

A Knowledge Management Integration Model within Enterprise Architecture to Improve the Competitiveness of Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

Higher education institutions are increasingly required to strengthen competitiveness through digital transformation, data-driven governance, knowledge-based decision-making, and sustainable innovation. Enterprise Architecture (EA) provides a strategic framework for aligning institutional objectives, business processes, data, applications, technology, and organizational capabilities. At the same time, Knowledge Management (KM) supports the creation, storage, sharing, utilization, and evaluation of institutional knowledge. However, existing EA practices are often fragmented and insufficiently integrated with organizational knowledge processes, particularly in higher education institutions. This study proposes a conceptual Knowledge Management–Enterprise Architecture (KM-EA) integration model to support the competitiveness of higher education. A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) combined with bibliometric analysis was conducted on scientific publications from 2021 to 2026, using Scopus as the primary database and VOSviewer for thematic and keyword analyses. The findings indicate that EA has evolved from a documentation-oriented approach to a strategic, knowledge-based infrastructure that integrates digital transformation, data integration, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, sustainability, and stakeholder management. The proposed model consists of five interconnected layers: Strategic, Enterprise Architecture, Knowledge Management, Governance, and Competitiveness. The integration of these layers is expected to improve strategic alignment, organizational learning, decision-making, knowledge sharing, digital governance, and institutional performance. This study provides a conceptual foundation for developing and empirically validating an integrated KM-EA model specifically designed to enhance the competitiveness of higher education institutions.

Keywords: enterprise architecture; knowledge management; higher education; digital transformation; competitiveness.

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1. Introduction

Higher education institutions in the digital era can no longer be understood merely as educational institutions that carry out teaching, research, and community service functions administratively (Liao & Wang, 2021). In the contemporary knowledge economy, these institutions operate in an increasingly complex, open, and performance-based competitive environment. The competitiveness of higher education institutions is determined by their capacity to manage knowledge resources, integrate information technology, accelerate decision-making, improve academic quality, strengthen research reputation, and build institutional governance that is adaptive to environmental change.

Digital transformation has become an unavoidable strategic agenda item because virtually all higher education business processes—from student admissions, learning management, research, publication, academic services, collaboration, and quality assurance to institutional performance reporting—increasingly depend on information systems and digital data. In this situation, higher education institutions require a governance model that connects institutional strategy to information systems, technology infrastructure, business processes, organizational actors, and institutional knowledge. Enterprise Architecture (EA) constitutes a relevant approach to address this need.

Enterprise Architecture is an approach employed to map, design, integrate, and manage relationships among business processes, data, applications, technology, and an organization's strategic objectives (Graves & Beard, 2025; Mikalef et

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al., 2021). In modern organizations, EA is no longer understood merely as a collection of technical diagrams or information system documentation but has evolved into a strategic mechanism for driving digital transformation and creating organizational value. EA plays a critical role in orchestrating information technology and business resources to enable organizations to respond to turbulent market conditions (Pattij et al., 2022). This perspective demonstrates that EA is not only technological in nature but also encompasses strategic and organizational dimensions. EA assists organizations in understanding their current state, designing a desired future state, identifying gaps, and preparing a more directed transformation roadmap. In higher education, this approach is particularly important because the complexity of academic and administrative processes often causes information systems to develop in isolation, thereby failing to support integrated strategic decision-making.

In recent years, the EA literature has demonstrated a significant shift from a documentation-oriented approach toward one that is more adaptive, data-driven, and knowledge-based (Vandevenne et al., 2023; Ahmad et al., 2024). Scholars argue that EA needs to evolve from static documentation to an intelligent knowledge infrastructure by integrating artificial intelligence. AI-based observability can transform EA into a living knowledge infrastructure—one in which architecture not only represents the organizational condition but also detects deviations, monitors changes, and updates organizational understanding in near real time. This development is highly relevant for higher education institutions because they store various forms of knowledge, both explicit and tacit, including academic policies, curricula, learning outcomes, research data, collaboration networks, lecturer expertise, study program management experience, quality assurance practices, and institutional evaluation results. If such knowledge is not managed systematically, higher education institutions will struggle to build a sustainable competitive advantage.

Knowledge Management has emerged as a critical approach for addressing this challenge (Kotusev et al., 2023; Underwood, 2023). KM focuses on how knowledge is created, stored, shared, utilized, and renewed within an organization. In higher education institutions, KM occupies a highly strategic position because knowledge constitutes the core of all institutional activities. Higher education institutions are not only users of knowledge but also producers, managers, and disseminators of knowledge. However, the primary challenge that frequently arises is knowledge fragmentation. Institutional knowledge is dispersed across academic units, administrative units, information systems, quality documents, research reports, student databases, cooperation archives, publication repositories, and the individual experiences of academic and non-academic staff. Consequently, decision-making processes often depend on partial data, personal experience, or documents that are not always integrated. In this context, integrating KM with EA is critical because EA provides structure, while KM furnishes mechanisms for managing knowledge content. When both are integrated, higher education institutions can develop a model that not only describes organizational architecture but also connects it to knowledge flows that support competitiveness.

