

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

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of knowledge acquisition on human resource planning in the Public Service Commission of Kenya.

Problem Statement: 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.

Methodology: The study adopted a positivist research philosophy. A mixed research design was employed, targeting 209 employees from various hierarchical levels within the organization. The study used a census approach, incorporating all employees of the Public Service Commission of Kenya. Data collection involved structured questionnaires and statistical analysis using correlation and regression techniques.

Results of the Study: 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 results indicated that effective knowledge acquisition practices contributed significantly to workforce planning by improving skills matching, reducing turnover rates, and enhancing organizational efficiency.

Conclusion: The study concludes that knowledge acquisition plays a pivotal role in enhancing human resource planning within the Public Service Commission of Kenya.

Recommendations: The study recommends that the Public Service Commission of Kenya should enhance knowledge acquisition practices through structured continuous learning

programs, including training sessions, workshops, and seminars on emerging HR trends. Additionally, the organization should establish formal mechanisms for capturing external knowledge and invest in a robust knowledge management system to facilitate documentation, retrieval, and integration into human resource planning activities.

Keywords: *Knowledge acquisition, human resource planning, public service commission, Kenya*

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Effective management of human resources in the public sector can be crucial for ensuring the efficient delivery of services to the public. Unlike private sector organizations, which focus on profit maximization, public sector institutions can prioritize fulfilling citizen expectations and adhering to regulatory and governance frameworks (Ubah & Ibrahim, 2021). Human resource planning can encompass forecasting workforce requirements, assigning personnel to suitable roles, and formulating policies that align individual objectives with organizational goals (Ubah & Ibrahim, 2021). Organizations with robust human resource planning frameworks can experience improved performance, higher employee retention, and increased job satisfaction (Adobor, Kudonoo, & Daneshfar, 2019). However, public sector organizations can face persistent challenges in human resource planning due to entrenched bureaucratic systems that slow down hiring processes and complicate employee retention efforts (Ouko & Gatero, 2023). Knowledge management practices can be important in influencing human resource planning.

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. 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 practices serve as the backbone for organizational success, comprising various integral components such as knowledge acquisition.

Knowledge acquisition can be fundamental to ensuring that organizations effectively gather, organize, and utilize information to achieve strategic objectives (Kucharska, 2022).

Knowledge acquisition can involve systematically collecting information from various sources, including research studies, employee experiences, and market analyses, to enhance institutional decision-making capabilities (Hagemeister & Rodríguez-Castellanos, 2019). Efficient knowledge acquisition can contribute to competitive advantage by enabling organizations to leverage valuable insights for innovation and problem-solving (Memon et al., 2022). Public institutions can benefit from knowledge acquisition by identifying workforce trends, anticipating skill shortages, and developing proactive strategies to enhance employee performance.

Knowledge acquisition can serve as the foundation for effective human resource planning in the public sector. It can enable organizations to gather relevant workforce insights, anticipate future challenges, and implement proactive strategies to enhance service delivery. Strengthening knowledge acquisition mechanisms through data-driven approaches, technological integration, and institutional collaboration can be essential in ensuring that public institutions develop agile, efficient, and competent workforces. By prioritizing knowledge acquisition, public sector organizations can overcome bureaucratic inefficiencies, bridge skill gaps, and enhance workforce sustainability in the long term. The relationship between human resource planning and knowledge acquisition can be a critical factor in fostering an efficient and competent public sector workforce that can meet evolving service delivery demands. Therefore, the paper determined the influence of knowledge acquisition 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, Papa, Dezi, Gregori, Mueller and Miglietta (2020) explored the relationship between knowledge acquisition, human resource planning, specifically focusing on the role of human resource management (HRM) and innovation performance. Keshtegar and Omidvar (2022) explored 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.

Imai, Lin, Watada, and Tzeng (2008) conducted a study exploring the use of knowledge acquisition in human resource management (HRM) through the application of rough sets theory, particularly in the context of IT corporations aiming to enhance competitive advantage and organizational performance. Phaladi (2021) conducted a study to develop a framework integrating knowledge management (KM) and human resource management (HRM) for reducing organizational knowledge loss in state-owned enterprises (SOEs). In addition, Chuma (2019) examined the influence of knowledge acquisition on performance of Solidaridad Eastern and Central Africa, Kenya office. Gatuyu and Kinyua (2020) investigated the role of knowledge acquisition strategies on the performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The study by Thumbi, Hannah and Rosemarie (2020) examined the influence of knowledge acquisition and information distribution on employees' performance in the hospitality sector in Kenya. Hence, the knowledge gap is ascertained by examining the influence of knowledge acquisition on human resource planning in the Public Service Commission of Kenya.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

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

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Ho: There is no significant influence of knowledge acquisition on human resource planning in the Public Service Commission of Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature Review

The study was anchored on 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. 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 is 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.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework is a diagrammatical representation that shows the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between knowledge acquisition and human resource planning.

