INFLUENCE OF KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION PRACTICES ON PERFORMANCE OF COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN MERU COUNTY GOVERNMENT.

ABSTRACT

Public infrastructure projects have progressed at a moderate rate since independence. The information provided by the Kenyan government in 2014 regarding their vision for 2030, aiming to make Kenya an internationally competitive and prosperous nation, shows that the slow progress in implementing public infrastructure projects has resulted in inadequate road networks, underdeveloped public facilities, a lack of connectivity between rural areas and industrial hubs, insufficient measures to mitigate challenges in agricultural regions, and a decline in formerly thriving industries. County governments face a significant challenge in effectively utilizing knowledge management within project management to maximize their outcomes. This research aimed to ascertain whether knowledge acquisition practices influences performance of county development projects in Meru County Government. The research was conducted in a descriptive manner. It targeted a total of 139 respondents from nine Sub-counties in Meru County, including members of county assemblies (MCAs), sub-county departmental heads, project management committee members, and county chief officers. A sample of 103 individuals was selected from the population to participate in the survey. Structured questionnaires were used as the primary research tool to collect data from the population. The responses were coded and categorized accordingly. The data collected was inputted into SPSS 27.0 and MS Excel for further computational analysis. The study revealed a strong correlation coefficient, with an R value of 0.897, indicating a high level of correlation between the variables. The adjusted R-squared value, which was 0.801, suggested that variations in county development projects were significantly influenced by the independent variable. The study's findings suggest that knowledge acquisition had a positive impact on the performance of the county development projects in Meru County. To enhance this positive influence, the study recommends that the public service engage with technical experts in specific fields for knowledge creation, emphasize the value of employees, organize formal training sessions for new knowledge creation, plan seminars for knowledge sharing, and ensure that staff members are trained in diverse tasks to facilitate information exchange. Furthermore, it is recommended that training programs encompass a wide range of tasks and duties to promote knowledge sharing among staff.

Key words: Knowledge acquisition,

Introduction

Background of the study

Knowledge Management encompasses the activities of generating, storing, and disseminating valuable information, expertise, and understanding within and across communities of individuals in organizations who share similar needs (Tong, Tak & Wong, 2015). According to Yang (2010),

knowledge management involves the development of approaches, tools, techniques, and organizational values that facilitate the exchange of knowledge among individuals and the acquisition, processing, and utilization of this knowledge to enhance and innovate activities. It serves as a bridge between internal and external information within a company, ensuring that the right information reaches the appropriate recipients when needed. Leveraging unique insights and information effectively within an organization has the potential to yield a sustainable competitive advantage, ultimately leading to improved organizational performance (Kim, Lee, Chun &Benbasat, 2014).

Knowledge encompasses distinctive collections of information and insights that empower organizations to effectively address their customers' needs. The accumulation and creation of a unique knowledge repository within an organization play a crucial role in setting it apart from its competitors within the industry. To fully capitalize on the value of the knowledge it possesses, a company must establish appropriate frameworks that facilitate effective knowledge management. This entails storing knowledge in a manner that ensures easy retrieval whenever necessary (Birasnav, 2014). Given the rapid advancements in technology and the intricate nature of organizational environments, businesses are increasingly compelled to embrace knowledge management practices to attain their predefined objectives (Donate & de Pablo, 2015).

Knowledge management presents an opportunity for organizations to adapt their operations to the dynamic business environment in order to survive (Kim et al., 2014). The effectiveness and efficiency of an organization depend on its access to knowledge, as it has a significant impact on overall performance (Liebowitz & Frank, 2016). Recognizing knowledge as a valuable asset in the functioning of a firm, as highlighted by Becerra-Fernandez &Sabherwal (2014), is equally important as organizational capital. This is because knowledge affects the performance and sustainability of the organization within a highly competitive environment. However, studies indicate that public organizations, unlike their private sector counterparts, are less inclined to implement knowledge management principles (Arora, 2011). This is particularly noticeable in Kenya, where the appreciation and integration of knowledge management are still in early stages compared to Western and Asian economies (Mwai, 2012).

