005). In general, Bandura (1997) reports that self-efficacy is a person's conviction about the probability of a plan or behavior being accomplished. Jex and Bliese (1999) added that self-efficacy serves as a defense against the depressing consequences of work-related stress. Meanwhile, high self-efficacy can be transformed into high-quality occupation skills and provisions to enhance individual and organizational accomplishments.

Given such responsibility, lecturers need to be competent in all three main domains of their occupation and responsibilities, i.e. teaching, research and service (pertaining to administrative or professional engagement) (Velu & Nordin, 2011;

Hemmings & Kay, 2009). These three domains are referred to by Hemmings and Kay (2009) as lecturers' self-efficacy, and they define the concept of self-efficacy as an individual's belief in his/her capability to organize and implement actions to reach a certain level of performance in the three domains. Previous researchers had argued that self-efficacy in teaching is the most focused aspect for most lecturers at universities and colleges of higher learning as it is often perceived as the fundamental responsibility of university lecturers. The lecturers continued advancement in their profession depends largely on the growth of their teaching practices (Rowbotham, 2015). If such is the case, they need to understand the underlying principle and the strategies for applying the best instructional practices and develop effective and efficient teaching behaviors and skills.

Many researchers, for instance, Knight and Yorke (2003), correlated that good teaching and learning processes at the university level will increase the level of employability of graduate students. The learning experiences provided by lecturers should play an important role to increase their students' employability. Among the criteria that attract employers to hire graduates include work experience, skill, and knowledge of the advertised position as well as soft skills, i.e. leadership skills, thinking skills, and communication skills. All these elements should be given priority in the lecturers' design of their teaching and learning practices. Rowbotham (2015) argued that some university lecturers who are considered as experts in their field of study might not have been trained in effective teaching, how to share their expertise or how to improve their teachings by providing updated information based on empirical findings from their studies.

Yang et al. (2006) opined that high or low instruction on self-efficacy impacts academics' forms of reasoning, choices of conduct, the height of devotion and accomplishments. High level of self-efficacy is also a significant issue influencing the accomplishment of lecturers and student scholarship (Cakiroglu et al., 2005). Additional studies also revealed that members of an academic faculty with high teaching self-efficacy are willing to assist weak students for longer hours, identify faults made by students, and experiment innovative teaching approaches to help their students (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Guskey, 1988). Meanwhile, lecturers who lack compelling perception of self-efficacy acknowledged their incapacity to positively influence their students towards Furthermore accomplishments. Similarly, they fail to agree on the obligation to inspire their students or even make any efforts towards achieving such milestones (Gibson & Dembo, 1985).

Besides self-efficacy in teaching, lecturers are also obligated to possess self-efficacy in research and publication activities, as it is necessary for them to discover new knowledge by performing quality research and share the knowledge by means of article publications. These two academic activities are closely related to knowledge generation in efforts to provide up to date information to their students in the lecturers' area of expertise and produce new knowledge to be dispersed to societies, for instance, in problem solution and innovation. Inevitably, research and publication become part of the key components of the Saudi National Development Plans which as discussed earlier, aims to achieve the country's social and economic aspirations (Alzuman, 2015). A significant amount of investment has been made by the Saudi government to enhance research productivity in Saudi universities. However, the findings by

Alzahrani (1997), in his study pertaining to academicians at Umm Alqura University, indicated that about 38.4% of the faculty members have failed to produce any research since their graduation.

According to Perkman and Walsh (2007), research has become a crucial agenda in universities as it is a platform for the generation of innovation and research also leads to many partnerships, as well as networking between universities and external organization (profit and non-profit organizations). Furthermore, research has an important role in ensuring that a university has the capacity to offer a modern and relevant curriculum that is in agreement with society's current needs. New research findings from local universities also provides an opportunity for individuals or organizations to use these findings to remain competitive when encountering challenges from their competitors. Apart from research, the publication resulted from the research is the primary means for academicians to disseminate the new findings they discovered from their research. Publication becomes an important indicator of a lecturer's productivity. In addition, recruitment, promotion, and tenure appear to be decided primarily based on the number of articles published by individual lecturers (Rond & Miller, 2005).

