

Knowledge Management Strategies and Organizational Performance of the National Police Service in Kenya.

¹Leah Mumbi Mathu, ²Dr. James Gitari, ³Dr. Grace Okello

¹Master Candidate, Co-operative University of Kenya (CUK), P.O BOX 24814 -00502, Karen, Nairobi, Kenya.

^{2,3}Doctor and Senior Lecturer, Co-operative University of Kenya, P.O BOX 24814 -00502, Karen, Nairobi, Kenya.

Abstract: Knowledge Management (KM) has become an essential organizational capability for improving efficiency, innovation, and service delivery, particularly in public sector institutions operating in complex environments. This study examined the effect of knowledge management strategies on the organizational performance of the National Police Service in Kenya. In particular, the study investigated the influence of knowledge acquisition, knowledge conversion, knowledge protection, and knowledge application on organizational performance. A descriptive research design was adopted, targeting 750 officers from selected NPS departments. Using stratified random sampling, a sample of 261 respondents was selected, with data collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression. The findings stated that all four knowledge management strategies positively and significantly influence organizational performance, with knowledge application demonstrating the strongest relationship. The study concludes that strengthening knowledge management practices enhances operational efficiency, improves decision-making, supports institutional learning, and contributes to better service delivery within the National Police Service. It recommends institutionalizing comprehensive knowledge management policies, investing in digital knowledge systems, strengthening knowledge-sharing practices, and enhancing continuous staff training to improve organizational performance.

Keywords: Knowledge acquisition, knowledge application, knowledge conversion, knowledge management, knowledge protection, organizational performance.

I. Introduction

Knowledge has emerged as one of the most valuable strategic resources for modern organizations. Unlike traditional organizational resources, knowledge grows through continuous learning, application and sharing, making it an important source of operational efficiency, innovation and sustainable organizational performance. Consequently, Knowledge Management (KM) has become an essential organizational capability for both private and public sector institutions seeking sustainable performance and competitive advantage (Grant, 1996; Kianto et al., 2020).

Knowledge Management (KM) refers to the systematic coordination of people, processes, technology and organizational culture to facilitate the creation, sharing, storage and application of knowledge in achieving organizational objectives. Effective KM enables organizations to preserve institutional memory, improve decision-making, reduce duplication of effort and enhance organizational learning. Recent studies have shown that organizations with well-developed knowledge management systems are more adaptable to environmental changes and consistently achieve superior organizational performance (Obeidat et al., 2021; Ali & Ahmad, 2021).

Globally, organizations such as Google, Toyota, NASA and the United Kingdom's National Health Service have demonstrated that well-developed knowledge management systems significantly improve innovation, organizational learning, operational efficiency and service quality. These organizations integrate digital knowledge repositories, collaborative platforms and structured learning systems to preserve institutional knowledge and support evidence-based

decision-making. Similarly, public institutions across Africa have increasingly adopted KM practices to strengthen governance, improve service delivery and enhance institutional learning despite persistent challenges related to technological infrastructure, organizational culture and knowledge-sharing practices.

In Kenya, several public institutions, including the Kenya Revenue Authority, the Judiciary and the Kenya Medical Research Institute, have integrated knowledge management practices to improve operational efficiency and service delivery. Nevertheless, the National Police Service (NPS) continues to experience challenges associated with fragmented knowledge systems, inadequate documentation of operational experiences, inconsistent knowledge-sharing practices and limited institutionalization of knowledge management strategies. These challenges contribute to the loss of institutional memory, reduced operational efficiency, and inconsistencies in decision-making, ultimately affecting organizational performance.

Although previous studies have established a positive relationship between knowledge management and organizational performance, much of the existing literature has focused on private sector organizations and other public institutions, with limited empirical attention given to law enforcement agencies in developing countries. Furthermore, relatively few studies have examined the individual effects of knowledge acquisition, knowledge conversion, knowledge protection and knowledge application on organizational performance within the National Police Service in Kenya.

The purpose of this study was therefore to examine the influence of knowledge management strategies on the organizational performance of the National Police Service in Kenya by assessing the effects of knowledge acquisition, knowledge conversion, knowledge protection and knowledge application. The study contributes to the growing body of knowledge management in public sector organizations through providing empirical evidence from Kenya's law enforcement sector. The findings offer practical recommendations for policymakers and managers seeking to strengthen institutional learning, improve operational efficiency, enhance service delivery and support evidence-based decision-making within the National Police Service.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Knowledge is increasingly recognized as a strategic organizational asset which enhances decision-making, innovation, operational efficiency and service delivery. Consequently, organizations are investing in knowledge for improved performance. Despite these developments, many public sector institutions, including the National Police Service (NPS) in Kenya, continue to experience challenges in effectively managing organizational knowledge. Fragmented knowledge systems, inadequate documentation of operational experiences, limited knowledge-sharing practices,³⁴ and insufficient mechanisms for preserving institutional memory have hindered the effective utilization of knowledge within the service. These challenges contribute to inconsistent decision-making, reduced operational efficiency, and diminished organizational performance.