There are various aspects of knowledge management that act as indicators to assess an organization's performance. One of these indicators is knowledge creation, which involves making newly generated knowledge accessible, amplifying it, and integrating it into the

organization's knowledge system, as defined by Ceptureanu&Ceptureanu (2010). The process of knowledge creation encompasses two primary levels: interaction among individuals, groups, and the organization, as well as the interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge, known as the Socialization, Externalization, Combination, and Internalization (SECI) process, as described by Binbin Jiangstao, Mingxing, and Tongjian (2012). This knowledge can be shared through observation or imitation between apprentices and experts.

Another crucial indicator of knowledge management is knowledge sharing, which significantly impacts organizational performance. Berchicci (2013) explains that many organizational issues stem from an inefficiency in utilizing knowledge to address various operational challenges. Due to knowledge gaps in terms of expertise, it is essential for organization members to focus on enhancing knowledge sharing, enabling younger employees to learn valuable skills that contribute to the organization's progress. Team interactions, as suggested by Crampton and Hinds (2014), are a valuable tool utilized by some organizations to facilitate the sharing of individual perspectives, information, and expertise within teams. The exchange of unique knowledge not only helps capture market share but also aids in reducing local competition in other locations.

Knowledge application is another indicator that refers to the process of transforming knowledge from theory to practice. Knowledge application according to Beloglazov and Buyya (2012), can result in an improvement in the decision-making process and can boost the problem-solving techniques. Also, knowledge application is seen to be effective as it aids in the development of shared mental models which can assist members of an organization carry out their tasks with ease. Knowledge storage on the other hand involves storing information in a central location that is readily accessible to those members of an organization who can use for everyday tasks. Stored information can be stored in the format of soft and hard copies like in the case of college and university repositories. It is also important to regularly update records for easy and faster retrieval (Alegre, Sengupta &Lapiedra, 2013).

During his research conducted on Nigerian campuses, the researcher observed the dynamic nature of knowledge management effectiveness. Similarly, in South Africa, Knowledge Management has been recognized as a valuable asset and a means of gaining a competitive edge for many institutions (Chigada, 2014). Another study conducted in Ghana, focusing on the factors that facilitate Knowledge Management implementation in the construction industry,

found that crucial environmental enablers such as culture, infrastructure, and technology play a vital role in successful knowledge management implementation (Lanme, 2018).

Public organizations worldwide exhibit a significant level of bureaucracy, resulting in delays in decision-making processes. This is done to ensure the appropriate allocation of public funds and foster accountability (Esterhuizen, Schutte & Du Toit, 2012). Consequently, numerous highly skilled professionals have accumulated extensive experience in their respective fields while occupying specific positions within a particular department for extended periods of time. Organizations aim to enhance efficiency through knowledge management by promoting information sharing across various levels of government and international borders. This entails the development of new systems and the elimination of outdated ones, ultimately improving overall performance and capitalizing on an extensive and easily accessible knowledge base. By embracing this approach, organizations enhance accountability, minimize risks by making informed decisions, and expedite problem-solving mechanisms through streamlined access to integrated and transparent information across organizational boundaries. Furthermore, this facilitates the delivery of superior and cost-effective services while maintaining collaborative partnerships with the private sector (Maravilhas& Martins, 2018).

County development projects rely on knowledge to drive their operations. Implementing knowledge management can offer an opportunity to improve the performance of these projects (Mason & Pauleen, 2003). Effective knowledge management practices are crucial for ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in their operations. For standards organizations, prioritizing knowledge management is essential to strengthen their operations, ensuring the delivery of high-quality products and services to customers without any adverse effects (Maravilhas& Martins, 2018). Consequently, this study will at examining the impact of knowledge management on the performance of county development projects in Meru County, Kenya

Knowledge management encounters various challenges in terms of creation, transfer, and distribution. These obstacles particularly hinder the organization's ability to convert tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge (Maravilhas& Martins, 2018). One common constraint to knowledge sharing is the presence of vertical authority structures, which introduce unnecessary bureaucratic processes due to the hierarchical nature of the industry (Meihami&Meihami, 2014). Other constraints include a lack of autonomy in learning, ineffective systemic knowledge

capture, insufficient innovative training mechanisms, inadequate investment in IT infrastructure, and limited horizontal integration.