The concept of integrating EA and KM is supported by various studies that position EA as a knowledge management discipline (Kotusev et al., 2023). These studies indicate that the primary issue in EA does not reside solely in architectural modeling but also in how organizations understand, interpret, and utilize the knowledge embedded in architecture. Knowledge fragmentation and semantic underspecification in EA tools pose challenges that impede EA's effectiveness as a strategic instrument. In higher education institutions, this condition manifests when academic data are not connected with research data, cooperation data are not linked to performance indicators, or quality assurance documents are not integrated with strategic planning. Therefore, research on an integrated knowledge management model within EA is highly relevant to strengthening the competitiveness of higher education institutions.

In addition to knowledge fragmentation, a significant challenge in higher education digital transformation is the alignment between institutional strategy and information technology (Takeuchi et al., 2022). Empirical evidence suggests that numerous digital projects fail at an early stage due to the absence of alignment between business objectives and technical requirements. Although such findings may originate in contexts beyond higher education, their implications are broad. Many digital initiatives in higher education institutions—including academic systems, learning management systems, research repositories, quality assurance systems, performance dashboards, and reporting systems—are often developed based on the needs of particular units without a comprehensive architectural framework. As a result, systems overlap, data integration becomes difficult, and strategic information cannot be readily accessed. This condition may inhibit higher education institutions' ability to respond to policy changes, student needs, accreditation standards, opportunities for collaboration, and demands for scientific publication.

Studies on data integration further emphasize its importance in supporting knowledge discovery (Hock & Gomez, 2022). Data preparation can consume more than half of the total time in the knowledge discovery process, making data integration a key determinant of analytical quality. This finding is highly relevant to higher education because data-driven decision-making can only function when data are available, standardized, connected, and trustworthy. Without

a clear data architecture, knowledge management processes will struggle to generate valid organizational knowledge. Data integration within EA can help higher education institutions connect various data sources—including student, faculty, research, publication, curriculum, cooperation, alumni, financial, and facilities data—thereby enabling EA to serve as a structural foundation for KM. In contrast, KM serves as a mechanism for transforming data and information into strategic knowledge.

In the context of digital transformation, human and organizational factors cannot be overlooked (Zhang et al., 2021). Human factors such as inertia and a lack of cross-unit communication are primary causes of failure to achieve dynamic alignment between business strategy and information technology. The success of digital transformation is strongly determined by an organization's capacity to overcome psychological, socio-cognitive, and structural inertia. Higher education institutions frequently encounter similar challenges. Digital transformation is not merely about procuring applications or infrastructure but also involves changing work culture, coordination patterns, data-sharing practices, leadership commitment, and human resource readiness. Therefore, an integrated KM model within EA needs to account for human dimensions, organizational culture, leadership, and cross-unit collaboration.

Stakeholder considerations also occupy an important position in EA development (Lukaszewski & Xie, 2024; Kitsios et al., 2022). Visual communication using ArchiMate is recognized as crucial for aligning business and information technology understanding during the early stages of project initiation. ArchiMate serves as a boundary object that bridges the gap in understanding between business and IT stakeholders. In higher education institutions, stakeholders encompass university leadership, faculties, study programs, lecturers, academic staff, students, alums, industry partners, government agencies, accreditation bodies, and society. Without an effective architectural communication mechanism, a university's digital strategy may be interpreted differently across units. Therefore, KM and EA integration must provide architectural representations that are understandable, communicable, and useful as institutional coordination tools.

The literature further demonstrates that EA plays an important role in project governance and project-based organizations (Atencio et al., 2024; Kitsios et al., 2022; Zhi & Zhou, 2022). EA, while still rarely applied in project-based organizations, is highly needed for effective governance. Higher education institutions share many characteristics with project-based organizations, particularly in managing research, community service, grants, accreditation, curricula, cooperation, and digital transformation initiatives. Each of these activities requires cross-unit coordination and continuous documentation of knowledge. If EA is integrated with KM, the outcomes of institutional projects can transcend administrative reports and become organizational knowledge that is reusable for strategic improvement.

