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INFLUENCE OF KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION ON HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF KENYA

Anne Thumbi ¹, Dr. David Njoroge, PhD ² & Dr. Stephen Kamau, PhD ³

¹ PhD Candidate, Kirinyaga University, Kenya

² Senior Lecturer, Kirinyaga University, Kenya

³ Lecturer, Kirinyaga University, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of knowledge acquisition on human resource planning. The research was anchored on the knowledge-based view theory. A mixed research design was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The target population consisted of 209 employees from various hierarchical levels within the organization. The study employed a census approach. Data was collected using questionnaires, interview guides, and a secondary data template. The study utilized both descriptive and inferential statistics for data analysis. The pilot study conducted in the Judicial Service Commission confirmed the validity and reliability of the research instruments, with factor analysis showing all statements had factor loadings above 0.4, demonstrating strong construct validity. Reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha yielded coefficients ranging from 0.745 to 0.823, all exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.7, indicating the internal consistency of the instruments. The study found that knowledge acquisition had a significant positive influence on human resource planning ($r = 0.695$, $\beta = 0.695$, $p = 0.000$). The study recommends that the Public Service Commission of Kenya should prioritize and enhance its knowledge management practices to improve human resource planning. This includes implementing structured programs for continuous learning and development, investing in advanced knowledge management systems and databases. The organization should also develop a comprehensive knowledge management policy that explicitly links knowledge practices to human resource planning.

Key Words: *Training attendance, External resource utilization, Informal knowledge transfer, Human Resource Planning*

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INTRODUCTION

Human resource planning in the public sector is essential to ensuring the delivery of efficient and effective services to the public. Contrary to the private sector, which prioritizes profit generation, the primary objective of the public sector is to meet the needs and expectations of the citizens it serves (Ubah & Ibrahim, 2021). Human resource planning is the process by which a business ensures that the appropriate number of people with the appropriate skills are performing the appropriate jobs at the appropriate time. Public sector organizations are frequently required to navigate more complex regulatory environments, such as labor laws, affirmative action policies, and budget constraints, which complicates the planning process (Sumarni, 2022). In addition, the public sector faces unique challenges, such as political influences, slower decision-making processes, and sometimes a lack of cutting-edge technology, all of which can have an influence on human resource planning (Luoma-aho & Canel, 2020). Sometimes, the bureaucratic nature of public sector organizations can make them less responsive to rapid changes that necessitate rapid workforce adjustments. Moreover, since public services are frequently unable to be interrupted, human resource planning must account for contingencies and redundancies that guarantee uninterrupted service (Amber, Ahmad, Khan, & Hashmi, 2019).

The human resource planning involves forecasting personnel needs, matching employees with appropriate roles, and designing policies that balance both individual and organizational objectives (Ubah and Ibrahim, 2021). Adobor, Kudonoo, and Daneshfar (2019) emphasized that a well-executed human resource planning could facilitate improved performance, higher job satisfaction, and greater employee retention. Cajkova and Gogova (2022) also underscored that human resource planning was vital in maintaining the ethical standards and core values of public service institutions. One of the critical challenges facing human resource planning in the public sector is the rigidity of bureaucratic systems. Ouko and Gatero (2023) argued that the bureaucratic nature often complicated the recruitment process, making it difficult to attract and retain high-quality talent. Thumbi, Hannah, and Rosemarie (2020) noted that this bureaucratic inertia often led to a mismatch between skills and job requirements, negatively affecting productivity. Khawaldeh (2020) pointed out the additional challenge of balancing employee rights with organizational goals, which could often conflict in a public service context. Moreover, Chebet and Njuguna (2020) noted that political influence could override merit-based recruitment and placement, impacting the effectiveness of human resource planning. North and Kumta (2018) suggested that these challenges made it imperative for public service institutions to adopt more flexible and responsive human resource planning strategies.

Knowledge management practices involve collecting, organizing, and sharing information within an organization to help it achieve its goals (Kucharska, 2022). The idea is to make sure that the right information gets to the right people at the right time, helping them do their jobs more effectively. Kucharska (2022) noted that if the components of intellectual capital were determined externally rather than internally, the power of human capital to drive innovation was reduced. Al-Nawafah, Nigresh and Tawalbeh (2019) found out that there were relationship between knowledge management and competitive advantage. Further the study concluded positive relationship between knowledge sharing and storage and competitive advantage. Meihami (2020) stated that knowledge management had positive influence on competitive advantage. The study further stated that knowledge management was the basis of competition. Knowledge management as per the study included knowledge creation, coding, sharing and using knowledge to enhance learning and innovation.