In the local context of Kenya, knowledge is highly regarded as a valuable asset for organizations. According to Evans (2003), knowledge is emphasized as a crucial tool that organizations can possess. Evans concluded that tangible resources tend to diminish in value when reused within a firm, whereas knowledge expands and improves with continuous reuse. The models of Knowledge Management and the Knowledge-Based View suggest that organizations can differentiate themselves from others by focusing on knowledge.

A knowledge-based firm becomes a significant asset by adopting and implementing Knowledge Management strategies. In the case of Container Freight Stations, these strategies enable firms to stand out and excel. In order to enhance knowledge acquisition and improve their overall performance, county development projects must actively acquire knowledge, distribute it among their members, and effectively utilize it.

Statement of the Problem

The significance of county government's efforts in advancing projects cannot be underestimated, as these initiatives bring services closer to the community and enhance formal cultural activities. This is evident from various academic discussions on the county government's role in various social settings (Bordum, 2018). Consequently, certain studies such as Kitsios and Kamariotou (2017) have noted that county development projects persist in meeting the diverse and expanding societal needs, despite facing resource limitations in this sector. However, county governments still face challenges in achieving satisfactory performance in their development projects, which could be attributed to ineffective leadership and subsequently subpar results, even as society increasingly demands sustainable services.

In a study conducted by Kariuki (2018), it was discovered that the implementation of county government development projects in numerous developing countries, particularly in Africa, was lacking in terms of performance. While some studies have explored the connection between performance and social factors, there has been limited attention given to the relationship between strategic knowledge management and the performance of county government development projects in Kenya. Additionally, there is a scarcity of research on strategic knowledge management within the context of county government. This research sought to investigate how strategic knowledge management practices, including knowledge acquisition, knowledge

creation initiatives, knowledge sharing practices and knowledge storage and documentation activities influences the performance of county development projects in Kenya, focusing specifically on the Meru County Government.

Research Objective

The research proposed to investigate theinfluence of knowledge acquisition practices on performance of county development projects in Meru County Government.

Scope of the Study

An investigation was conducted at the County Government offices in Meru County to examine how knowledge acquisition, knowledge creation initiatives, knowledge sharing practices and knowledge storage and documentation activities influenced the performance of County Governments Development Projects in Meru County, Kenya. The analysis was based on the Meru County Government projects over the last five years (2018-2022). A total of 139 respondents from nine Sub-counties in Meru County were targeted for this research, including members of county assemblies (MCAs), sub-county departmental heads, project management committee members, and county chief officers (Meru County Government Headquarters, HR Department, (2023). These populations were selected because it was believed that they possessed knowledge and understanding of the project development within the County and were directly involved in strategic change management. Data collection involved the use of questionnaires, and the collected information was evaluated through descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The research relied on the outcomes of the Meru County Government's Development Projects. The analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics and regression analysis during the research period, which took place between June and October 2023. Meru County was chosen for this research due to its history of high strategic knowledge management failures that have had significant financial implications, with an anticipated loss of 15 percent of every shilling spent on development projects (Ministry of Devolution & Planning, 2020). Thus, this selection justifies why Meru County was chosen as the designated case study area.

Literature Review

Theoretical literature review

Knowledge Based View of the Firm

This perspective regards companies as entities that acquire, absorb, develop, and utilize various forms of knowledge. It argues that a company's ability to create wealth primarily relies on its intangible knowledge-based capacities rather than tangible or financial assets. The theory suggests that a company's competitiveness hinges on its capacity to cultivate innovative knowledge-based assets that can be leveraged to develop core competencies. According to Zhao et al. (2019), the internal determination of an organization's knowledge-based capability is influenced by its inclination to acquire knowledge, while external factors such as the operational environment also play a role.

Based on this standpoint, organizations should prioritize the development of their knowledge management capabilities and align them with their organizational objectives. Pandey (2018) explains that an organization's inclination towards knowledge management competencies is determined by its knowledge infrastructure and process capacities. This perspective expands on the resource-based view (RBV) of firms, which perceives a company as a combination of physical and human resources, whereas the knowledge-based view (KBV) identifies human capital, organizational practices, and organizational processes as sources of knowledge.

