



The Effect of Knowledge Acquisition on Organizational Performance of Selected Humanitarian Organizations in Marsabit County Kenya.

Basma Shariff Abdinoor^{1*}, *Dr. Abel Moguche*², *Dr. Adel Kanyiri*³

^{1*} Masters of Business Administration Kenya Methodist University,

²Lecturer School of business and economics Kenya Methodist University

³Lecturer School of business and economics Kenya Methodist University

*Corresponding author email;

ABSTRACT

The potential for employing knowledge acquisition to enhance organizational performance is expanding exponentially, especially during a time of rapid technological progress. Knowledge acquisition can play a critical role in both preventing humanitarian disasters and building capacities for better disaster response. Additionally, it can improve coordination and communication in emergencies. This study aimed to assess the effect of knowledge acquisition strategies on the performance of selected humanitarian organizations in Marsabit County, Kenya. The study drew on Knowledge-Based View Theory. A descriptive research design was used, and the target population consisted of 386 employees working in the selected humanitarian organizations in Marsabit County. The participant pool, consisting of 112 respondents, was established utilizing the Yamane formula. Direct data was gathered via questionnaires, implemented through the drop-off/pick-up technique to engage with the respondents. Utilized methodologies encompassed descriptive statistics, featuring average and standard deviation, and inferential statistical techniques like correlation analysis and multiple linear regression. The outcomes are illustrated via a variety of tables and visual diagrams, followed by a comprehensive interpretation of the findings. The study concludes that knowledge acquisition impacted the performance of humanitarian organizations in Marsabit County. The study recommends that humanitarian organizations engage with technical experts in specific fields for knowledge acquisition and value their employees.

Key words; acquisition, performance, Knowledge-Based View

1.0 Introduction

The concept of Knowledge acquisition can be elucidated as encompassing a multifaceted set of activities involving the cultivation, organization, and dissemination of precious information, specialized skills, and profound understanding. These endeavors extend their reach, facilitating effective knowledge exchange within and across communities of individuals, specifically tailored to businesses with akin requirements and objectives (Nair & Munusami, 2020). Gonzalez and Martins (2017) describe knowledge acquisition as the creation of organizational ideals, processes, tools, and procedures that encourage the exchange of information among people and the retrieval, processing, and application of that knowledge to enhance organizational performance. It is the procedure that links a company's internal and external information in a way that is convenient for the correct recipient at the right time. The effective use of distinctive ideas and information inside a company has the potential to provide a long-lasting competitive edge. Gaining a competitive edge may enhance organizational performance (Baah, & Jin, 2019).

Practically speaking, knowledge is made up of fundamental data and insights that enable businesses to effectively serve their customers. Through time, the company develops a distinctive body of expertise that sets it apart from other businesses in the same field. A business must implement appropriate structures that encourage better knowledge acquisition in order to get the most benefits from the information it has. Sayyadi (2019) argues that information must be kept in a format that makes it accessible anytime it is needed. In order to succeed in today's fast-paced and sometimes confusing business world, firms need to use knowledge acquisition strategies (Donate & de Pablo, 2015).

Organizations have the chance to adapt their operations to the dynamic nature of the business world via knowledge acquisition (Irfan *et al.*, 2022). To have an impact on an organization's overall success, knowledge is essential (Miković *et al.*, 2020). Mehralian, Nazari, & Ghasemzadeh, (2018) argue that the importance of knowledge as a resourceful asset in a company's overall operation is comparable to that of organizational capital. This is so because it affects how well and how long a business can survive in a highly competitive market. Public enterprises, in contrast to the private sector, seem to be less likely to use knowledge acquisition concepts, according to numerous research (Balasubramanian, Al-Ahbabi, & Sreejith, 2020).

In Kenya, where knowledge acquisition understanding and implementation are still in their infancy compared to countries in the West and Asia, this is extremely typical (Mutuku, Mwai, & Mbenge, 2022). As the success or failure of knowledge acquisition projects may have far-reaching impacts on an

organization's performance, it is of paramount importance that these practices be identified and understood by the respective companies (Baah, & Jin, 2019). These practices are the main focus of completing learning administration; they not only promote the formation of information throughout the organization, but also encourage group members to share their knowledge and experiences with one another, allowing for the simultaneous and efficient development of authoritative knowledge (Davis-Floyd & Sargent, 2023).