The competitiveness of higher education institutions is also related to institutional capacity to build sustainability and innovation (Cagle & Ahmed, 2024; Fernando, 2022). Conceptual models of sustainable digital transformation in universities demonstrate that integrating technology, systems, and educational phenomena constitutes a viable pathway. This confirms that higher education digital transformation must be directed not only toward internal efficiency but also toward long-term institutional sustainability. Green Enterprise Architecture (GREAN) provides one avenue for integrating environmental sustainability targets into an organization's digital architecture structure (Vandevenne et al., 2023). EA thus has the potential to integrate various strategic orientations, including sustainability, academic quality, research reputation, and competitiveness. In higher education, competitiveness is measured not only by technology adoption but also by the institution's ability to generate academic, social, economic, and reputational value.

From a technological perspective, developments in AI, cloud computing, ERP systems, digital twins, cybersecurity, and process mining have progressively expanded the scope of EA (Handa et al., 2021; Jiang et al., 2023; Meierhofer et al., 2021; Ayala et al., 2023). Large Language Models increasingly function as strategic partners in modernizing legacy systems, and formal collaboration between human experts and AI has the potential to improve transparency in strategic decisions within ArchiMate. Big Data and Cloud Computing exert a strong influence on EA principles, and EA is increasingly employed for cybersecurity analysis, especially in critical infrastructure. These developments indicate that EA is becoming a center for integrating various digital technologies—an evolution that is strategically significant for higher education institutions.

However, several gaps in the literature constitute the basis for this study (Milovanov, 2022; Rodríguez-Rios & Roa-Sánchez, 2022; Soelistijanto & Siringoringo, 2023; Busch & Zalewski, 2025). First, most EA studies continue to focus on business organizations, the public sector, banking, manufacturing, or critical infrastructure, while the development of an EA-KM model explicitly directed at higher education competitiveness remains limited. Second, studies on KM in EA often discuss conceptual aspects, observability, AI, or knowledge fragmentation, but few have formulated an integrated model applicable to higher education institutions as a strategic framework. Third, the literature on higher education digital transformation emphasizes the importance of sustainability and governance, but has not strongly

connected these concerns with EA structures and KM processes. Fourth, EA evaluation continues to face standardization challenges, indicating the need for a model that is not only conceptual but also directed toward evaluable competitiveness indicators.

Based on the foregoing discussion, the study entitled 'A Knowledge Management Integration Model within Enterprise Architecture to Improve the Competitiveness of Higher Education Institutions' possesses both academic and practical urgency. Academically, this study seeks to fill the gap between the literature on EA, KM, digital transformation, and higher education competitiveness, viewing EA not merely as an information technology framework but as an organizational knowledge infrastructure. In practice, this study can assist higher education institutions in developing a knowledge governance model that connects to business processes, data, applications, technology, organizational actors, and institutional performance indicators (Chang & Zhang, 2024; Khoshroo & Talari, 2025). This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and Bibliometric Analysis to map research developments, identify key themes, locate research gaps, and formulate the conceptual model's direction. The article is structured as follows: introduction, background, related work, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion.

2. Background

Digital transformation in higher education necessitates a conceptual foundation that connects strategy, business processes, technology, and organizational knowledge. EA provides a mechanism for mapping the current organizational state and designing the desired future state. Meanwhile, KM ensures that organizational knowledge can be continuously created, shared, utilized, and renewed. When these two approaches are integrated, higher education institutions can build an organizational architecture that is not only technically sound but also knowledge-based. In recent literature, EA is positioned as a primary driver of digital transformation (Pulparambil et al., 2021; Pattij et al., 2022). The building blocks approach has been identified as necessary to support architectural flexibility in a dynamic environment. Scholars recognize that there is no single, universally applicable approach to Enterprise Architecture Management, as different configurations of elements can support digital transformation under different organizational conditions (Prajova et al., 2021). This finding implies that higher education institutions need to develop an EA model that is appropriate to their specific institutional characteristics rather than mechanically adopting a general framework.

KM constitutes an important element because higher education institutions are fundamentally knowledge-based organizations (Bukhori et al., 2024; Huang et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2021). EA maintains a close relationship with KM because architecture inherently stores knowledge about organizational structures, processes, technologies, and decisions. However, this knowledge is often dispersed across documents, modeling tools, information systems, and the experiences of organizational actors. Therefore, integrating KM into EA can improve decision-making quality, reduce fragmentation, and strengthen organizational learning processes.

3. Related Work

Previous studies reveal several major research streams that are highly relevant to this investigation.

3.1. EA and Digital Transformation

Studies on EA and digital transformation demonstrate that EA plays a pivotal role in orchestrating business and IT resources to address turbulent competitive environments (Christy et al., 2024; Irawan et al., 2024; Pulparambil et al., 2021; Trad, 2021). Business transformation managers are increasingly positioned as architects of adaptive business systems. Standard architectures often lack sufficient flexibility, necessitating a building-block approach that can accommodate dynamic organizational requirements.