In a strategic analysis by Takeuchi (2013), the KBV is utilized to demonstrate the significance of knowledge as a driving force behind strategy. The author emphasizes that strategy relies on continuous innovation, human interaction, and the firm's agenda. Meanwhile, Wang and Qu (2020) utilize the KBV to examine the conception of the business model (BM) and elucidate its essence by exploring the active system of implicit and explicit knowledge creation and transmission across boundaries. It is evident that knowledge is not only a crucial asset for a firm but also requires ongoing attention to meet evolving needs within an organization.

However, this theory primarily emphasizes the value of knowledge in enhancing competitiveness and firm performance, but lacks guidance on managing knowledge to achieve desired outcomes. This research aimed to investigate how knowledge can be effectively managed in order to improve the performance of development projects within the county.

Empirical Literature

Knowledge Acquisition and performance

Knowledge acquisition has been defined to refer to a company's ability to recognize, obtain and accrue knowledge that is vital to its running (Alaarj et al., 2017). According to Mills and Smith (2011), acquisition denotes the capability of a business to recognize, obtain and accumulate knowledge, both internal and external that is important to its running. Baytok et al. (2013) articulate that companies obtain knowledge by capturing knowledge that is prevailing in the company by knowledge employees and by outsourcing or purchasing essential information which exits externally. In their operations, counties extract new knowledge by scanning their operating environment to obtain and gather information. This may be achieved externally by sending workers to trainings, seminars and colloquia to acquire fresh knowledge or obtaining reactions from clients and associated agencies. Internally, counties acquire knowledge from their working procedures, databases, reports from meetings and internal documents.

In a study conducted by Waribugo, Ofoegbu, and Akpan (2016) in Nigeria, the researchers aimed to examine the impact of knowledge acquisition on the performance of Nigerian manufacturing firms. The study focused on a sample of 5 firms, with a total of 125 employees initially selected as the target population. However, only 95 of them ultimately participated as respondents. Questionnaires were administered to collect data, which was then analyzed using SPSS. The study's findings indicated that knowledge acquisition plays a crucial role in product innovation for manufacturing firms. Specifically, the training of employees, acquisition of knowledge through research, and research on new services were found to have a positive influence on the firms' performance.

Similarly, Alkhazali, Bakar, and Halim (2017) conducted a study in Jordan to investigate the role of knowledge acquisition in enhancing performance and entrepreneurial orientation in commercial banks. The study adopted a descriptive research design and focused on 13 banks. Data was collected through self-administered questionnaires from managers and their respective assistants. The researchers employed descriptive statistics, factor analysis, and regression analysis for data analysis. The study's findings revealed that knowledge acquisition, through training seminars, research on new services, and general research, enhances employees' competency and improves services in commercial banks. Moreover, the study highlighted that knowledge acquisition and entrepreneurial orientation have a positive impact on the performance of commercial banks.

A study by Alaarj et al. (2016) on how trust intermediates the impacts of knowledge management competencies on a firm's performance established that knowledge acquisition possesses a noteworthy influence on performance of an organization. Samir (2020) studied the manner in which knowledge management affects the performance of SMEs in Egypt and found the existence of a significant effect of knowledge acquisition on organizational performance. In a study by Abdavi et al. (2016) on how knowledge management aspects affects improvement of performance of success of customer relationship management in sports, the findings illustrated that acquisition of knowledge management directly and considerably influences the success of customer relationship management.

In Kenya, a study was conducted by Mtawali and Kiiru (2018) to explore the impact of knowledge acquisition on the performance of micro-finance banks. The research employed a descriptive research design, with a target population represented by 111 respondents. From the sample, 87 respondents were deemed suitable for the study. The researchers utilized semi-structured questionnaires to collect data, which was subsequently analyzed using SPSS. The study's findings suggested a correlation between knowledge acquisition and performance, as training in knowledge acquisition was found to enhance resource utilization and improve employee competence. Ultimately, the study concluded that knowledge acquisition is crucial for organizations to attain competitive advantages and enhance overall performance.