The Asia-Pacific area is the most vulnerable to natural disasters worldwide. The Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2017 estimates that in 2016, natural catastrophes in the area had a total economic impact of \$77 billion, impacted 35 million people, and claimed the lives of 4987 individuals (Nakanishi & Black, 2018). Efforts to better prepare for and respond to disasters should be a top focus. Distinct features such as collective proprietorship, responsive programming, predictable yet adaptable strategies, and holistic learning and accountability emerge as key indicators of success in humanitarian work (Balle, et al., 2019). As a consequence, knowledge acquisition in disaster scenarios has been underscored as one of the four cornerstones of humanitarian effectiveness. Knowledge gathering, sharing, usage, and correct storage are increasingly recognized as ways to improve cooperation in humanitarian efforts. Yet, the humanitarian sector continues to pay little attention to institutional memory and knowledge acquisition. The assertion that the sector is increasingly embracing professionalism has been put forth for a while (Balle et al., 2019). However, it appears this evolution does not fully encompass the aspect of knowledge acquisition or the establishment of institutional memory within the field.

Due to the rising awareness of knowledge as a source of organizational success and sustainability, strategic knowledge acquisition and organizational performance have garnered a lot of attention in developing nations. In Ethiopia, knowledge acquisition often takes place face-to-face, according to Seifu *et al.*, (2019). While IT-based KM is still in its infancy stage, the few previous initiatives to enhance knowledge exchange, such as the WoredaNet program by the Government of Ethiopia, were not as effective. Moreover, Ethiopia pays little to no attention to systems and methodologies for knowledge development and exchange. Knowledge acquisition (KM) in an organization characterizes the organization's technological preparedness, according to research by Tarekegn (2017) on KM practices in development and humanitarian relief organizations in Ethiopia. Facilitators are crucial for developing a successful KM project in an assistance organization, as are the design of KM principles, policy, and strategy within an organization and the 'utilization of KM inside an organization. According to research, employees and knowledge workers in these companies are highly engaged in knowledge sharing when it's necessary to increase productivity. The research also reveals that there aren't enough people aware of the needs of their coworkers, enough time, or enough resources to make knowledge sharing a priority in the workplace.

Studies on the impact of knowledge acquisition, transformation, and application on business performance have been undertaken in Kenya. There is little empirical evidence on humanitarian groups, especially in Marsabit County, and most studies on knowledge acquisition have been conducted in emerging countries (Tseng, 2016). So, this investigation was important.

An organization's performance can be evaluated by considering various factors, such as the provision of top-notch services and goods, the level of customer contentment, the achievement of market success, the implementation of service innovations, and the strength of staff connections (Serrat, 2017). The author contends that the balanced scorecard forms the basis for evaluating organizational performance, and it allows for the assessment of an organization's success through various metrics, such as return on investment, sales margin, capacity utilization, customer satisfaction, and product quality. Similarly, Bititci *et al.* (2019) said that profit, sales and market growth, and return on investment are significant criteria that are assessed when evaluating an organization's success.

Successful organizations are a crucial component for developing countries since they play a significant part in our everyday lives (El Dahshan *et al.*, 2018). In today's dynamic workplace and globally integrated economy, Ekechi and Umar (2020) contend that the improvement of organizational performance is correlated with the improvement of individual performance, skills, knowledge, and experience. Yet, obtaining and sustaining high levels of performance and productivity in firm's remains one of the largest difficulties management faces today.

Financial measures, such as return on investment and earnings per share, are commonly employed to assess an organization's success. Kanakriyah (2020) suggests that metrics like ROI, revenue, and profit per share are utilized to gauge a firm's performance. Apart from these financial indicators, an organization's effectiveness is also influenced by its workforce, the strategies they adopt to achieve objectives, and the overall business environment. Kaplan and Norton (1992) introduced the Balanced Scorecard, which incorporates both financial and non-financial metrics to evaluate four crucial aspects of an organization: finance, customers, internal processes, and innovation and development.

Ancient thinkers like Plato and Aristotle used the word "knowledge" a very long time ago. Knowledge and its role in society have been the subject of much effort by scholars throughout the years. Rationalism and empiricism are the two schools of thinking that have been identified by Sigala and Chalkiti (2007) as contributing to the definition of knowledge. Rationalism holds that knowledge is a justified true belief, but empiricism maintains that knowledge is continually created via experience (Habermas, 2015). Newer research use a cumulative method to deconstruct the nature of knowledge and its growth. The fresh perspective on the constituents of knowledge, as detailed by Barinua & Akpan (2022), emphasizes the progression from data to knowledge through various transformative stages. Initially, data is gathered, which, when structured purposefully, transforms into valuable information. Subsequently, when this information is strategically applied to a functional role, it evolves into knowledge. This overall process underscores the integral relation between data, information, and knowledge, and illuminates how each individual component contributes to the broader understanding within an operational context.