As part of an organization, lecturers are also required to engage in administrative or professional work. This engagement includes organizing courses pertaining to their expertise, consultation and becoming part of the editorial board for journal publication (Hemming & Kay, 2009). Aronson and Janke (2015) proclaimed that if members of academia fail to be engaged in the profession, the profession has indeed failed. They argued that professional engagement would capture experts'

distinct engagement within the profession as they undergo professionalization, becoming acculturated and adopting the professional ethos of an area of knowledge

However, the level of lecturer's self-efficacy is influenced by many factors that exist within the organization, and one of them is education leadership empowerment (Mareyke, Greety, Velma & Sumual, 2014). As mentioned by scholars in the education management field, for instance, Yulk (2004), leadership is an inevitable aspect that is seen as a crucial factor in influencing the performance of an organization. Bass (1985) believed that leaders able to lead effectively by motivating and inspiring their subordinates rather than controlling or directing them. In other words, leaders should empower their subordinate as part of their leadership process.

Empowerment is referring to the power-sharing activities between a leader and employees. It is a modern and effective technique for improving organizational productivity by using the strength of the employees. Leadership empowerment is a crucial mechanism to enhance subordinates' work motivation and performance through delegating authority for job-related decisions and involving them in the decision-making process. Wilkinson (1998) explained that Peters and Waterman's (1982) had laid the foundations for the modern empowerment movement in higher education by implementing emancipation and administrative models. Modern empowerment in higher education aims to encourage innovation and workers who felt isolated, developed easier, instinctive management methods that enable organizations to become more flexible, innovative, and responsive (Wilkinson, 1998). Managers and executive officers are inspired to cater for their junior staff and treat them as colleagues. This ensures that they valued the contributions and trust the ability of their

subordinates in using spontaneous decisions to actualize duties. The organizations are expected to transform into systems that have the characteristics of maintaining trustworthy relationships, cooperation, and empowerment among its personnel.

Wilkinson, (1998) argued that empowerment should be increased in universities as the workers (especially academicians) are untapped resources with knowledge and experience and have an interest in becoming involved in a job-related decision making which can be made available by employers providing opportunities and structures for their involvement. Darraugh (1991) posited that empowerment in HEIs means academicians need to do what needs to be done rather than doing what they are told to do. In addition, Lawler (1986) believed that empowerment is considered to be a powerful mechanism for increasing employee involvement and for motivating employees' task achievement (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Despite minor variations in how empowerment is viewed, the majority of previous studies concluded that leadership emancipation enriches work standards for people, multiplies job satisfaction, and adds to work output and victory (Eylon & Au, 1996; Fulford & Enz, 1995; Koberg et al., 1999; Spreitzer, 1995). Karasek (1990), added that disempowered employees could be costly, not only in terms of turnover but also in terms of reduced job satisfaction and increased absenteeism.

Arnold et al. (2000) emphasized that inspiring leadership is a unique type of trailblazer behavior, which affords helps to subordinates by coaching, inspiring, guiding and offering them emotive assistance and information (Bandura, 1986). Workforces in organizations will probably feel a sense of belonging to their occupations and the confidence that they can execute work-related chores without any

form of supervision. The claim had been examined by research on leadership empowerment undertaken by various scholars (Ahearne, Mathieu & Rapp, 2005; Arnold et al., 2000). This assertion has some theoretical backing suggesting that a leader may energize individual personnel to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the individual's characteristics (Yukl & Fu, 1999; Zhang & Bartol, 2010).

Besides empowering leadership, Shahidi and Baezat (2015) proclaimed that knowledge management is another aspect that could increase faculty members' self-efficacy. According to previous researchers such as Trivella and Dimitriou (2015), Gourlay (2001) and Nawas and Gomes (2014), knowledge management (KM) is one of the current key elements that have affected the effectiveness of universities' roles in societies. As stated by Trivella and Dimitriou (2015), KM's strategy is an essential factor that enables universities to have a more effective and active role in relation to society, international market, and political scene.