Conceptual Framework

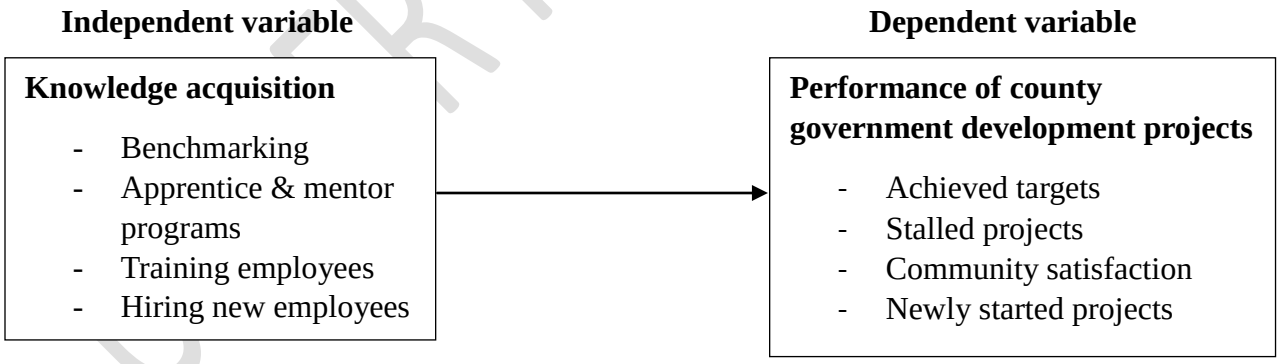

Figure 1: conceptual framework

Research design

According to Asenahabi, (2019) research design refers to the overall plan or structure that guides a research study or investigation. It outlines the methods, procedures, and techniques that

researchers use to collect and analyze data in order to answer research questions or test hypotheses.

In this study, a descriptive research design was utilized to explore and present information in the future tense. According to Akhtar (2016), descriptive research aims to identify and present the characteristics of items in their current state. It sought to answer questions related to who, what, where, when, or how much in the context of the situation under investigation. One of the preferred approaches, as suggested by Heppner et al. (2017), is a descriptive survey design, which effectively captures and displays accurate information through the collection of data in human settings. By employing a descriptive design, we will thoroughly examine the impact of strategic knowledge management on the performance of County development projects in Meru County, Kenya. This research method enabled the researcher to extrapolate the findings to a larger population.

Target population

A population is defined as a group of distinct constituents that can be either limited or limitless and immeasurable (Dahabreh& Hernán, 2019). According to Diniz and Amado (2017), a population encompasses the entire collection of objects or items that are of interest for investigation. Diniz and Amado (2017) further characterize a population as a gathering of individuals, cases, or things with observable attributes. Hazzi and Maldaon (2017) describe a population as comprising individuals, organizations, objects, events, and even communities or groupings of items under study. The research targeted a total of 139 respondents from nine Sub-counties in Meru County. They included members of county assemblies (MCAs), sub-county departmental heads, project management committee members, and county chief officers (Meru County Government Headquarters, HR Department, 2022). This population was selected because the researcher believes they are the ones conversant with the project development within the County. They were also directly involved in strategic knowledge management within the County.

Sampling Procedures and Techniques

Sampling techniques refer to the methods employed to choose a subset of individuals or observations from a larger population. These methods find wide application in fields such as statistics, research, and data analysis. Their purpose is to make inferences and draw conclusions about the entire population based on the characteristics of the selected sample.

A sampling strategy outlines how examples are selected for examination within a group. According to Leuthold and Thomas (2015), there are two types of sampling procedures: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling, including random sampling and cluster sampling designs, is commonly preferred because it employs random selection, ensuring that every instance in the target population has an equal chance of being chosen. In contrast, non-probability sampling techniques like purposive and convenience sampling introduce sample bias (Huang & Beck, 2018). Hence, the study used a stratified sampling technique to determine the sample size from each category. Stratified sampling is appropriate for the study since the target population is diverse, allowing every respondent to have an opportunity to participate.