Knowledge acquisition, then, is the process by which a company ensures that its knowledge assets are developed and put to good use by planning, organizing, motivating, and controlling the people, processes, and systems inside it (Bitkowska, 2020). Different constructs of knowledge acquisition serve as indicators for assessing an organization's performance. Several markers, such as knowledge acquisition, emphasize the importance of making personal knowledge accessible, enhancing it, and integrating it into the organization's broader knowledge structure. As per Akbar, Baruch, and Tzokas

(2018), knowledge acquisition is characterized as a procedure of solidifying and connecting knowledge within an organization. This method comprises interactions at various levels, including between individuals, among groups, and throughout the organization, as well as interactions bridging the gap between tacit (unarticulated) and explicit (articulated) knowledge.

This cycle is famously recognized as the Socialization, Externalization, Combination, and Internalization (SECI) process, outlined by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). Socialization refers to the sharing and creation of tacit knowledge through direct experience. Externalization involves articulating tacit knowledge into explicit concepts, typically through metaphors, analogies, concepts, hypotheses, or models. Combination connects different sets of explicit knowledge, while internalization is the process of embodying explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge. Through this SECI process, knowledge is amplified and becomes a part of the organization's knowledge system.

In addition to knowledge acquisition, knowledge dissemination is another important aspect of knowledge acquisition that affects organizational performance. Cajková, Jankelová, and Masár (2023) indicate that the lack or ineffective implementation of knowledge acquisition strategies can lead to an overabundance of unfiltered knowledge within an organization. As a consequence, there arises an urgent need for efficient categorization and selection of this accumulated knowledge. Essentially, without effective knowledge acquisition strategies in place, organizations may find themselves overwhelmed with an excess of non-essential knowledge, making the task of identifying useful, actionable insights increasingly challenging. Addressing these issues requires attention to knowledge dissemination, as it bridges the expertise gap and enables the younger workforce to acquire valuable skills for improving organizational progress. Disseminating knowledge can be achieved through observation or imitation between apprentices and experts.

Natu and Aparicio, (2022) suggest that team interactions are employed by certain organizations to facilitate the sharing and discussion of individual perspectives, information, and expertise within teams. This exchange of unique knowledge can help capture market share and reduce competition in different locations. Knowledge utilization, as described by Beloglazov and Buyya (2012), involves the process of applying theoretical knowledge into practical situations. This utilization can enhance decision-making and improve problem-solving techniques. Moreover, knowledge utilization is effective in fostering shared mental models, which enable organization members to perform their tasks more efficiently.

In contrast, knowledge storage involves the centralized preservation of information, making it readily available to members of an organization in their daily activities. This data may exist in either digital or physical formats, akin to collections found in educational institutions. Keeping records up to date is vital to ensure easy and quick access (Janus, 2016). Valuable knowledge assets can take the shape of electronic repositories, such as a database for "best practices," insights accumulated by problem-solving teams, and knowledge embedded within an organization's products, processes, and relationships (Levallet & Chan, 2019).

Drought, starvation, disease outbreaks, food insecurity, warfare, and war are just a few of the humanitarian tragedies that Marsabit County has to deal with. In several areas of the country, there is a sizable presence of UN agencies and international NGOs working on development, disaster relief, healthcare promotion, and rehabilitation projects. There are 62 foreign humanitarian groups active in Kenya in 2022, with the bulk of them focusing on the country's northern regions, according to the Kenya Relief Portal. Humanitarian organizations, united by a dedication to humanitarian principles, and actively involved in emergency response activities, encompass a broad spectrum of entities. These include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations (IOs), entities associated with the Red Cross/Crescent movement, and organizations affiliated with the United Nations (UN). All these diverse entities contribute significantly to global humanitarian efforts, each playing a unique role in delivering aid and assistance in crisis situations.

Humanitarian organizations operating in Marsabit County recognize the continuous necessity of facilitating access to relevant information to support decision-making based on solid evidence. As a result, several collectives of information users with an emphasis on humanitarian work have evolved. These include the Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) on Information Management and Technology, the Information Management Working Group, and the Kenya Geospatial User Group. The formation of these groups serves a key purpose - to bolster coordination and collaborative efforts within the realm of humanitarian information management. These entities strive to ensure efficient, coherent, and streamlined handling of information, which in turn, enhances the overall effectiveness of humanitarian initiatives. In essence, the goal of these working groups has been to provide a venue to facilitate information sharing across different types of organizations.