Based on its importance, KM has become an emerging concept in Saudi Arabia. In fact, the government of Saudi Arabia has been observed to actively promote KM in their HE system. The intention of promoting KM's concept in universities is clearly stated in the Saudi Arabia policy paper that highlights the aspect of adequate transfer and preservation of knowledge in universities (EPK: 1419 AH). Yaghi and Zamzami (2014) proclaimed that KM is essential in Saudi Arabia's universities as it promotes a knowledge sharing environment among academics and eases the process of knowledge experts' identification for reference in an academic organization (Shafique, 2015).

Bouthillier and Shearer (2002) rationalized that the management of knowledge is a process that involves the articulation of various approaches for comprehending and documenting knowledge resources in an establishment. These approaches result from the employees from different departments or faculties in the establishment and other related establishments, working together in related areas of specialty. For this purpose, an establishment-wide tactic for managing knowledge can be deployed to accelerate knowledge distribution openly and discretely (Shafiques, 2015).

Alsuraihi, Yaghi, and Nassuora (2016) stated that the effort of promoting KM in HEIs in Saudi Arabia was initiated in September 2005. The initiative encompassed the consent of faculty members about using KM tools in sharing and exchanging their knowledge of training programs and activities offered by their departments. The implementation of KM resulted in immense savings in terms of the amount of time and work required in preparing and processing activities and programs. It also benefitted the cross-departmental initiative by facilitating creative ideas exchanges. Moreover, it has been associated with an increase in the participants' ability to deal with emergencies and had significantly reduce pressures at work (Personnel Department, 2013).

Nevertheless, some scholars in Saudi Arabia were skeptical about the implementation of KM in Saudi Arabia. For instance, Umar (2014) proclaimed that the KM, in general, has not been given priority in Gulf countries including Saudi Arabia given the fact that the promotion of knowledge was not emphasized in the policy of most Gulf countries including Saudi Arabia. Yet, there was no action taken to implement KM. The author agreed that although Saudi Arabia has a clear policy for

promoting KM in its higher education system, there was either insignificant or no enforcement implementation of that policy. However, Saudi Arabia's government policy has explicitly acknowledged the nation's awareness about these concerns and formulated frameworks for overcoming some of the obstacles experienced during the execution of knowledge management. For instance, the Saudi Ministry of Education (2004) had already verified the challenges that currently exist in the country's educational system and has started to take the necessary actions to put into operation the knowledge-intensive approach.

Yaghi and Zamzami (2014) made an inquiry into the importance and principle of knowledge management among tertiary education institutions in Saudi Arabia and suggested that senior managerial staff should incorporate strategic reasoning into knowledge management. They asserted the necessity for knowledge to be disseminated among personnel within these tertiary education institutions, to guarantee that knowledge is open for public consumption and scrutiny. As claimed by Alsereihy, Alyoubi, and Emary (2012), KM has become an essential strategic practice that helps firms to gain a competitive advantage and helps the organization to create, identify, document, store and redistribute the experiences, insights, and knowledge that people have gained. Their research on KM proved that major organizations that applied KM effectively achieved better performance in productivity, turnaround time and overall organization efficiency. Thus, it is believed that the practice of KM is needed to boost the effectiveness of tertiary education in Saudi Arabia.

Furthermore, many forms of research in different contexts revealed that there is a significant relationship between KM and employees' self-efficacy (Baezat,

Aflakifard & Shahidi, 2014; Sahidi & Baezat, 2015; Wulandari, Tunas & Sunaryo, 2017). For example, in the research conducted by Baezat et al. (2014) at Shiraz Pre-school Centre, it was found that all the measurements of KM, comprising knowledge creation, knowledge make-up, knowledge implementation, and knowledge allocation had a significant positive relationship with teachers' self-efficacy. Some measurements of KM which include the creating, organizing, implementing and sharing of knowledge had significantly predicted teachers' self-efficacy. These results supported empirical evidence established by Wulandari et al. (2017) who discovered a positive and significant relationship between KM and elementary teachers' self-efficacy.

