Managing Knowledge for Innovation in Manufacturing Sector SMEs in the UK
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BACKGROUND
The small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) form a large part of the total manufacturing sector of the UK. The businesses face challenges in the international market. Technology supplying SMEs such as machine builders must maintain their niche market position in the market where they can demand a higher value for innovative products. The solution is not radical but incremental and continuous. Through the application of knowledge, the SMEs can be innovative in all spheres and remain ahead of the competition which is also trying to catch up.

AIM
To develop a knowledge management framework for technology oriented and export-dependent machine building SMEs in the UK.

OBJECTIVES
- To understand the organisational perspective towards knowledge.
- To identify the strategic business drivers of the organisation.
- To understand the impact of formal and/or informal management mechanisms on creation, storage, sharing and application of knowledge.
- To understand the organisational culture in the context of knowledge sharing and decision making.
- To understand the level of utilisation level of ICT.
- To develop an integrated KM framework based on above.

RESEARCH DESIGN
Knowledge is relative to individuals and organisations. Therefore, an interpretivist epistemology will reveal multiple perspectives necessary for developing an effective knowledge management framework. The research will use qualitative methods for collection of data and use a grounded theory approach for analysis of the data.

CASE
Technology oriented machine-building SME in the UK which depends on exports for the majority of its business and has its main manufacturing, engineering and research activity in the UK. The sub-cases will be formed by departments within the organisation.

EXPECTED FINDINGS
The research will contribute to both academia and practice. It will do a root cause analysis for the lack of formal knowledge management in manufacturing sector SMEs in the UK. This will help to integrate systems and cultural aspects in a framework which will be underpinned by organisational business needs. For knowledge management system developers, the knowledge management framework can support agile system development.

REFERENCES