Knowledge is increasingly seen as a valuable resource that is mostly stored in workers' thoughts. The development and transfer of an organization's intellectual assets are also dependent on effective knowledge acquisition. Management should improve Knowledge acquisition practices in order to properly and profitably convert this employee knowledge into usable information. In this respect, it is said that businesses that have made headway in implementing knowledge acquisition are reaping its rewards (Alstete & Meyer, 2020). The vast majority of studies have shown that KM improves a company's bottom line. Yet, the key to a company's success and performance is in how it allocates its knowledge acquisition (KM) resources to develop its own unique KM capabilities (Mardani *et al.*, 2018). According to Beauchamp and Bowie's (2010) study on knowledge acquisition (KM) methods used by non-profit organizations in Nairobi, Kenya, 93% of respondents agreed that KM practices were used for purposes such as advancing, acquiring, and using knowledge coming from outside an organization. The survey also found that just 17% of firms attempted to account for the efficacy of their KM procedures, while 83% did not. This discrepancy may be due to cultural factors inside the workplace. Humanitarian organizations in Kenya have several challenges, the most of which are related to the incorporation of knowledge acquisition (KM) procedures into organizational culture, overall strategy, and management and leadership practices (Caballero, Cook & Chen, 2021).

As noted by Mutisya *et al.* (2022), the performance of Kenyan humanitarian organizations in aspects such as efficiency, cost-effectiveness, sustainability, and innovation is notably subpar, primarily due to insufficient information management. Nguyen and Nguyen (2022) delved into the connection between knowledge acquisition (KM) measures and the triumph of businesses in Vietnam. This research employed the Resource-Based Theory and the Socio-

capital Theory, utilizing a combination of case studies and hypothesis testing methodologies. The outcomes revealed that the orientation towards knowledge acquisition and the adoption of innovative strategies significantly impact corporate performance.

Meanwhile, Alnatsheh, Sasan, and avuolu (2020) explored the relevance of knowledge acquisition techniques for augmenting the effectiveness of NGOs in Palestine. The study determined that both codification and personalization strategies of knowledge acquisition substantially and positively influenced various dimensions of NGO performance, including financial sustainability, organizational processes, and program/project execution.

Similarly, a study conducted by Tarekegn (2017) found that the collective application of knowledge acquisition methods has a significant and positive impact on the operational performance of selected international NGOs operating in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This underscores the critical role of effective knowledge acquisition in enhancing the effectiveness of humanitarian organizations across various contexts.

In a local context, Osano (2008) conducted a survey among ISPs in Kenya to explore their knowledge acquisition systems. In a related study, Muturi (2021) scrutinized the link between knowledge acquisition practices and the overall performance at the Kenya Revenue Authority. This research emphasizes the wider application and importance of knowledge acquisition across different sectors and institutions, highlighting its role not just in NGOs and business firms, but also in government revenue bodies. Kithuka (2020) sought to investigate how solidarity eastern and central Africa, Kenya's knowledge acquisition techniques, impacted the organization's productivity. Meanwhile, Wanyoike (2020) focused on studying the effects of Knowledge acquisition Strategies on Kenya's Non-Profit Health Organizations. Given the rapid advancement of information technology, the growing demand for knowledgeable human resources, and the challenges faced by humanitarian organizations, this research aimed to answer the following query: What is the impact of KM strategies on the performance of humanitarian organizations in Marsabit County?

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Literature

The Knowledge-Based View (KBV) is a theoretical construct that underlines the significance of knowledge and knowledge-related assets in establishing and maintaining a competitive edge for organizations. As per Grant (1996), the KBV proposes that a firm's capacity to generate, gather, and apply knowledge is a principal determinant of its marketplace success. This theory, therefore, highlights that knowledge is not just an asset, but a strategic tool that can be leveraged to drive growth and competitiveness within an organization. This is in contrast to earlier theories of competitive advantage, which focused primarily on tangible resources such as physical assets, financial capital, and labor. KBV emphasizes that intangible assets, such as knowledge, skills, and capabilities, are equally important in creating and sustaining competitive advantage.