3.2. EA and Knowledge Management

Studies on the relationship between EA and KM position EA as a knowledge management discipline and identify epistemological, technological, and organizational barriers to effective integration (Hock & Gomez, 2022). AI-based observability approaches can enable EA to function as a living knowledge infrastructure, continuously capturing and updating organizational knowledge. This research stream is directly relevant to the proposed study because it positions EA as a mechanism for systematic knowledge management rather than merely as a documentation tool.

3.3. Data Integration and Knowledge Discovery

Studies on data integration and knowledge discovery demonstrate the critical importance of integration as a prerequisite for quality knowledge generation (Hock & Gomez, 2022). In higher education institutions, data integration constitutes a prerequisite for developing quality dashboards, accreditation systems, research management systems, and evidence-based strategic decision-making. Poorly integrated data inevitably leads to fragmented institutional knowledge.

3.4. Stakeholders and Architectural Communication

Studies on stakeholders and architectural communication highlight the indispensable role of ArchiMate as a visual communication tool for aligning business and IT understanding among diverse actors (Borucka et al., 2021; Lukaszewski & Xie, 2024; Meierhofer et al., 2021). In higher education institutions, architectural communication is particularly necessary due to the multiplicity of stakeholders with distinct interests and information needs.

3.5. Higher Education Digital Transformation and Sustainability

Studies on higher education digital transformation and sustainability propose models that integrate technology, systems, and educational phenomena to support long-term institutional resilience (Al-Shareeda et al., 2024; Sheeba et al., 2023). These studies provide a conceptual basis for understanding digital transformation in higher education as a long-term strategic orientation rather than merely a temporary technology project.

4. Methods

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4.1. Research Design

This study adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach combined with bibliometric analysis. The SLR method enables a systematic and reproducible examination of the published literature using defined inclusion and exclusion criteria, thereby minimizing selection bias and enhancing the rigor of the theoretical synthesis. Bibliometric analysis complements the SLR by providing quantitative insights into publication trends, keyword co-occurrence patterns, and thematic evolution across the literature corpus. Together, these methods facilitate a comprehensive mapping of the EA and KM research landscape in the context of competitiveness in higher education.

4.2. Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: How has the integration of EA and KM evolved within the digital transformation literature from 2021 to 2026?

RQ2: What role does EA-based knowledge management play in strengthening organizational competitiveness in higher education institutions?

RQ3: What are the conceptual components of an integrated KM-EA model for higher education institutions?

4.3. Search Protocol and Inclusion Criteria

The literature search was conducted using Scopus as the primary scientific database. Search strings were constructed using combinations of relevant keywords, including 'Enterprise Architecture,' 'Knowledge Management,' 'Digital Transformation,' 'Higher Education,' 'Competitiveness,' 'AI-enhanced architecture,' 'Data Integration,' 'ERP,' 'Cloud Computing,' and 'Cybersecurity.' Publications were restricted to the period 2021–2026 to capture contemporary developments. Inclusion criteria required that articles be peer-reviewed, written in English, and directly relevant to at least one of the identified research themes. Review articles, book chapters, and conference proceedings were included where substantial thematic relevance was established.

4.4. Exclusion Criteria

Articles were excluded if they did not address EA, KM, digital transformation, or higher education in substantive terms; if they were published before 2021; if they were not accessible in full text; or if they were found to be duplicates across database sources. Articles focusing exclusively on infrastructure or operational IT without strategic or architectural dimensions were similarly excluded.

4.5. Quality Assessment

Quality assessment was conducted using established criteria for systematic literature reviews, including methodological rigor, the relevance of findings to the research questions, the clarity of the theoretical framework, and the reliability of the empirical evidence presented. Studies receiving low quality ratings were excluded from the final synthesis. All included articles were indexed in Scopus, thereby providing baseline assurance of peer-review quality.

4.6. Data Extraction

Data extraction was performed using a structured extraction form encompassing the following elements: article title, author names, publication year, research context and geographical scope, theoretical framework employed, research methodology, principal findings, stated research limitations, and relevance to digital transformation and EA-KM integration themes. Extracted data were systematically recorded in a structured database to facilitate subsequent thematic synthesis and bibliometric analysis.

4.7. Bibliometric Analysis Tools

Bibliometric analysis was performed using VOSviewer (version 1.6.20) for keyword co-occurrence mapping and network visualization. Publication trend analysis was conducted using descriptive statistical methods. Thematic clustering was performed to identify major research streams and their inter-relationships. An overlay visualization was employed to track the temporal evolution of themes from 2021 to 2026.