Likewise, in another study, Alserihy, Alyoubi, and El-Emary (2012) revealed that knowledge management implementation in Saudi Arabia was related to different ongoing initiatives/projects in the country such as school education for girls, public segment corporations, oil, and chemical industries and construction companies. They emphasized that such projects would flourish if others joined in the enterprise and exchanged views to generate new knowledge. There was also an emphasis on the necessity to use various new media, especially social media platforms in distributing knowledge. According to Shakki, Garkaz and Dahghan (2016) in their study on KM in an industrial context, identified organizational structure and culture as the most critical factors for KM development in an organization and referred to them as empowerment. Organizational structure relates to the power distribution in the organization, and it refers to two crucial aspects, i.e., centralization and formalization. Organizational culture, on the other hand, consists of cooperation, trust, and motivation as well as the sharing and transfer of knowledge in the organization

(DeTienne et al., 2004). The results of the study by Mohamad Ali Shakki et al. (2016) showed that there is a significant relationship between empowerment and KM, and this linear relationship is considered meaningful in the context of their study.

Fotovat, Mirzayidaryani & Talebi (2012) emphasized the impact of leadership empowerment on KM as they believed that employees who are knowledgeable and experts in executing their tasks are eligible to obtain more power in an organization especially in decision making pertaining to their tasks. According to Fotovat et al. (2012), employees own hidden power which is acquired through knowledge, experience, and their motive; empowerment releases thAT power. Thus, it can be argued that KM has a significant influence on self-efficacy but the KM practice in the organization is influenced by leadership empowerment.

### **1.3 Statement of Problem**

Saudi Arabia is currently experiencing tremendous changes as economic wealth has resulted in the transformation of the nation in all aspects, particularly education. A report by Saudi's Ministry of Higher Education (2009), stated that Saudi Arabia is experiencing an aggressive investment in the key pillar of the knowledge-based economy, namely, education and learning, innovation, and information technology.

As explained by the Saudi Arabia Ministry of Education (2015), the country has given special attention to education notably higher education. The current rapid developments that is regarded as renaissance requires knowledge as the main foundation and mechanism to achieve the required quantum leap towards a knowledge

society (Pavan, 2016). Given the special attention that has been dedicated to education in the Saudization policy, the government is making efforts to provide adequate training for university lecturers, who they regard as the key players of higher education, through research and training for quality education (EPK: 1419 AH) with specific interest on research, teaching, and publication. However, it is found that the professional achievements of most local lecturers in Saudi Arabia are way behind their foreign colleagues including their peers from other developing countries. Vast majority of administrators and lecturers in Saudi universities have been increasingly overwhelmed by foreign expatriates. Almeen (2015) believed that the Saudi lecturers' incompetence was largely due to the lack of training in terms of skills as well as updated knowledge. This has resulted in an incessant increase in the recruitment of foreign lecturers to serve in the country's institutions due to the lack of quality local lecturers. To overcome this problem, many Saudi lecturers have been given the best professional development opportunities to improve their academic skills. Training and development courses that given to them were either conducted by professional consultants, predominantly from Western, English-speaking countries or organized by prestigious institutions abroad.

As the government has invested heavily to provide the best professional development and training to lecturers to improve the quality of higher education in the country, the lecturers are obligated to achieve high levels of performance and productivity in their academic responsibilities, i.e. teaching, research, and professional services as an outcome of the investment.

However, the impact of knowledge obtained by the local lecturers through training on the universities' performance cannot be overemphasized and needs to be coupled with the lecturers' self-efficacy. Many lecturers who have low self-efficacy, reported that they struggled with their teaching though they have been trained in their area of expertise (Rowbotham, 2015). According to previous researchers for instance, Cakiroglu et al. (2005), Hemmings and Kay (2009), Gibson and Damson (1984) and John and Ross Miller (1987), lecturers especially those who possessed high level of self-efficacy have made a significant contribution to the organization's output *vis-a-vis* students' achievement. This supports the claim that their self-efficacy affects their instructional or delivery processes as well as the outcome.