The knowledge-based viewpoint (KBV) of the company sees learning as its most crucial resource from a strategic standpoint. Although learning-based assets are often hard to replicate and socially complicated, its proponents contend that diverse knowledge bases and capacities across businesses are the real drivers of long-term competitive advantage and broad corporate success (Dahiya, Ring, & Watson, 2022). Many factors, such as organizational hierarchy and personality, methodologies, timetables, archives, frameworks, and the workforce, all play a role in the incubation and transmission of this knowledge (Dahiya *et al.*, 2022).

One of the central tenets of KBV is that knowledge is a complex and multifaceted resource that can take many different forms. As Dahiya *et al.*, (2022) notes, knowledge can include technical know-how, customer insights, and organizational culture. Firms that are able to develop and leverage knowledge-related resources are better equipped to innovate, adapt to changing market conditions, and outperform their rivals. In order to cultivate and utilize knowledge-related assets, organizations must foster a culture that encourages knowledge-sharing. Additionally, it's crucial for them to invest in knowledge management systems. These systems streamline the process of knowledge creation, transfer, and dissemination across the organization. By fostering an environment conducive to sharing and managing knowledge, organizations can better leverage their intellectual resources, enhancing productivity, innovation, and overall competitiveness. As Grant and Phene (2022) suggests, KBV emphasizes the importance of learning and continuous improvement, and argues that firms that are able to learn faster and more effectively than their competitors will be better positioned to succeed.

As knowledge is the most profitable, unique, and fixed asset of all, theorists claim that the knowledge-based viewpoint of the organization is a typical progression of the asset-based approach. The core principles of this perspective suggest that organizations leverage knowledge in their product and service offerings; they intentionally value information as a crucial asset. Additionally, it posits that knowledge is primarily created and owned by individuals, not organizations. The existence of firms is justified by the fact that industries lack the capacity to structure and facilitate learning within individual specializations. In other words, firms serve as aggregators and organizers of individual knowledge, creating a shared pool of specialized wisdom that can be deployed towards achieving collective goals. This is an administrative task performed inside the business. A hypothetical company with an asset-based viewpoint is born out of the recognition that knowledge is a valuable resource (Hughes, Powell, Chung and Mellahi, 2017). The understanding of organizations as diverse entities housing knowledge also supports the argument that the Knowledge-Based View is an extension of the Resource-Based View. This perspective sees organizations as knowledge repositories composed of a variety of skills and experiences (Mitra, O'Regan, & Sarpong, 2017). Thus, the uniqueness of an organization doesn't just stem from its tangible resources, but importantly from its intangible assets—its knowledge base and the ability to utilize and manage this knowledge effectively.

Knowledge management, as defined by Mitra, O'Regan, and Sarpong (2017), seeks to harness an organization's collective intelligence and put it to use where it will have the most impact. This is due to the firm's information-based approach, which suggests that the source of an advantage resides in the industry. According to the principle, every organization's knowledge is susceptible to imitation or transmission (Lungu, 2019). Due to the industry's

unparalleled understanding, humanitarian groups are also at danger in this situation. The uniqueness of such knowledge can significantly impact various aspects of the organization including its image, reputation, copyright, profitability, market share, and overall performance. Implementing a Knowledge-Based View (KBV) in knowledge management falls under the scope of human resources, which plays a crucial role in facilitating the development, sharing, and application of knowledge within the organization. The HR function can leverage the KBV to optimize talent management, foster a culture of learning and knowledge sharing, and thereby enhance organizational effectiveness. The main finding of this study's premise is that knowledge application, not only knowledge ownership, is the key source of organizational performance.