4.8. Scope of Literature Context

Table 1. Scope of literature context

Research Domain	Primary Focus
Enterprise Architecture	EA frameworks, modeling, governance, evaluation
Public Sector EA	Digital government, governance architecture
Banking and Financial Services	Digital transformation, legacy modernization
Industry and Manufacturing	Lean manufacturing, sustainability, digital twin
Healthcare	Institutional pluralism, EA operationalization
Enterprise Systems	ERP, cloud ERP, data integration
Cybersecurity Architecture	Zero Trust, EA for cyber risk analysis
Higher Education	Digital transformation, knowledge management, and competitiveness

4.9. Purpose of Analysis

The purpose of analysis in this study:

- To map EA and KM research trends in the digital transformation context;
- To identify EA contributions to organizational competitiveness;
- To locate research gaps in the KM and EA integration literature with specific attention to higher education institutions;
- To formulate initial conceptual components of a KM-EA integrated model;
- To establish a robust theoretical foundation for further dissertation research.

4.10. Data Sources

The primary data sources consist of scientific articles summarized in the reference corpus, which includes 197 publications exported from the Scopus database via Mendeley reference management software. The data elements employed in the bibliometric and content analysis include: article title, author names, publication year, research context, theoretical framework, research methodology, principal findings, stated limitations, and correlation with digital transformation themes.

4.11. Visualization

The planned visualizations in this study include: a publication distribution graph by year; a keyword co-occurrence map generated using VOSviewer; a network visualization among the themes of EA, KM, AI, digital transformation, and competitiveness; an overlay visualization to observe temporal theme development; and a conceptual diagram of the integrated KM model within EA.

5. Result and Discussion

5.1. Bibliometric Analysis

Based on the analysis of the literature corpus, publication trends demonstrate increasing scholarly attention to EA in the context of digital transformation, artificial intelligence, data integration, cybersecurity, and sustainability. Publications from 2025 are the most dominant in the corpus, followed by those from 2021, 2024, and 2026. This distribution indicates that the EA theme has grown substantially stronger following the post-pandemic acceleration of digital transformation initiatives globally.

Table 2. Publication distribution by year

Year	Number of Articles
2021	7
2022	4
2023	2
2024	7
2025	9
2026	6
Total	35

The principal thematic clusters emerging from the bibliometric analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Principal research themes identified in the corpus

Theme	Primary Focus
EA and Digital Transformation	Strategic alignment, building blocks, and dynamic capabilities
EA and Knowledge Management	Architecture as knowledge infrastructure
AI-Enhanced EA	Observability, Large Language Models, co-intelligence
Data Integration	Knowledge discovery, data preparation, data fusion
Cybersecurity Architecture	Zero Trust, critical infrastructure protection
ERP and Cloud ERP	Enterprise system integration, open innovation
Sustainability	Green EA, sustainable university transformation
Stakeholder Management	ArchiMate, visual communication, boundary objects
Higher Education	Digital transformation, KM, institutional competitiveness

Bibliometrically, the themes most proximate to this study are Enterprise Architecture, Knowledge Management, Digital Transformation, Data Integration, Artificial Intelligence, and Higher Education Competitiveness. The relational structure among these themes indicates that EA can function as the connecting infrastructure between strategy, technology, and organizational knowledge.

To visualize this thematic structure, a keyword co-occurrence network was constructed from the author keywords of the 197 reviewed publications, as shown in Figure 1. The network reveals three coherent clusters: an EA-frameworks cluster centered on enterprise architecture, TOGAF, digital transformation, and blueprint; a modeling-and-intelligence cluster comprising ArchiMate, ontology, IT governance, and artificial intelligence; and a governance-and-practice cluster encompassing stakeholders, case study, agile, and risk management. The centrality of enterprise architecture within the network, together with its dense linkages to digital transformation and artificial-intelligence-related terms, corroborates the bibliometric finding that EA research is increasingly converging with knowledge-oriented and intelligent-system themes, thereby reinforcing the rationale for the KM-EA integration model proposed in this study.

5.2. Study Analysis

The study's analysis reveals that EA primarily serves as an integration mechanism (Takeuchi et al., 2024; Takeuchi et al., 2022; Hermanto & Ibrahim, 2025; Rosak-Szyrocka et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2022; Borucka et al., 2021; Meierhofer et al., 2021). The literature consistently emphasizes the importance of aligning business objectives with technical requirements, highlights data integration as the foundation for high-quality knowledge discovery, and demonstrates that architectural visualization can enhance shared understanding among business and IT stakeholders. These findings collectively establish that EA can serve as a bridge between strategy, data, technology, and organizational actors.