Although previous studies have reported a positive relationship between knowledge management practices and organizational performance, most have focused on private sector organizations or public institutions outside the law enforcement sector. There is limited empirical evidence on how specific knowledge management strategies, namely knowledge acquisition, knowledge conversion, knowledge protection and knowledge application, influence the organizational performance of the national police service in Kenya. This gap limits the availability of evidence to guide policy and managerial decisions on strengthening knowledge management within the service.

This study therefore sought to examine the influence of knowledge management strategies on the organizational performance of the National Police Service in Kenya. The findings provide empirical evidence to support policy formulation and managerial interventions aimed at strengthening knowledge management practices, enhancing institutional learning, improving service delivery, and promoting sustainable organizational performance within the National Police Service.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study was anchored on three complementary theories: the Knowledge-Based View (KBV), Organizational Learning Theory (OLT), and Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT). The Knowledge - Based View argues that knowledge is the most valuable strategic resource that enables organizations to develop and sustain competitive advantage through effective creation, acquisition, sharing and utilization of knowledge [1]. The theory emphasizes that organizations that effectively

manage knowledge achieve superior performance by enhancing innovation, improving decision-making and strengthening institutional capabilities.

Organizational Learning Theory explains that organizations improve their performance by continuously acquiring, creating, interpreting, and applying knowledge obtained through experience and interaction with the environment. The theory suggests that learning organizations are more adaptable to environmental changes because they encourage knowledge sharing, employee development, and continuous improvement [2].

Dynamic Capabilities Theory complements the two theories by emphasizing an organization's ability to integrate, build and reconfigure internal and external resources in response to changing environmental conditions. The theory argues that organizations that continuously renew their knowledge resources and organizational capabilities are better positioned to achieve sustainable organizational performance [3]. Collectively, these theories explain how knowledge management strategies contribute to improved organizational performance within the National Police Service.

2.2 Empirical Review

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that knowledge management positively influences organizational performance. Knowledge acquisition enables organizations to obtain new knowledge through employee training, professional development, benchmarking, research, and collaboration with external stakeholders. Studies have reported that organizations investing in continuous learning improve employee competencies, innovation and organizational effectiveness [4].

Knowledge conversion involves transforming tacit knowledge possessed by employees into explicit organizational knowledge through documentation, standard operating procedures, databases, and organizational learning systems. Previous studies indicate that effective knowledge conversion strengthens institutional memory, facilitates knowledge sharing, and improves consistency in organizational operations [5].

Knowledge protection focuses on safeguarding valuable organizational knowledge against loss, unauthorized access, or misuse. Organizations implement knowledge protection through information security policies, access controls, digital repositories, intellectual property protection, and secure information management systems. Research findings show that effective knowledge protection preserves institutional memory and enhances organizational continuity [6].

Knowledge application refers to the effective utilization of acquired knowledge in organizational decision-making, policy implementation, problem-solving, and service delivery. Studies have consistently identified knowledge application as one of the strongest predictors of organizational performance because organizations derive value only when knowledge is translated into practical action that improves efficiency and effectiveness [7].

2.3 Research Gap

Although previous studies have established a positive relationship between knowledge management and organizational performance, most have concentrated on private sector organizations, educational institutions, healthcare organizations and other public sector agencies. Limited empirical evidence exists on the influence of knowledge acquisition, knowledge conversion, knowledge protection and knowledge application within Kenya's law enforcement sector. In particular, few studies have examined the combined effect of these four knowledge management strategies on the organizational performance of the National Police Service.

This study addressed this gap by examining how knowledge acquisition, knowledge conversion, knowledge protection and knowledge application influence organizational performance within the National Police Service in Kenya. The findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge through providing empirical evidence from a public security institution and offer practical recommendations for strengthening knowledge management practices, improving operational efficiency, and enhancing service delivery.

III. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive research design to examine the influence of knowledge management strategies on the organizational performance of the National Police Service (NPS) in Kenya. A descriptive research design was considered appropriate because it enabled the collection of quantitative data and facilitated the examination of relationship between knowledge acquisition, knowledge conversion, knowledge protection, knowledge application and organizational

performance. The design also allowed the researcher to describe the characteristics of the study population and draw valid conclusions from the findings [8].