Knowledge acquisition is the first and crucial phase in the process of managing knowledge within an organization. It involves actively collecting, gathering, and assimilating various kinds of information and insights from multiple sources (Hagemeister & Rodríguez-Castellanos, 2019). This could include extracting data from scientific research, gathering insights from the experiences of employees, analyzing customer feedback, and studying market trends. Often, organizations may use surveys, interviews, and detailed research to add more depth to their existing knowledge pool (Memon et al., 2022). By having a broad and varied base

of knowledge, organizations can make more informed decisions, address challenges with a greater level of detail, and identify new opportunities for innovation and growth. Efficient knowledge acquisition sets the stage for competitive advantage, providing a rich source of insights that can drive smarter decision-making and problem-solving (Ubah & Ibrahim, 2021).

The Public Service Commission of Kenya (PSCK) is an independent Commission established under Article 233 of the Constitution of Kenya. As spelt out in Articles 234, 155(3)(a), 158(2)(3) and (4), 171(2), 230(2)(b) and 236 of the Constitution, the mandate of the commission includes establishment and abolition of offices, provision of competent human resource, promotion of good governance and ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of quality services in the Public Service. PSCK serves a pivotal role in the governance structure of Kenya, given its mandate as outlined in various articles of the Constitution (Kelemba, Chepkilot & Zakayo, 2017). As an independent commission, it carries a range of significant responsibilities, including the establishment and abolition of offices, ensuring that the public service is staffed with competent human resources, and promoting good governance. These mandates have a direct influence on the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery in Kenya.

One of the most crucial aspects of the PSCK's work is in the area of human resource planning. Given its constitutional mandate to provide competent human resources, the PSCK is essentially tasked with the strategic planning of human capital for the entire public service sector (Simson, 2019). This involves not only recruitment but also ongoing training, performance evaluations, and career development for public service employees. The emphasis on competent human resource signifies that the PSCK has to ensure that the workforce is not only sufficient in numbers but also in quality and skills. This involves a multi-faceted approach to HR planning, from talent acquisition to skill development and retention strategies. The Commission had faced challenges and lacked uniform norms and standards in managing human resources in the public service during the implementation of the strategic plan 2013-2018 (Public Service Commission, 2019). Based on the challenges that faced the implementation of the strategic plan of 2013-2018, the study sought to examine the influence of knowledge management practices on human resource planning in the Public Service Commission of Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Human resource planning is a critical function that ensures organizations have the right talent with the right skills at the right time to achieve their strategic goals. However, many organizations struggle with effective human resource planning, leading to issues such as skills gaps, high turnover, and difficulty in meeting business objectives. A global survey by Mercer (2019) found that only 23% of companies effectively utilized workforce planning analytics, while 51% faced challenges with skills gaps. Boston Consulting Group (2020) had shown that companies with robust workforce planning strategies outperformed their peers in terms of revenue growth, profitability and employee engagement. A report by Federation of Kenyan Employers (FKE, 2021) revealed that 62% of organizations lacked a comprehensive workforce planning strategy, resulting in high turnover rates and productivity losses.

The Public Service Commission of Kenya had faced significant challenges in human resource planning, as evidenced by the deficiencies in human resource planning that hindered the implementation of its 2013-2018 strategic plan (Public Service Commission, 2019). The justification for conducting the current study was that no previous research had been undertaken on a similar theme. For instance, Mwangi (2021) examined the influence of knowledge management on organizational competitive advantage in the Telecommunication Industry in Kenya. Moreover, Muturi (2021) examined the influence of knowledge management on performance at the Kenya Revenue Authority. In addition, Cumari (2018) studied knowledge management practices and the performance of the Kenya Bureau of Standards. Wanyoike (2020) examined the influence of knowledge management on the performance of non-governmental health organizations in Kenya. Hence, the

knowledge gap would be ascertained by conducting the current study to examine the influence of knowledge acquisition on human resource planning in the Public Service Commission of Kenya.

Objective of the Study

The following research objective guided the study;

- To examine the influence of knowledge acquisition on human resource planning in the Public Service Commission of Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowledge Based View Theory

Robert Grant developed the Knowledge-Based View Theory (KBV) in 1996. The theory stated that a company would not perform well without establishing its knowledge foundation (Grant, 1996). The knowledge foundation was a crucial element for achieving sustainable uniqueness in the market, resulting in long-term competitive advantage (Blome, Schoenherr & Eckstein, 2014). Resources categorized as knowledge-based were resources that were protected from imitation by competitors. They were rare to be reproduced due to their unique feature of being hard to identify their impact towards a particular result because it was a resource that involved individuals' talents (Gassmann & Keupp, 2007).

The theory recognized that as a result of the significant importance of knowledge in the competitiveness of a firm, the higher the investment and management in knowledge by a firm, the greater the benefits for the firm (Srivardhana & Pawlowski, 2007). An organization's knowledge could be embedded in different repositories that included, individual's mind and perception toward the daily activities, procedures or the set-up of an organization, or on external social networks established with institutions or companies (Hayter, 2016).