Studies on EA and KM provide the most direct contribution to this research (Rembulan et al., 2023; Zhu et al., 2024). EA can be effectively positioned as a knowledge management discipline, while AI-based observability approaches have

the potential to transform EA into a living knowledge infrastructure. These findings support the argument that EA needs to be developed not only as architectural documentation but also as a dynamic system capable of continuously capturing, processing, and utilizing organizational knowledge.

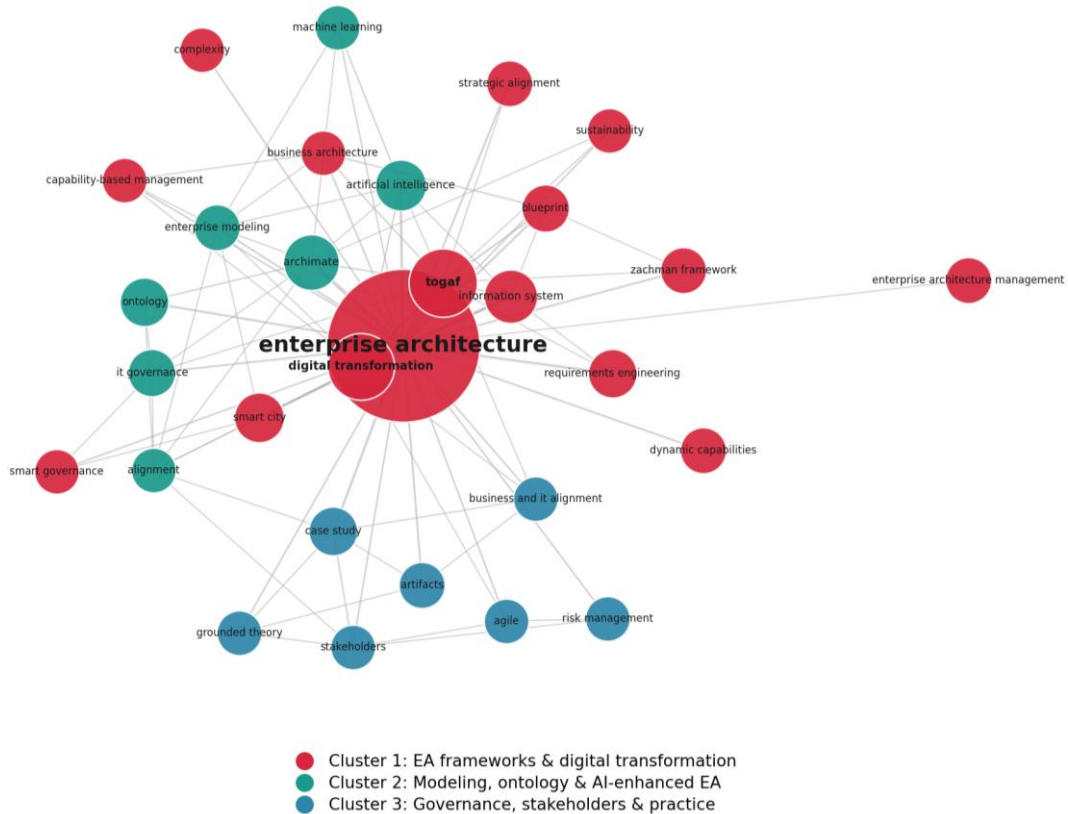


Fig. 1. Keyword co-occurrence network of the reviewed corpus (node size = keyword frequency; color = thematic cluster).

In the context of higher education, studies emphasizing sustainable digital transformation that integrates technology, systems, and educational phenomena strengthen the argument that higher education institutions require a digital transformation model that is not merely technical but also institutional and knowledge-based. Higher education competitiveness can be substantially improved when organizational knowledge is systematically managed through a coherent EA structure.

5.3. Summary of Findings

Enterprise Architecture (EA) has evolved from static documentation into a strategic mechanism for supporting digital transformation and organizational knowledge governance. Knowledge Management (KM) constitutes an essential dimension of EA because architectural artifacts inherently contain valuable organizational knowledge. In this context, data integration is a prerequisite for developing EA-based KM systems. At the same time, the emergence of artificial intelligence, Large Language Models, and observability technologies offers transformative opportunities to advance EA as an intelligent knowledge infrastructure. Higher education institutions, therefore, require an integrated KM-EA model due to the high complexity of their processes, actors, data, and knowledge requirements. However, the principal research gap remains the lack of a comprehensive, integrated KM-EA model specifically designed to enhance the competitiveness of higher education institutions.