Research Instruments

Piloting involves conducting a preliminary test of the questionnaire by administering it to a group that closely resembles the actual population intended for the research (Faber & Fonseca, 2018). Research reliability, as defined by Hazzi and Maldaon (2017), refers to determining whether the research accurately achieved its intended objectives or produced reliable findings. Pilot research aims to identify flaws in the research design and instruments, while also providing a screening phase for sample selection (Hazzi&Maldaon, 2017). In this particular study, a pilot group of ten individuals from a neighboring county, Tharaka Nithi County, were selected to assess the reliability of the research instrument. According to the general guideline (Cooper & Schindler, 2011; cited in Hazzi& Maldon, 2017), the pilot test should constitute 10% of the total sample. However, the data from the pilot test was not included in the final analysis. As part of the pilot project, the research instrument underwent a pre-testing process. The clarity of the research tools was improved to enhance their validity and reliability for the respondents. The pilot study allowed the researcher to become familiar with the study and its procedures, as well as identify necessary modifications. The findings from the pilot study assisted the author in addressing any discrepancies in the tools and ensuring that they accurately measure the intended aspects.

Data Analysis Techniques and Procedures

Response Rate

The researcher distributed a total of 102 questionnaires to all the selected study participants.

Out of this questionnaires 95 were dully filled and returned to the researcher. This gave a response rate of 93.1% which is deemed sufficient for the study. This conforms Babbie (2010) who stated that a response rate of 70% an above is deemed as very good.

Reliability Test

In this research, the reliability of the study's instruments was assessed using the Cronbach Alpha test. This evaluation aimed to ascertain whether the questionnaires accurately measured their intended aspects. According to Fowler (2013), a Cronbach Coefficient exceeding 0.7 indicates the instruments' reliability.

Respondent Demographic Information

The researcher aimed to gather basic background details from the survey participants to assess their suitability for inclusion in the study. The demographic information of the respondents encompassed their gender, educational background, and tenure of employment within the County. The results are subsequently outlined as follows.

Gender of the Respondents

The test aims to determine the gender type of the study respondents. This was to ensure that responders were treated equally regardless of their sex. Table summarizes the findings.

Table 1: Gender of the Respondents

		Frequency	**Percent**
Valid	Male	54	56.8
	Female	41	43.2
	Total	95	100.0

The findings in Table 1 shows that 54 (56.8%) were male while 41 (43.2%) were female. This shows that all genders were included thus provided a good representation for the study. This concur with Magliozzi et al. (2016) who noted that a ratio of at least 1:2 in either gender representation in the study is representative enough.

Age Bracket of the Respondents

To ensure a diverse range of perspectives on different subjects, participants were categorized based on their age groups. This approach aimed to capture varied viewpoints across different generations. The research findings are presented in table .

Table 2: Age Bracket of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Below 25years	5	5.7
	25-30 years	23	23.9
	31-35 years	12	12.5
	36-40 years	18	19.3
	41years and above	37	38.6
	Total	95	100.0

The data presented in Table 2 indicates a diverse distribution of respondents across various age brackets. Specifically, the majority, constituting 38.6%, were above the age of 41, followed by 23.9% in the 25-30 age range, 19.3% aged between 36-40, 12.5% falling within the 31-35 age group, and a smaller proportion of 5.7% below the age of 25. This underscores the study's inclusion of participants from a wide range of age groups.

Level of Education Attained

The level of education determines one's personal acceptance/understanding of certain situations. To establish their capacity to reply to the research questions, respondents were asked to identify their educational qualifications. The findings are as shown in Figure 2.