The theory was considered relevant to the study in that it posits that the most important resource for gaining and sustaining competitive advantage in an organization was knowledge. This theory was particularly relevant when examining the influence of knowledge acquisition on human resource planning in the Public Service Commission of Kenya. In the context of a public organization, knowledge about policies, regulations, best practices, and even local cultural distinctions were critical. Effective human resource planning required a deep understanding of various elements, from skills availability to future organizational needs. Therefore, using KBV as a lens could help researchers understand how knowledge acquisition affected the efficiency and effectiveness of human resource planning. By acquiring the right kind of knowledge, the Public Service Commission could align its human resource policies and practices better with organizational goals and public service mandates.

However, the weaknesses of knowledge-based view theory that prompt the consideration of organizational learning theory included its narrow focus on knowledge possession rather than knowledge management processes. While the theory emphasized the significance of knowledge in organizational success, it overlooked the complexities of how knowledge was managed and transferred within an organization. This limitation restricted its applicability to informing only one variable-knowledge acquisition-within the study's context, necessitating the exploration of alternative frameworks such as Organizational Learning Theory. Thus, while KBV provided valuable insights into the role of knowledge as a strategic resource, its limited focus on knowledge acquisition alone rendered it insufficient for comprehensively informing the multifaceted aspects of human resource planning in the current study.

Conceptual Framework

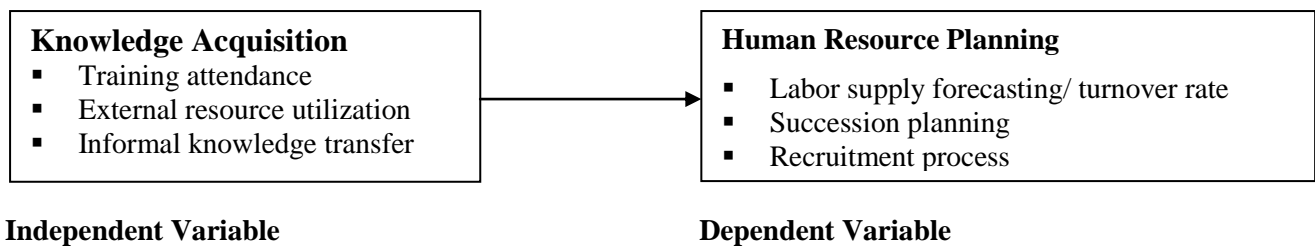


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Human Resource Planning

Human Resource Planning, as a dependent variable, encompasses three critical components: labor supply forecasting/turnover rate, succession planning, and recruitment processes. Labor supply forecasting involves analyzing future workforce availability by examining retirement rates, voluntary turnover, and internal mobility patterns, while turnover rate measurements help organizations develop proactive recruitment and retention strategies. Succession planning focuses on identifying and developing potential leaders to ensure business continuity and knowledge preservation, working hand-in-hand with knowledge sharing practices to facilitate expertise transfer between experienced employees and their successors. The recruitment process serves as the mechanism for attracting and selecting talent that aligns with organizational objectives, leveraging both internal and external knowledge resources while fostering cross-functional collaboration to ensure the right candidates are placed in appropriate roles. This process was influenced by factors such as knowledge sharing, cross-functional collaboration, and the organization's ability to leverage its internal and external knowledge resources.

Knowledge Acquisition

Knowledge acquisition, as an independent variable, played a pivotal role in organizational growth and development. It encompassed three key indicators: training attendance, external resource utilization, and informal knowledge transfer. Training attendance reflected the organization's commitment to continuous learning and development of its workforce. External resource utilization underscored the organization's proactive approach to seeking knowledge beyond its boundaries, thus enriching its knowledge base. Informal knowledge transfer showcased a culture of peer-to-peer learning, where colleagues readily shared their expertise and insights. Together, these indicators contributed to an organization's ability to acquire and apply new knowledge effectively, fostering innovation and adaptability.

Empirical Review

Knowledge Acquisition and Human Resource Planning

A study was conducted in Iran by Jaafari and Mehrara (2021) to examine how knowledge acquisition affected human resource strategies in the Iranian higher education system. Participants were managers and deputies of human resources in the higher education system and university professors. Sampling was performed in a purposeful and theoretical manner. Theoretical dissemination of the samples was obtained after interviewing 10 people. The findings of the study showed that knowledge acquisition affect human resource strategies in the Iranian higher education system positively. The study concluded that when individuals involved in the management and decision-making processes in higher education institutions actively engaged in knowledge acquisition, it had a beneficial impact on the formulation and implementation of HR strategies. This positive influence could encompass various aspects, such as improved talent management, enhanced faculty development, and more effective workforce planning, all of which contributed to the overall advancement and efficiency of the higher education system in Iran. The study underscored the importance of continuous

learning and knowledge acquisition as a driving force behind the positive evolution of HR strategies in the Iranian higher education context.