3.2 Target Population and Sampling Procedure

The target population consisted of 750 officers drawn from selected departments of the National Police Service. A sample size of 261 respondents was determined using the Yamane sampling formula to ensure adequate representation of the study population. Stratified random sampling was employed to select respondents from different departments and officer categories, thereby minimizing sampling bias and improving the representativeness of the sample [8].

3.3 Data Collection Instrument

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising close-ended questions measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strong Agree). The questionnaire was designed to collect data on knowledge acquisition, knowledge conversion, knowledge protection, knowledge application and organizational performance. Prior to the main survey, a pilot study was conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the research instrument, and the necessary adjustments were made to improve its clarity and consistency [8].

3.4 Data Analysis

The collected data were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize the characteristics of the respondents and the study variables. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis was employed to determine the relationship between the independent variables and organizational performance, while multiple linear regression analysis was used to establish the combined effect of knowledge acquisition, knowledge conversion, knowledge protection, knowledge application on organizational performance. Statistical significance was evaluated at the 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$) [8].

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were observed throughout the study. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the relevant authorities before data collection. Participation was voluntary, respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, and confidentiality and anonymity were maintained. The information collected was used solely for academic purposes, and respondents were assured that their responses would remain confidential [8].

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1 Response Rate

A total of 261 questionnaires were administered to officers of the National Police Service. Of these, 188 questionnaires were correctly completed and returned, representing a response rate of 72%, while 73 questionnaires (28%) were not returned or were incomplete. The response rate was considered adequate for statistical analysis and exceeded the minimum threshold recommended for survey research, thereby enhancing the reliability of the study findings [9].

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to determine respondents' perceptions of the knowledge management strategies adopted by the National Police Service and their influence on organizational performance. The results indicate that respondents generally agreed that the implementation of knowledge management practices contributes positively to organizational performance.

Knowledge acquisition recorded a mean score of 3.80, suggesting that respondents agreed that the organization promotes the acquisition of knowledge through training, experience sharing, and continuous professional development. Knowledge conversion had a mean score of 3.50, indicating moderate agreement that the organization effectively transforms individual knowledge into documented organizational knowledge through established systems and procedures. Knowledge protection recorded a mean score of 3.70, implying that respondents perceived the existing mechanism for safeguarding organizational knowledge and sensitive information to be moderately effective. Knowledge application registered the highest mean of 4.00, demonstrating strong agreement that acquired knowledge is effectively utilized in operational activities, decision-making, and service delivery. Organizational performance recorded an overall mean score of 3.70, reflecting respondents' positive assessment of the performance of the National Police Service.

The findings suggest that knowledge application is the most strongly implemented knowledge management strategy within the National Police Service, followed by knowledge acquisition and knowledge protection. Knowledge conversion, although positively rated, recorded the lowest mean score, indicating an opportunity for the organization to strengthen mechanisms for documenting, storing, and disseminating knowledge. Overall the descriptive results demonstrate that effective implementation of knowledge management strategies is associated with improved organizational performance, supporting previous studies that identify knowledge management as a key driver of organizational as a key driver of organizational effectiveness and service delivery [10], [11].

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	Interpretation
Knowledge Acquisition	3.80	High
Knowledge Conversion	3.50	Moderate
Knowledge Protection	3.70	High
Knowledge Application	4.00	High
Organizational Performance	3.70	High

4.3 Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics were used to determine the relationship between knowledge management strategies and organizational performance and to establish the predictive effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation and multiple linear regression analyses were performed at a 95% confidence level.

4.3.1 Correlational Analysis

Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between knowledge acquisition, knowledge conversion, knowledge protection, knowledge application, and organizational performance. The results revealed positive and statistically significant relationships between all the independent variables and organizational performance ($r = 0.562$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that increased utilization of organizational knowledge is associated with improved organizational performance. Knowledge acquisition, knowledge conversion, and knowledge protection also demonstrated significant positive relationships with organizational performance, suggesting that strengthening these knowledge management strategies enhances institutional effectiveness [10].

The findings are consistent with previous studies, which reported that organizations implementing effective knowledge management practices experience improved decision-making, innovation, operational efficiency, and service delivery. They also support the Knowledge- Based View, which identifies knowledge as a strategic organizational resource that contributes to sustainable advantage [1], [4].