2.2 Knowledge acquisition and organizational performance

The process of knowledge acquisition holds a significant place for organizations aiming to bolster their performance. Studies indicate that knowledge acquisition can augment a firm's innovative capacity, aid in the development of new products and services, and enhance operational efficiency (Jansen et al., 2005; Park & Kim, 2018). This suggests that acquiring new knowledge is not just about absorbing information, but also about how it can be effectively leveraged to drive innovation, create value, and improve overall business processes. In today's knowledge-driven economy, organizations that continuously learn and adapt are more likely to maintain their competitive edge and achieve long-term success. Knowledge acquisition, as defined by De Bruin (2019), is the process of acquiring, developing, and honing knowledge, skills, and expertise through the learning of new information, the application of skills, and the creation of cognitive processes that permit the incorporation of new knowledge into existing knowledge structures. The acquisition of pertinent knowledge can be accomplished through various means as highlighted by Mbah & Maduafor (2022). These include conducting external surveys, purchasing companies rich in knowledge, sending existing employees for specialized training, hiring new employees with required expertise, procuring valuable data sets, monitoring technological advancements, acquiring patented processes, and gathering information through competitive intelligence. Each of these strategies offers unique benefits and can play a crucial role in enhancing an organization's knowledge base, thereby improving its decision-making capabilities, operational efficiency, and overall competitiveness. Interaction, feedback, creativity, brainstorming, and benchmarking are all strategies and activities that aid in knowledge development. The concept is characterized by six crucial elements: valuing employee attitudes and ideas while promoting their skills development; maintaining a robust financial reporting system; and adopting a market-oriented approach that involves active collection of customer and industry information. These factors underline the importance of both human resources and market awareness in fostering a conducive environment for growth and improvement within an organization. It emphasizes the role of employees' ideas and attitudes, financial transparency, and market intelligence in driving organizational success. Also, keeping an eye out for market shifts, collaborating with overseas clients, and gathering data from market research.

Gareth and White (2017) conducted study in the United Kingdom (UK) to determine how Pmapping may be used for knowledge acquisition and how this has affected how businesses operate there. The investigation included longitudinal action research (LAR), in which three firms participated in a Pmapping to improve business processes. The researchers gathered data using surveys and analyzed it using descriptive statistics. The investigation revealed that knowledge acquisition significantly influenced the efficiency of business processes in the UK.

Wang and Hu (2020) undertook a study in China with the aim of discerning the relationship between knowledge acquisition, innovation, and organizational success. The investigation utilized a cross-sectional survey research methodology and a validated research model. The data for this study was gathered from 89 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) situated in Jiangsu province, China. The study provided valuable insights into how knowledge acquisition and innovation strategies can influence the performance and competitiveness of SMEs in a rapidly evolving business environment. The research concluded that information sharing, both explicit and tacit, significantly influenced the rate of innovation and the company's bottom line. Although tacit knowledge has a significant impact on operational success, explicit knowledge exchange showed a strong correlation with financial performance. The present research will use a descriptive research approach and will concentrate on learning more about the effectiveness of humanitarian organizations in Kenya.

In a research by Shodiya (2021), the impact of long-term knowledge accumulation on business efficiency was examined. It was discovered that there was a robust connection between long-term knowledge accumulation and profitability for manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. It was also shown that there was a somewhat significant association between continuous knowledge acquisition and organizational productivity. In addition, the research found that firms in that area who actively pursued knowledge expansion saw their market share grow significantly as a result. The present research aims to determine if there are any similarities between the findings from the humanitarian sector and the manufacturing industry, which is a separate sector from the humanitarian sector.

Kiarie Kamau did research in Kenya titled "Impact of Knowledge Management Capabilities on the Performance of the United Nations Office for Project Services" (2021). The research aimed to determine how UNOPS' effectiveness was impacted by its knowledge management capabilities. The study used a descriptive research methodology. 386 UNOPS workers were the primary respondents in the study. This study used questionnaires to acquire primary data. It was determined that there was a very substantial positive relationship between knowledge gain and output at UNOPS.

3.0 Materials and Methods

3.1 The materials

This research employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative research techniques within the same study. This method enabled the collection of both statistical and descriptive data, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. As outlined by

Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), a mixed-methods approach involves the integration of quantitative and qualitative data, methods, and perspectives within a single investigation. This approach allowed researchers to capitalize on the strengths of each while compensating for their individual weaknesses. The selection of this approach was informed by its capacity to cross-validate results from different methods and its ability to address intricate research questions that cannot be adequately answered using a single methodology.

In this study, the target population was selected from humanitarian organizations which have operation office in Marsabit County. The study focused on 386 employees from the five chosen humanitarian organizations (World Vision, Compassion International Inc., Pastoralist Community Initiative and Development Assistance (PACIDA), Horn of Africa Development Initiative (HODI), and Give Directly Kenya). As they are the top providers of humanitarian aid in the county (Annual NGO Sector Report 2021/22), the five humanitarian organizations have been selected as the unit of observation while 386 employees from the NGOs forms the unit of analysis. Also, their activities and presence are noticeable across the county.