Keshtegar and Omidvar (2022) conducted a study in Iran to explore how knowledge acquisition impacts the performance of open innovation and the moderating role of human resource management (HRM) practices, including employee retention, on this relationship. Data were collected from 134 companies across diverse sectors through a standardized questionnaire, and hypotheses were tested using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models. The results indicated that knowledge acquisition significantly enhances innovation performance, while HRM practices, particularly those focused on retaining employees, further strengthen this relationship. The study highlighted that as companies increasingly adopted open innovation models, they encountered challenges and opportunities that necessitated adapting HRM strategies. The findings underscored the importance of retaining employees who were vital repositories of organizational knowledge and leveraging HRM practices to effectively integrate knowledge acquisition into innovation processes. By addressing the interplay between knowledge acquisition, HRM, and open innovation, the study filled a critical gap in the literature and provided insights into improving innovation performance through strategic human resource planning.

METHODOLOGY

Positivism research philosophy was utilized for this study. In this approach, researchers provided their standpoint to assess the social world with impartiality instead of prejudice (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.

The study focused on a target population of 209 employees from the Public Service Commission of Kenya, representing various hierarchical levels within the organization. The study was a census.

The study used questionnaires, interviews and secondary data collection template as tools for data collection. In addition to primary data, the study collected secondary data over a five-year period from 2019 to 2023 to gain a comprehensive understanding of human resource planning practices. The researcher executed a pilot of the research instruments to assess the reliability and validity of the survey tools before the definitive data collection. The pilot study was conducted in the Judicial Service Commission.

The study rigorously examined both content and construct validity of the research instruments to ensure they accurately measured the intended concepts. Content validity was addressed through a comprehensive review process involving supervisors overseeing the thesis development, ensuring the questionnaires adequately covered the subject matter. Construct validity was assessed using factor analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Response Rate

The sample size of the study was 209 and 187 questionnaires were correctly filled and returned. This presented a response rate of 89.47%.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics of Knowledge Acquisition

The descriptive statistics of knowledge acquisition is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Knowledge Acquisition

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Standard Deviation
The organization regularly provides training for employees to enhance their skills and knowledge.	22.50%	58.90%	5.30%	9.60%	3.70%	2.13	0.99
External resources like consultants and academic partnerships are used effectively to stay updated on workforce trends.	34.80%	46.00%	2.10%	8.50%	8.60%	2.10	1.22
Informal mechanisms, such as mentoring and communities of practice, help share knowledge among employees.	30.50%	49.20%	1.60%	16.00%	2.70%	2.11	1.09
Employees are encouraged to attend conferences, seminars, and workshops to gain new insights and best practices.	18.20%	62.60%	4.30%	12.20%	2.70%	2.19	0.96
Processes are in place to capture the expertise of employees before they leave the organization.	33.70%	46.50%	2.10%	9.10%	8.60%	2.12	1.22
The organization conducts regular environmental scans to identify trends affecting workforce planning.	15.00%	64.20%	4.10%	11.90%	4.80%	2.02	1.01
Employees collaborate and learn from in-house subject matter experts.	18.20%	61.00%	3.70%	15.00%	2.10%	2.22	0.98
The organization learns from successful practices and case studies from other industry players.	33.20%	50.30%	1.50%	4.80%	10.20%	2.09	1.21
Employees participate in cross-functional projects to share and acquire knowledge across departments.	11.80%	69.50%	4.80%	10.20%	3.70%	2.17	0.98
Partnerships with educational institutions and research centers provide access to valuable expertise.	28.50%	43.50%	3.60%	13.70%	10.70%	2.27	1.29

n=187, composite mean=2.14, composite standard Deviation =1.10

The findings presented in Table 1 provide a comprehensive overview of knowledge acquisition practices within the Public Service Commission of Kenya. The study found that 81.40% (22.50%+58.90%) of the respondents disagreed that the organization frequently provides training opportunities for employees to acquire new skills or knowledge relevant to their roles, while 13.30% (9.60%+3.70%) agreed with the statement and 5.30% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.13 with a standard deviation of 0.99. This implied that most respondents perceived lack of regular training opportunities within the organization, potentially hindering the acquisition of new skills and knowledge necessary for effective job performance. Regarding the utilization of external resources, 80.80% (34.80%+46.00%) of respondents disagreed that the organization effectively uses consultants, industry associations, or academic partnerships to gain insights related to workforce trends and emerging skills requirements, while 17.10% (8.50%+8.60%) agreed with the statement and 2.10% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.10 with a standard deviation of 1.22. This suggested that the organization could not be effectively leveraging external resources to stay informed about industry trends and skill requirements, potentially influencing its ability to adapt to changing workforce needs.

