

## STRATEGIC KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN SMALL – AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES IN TRANSITION ECONOMIES – CASE OF ALBANIA

Narasimha Rao Vajjhala  
University of Phoenix, USA  
narasimha123@email.phoenix.edu

Jelena Vucetic  
University of Phoenix, USA  
jelena@email.phoenix.edu

### **Abstract:**

Most organizations, particularly knowledge-based organizations invest significantly in intellectual resources, including individual employee training. However, only some organizations obtain benefit from these investments. Unless organizations plan to strategically leverage the intellectual capital, they are likely to lose their strategic competitive advantage. Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in transition economies often fail to invest in knowledge management activities because of limited financial and human resources. The strategic impact of knowledge management initiatives in a firm depends on how the organization places in service the tacit and explicit components of knowledge. The purpose of this study is to explore how SMEs in transition economies can benefit from leveraging strategically the knowledge assets in the organization. Interviews were conducted with senior managers from 20 medium-sized enterprises in a transition economy- Albania, four from each of the five key sectors, namely, information and communication technology (ICT), financial services, manufacturing, construction, and retailing. The qualitative data coded from the in-depth interviews was analysed using NVivo® for identifying key themes. Four key themes were identified along with thirteen subthemes. The four key themes are human resources as strategic knowledge asset, adoption of a strategic knowledge management strategy, supporting knowledge management using information systems and technology, and knowledge storage and application. The findings of this study will help SMEs in transition economies identify how knowledge resources in a firm can be strategically leveraged. This study also adds value to the limited literature available on strategic knowledge management in the context of SMEs in transition economies. The abstract of this paper has been presented and published at the MakeLearn and TIIM 2016 International Conference.

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