Table 1: Target population

| Categories | Target population | Percent |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Mangers | 45 | 11.7 |
| Supervisors | 112 | 29.0 |
| Field officers | 229 | 59.3 |
| Total | 386 | 100.0 |

Source: (Annual NGO Sector Report 2021/22 Marsabit County)

3.2 Methods

The accuracy of the data was verified, and variables with incomplete or missing data were eliminated. Cases that have more than 20% of their responses missing were not included in the analysis. Outliers should be removed from the data in order to protect the validity and reliability of study results. The 28th edition of the SPSS application was used to examine the data. The process of data analysis included investigation of both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics consisted of distributional measures such as frequencies, mean, standard deviations and percentages. Inferential statistics were computed using Pearson's correlation, and multiple regression analyses to determine the effects of independent variables on the dependent variable. The findings of the analysis were provided in tables with relevant interpretations and discussions. The empirical model below was adopted.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Where; Y = performance of humanitarian organizations

B_0 = Constant

X_1 = knowledge acquisition

ε = Error Term

β_1 = Regression Coefficients of Predictor Variable.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Response Rate

The researcher distributed 112 questionnaires to the selected respondents from humanitarian organizations in Marsabit County. Out of these, 90 were properly completed and returned, resulting in a response rate of 80.4%, which was considered adequate for the analysis. This aligns with Babbie (2010), who indicated that a 70% or higher response rate is regarded as very good.

4.2 Knowledge Acquisition

The researcher established several statements on how knowledge acquisition affected organizational performance in the humanitarian organizations in Marsabit County. Respondents were requested to indicate the extent of their agreement on each statement on a scale of 1 to 5 where; 1= Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3= Neutral; 4= Agree and 5= Strongly agree was used. The findings are indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Knowledge acquisition

| | N | Min | Max | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|----|-----|-----|-------|----------------|
| Employees obtain new knowledge from external sources (e.g. through seminars, journals, expert networks, business partners, and clients). | 90 | 1 | 5 | 4.145 | 0.802 |
| Employees acquire knowledge from written sources (e.g. project documentation, organizational procedures, instructions, and formally documented sources). | 90 | 1 | 5 | 3.821 | 0.816 |
| Employees acquire knowledge from other employees informally from co-workers | 90 | 1 | 5 | 3.470 | 0.566 |
| Knowledge acquisition results in the Development of knowledge | 90 | 1 | 5 | 2.615 | 0.555 |
| Knowledge acquisition facilitates knowledge dissemination | 90 | 1 | 5 | 3.769 | 0.648 |
| Knowledge acquisition facilitates the development and sustenance of expertise | 90 | 1 | 5 | 2.393 | 0.707 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 90 | | | | |

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 2 shows that respondents largely agreed that employees acquire substantial new knowledge from external sources (such as seminars, journals, expert networks, business partners, and clients), with a mean score of 4.145. Additionally, they indicated that employees significantly gain knowledge from written sources (including project documentation, organizational procedures, instructions, and formally documented materials), reflected by a mean score of 3.821. Furthermore, the data suggest that knowledge acquisition promotes knowledge dissemination, as evidenced by a mean score of 3.769.

The respondents also indicated that employees moderately acquire knowledge from other employees informally from co-workers as shown by a mean of 3.470, that knowledge acquisition moderately results in the Development of knowledge as shown by a mean of 2.615, and that knowledge acquisition lowly facilitates development and sustenance of expertise as shown by a mean of 2.393. This suggests that knowledge acquisition significantly allows employees to obtain new knowledge from external sources, written materials, and co-workers, thereby aiding in the development and maintenance of expertise, which in turn impacts the firm's performance. However, the low mean score of 2.393 regarding the development and maintenance of expertise indicates that labor mobility presents a challenge for contemporary organizations and their knowledge management efforts.

These findings are in line with Houessou, Aoudji, and Floquet (2023) who argue that the impact of the use of KMS on explicit knowledge acquisition is critical given that explicit knowledge provides the foundation for and is the precursor of tacit knowledge development. As such, the acquisition of explicit knowledge is a critical component in the development and sustenance of expertise and consequently a firm performance driver. It is under the same premises that this study is founded.

Respondents were asked to identify additional ways in which knowledge acquisition impacts performance. The research data revealed that it enhances focus on human capital and fosters a systematic approach to knowledge acquisition, allowing the organization to optimally utilize this resource and directly boost performance. It also establishes active interpersonal networks, which enhance collaboration and teamwork, and align the organizational culture by promoting an effective knowledge-dissemination strategy. These findings indicate that the Utilization of knowledge significantly influences organizational performance.