Yahya, Mohd. Noor, Othman, Mohd. Isa and Abdul Manaf (2017) revealed that self-efficacy has a significant influence on training effectiveness for workers. Since self-efficacy is identified as one of the key aspects in influencing lecturers' performance, it is crucial for the Saudi Arabia's government, as the main stakeholders of public universities, to know the level of their lecturers' self-efficacy. With that, the government can address the constraints that are currently impeding the professional development of their lecturers. Thus, this study aims to reveal the level of self-efficacy among lecturers as previous findings indicated that self-efficacy had been identified as one of the key factors that influenced individual performance. The intention to investigate the lecturers' self-efficacy is Furthermore motivated by the present lack of empirical studies examining this issue in the context of public universities in Saudi Arabia particularly in terms of teaching, research and professional services. Most of the studies that had been conducted were focused on different areas of self-efficacy such as teacher's self-efficacy, student's self-efficacy, and technology efficacy.

Furthermore, this study aims to investigate the significant contribution of two major factors on Saudi lecturers' self-efficacy, namely leadership empowerment and knowledge management. Previous studies have revealed that self-efficacy is shaped by many factors among which are leadership empowerment and the KM practices within the organization. Darraugh (1991), who was concerned about creating opportunities to develop the feelings of self-efficacy believed that this personal belief could be increased by removing conditions that contributed to feelings of powerlessness. In other words, the traditional model of a leader who practiced the 'one-man show' is no longer appropriate and applicable in universities. Hasan et al., (2012) and Mareyke et al. (2014), asserted that by giving the employees the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process, their self-efficacy and performance are likely to be enhanced.

Leithwood and Louis (2012) stated that leaders and subordinates have an organic interrelationship and need to work and learn together in realizing the mission and vision of the organization. It is believed that the delegation of responsibility and authority to the lowest organizational level is able to enhance individual motivation at work. Furthermore leadership empowerment contributes to the lecturers' self-leadership development as well. According to Blasé and Blasé (2006), Lieberman and Miller (2005), self-leadership can positively influence individuals performance by promoting their self-confidence, engaging with their colleagues, inhibiting collegial collaboration and sharing information and resources to improve their teaching quality.

Arnold et al. (2000), agreed that leaders who practised empowerment are required to support and encourage self-management as well as promote empowerment. They are also required to model appropriate empowering behaviors, provide social and emotional encouragement, build trust and openness, encourage self-reinforcement, provide information and resources to complete their tasks, encourage self-goal setting, and provide and communicate a vision. These model of empowerment behavior inspired subordinates to perform their best in carrying out their responsibilities. As leadership empowerment has become increasingly adopted by public universities in Saudi Arabia, the current study aims to investigate the role of empowerment in Saudi public universities' management process as well as the impact of leadership empowerment on lecturers' self-efficacy. According to earlier studies, by practicing the leadership empowerment, individual self-efficacy will increase as it has a significant impact on morale, motivation, and performance. However, studies examining the impact of leadership empowerment among universities leaders on lecturers' self-efficacy and KM practiced in Saudi Arabia public universities are still insufficient. Currently, the research on empowerment in Saudi mainly focused on empowerment in women leadership, not on the overall leadership in universities.

In addition, this study also investigates the role of KM as a mediator in the relationship between leadership empowerment and lecturers' self-efficacy. Based on previous research findings by Baezat et al. (2014), Shahidi & Baezat (2015) and Wulandari et al. (2017), a significant relationship between KM with self-efficacy has been revealed. Sahidi & Baezat (2015) in their study in Azad University found a positive and significant relationship between all the dimensions of KM with the faculty members' self-efficacy. Besides, previous findings also showed that the level of KM practiced in an organization has a significant relationship with leadership

empowerment (Shakki, 2016). Fotovat et al. (2012) claimed that lecturers who are experienced and experts in their field own hidden power and empowerment is releasing this power.

Since the knowledge management concept was introduced in Saudi Arabia in 2005, many concept papers on the implementation of KM in Saudi Arabia's higher learning institutions have been written, for example, the Aafaq Plan and Saudi Vision 2030. Most importantly, universities in Saudi Arabia were encouraged to adopt the KM strategy as one of the mechanisms to improve their performance. However, the empirical study on the extent to which KM has been practiced in Saudi public universities, and its influence on lecturers' self-efficacy and managerial process are still scarce. Thus, the level of KM practiced in Saudi Arabia public universities requires Furthermore investigation as the empirical data of KM implementation in Saudi universities is valuable for policymakers to map the national development plan.