Concerning informal knowledge sharing mechanisms, 79.70% (30.50%+49.20%) of respondents disagreed that mentoring or communities of practice within the organization are effective in facilitating knowledge transfer between experienced employees and their colleagues, while 18.70% (16.00%+2.70%) agreed with the statement and 1.60% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.11 with a standard deviation of 1.09. This indicated a perceived lack of effective informal knowledge sharing mechanisms within the organization, which could hinder the transfer of tacit knowledge and experiences among employees. The study found that 80.80% (18.20%+62.60%) of respondents disagreed that the organization actively encourages employees to attend external conferences, seminars, or workshops to acquire new knowledge and best practices relevant to their work, while 14.90% (12.20%+2.70%) agreed with the statement and 4.30% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.19 with a standard deviation of 0.96. This suggested that employees perceived limited support for attending external learning events, potentially limiting their exposure to new ideas and industry best practices.

Regarding knowledge capture from experienced employees, 80.20% (33.70%+46.50%) disagreed that there were effective processes in place to capture the knowledge and expertise of experienced employees before they leave the organization, while 17.70% (9.10%+8.60%) agreed with the statement and 2.10% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.12 with a standard deviation of 1.22. This implied a perceived lack of mechanisms to retain critical knowledge within the organization when experienced employees depart. On the topic of environmental scanning, 79.20% (15.00%+64.20%) disagreed that the organization regularly conducted such activities to identify new knowledge or trends influencing workforce planning and development, while 16.70% (11.90%+4.80%) agreed with the statement and 4.10% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.02 with a standard deviation of 1.01. This suggested a perceived lack of proactive efforts to stay abreast of external trends and developments that could influence on the organization's human resource planning. Besides, regarding collaboration with subject matter experts, 79.20% (18.20%+61.00%) disagreed that employees were provided with opportunities to collaborate and learn from internal experts, while 17.10% (15.00%+2.10%) agreed with the statement and 3.70% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.22 with a standard deviation of 0.98. This indicated limited perceived opportunities for employees to benefit from the expertise of their colleagues within the organization.

In terms of acquiring knowledge from successful practices of other organizations, 83.50% (33.20%+50.30%) disagreed that the organization actively seeks such knowledge, while 15.00% (4.80%+10.20%) agreed with the statement and 1.50% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.09 with a standard deviation of 1.21. This suggested a perceived lack of effort to learn from external best practices and successful case studies in the industry. Regarding cross-functional knowledge sharing, 81.30% (11.80%+69.50%) disagreed that employees are encouraged to participate in cross-functional teams or projects to facilitate knowledge sharing across departments, while 13.90% (10.20%+3.70%) agreed with the statement and 4.80% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.17 with a standard deviation of 0.98. This indicated limited perceived support for cross-functional learning and collaboration within the organization.

Lastly, 72.00% (28.50%+43.50%) disagreed that the organization had established partnerships with educational institutions or research centres to access relevant knowledge and expertise, while 24.40% (13.70%+10.70%) agreed with the statement and 3.60% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.27 with a standard deviation of 1.29. This suggested a perceived lack of formal collaborations with external knowledge sources such as educational institutions or research centers. The composite mean score across all items was 2.14 with a composite standard deviation of 1.10. This consistently low average score implied that respondents generally perceived significant challenges in the organization's approach to knowledge acquisition across various methods and practices. The standard deviation suggested some variability in responses, but overall, the perception of inadequate knowledge acquisition practices was consistent across different aspects examined.

The study conducted an interview with the CEO, chairperson, vice chairperson, commissioners, and directors to explore the influence of knowledge acquisition on human resource planning within the Public Service Commission of Kenya. The interviewees acknowledged that acquiring new knowledge plays a critical role in identifying workforce gaps and aligning human resource strategies. They highlighted that newly acquired knowledge, particularly about industry trends and best practices, often led to the reassessment of existing employee skills and competencies. This reassessment informed crucial decisions regarding recruitment, training, and succession planning. However, the interviewees expressed concerns about the lack of a systematic approach to integrating new knowledge into human resource planning. While some examples of successful integration, such as improved recruitment strategies and updated training programs, were cited, these were often isolated instances rather than part of a structured process.

The respondents also emphasized the organization's struggles with consistently acquiring and utilizing new knowledge to inform human resource planning. They pointed out that while there was recognition of the value of staying updated with evolving workforce requirements, the implementation of knowledge acquisition practices was ad hoc and lacked a comprehensive framework. For instance, insights from industry conferences or professional development programs occasionally influenced decision-making but were not consistently applied across the organization. The interviewees further noted that rapid changes in human resource management knowledge presented challenges, as the organization struggled to keep pace with these developments. They suggested that implementing robust systems to capture, analyze, and utilize new knowledge would enhance the organization's ability to anticipate future workforce needs and create effective long-term strategies.