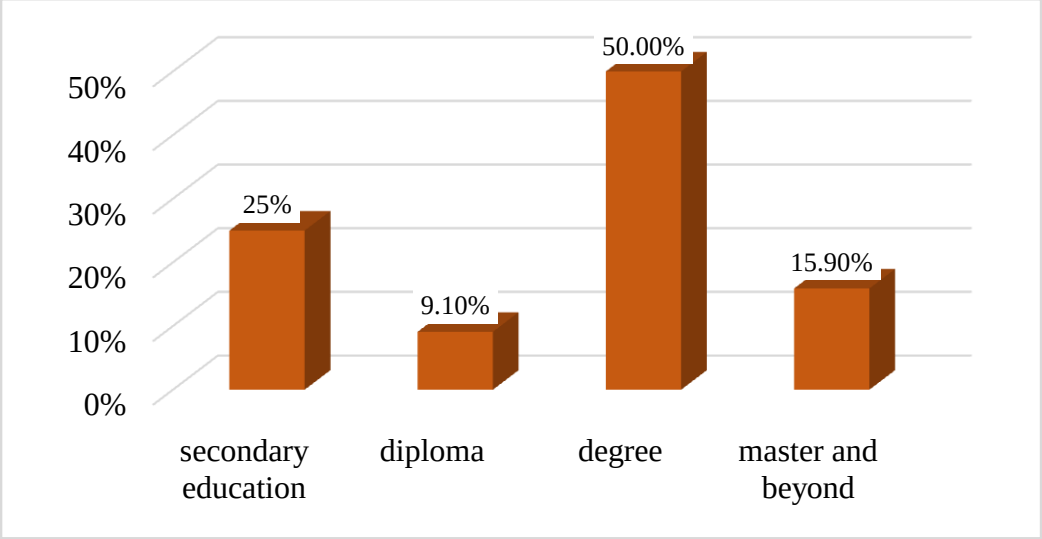

Figure 2: Level of Education Attained

Findings from figure illustrates that the majority of the participants possessed a bachelor's degree, comprising 50% of the sample. The second-largest group had completed secondary

school, accounting for 25%. Respondents with post-graduate master's degrees or higher constituted 15.9%, while those holding diplomas made up 9.1% of the total. These results suggest that the participants were highly educated, indicating their capacity to respond proficiently to research inquiries.

Respondents' Length of Work

The research finds out the respondents working experience at their respective sub-counties development projects in order to determine the level to which they may be relied upon to conclude the research problem. The findings are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Respondents' Length of Work

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	5-10 Months	15	15.9
	1- 5 years	38	39.8
	Over 5 years	42	44.3
	Total	**95**	**100.0**

According to the data presented in Table 3, a significant portion of the participants, accounting for 44.3%, had professional experience exceeding 5 years. Additionally, 39.8% had a tenure ranging from 1 to 5 years, while 15.9% had worked between 5 and 10 months. These findings indicate that a substantial number of respondents had dedicated substantial time to project development in the county. Consequently, their insights and information could be considered reliable for this study.

Descriptive Analysis of Study Variables

Knowledge acquisition and performance

The first objective of the study was to assess the influence of knowledge acquisition practices on performance of county development projects in Meru County Government. To this effect the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each of the given statements on knowledge acquisition in their county. A five point likert scale of 1-5 was used, where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree. The findings were as in Table4;

Table4 : Knowledge acquisition and Performance

Statements	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
The county government sponsors employees to attend relevant seminars and workshops	95	1	5	3.66	0.699
New knowledge is acquired in the county by training employees	95	1	5	3.71	10.901
Training of employees equips them with new skills in the county	95	1	5	3.86	0.716
New knowledge is acquisition through market research in our county	95	1	5	2.78	0.831
Market research helps us to gather timely information on customer needs	95	1	5	2.71	0.811
Valid N (LISTWISE)	95				

According to the table, respondents affirmed that the county government supports employees in attending relevant seminars and workshops, and imparts new knowledge through employee training, enhancing their skills with a mean score of 3.66, 3.71, and 3.86 respectively. However, respondents expressed neutrality regarding whether market research in their county leads to new knowledge acquisition or aids in timely gathering of customer needs, with mean scores of 2.78 and 2.71 respectively. These results suggest that the Meru county government actively promotes knowledge acquisition through employee development and research. This aligns with Muhuya's (2016) findings, indicating that knowledge acquisition is facilitated through job training and educating employees about new products, ultimately enhancing organizational performance.

Inferential statistics

A multiple linear regression analysis was employed to assess the influence of knowledge management practices on performance of county development projects in Meru County Government. The results and outcomes from the Model Summary, ANOVA, and Regression Coefficient sections are detailed in the subsequent sections.

Model Summary

The findings of coefficient of correlation R and adjusted coefficient of determination R^2 are shown in Table5.

Table5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.897[a]	0.805	0.801	1.148

a. Predictors: (Constant), knowledge acquisition

The results presented in the table reveal a strong correlation between the variables, with a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.897, signifying a high level of correlation. Additionally, the adjusted R-squared value of 0.801, equivalent to 80.1%, suggests that alterations in the performance of county development projects in the Meru County Government can be 80.1% attributed to knowledge acquisition. It's worth noting that the remaining 19.9% of the variability in performance can be attributed to factors beyond the scope of this study that impact county development project performance.