Though previous studies had revealed the significant relationships between the three variables, i.e. lecturer self-efficacy, leadership empowerment, and KM, it could be ascertained that there are a few issues that need to be addressed concerning these variables in higher education landscape, especially in Saudi Arabia's public universities. Based on the issues mentioned above, this study aims to examine the direct effect of leadership empowerment on lecturers' self-efficacy in Saudi Arabia public universities and to investigate the mediating effect of KM on the relationship. While the studies conducted on leadership empowerment, KM and lecturers' self-efficacy had focused on one or two of these variables, the relationship between all these three variables needs to be comprehensively researched.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The main aim of this study is to explore the relationship between leadership empowerment, KM and lecturers' self-efficacy in Saudi Arabia public universities.

Specifically, this study intends to achieve the following research objectives:

1. To examine the level of leadership empowerment in Saudi public universities
2. To examine the level of KM practiced in Saudi public universities
3. To examine the level of lecturers' self-efficacy in research, teaching, and the service of lecturers in Saudi public universities
4. To examine the significant difference between self-efficacy in research, teaching, and service among lecturers based on gender, age, academic qualification as well as university work experience.
5. To examine the significant influence of leadership empowerment on self-efficacy
6. To examine the significant influence of leadership empowerment on KM
7. To examine the significant influence of KM on self-efficacy
8. To determine the role of KM as a significant mediator in the relationship between empowerment and lecturers' self-efficacy.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

1. What is the level of leadership empowerment practiced in Saudi public universities?
2. What is the level of KM practiced in Saudi public universities'?
3. What is the level of self-efficacy of lecturers in Saudi public universities'?

4. Is there any significant difference in self-efficacy among lecturers based on their gender, age, academic qualification and working experience in university?
5. Is there any significant influence of leadership empowerment on lecturers' self-efficacy?
6. Is there any significant influence of leadership empowerment on KM?
7. Is there any significant influence of KM on lecturers' self-efficacy?
8. Is KM a significant mediator in the relationship between empowerment and lecturers' self-efficacy?

## **1.6 Hypotheses**

- H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference in the lecturers' self-efficacy in the selected Saudi's public university based on gender.
- H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant difference in the lecturers' self-efficacy in the selected Saudi's public university based on age.
- H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant difference in the lecturers' self-efficacy in the selected Saudi's public university based on academic qualification.
- H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant difference in the lecturers' self-efficacy in the selected Saudi's public university based on working experience.
- H<sub>05</sub>: There is no significant influence of leadership empowerment in the selected Saudi's public university on the lecturers' self-efficacy.
- H<sub>06</sub>: There is no significant influence of KM in the selected Saudi's public university on the lecturers' self-efficacy.
- H<sub>07</sub>: There is no significant influence of leadership empowerment in the selected Saudi's public university on KM.

H<sub>08</sub>. There is no mediating effect of KM's dimensions on the relationship between leadership empowerment and lecturers' self-efficacy in the selected Saudi public university.

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The present research provides a starting point to explain the influence of leadership empowerment and knowledge management on Saudi lecturers' self-efficacy in fulfilling their three main tasks at university, i.e. research, teaching and professional services. As Saudi Arabia is making marked efforts to develop a knowledge society by improving the quality of their education system as well as educators especially academics at higher education institutions, the data on the management practices at the university level is fundamental. This study aims to provide the important data on the role of leadership empowerment and knowledge management that is currently practiced in public universities in Saudi to enhance the self-efficacy of lecturers in teaching, researching and providing professional services. The results obtained in the current research will provide academic leaders with valuable and useful information on how best to implement and support their academic staff's professional development

The study would also be able to provide other data pertaining to leadership empowerment and knowledge management practices in Saudi universities by addressing the issue from the perspective of faculty members at the university's level. The analysis and findings can offer insights into the academia's perception about leadership empowerment and knowledge management in Saudi universities. These insights could enable Saudi universities to devise and implement effective strategies