Moreover, the interviewees identified several barriers that hindered the systematic acquisition of new knowledge within the organization. A lack of dedicated resources and formal mechanisms to acquire, document, and disseminate new insights was highlighted as a significant challenge. Additionally, the bureaucratic nature of the organization was seen as a hindrance to the quick adoption of innovative practices derived from newly acquired knowledge. The respondents stressed the importance of fostering a culture that values continuous learning and innovation. They suggested that creating dedicated platforms for knowledge exchange, coupled with training programs to enhance staff capabilities, could significantly improve the integration of new knowledge into human resource planning.

Thus, both the questionnaire and interview guide responses aligned in recognizing significant gaps in knowledge acquisition within the Public Service Commission of Kenya. The questionnaire data indicated that a majority of respondents felt that the organization lacked consistent opportunities for training, with a noticeable absence of structured external partnerships to stay updated on workforce trends. This finding was echoed in the interview responses, where interviewees emphasized the organization's struggles with acquiring and integrating new knowledge into human resource planning. They acknowledged that while the need for new knowledge was recognized, its acquisition was often sporadic, and there were no systematic approaches in place to ensure that valuable external insights were regularly incorporated into the organization's decision-making processes. This alignment between both sets of data suggests a shared concern about the inadequacy of structured practices to capture new knowledge for workforce development.

Similarly, in the interviews, respondents noted that while there were occasional attempts to engage with external expertise, these efforts were neither frequent nor systematically incorporated into human resource planning strategies. The interviewees also highlighted that the organization struggled with adapting to rapidly changing workforce dynamics, further compounding the issue of effectively acquiring and applying new knowledge. This consistent message from both the questionnaire and interview data reinforces the idea that external resources, which could be vital for knowledge acquisition, are underutilized and inadequately integrated into the organization's planning processes. The agreement between the questionnaire and interview

responses highlights a broader concern about the organization's failure to establish comprehensive, structured processes for acquiring knowledge, both from external sources and within its own workforce.

Descriptive Statistics of Human Resource Planning

The descriptive statistics of human resource planning is discussed in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Human Resource Planning

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Standard Deviation
Our organization regularly analyses data on employee turnover rates to forecast future labour supply needs.	31.60%	50.20%	3.80%	8.60%	5.80%	2.05	1.07
There are clear processes in place for identifying and developing potential successors for key positions within the organization.	40.10%	35.90%	3.20%	17.60%	3.20%	2.08	1.20
The recruitment process in our organization is efficient and effective in attracting qualified candidates.	28.90%	40.60%	8.00%	15.50%	7.00%	2.31	1.24
Our organization has a system in place to track and analyse reasons for employee turnover.	27.30%	51.30%	6.40%	8.60%	6.40%	2.19	1.11
Succession planning initiatives are aligned with the organization's long-term goals and strategies.	33.70%	49.70%	2.10%	11.30%	3.20%	2.01	1.05
The recruitment process in our organization is transparent and fair, providing equal opportunities to all applicants.	16.60%	69.00%	3.70%	9.10%	1.60%	2.10	0.84
Our organization takes proactive measures to retain high-performing employees and reduce turnover rates.	22.40%	55.40%	6.10%	7.00%	9.10%	2.25	1.15
Succession planning involves identifying and developing leadership skills in potential successors.	25.70%	52.30%	8.60%	10.70%	2.70%	2.12	1.00
The recruitment process in our organization effectively assesses candidates' skills, knowledge, and cultural fit.	19.80%	57.80%	9.10%	8.50%	4.80%	2.21	1.01
Our organization regularly reviews and updates its succession planning strategies to ensure continuity in key positions.	17.60%	66.30%	2.70%	10.20%	3.20%	2.16	0.96

n=187, Composite mean=2.15, Composite standard Deviation =1.06

The findings presented in Table 2 provide insights into human resource planning practices within the Public Service Commission of Kenya. The study found that 81.80% (31.60%+50.20%) of the respondents disagreed that the organization regularly analysed data on employee turnover rates to forecast future labour supply

needs, while 14.40% (8.60%+5.80%) agreed with the statement and 3.80% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.05 with a standard deviation of 1.07. This implied that most respondents perceived lack of systematic analysis of turnover data for workforce planning purposes, potentially hindering the organization's ability to anticipate and address future staffing needs. Besides, regarding succession planning processes, 76.00% (40.10%+35.90%) of respondents disagreed that there were clear processes in place for identifying and developing potential successors for key positions within the organization, while 20.80% (17.60%+3.20%) agreed with the statement and 3.20% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.08 with a standard deviation of 1.20. This suggested that the organization did not have well-defined succession planning mechanisms, potentially risking leadership continuity and knowledge transfer for critical roles.