5.4. Discussion

The synthesis of the literature demonstrates that KM and EA integration can provide a robust foundation for enhancing the competitiveness of higher education. EA furnishes an architectural structure that maps the relationships among institutional strategy, business processes, data, applications, and technology. KM ensures that knowledge embedded within this structure can be created, shared, utilized, and evaluated on an ongoing basis. When both approaches are

integrated, higher education institutions acquire the institutional capacity to learn, adapt, and make strategic decisions with greater agility and precision. In the proposed model, EA functions as the structural foundation across multiple architectural layers. Business architecture maps academic, research, community service, cooperation, and governance processes. Data architecture manages strategic institutional data sources. Application architecture connects the institution's information systems. Technology architecture supports digital infrastructure. All these layers are then connected to KM processes—specifically knowledge creation, knowledge storage, knowledge sharing, knowledge utilization, and knowledge evaluation—thereby creating a dynamic and coherent knowledge-driven organizational system.

Higher-education competitiveness can be fostered through multiple mechanisms. First, KM-EA integration can improve strategic alignment by ensuring that every digital decision is explicitly linked to institutional objectives. Second, this integration can accelerate decision-making by rendering data and knowledge more accessible and actionable. Third, it can reduce system duplication and information fragmentation. Fourth, it can strengthen accreditation and quality assurance processes by systematically documenting evidence of institutional performance within the architectural framework. Fifth, it can catalyze institutional innovation by enabling the synthesis of knowledge from diverse organizational units into novel strategies. Accordingly, an integrated KM model within EA has the potential to make both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this model expands the understanding of EA as a knowledge infrastructure that encompasses not only technical but also human, organizational, and strategic dimensions. Practically, it can assist higher education institutions in building digital governance that is more adaptive, collaborative, and competitive in the contemporary knowledge economy.

5.5. Bibliometric Conclusions

In general, the dataset confirms that scholarly research during the 2021–2026 period has experienced sustained growth, particularly in the thematic areas of enterprise architecture, blockchain, Internet of Things, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and digital transformation. The year 2025 saw the highest number of publications in the corpus, indicating that this field remains dynamically evolving and attracts strong academic and professional interest. The dominance of the 'enterprise architecture' keyword confirms that EA remains a foundational element in scholarly discussions of organizational digital transformation. However, the most recent publications increasingly associate EA with complementary technologies—AI, blockchain, cloud computing, IoT, and cybersecurity—indicating a paradigmatic evolution in which EA is no longer viewed as a static framework but as a dynamic approach for managing organizational and technological complexity in an integrated fashion. In the context of dissertation research, these findings reinforce the scientific soundness of developing an integrated knowledge management model within enterprise architecture. Such a study has the potential to make substantive contributions to knowledge governance, strategic technology alignment, and the enhancement of the competitiveness of higher education institutions in the digital era.

6. Proposed Conceptual Model

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The proposed integrated KM-EA model for higher education competitiveness consists of five hierarchically organized and functionally interconnected layers, as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Components of the integrated KM-EA conceptual model

Layer	Component Description
Strategic Layer	Institutional vision, mission, strategic objectives, competitiveness indicators, and higher education long-term strategy.
EA Layer	Business architecture, data architecture, application architecture, and technology architecture aligned with institutional strategy.
KM Layer	Knowledge creation, knowledge storage, knowledge sharing, knowledge utilization, and knowledge evaluation processes.
Governance Layer	Policies, standards, stakeholder engagement mechanisms, quality assurance protocols, and architecture evaluation frameworks.
Competitiveness Layer	Academic quality, research reputation, innovation capacity, collaboration networks, accreditation outcomes, and institutional performance metrics.

The model operates on the principle that institutional competitiveness is not an outcome achieved through technological adoption alone but emerges from the systematic governance of organizational knowledge within a coherent architectural framework. The Strategic Layer defines the institutional direction and competitive ambition. The EA Layer provides the structural scaffolding that maps how technology, data, and processes support these strategic objectives. The KM Layer ensures that knowledge embedded within this structure is continuously identified, captured, organized, and made accessible to decision-makers. The Governance Layer provides the regulatory and coordination mechanisms that maintain the integrity and coherence of the integrated system. Finally, the Competitiveness Layer translates the knowledge governance outcomes into measurable institutional performance.

Figure 2 illustrates the complete structure of the proposed model, depicting how the Strategic, EA, KM, Governance, and Competitiveness layers are vertically interconnected and how each layer decomposes into its constituent components.