4.3 Correlation Results of Study Variables

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to assess the magnitude and direction of the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation matrix of variables under study

| | | Employee performance | Promotion practices |
|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Employment performance | Pearson Correlation | 1 | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|--------|-----|
| | N | 134 | |
| promotion practices | Pearson Correlation | .397** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 134 | 134 |

Source: Researcher (2024)

The results presented in Table 3 revealed that there is a positive and statistically significant correlation between promotion practices and employee performance ($r = 0.397$; $p < 0.01$). According to Orodho (2003), a strong correlation indicates a significant relationship between two or more variables, while a weak or low correlation suggests a minimal connection between the variables.

4.4 Regression Analysis

The research utilized regression analysis to examine the impact of the relationship between independent variables (Knowledge Acquisition) and the dependent variable (Organizational Performance). The results of the Model Summary, ANOVA, and Regression Coefficients are presented below.

Model Summary

The findings of the coefficient of correlation R and adjusted coefficient of determination R² are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted Square | R | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-----------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1 | .897 ^a | 0.805 | 0.801 | | 1.479 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge acquisition

The findings in Table 4 show that the coefficient of correlation R was 0.897 an indication that the variables were highly correlated. The findings pointed out that adjusted R² was 0.801 which translates to 80.1% an indication that changes in organizational performance were influenced by the following independent variables; knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage, knowledge dissemination, and knowledge Utilization. The residual of 19.9% can be explained by other factors affecting organizational performance that were not carried out in the current study.

ANOVA

The comparison of F Calculated and F Critical was carried out by the researcher to test for the strength of the overall regression model. An ANOVA was carried out at a 95% significance level. The findings are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: ANOVA

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------------------|----------------|----|-------------|---------|-------|
| Regression | 1460.105 | 4 | 365.026 | 238.006 | .000b |
| Residual | 354.281 | 95 | 1.534 | | |
| Total | 1814.386 | 89 | | | |

Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge Acquisition

Dependent Variable: Performance

The finding in Table 5 shows that F Calculated was 238.006 and F Critical was 2.4107. This shows that F Calculated > F Critical (238.006 > 2.4107) is an indication that the overall regression model was sufficient for the study. The probability value $p = 0.00$ which is less than 0.05 an indication that at least one independent variable significantly influenced organizational performance.

Regression Coefficients

To determine the individual influence of dependent variables on organizational performance, the following coefficients were generated. The findings are indicated in Table 6.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---|------|
|-------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---|------|

| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
|-----------------------|--------|------------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1 (Constant) | -4.553 | 0.328 | | 6.535 | 0.000 |
| Knowledge acquisition | 0.0630 | 0.038 | 0.119 | 1.155 | 0.000 |

a. Dependent Variable: organizational performance

The resultant equation becomes: $Y = -4.553 + 0.063X_1$

Where: Y= Organizational Performance in the humanitarian organization in Marsabit county

X1= Knowledge Acquisition

The findings show that while holding other factors constant, organizational performance would be at -4.553. A unit increase in knowledge acquisition while holding other factors constant, organizational performance would be at 0.063. The findings pointed out that knowledge acquisition had a p-value of $0.00 < 0.05$ an indication that the variable significantly influenced organizational performance in the humanitarian organizations in Marsabit County. This agrees with a study by Ogendo (2014) who stated that knowledge transfer has a significant effect on organizational performance. Strategy content has a significant intervening influence on the relationship between knowledge transfer and organizational performance.

5.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that knowledge acquisition positively influenced the organizational performance of humanitarian organizations in Marsabit County. This was attributed to the following factors; Humanitarian organizations patented new ideas and knowledge it created and encouraged functional heads to champion the acquisition of new knowledge, staff learned to carry out their job by dissemination duties, respondents indicated that humanitarian organizations planned for seminars to disseminate knowledge on current workplace and staffs were trained on different tasks on different job to disseminate knowledge. Humanitarian organizations gained insight into running work operations from the created knowledge, used knowledge collected to improve their internal processes, and used the generated knowledge to improve staff management at the workplace. The service board had a proper mechanism for storing its work procedures and had adequate servers for storing soft copies of work procedures /manuals.

5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that humanitarian organizations in Marsabit County ought to talk with technical experts in specific fields for knowledge acquisition and employees ought to be valued. New knowledge ought to be created at the organization in an organized formal training session. Humanitarian organizations ought to adopt new ideas and knowledge should be created to encourage functional heads to champion the acquisition of new knowledge. Humanitarian organizations ought to initialize new mechanisms to manage knowledge content created for future use and officers should be taken on benchmarking visits to learn and adopt new ideas.

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