In addition, concerning the efficiency of the recruitment process, 69.50% (28.90%+40.60%) disagreed that the recruitment process in the organization was efficient and effective in attracting qualified candidates, while 22.50% (15.50%+7.00%) agreed with the statement and 8.00% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.31 with a standard deviation of 1.24. This indicated a perceived lack of effectiveness in the organization's recruitment strategies, potentially influencing its ability to attract top talent. The study found that 78.60% (27.30%+51.30%) of respondents disagreed that the organization has a system in place to track and analyse reasons for employee turnover, while 15.00% (8.60%+6.40%) agreed with the statement and 6.40% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.19 with a standard deviation of 1.11. This suggested a perceived lack of systematic efforts to understand the root causes of employee departures, potentially limiting the organization's ability to address retention issues effectively.

Moreover, regarding the alignment of succession planning with organizational goals, 83.40% (33.70%+49.70%) disagreed that succession planning initiatives were aligned with the organization's long-term goals and strategies, while 14.50% (11.30%+3.20%) agreed with the statement and 2.10% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.01 with a standard deviation of 1.05. This implies a perceived disconnect between succession planning efforts and the organization's strategic objectives. On the topic of recruitment fairness, 85.60% (16.60%+69.00%) disagreed that the recruitment process in the organization was transparent and fair, providing equal opportunities to all applicants, while 10.70% (9.10%+1.60%) agreed with the statement and 3.70% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.10 with a standard deviation of 0.84. This indicated a perceived lack of transparency and fairness in the recruitment process, potentially affecting the organization's reputation and its ability to attract diverse talent.

In addition, regarding employee retention measures, 77.80% (22.40%+55.40%) disagreed that the organization took proactive measures to retain high-performing employees and reduce turnover rates, while 16.10% (7.00%+9.10%) agreed with the statement and 6.10% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.25 with a standard deviation of 1.15. This suggested a perceived lack of effective retention strategies, potentially leading to the loss of valuable employees. In terms of leadership development in succession planning, 78.00% (25.70%+52.30%) disagreed that succession planning involved identifying and developing leadership skills in potential successors, while 13.40% (10.70%+2.70%) agreed with the statement and 8.60% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.12 with a standard deviation of 1.00. This implied a perceived lack of focus on leadership development within the organization's succession planning efforts.

Furthermore, regarding the assessment of candidates' skills and cultural fit, 77.60% (19.80%+57.80%) disagreed that the recruitment process effectively assesses candidates' skills, knowledge, and cultural fit, while 13.30% (8.50%+4.80%) agreed with the statement and 9.10% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.21 with a standard deviation of 1.01. This suggested a perceived inadequacy in the organization's ability to evaluate candidates comprehensively during the recruitment process. Lastly, 83.90% (17.60%+66.30%) disagreed that the organization regularly reviewed and updated its succession planning strategies to ensure continuity in key positions, while 13.40% (10.20%+3.20%) agreed with the statement and 2.70% remained

neutral. The mean score was 2.16 with a standard deviation of 0.96. This indicated a perceived lack of regular review and adaptation of succession planning strategies to meet changing organizational needs.

The composite mean score across all items was 2.15 with a composite standard deviation of 1.06. This consistently low composite mean score implied that respondents generally perceived significant challenges in the organization's human resource planning practices across various aspects. The composite standard deviation suggested some variability in responses, but overall, the perception of inadequate human resource planning practices was consistent across the different elements examined

The regression coefficient results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Regression Coefficients of Knowledge Acquisition and Human Resource Planning

Model		Coefficients ^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.780	0.107		7.299	0.000
	Knowledge Acquisition	0.545	0.041	0.695	13.160	0.000

Note: Dependent=a (Human resource planning), n=187, $\alpha=0.780$

The model equation shows that standardized human resource planning will increase by 0.695 units with one unit increase in standardized knowledge acquisition. The model indicates that knowledge acquisition is significantly explaining the variation in the dependent variable (human resource planning). Therefore, hypothesis H₀₁: there is no significant influence of knowledge acquisition on human resource planning in the Public Service Commission of Kenya is rejected, and it is concluded that knowledge acquisition has a significant influence on human resource planning. The residual sum of squares (10.751) indicates that while the model explains a significant portion of the variation in human resource planning, there are other factors that account for some of the variation in the dependent variable.

These findings concurred with the existing studies. In Iran, Jaafari and Mehrara (2021) found that knowledge acquisition positively impacted human resource strategies in the higher education sector. The study highlighted that engaging in knowledge acquisition enhanced talent management, faculty development, and workforce planning for improved institutional efficiency. In Italy, Papa et al. (2020) discovered that knowledge acquisition significantly enhanced innovation performance across diverse industries. The research emphasized the importance of integrating strategic HRM practices with knowledge management to foster innovation and drive organizational success. In Iran, Keshtegar and Omidvar (2022) revealed that knowledge acquisition improved innovation performance, with HRM practices like employee retention strengthening the relationship. The study highlighted the need to align HRM strategies with open innovation models to address challenges and improve performance. Imai et al. (2008) demonstrated that effective knowledge acquisition enhanced HRM practices and customer relationships in IT firms. The study suggested the aspect of managing employee attributes strategically to achieve competitive advantage and project success. In Bangladesh, Mannan (2015) found that knowledge acquisition fostered employee development and innovation when integrated with HRM practices such as training and performance appraisal. The study stressed the importance of strategic HRM planning to support knowledge sharing and sustainable organizational performance.