4.3.2 Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the combined influence of knowledge acquisition, knowledge conversion, knowledge protection, and knowledge application on organizational performance. The regression model produced a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.672 and a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.452, indicating that the four knowledge management strategies collectively explained 45.2% of the variation in organizational performance. The remaining 54.8% of the variation was attributed to other factors not included in the study [11].

The regression coefficients further indicated that all four knowledge management strategies had a positive influence on organizational performance, with knowledge application emerging as the strongest predictor. This finding suggests that organizations derive the greatest value when acquired knowledge is effectively applied in operational processes, strategic decision- making, and service delivery. These results are consistent with Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which argues that

organizations achieve superior performance by effectively integrating and utilizing knowledge resources in response to changing environmental conditions [3],[7].

Overall, the inferential analysis confirms that knowledge management strategies significantly influence organizational performance within the National Police Service. The findings therefore support the study hypothesis that effective implementation of knowledge acquisition, knowledge conversion, knowledge protection, and knowledge application contributes positively to organizational performance [12].

V. Conclusion

This study examined the influence of knowledge management strategies on the organizational performance of the National Police Service in Kenya. Specifically, it investigated the effects of knowledge acquisition, knowledge conversion, knowledge protection, and knowledge application on organizational performance. The findings revealed that all four knowledge management strategies have a positive and statistically significant influence on organizational performance. Among four dimensions, knowledge application emerged as the strongest predictor, demonstrating that organizations achieve greater improvements in performance when acquired knowledge is effectively utilized in decision-making, operational processes, and service delivery.

The study further established that effective knowledge acquisition enhances employees' competencies through continuous learning and professional development, while knowledge conversion facilitates institutional learning by transforming tacit knowledge into documented organizational knowledge. Knowledge protection was found to strengthen organizational continuity by safeguarding strategic information and preserving institutional memory. Collectively, these knowledge management strategies contribute to improved operational efficiency, better decision-making, enhanced service delivery, and overall organizational performance within the National Police Service.

The findings support the Knowledge- Based View, Organizational Learning Theory, and Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which recognize knowledge as a strategic organizational resource that enhances organizational effectiveness and sustainable performance. The study therefore concludes that strengthening knowledge management practices is essential for improving the operational effectiveness of the National Police Service in Kenya.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

The National Police Service should strengthen knowledge acquisition by investing in continuous professional training, mentorship programs, benchmarking, and collaboration with other security agencies to enhance employees' knowledge and skills.

The Service should improve knowledge conversion by establishing standardized procedures for documenting operational experiences, best practices, and lessons learned to promote organizational learning and preserve institutional memory. Management should enhance knowledge protection through secure digital knowledge repositories, robust information security policies, controlled access to sensitive information, and regular backup systems to safeguard organizational knowledge.

The National Police Service should promote knowledge application by integrating organizational knowledge into decision-making, operational planning, policy implementation, and service delivery, ensuring that knowledge generated within the organization is effectively utilized.

The organization should invest in modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure to facilitate efficient knowledge creation, storage, sharing, retrieval, and utilization across all departments.

Implementation of these recommendations is expected to strengthen knowledge management practices, improve organizational learning, enhance operational efficiency, and contribute to sustainable organizational performance within the National Police Service.

References

- [1] R.M. Grant, Toward a knowledge-based theory of the firm, *Strategic Management Journal*, 1996, 109–122.

- [2] I. Nonaka and H. Takeuchi, *The knowledge-creating company: How Japanese companies create the dynamics of innovation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
- [3] D.J. Teece, G. Pisano, and A. Shuen, Dynamic capabilities and strategic management, *Strategic Management Journal*, (7), 1997, 509–533.
- [4] J. Barney, Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage, *Journal of Management*, (1), 1991, 99–120.
- [5] K. Dalkir, *Knowledge management in theory and practice*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017).
- [6] A. Kianto, J. Sáenz, and N. Aramburu, Knowledge management, learning and organizational performance, *Journal of Knowledge Management*, (6), 2017, 1469–1486.
- [7] B.Y. Obeidat, A. Tarhini, R. Masa'deh, and N.O. Aqqad, The impact of knowledge management on organizational performance, *Management Research Review*, (10), 2017, 1214–1238.
- [8] C.R. Kothari, *Research methodology: Methods and techniques*, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: New Age International Publishers, 2004).
- [9] U. Sekaran and R. Bougie, *Research methods for business: A skill-building approach*, 8th ed. (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2020).
- [10] J.F. Hair, W.C. Black, B.J. Babin, and R.E. Anderson, *Multivariate data analysis*, 8th ed. (Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2019).
- [11] D.C. Mugenda and A.G. Mugenda, *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches* (Nairobi: ACTS Press, 2003).