ANOVA

The comparison of $F_{Calculated}$ and $F_{Critical}$ were carried out by the researcher to test for the strength of the overall regression model. An ANOVA was carried out at 95% significance level. The findings are shown in Table6.

Table 6: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1460.105	4	365.026	238.006	.000[b]
Residual	354.281	91	1.534		
Total	1814.386	95			

Predictors: (Constant), knowledge acquisition

Dependent Variable: Performance of county development projects.

The results presented in Table6 indicate that the calculated F-value was 238.006, surpassing the critical F-value of 2.4107. This suggests that the overall regression model used in the study was statistically significant. Additionally, the probability value (p) was found to be less than 0.05,

specifically p=0.00, implying that the independent variable had a significant impact on Performance of county development projects.

Regression Coefficients

In order to determine individual influence of dependent variables on Performance of county development projects, the following coefficients were generated. The findings are indicated in Table7.

Table7: Regression Coefficients

Model		**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-4.553	0.804	0.715	6.488	0.000
	Knowledge acquisition	0.063	0.098	0.017	-1.932	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of county development projects

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

Where: Y= Organizational Performance in the Public Service Sector Organizations of Kenya

X_1= Knowledge acquisition

The results demonstrate that, when the factoris held constant, county development project performance would be at -4.553. Moreover, a one-unit increase in knowledge acquisition, would lead to a performance increase of 0.063 in county development projects. These findings indicate that knowledge acquisition significantly influences the performance of county development projects in the county government of Meru, as evidenced by a p-value of 0.00, which is less than the threshold of 0.05. This aligns with the findings of Ogendo (2014), who also highlighted the significant impact of knowledge transfer on organizational performance.

Summary of the Results

The study aimed to explore, the influence of knowledge acquisition practices on performance of county development projects with a focus on the Meru County Government. The research confirmed that the practice of knowledge acquisition, as part of knowledge management, had a

positive and substantial influence on the performance of county development projects. According to the respondents, there was agreement that the county supported its employees in attending relevant seminars and workshops, facilitating the acquisition of new knowledge within the organization through employee training. This training was seen as a means to equip employees with fresh skills.

However, respondents expressed neutrality regarding whether new knowledge was generated through market research within their county or if market research effectively aided in obtaining timely information on customer needs. This suggests that the Meru County government actively embraced knowledge acquisition through employee development initiatives and research, although the effectiveness of market research in creating new knowledge or gathering timely customer information remained uncertain.

Conclusion

The study's findings affirm that knowledge acquisition positively contributed to the success of county development projects in Meru County. This success can be attributed to several factors: the county authority took measures to patent new ideas and knowledge, and fostered a culture where departmental leaders actively promoted the generation of fresh knowledge. Additionally, staff members adopted a collaborative approach by sharing responsibilities, and they received training across different tasks to facilitate knowledge sharing.

The county gained valuable insights for efficient operations from the knowledge created, leveraging it to enhance internal processes and elevate staff management within the workplace. Furthermore, the county government demonstrated adeptness in preserving work procedures, maintaining ample server capacity for safeguarding digital copies of work procedures and manuals.

Recommendations

The study offers a set of recommendations for the county government to enhance knowledge management and its positive impact on project performance:

The county should engage with technical experts in specific fields to facilitate knowledge creation, and employees should be recognized for their contributions.Organized formal training sessions should be employed as a means of creating new knowledge within the county government.

The county government should embrace new ideas and encourage departmental leaders to play an active role in promoting the creation of fresh knowledge.New mechanisms should be introduced to effectively manage knowledge content for future use, and officers should participate in benchmarking visits to acquire and adopt innovative ideas.

The sharing of new developments should be facilitated through internal memos, and employees should gain a clear understanding of their respective roles within their job assignments.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The current study on the effect of knowledge acquisition practices on performance of county development projects in Meru County government, accounted for 80.1% of the variations in project performance. To gain a more comprehensive understanding, future research should be conducted to identify additional factors that impact the performance of county development projects.

While the present study relied on primary data, it is advisable for future research endeavors to consider conducting similar investigations using secondary or empirical data sources to attain more accurate and refined results. Additionally, the researcher suggests that similar studies be conducted in different countries to compare and contrast the findings across various contexts.

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