In Kenya, Gatuyu and Kinyua (2020) found that knowledge acquisition strategies, such as mentorship programs and technology adoption, significantly improved SME performance. The study underscored the importance of adopting knowledge acquisition practices to enhance decision-making and drive economic growth in SMEs. Fombad and Sirorei (2019) highlighted the role of knowledge acquisition in enhancing academic library functions and service delivery. The researchers recommended formalizing knowledge

management practices and aligning them with HR planning to improve adaptability and effectiveness. Thumbi et al. (2020) found that knowledge acquisition and information distribution significantly enhanced employee performance, particularly in service delivery and efficiency. The study emphasized aligning knowledge strategies with organizational processes to maximize their impact on performance.

These research findings had significant implications for both theory and practice in public sector management. The positive relationship between knowledge acquisition and human resource planning suggested that organizations should prioritize developing robust knowledge acquisition systems and processes. This included implementing formal training programs, establishing knowledge sharing platforms, and creating mechanisms for capturing and retaining institutional knowledge. The results also indicated that public sector organizations need to align their knowledge acquisition strategies with their human resource planning objectives to maximize effectiveness. Furthermore, the findings suggested that investments in knowledge acquisition capabilities could yield substantial returns in terms of improved human resource planning outcomes, which in turn could lead to enhanced organizational performance.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that knowledge acquisition had a significant positive influence on human resource planning in the Public Service Commission of Kenya. The conclusion was supported by the positive correlation and regression results, which indicated that knowledge acquisition explained a significant amount of the variation in human resource planning. The findings suggested that as the organization improved its ability to acquire new knowledge from various sources, including training, external resources, and informal knowledge sharing mechanisms, it enhanced its capacity for effective human resource planning. This implied that the organization's efforts to systematically gather, assimilate, and integrate new knowledge play a crucial role in shaping its human resource planning processes. The association between these variables suggested that knowledge acquisition served as a foundational element in developing informed, adaptive, and forward-looking human resource strategies within the organization.

Public Service Commission of Kenya should prioritize and enhance its knowledge acquisition practices to improve human resource planning. Given the positive influence of knowledge acquisition on human resource planning ($\beta = 0.695$, $p = 0.000$), management could implement structured programs for continuous learning and development. This could include regular training sessions, workshops, and seminars that focus on emerging trends in human resource management and public administration. Additionally, the organization should establish formal mechanisms for capturing external knowledge, such as partnerships with academic institutions or industry experts.

In addition, management could create a systematic approach to integrating newly acquired knowledge into existing human resource planning processes. This could involve developing a knowledge management team responsible for identifying, vetting, and disseminating relevant new information throughout the organization. Regular knowledge-sharing sessions should be organized where employees who have attended external training or conferences could present their learnings to colleagues. The organization could also invest in a robust knowledge management system that allowed for easy documentation and retrieval of newly acquired knowledge, ensuring it was readily available for human resource planning activities.

Contribution to the Body of Knowledge

The contribution to the body of knowledge from this study included the extension and validation of knowledge-based view theory in the context of public sector human resource planning. By demonstrating a positive relationship between knowledge acquisition and human resource planning, the study provides empirical support for the theory's assertion that knowledge is a critical resource for organizational success. This extends the application of the knowledge-based view theory beyond its traditional focus on competitive

advantage in the private sector, highlighting its relevance in public sector management, particularly in human resource planning processes.

Furthermore, the study contributed to the empirical literature by providing quantitative evidence of the influence of knowledge acquisition on human resource planning in a public sector context. The adds to the growing body of evidence on the importance of knowledge management in public sector organizations and offers a foundation for comparative studies across different public sector entities or countries. The study's findings provide a benchmark for future research, enabling more thorough investigations into how various aspects of knowledge acquisition influence human resource planning in public organizations.

Areas for Further Study

The study identified several areas for further research that could build upon and extend the current findings. This could include examining the role of leadership styles, technological infrastructure, or external environmental factors in influencing human resource planning in public sector organizations. Additionally, as this study focused on the Public Service Commission of Kenya, future research could replicate this study in other public sector organizations or in different countries to assess the generalizability of the findings. Such comparative studies could provide valuable insights into how the relationship between knowledge management practices and human resource planning may vary across different cultural or institutional contexts.

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