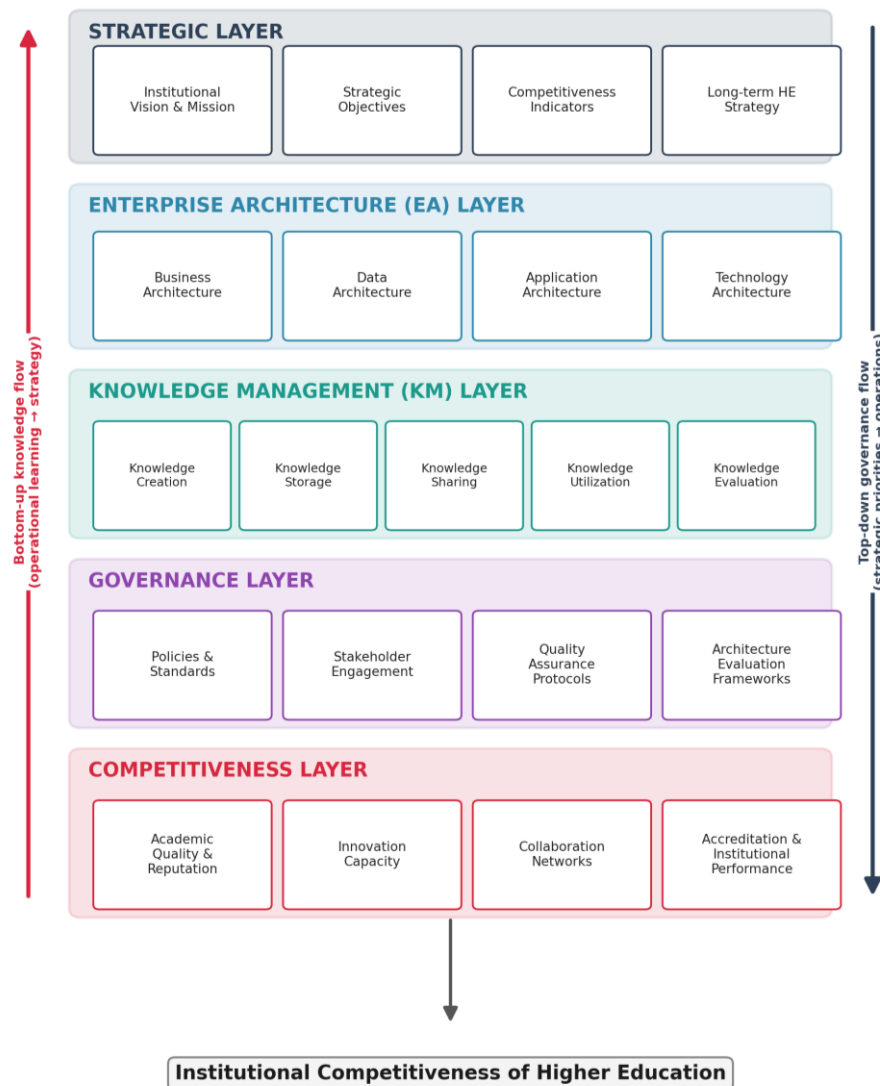


Fig. 2. Conceptual model of KM-EA integration for higher education competitiveness, showing the five interconnected layers and bidirectional strategic-operational flows.

The bidirectional relationships among layers are particularly significant. Bottom-up knowledge flows from operational processes through the KM Layer to the Strategic Layer, enabling evidence-based institutional learning and adaptive strategy refinement. Top-down governance flows from the Strategic Layer through EA frameworks to operational units, ensuring that institutional priorities are systematically translated into architectural decisions and knowledge management practices.

7. Conclusion

Based on the systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis conducted in this study, several substantive conclusions can be drawn. Enterprise Architecture has undergone a fundamental evolution from a documentation-oriented approach into a strategic mechanism that supports digital transformation, data integration, technology governance, and organizational decision-making. Knowledge Management constitutes an indispensable element because higher education institutions are intrinsically knowledge-based organizations that critically depend on their capacity to create, store, share, and utilize institutional knowledge. The synthesis of the literature demonstrates that integrating KM and EA holds considerable potential to overcome system fragmentation, data silos, and knowledge dispersion in higher education institutions. The proposed model, comprising a strategic layer, EA layer, KM layer, governance layer, and competitiveness layer, provides a coherent conceptual framework that higher education institutions can employ to build strategic alignment, strengthen organizational learning, improve decision-making quality, and accelerate knowledge-based digital transformation.

The principal contribution of this article is the development of a conceptual foundation for subsequent research that can be validated and refined through empirical approaches. Future research should test the relationships among variables in the proposed model, develop operationalizable indicators of higher education competitiveness, and evaluate the model's effectiveness across diverse higher education institutional contexts, particularly within the Indonesian higher education landscape. Methodological approaches, including expert validation interviews, Design Science Research, case study analysis, and quantitative structural equation modeling using PLS-SEM, are recommended for future empirical phases. This conceptual synthesis is subject to the inherent limitations of literature-based inquiry, including reliance on Scopus-indexed publications and the exclusion of non-English sources; nevertheless, it establishes a defensible theoretical platform on which subsequent empirical dissertation research can be systematically built and refined.

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