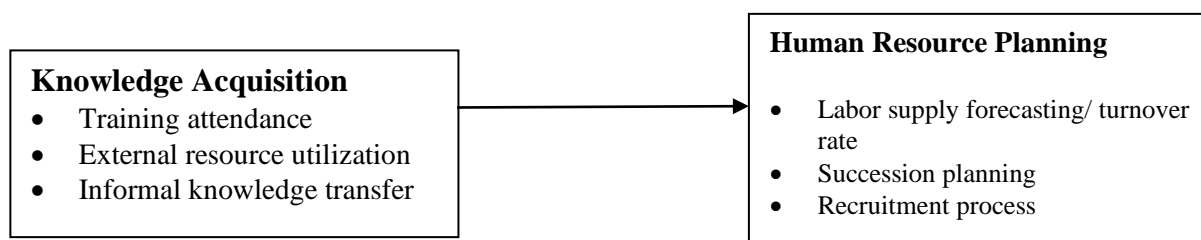


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Papa, Dezi, Gregori, Mueller and Miglietta (2020) conducted a study in Italy, exploring the relationship between knowledge acquisition, human resource planning, specifically focusing on the role of human resource management (HRM) and innovation performance. Based on data from 129 firms across a variety of sectors, the study found that knowledge acquisition significantly enhances innovation performance. The research emphasized that a firm's knowledge base resides largely within its employees, and managing human resources effectively is crucial for retaining and utilizing this knowledge. By aligning knowledge acquisition with strategic HRM practices, firms could create an environment conducive to innovation, thus enhancing overall organizational performance.

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.

Imai, Lin, Watada, and Tzeng (2008) conducted a study exploring the use of knowledge acquisition in human resource management (HRM) through the application of rough sets theory, particularly in the context of IT corporations aiming to enhance competitive advantage and organizational performance. The research focused on identifying employee characteristics and behaviors that influenced customer relationships, using rough sets analysis to handle vagueness and uncertainty in HRM decision-making. By converting qualitative HRM challenges into quantitative data, the study provided valuable insights for improving HRM practices. The findings revealed that effective knowledge acquisition and strategic management of employee attributes were key to fostering better customer relationships, ensuring project success, and boosting corporate performance.

In addition, Chuma (2019) examined the influence of knowledge acquisition on performance of Solidaridad Eastern and Central Africa, Kenya office. The study was guided by the

Resource Based Views Theory and the Knowledge Spiral Theory. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The target population was 52 employees of Solidaridad Eastern and Central Africa, Kenya office drawn from the different job levels. The study used a census and thus the sample size was 52 respondents. The study collected primary data using questionnaires. The collected data was analysed using means, standard deviations and regression analysis. The findings were presented using tables and figures. The study established that knowledge acquisition significantly and positively influences performance.

Gatuyu and Kinyua (2020) conducted a study in Meru County, Kenya, to investigate the role of knowledge acquisition strategies on the performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Grounded in the Resource-Based View (RBV), Organizational Learning (OL), and Knowledge-Based View (KBV) theories, the study employed a descriptive survey design targeting 500 SMEs, with a sample of 150 selected via stratified random sampling. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship (correlation coefficient of 0.781) between knowledge acquisition and SME performance. Strategies such as capacity development, mentorship programs, modern technology adoption, and consultations were identified as key enablers of knowledge acquisition.

The study by Thumbi, Hannah and Rosemarie (2020) examined the influence of knowledge acquisition and information distribution on employees' performance in the hospitality sector in Kenya. Using purposive and stratified random sampling, a sample of 225 respondents was selected from 75 classified hospitality firms in Kenya. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire and analysed using multiple regression and correlation analyses. The results indicated that knowledge acquisition and information distribution were significantly positively correlated with employees' performance and had higher influence on employees' performance dimensions of service delivery and efficiency.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a positivist research philosophy and mixed-methods research design. 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 target population encompassed individuals holding positions ranging from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to assistant officers, including leaders and professionals across different departments and functional areas. By concentrating on the technical and senior management personnel, the study aimed to gather insights from individuals who were directly

involved in or had a comprehensive understanding of the organization's knowledge management initiatives and their influence on human resource planning processes. A census approach was used, targeting all 209 employees across different hierarchical levels. Statistical analysis, conducted using SPSS Version 25, included descriptive and inferential techniques. Ethical considerations were strictly observed, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and research integrity while maintaining transparent communication with participants.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Response Rate

The sample size was 209 and 187 questionnaires were correctly filled and returned. This presented a response rate of 89.47%. which is significantly higher than the 60% threshold recommended by experts such as Ahmad and Halim (2017) and Hendra and Hill (2019). This indicates that the data collected is highly representative of the target population and provides a solid foundation for drawing reliable conclusions. The high response rate suggested that the study participants were engaged and interested in the research topic, potentially reflecting the importance of knowledge management and human resource planning within the Public Service Commission of Kenya. The high response rate enhanced the credibility of the study findings, as it reduced the risk of non-response bias and increased the likelihood that the results accurately reflected the views and experiences of the entire target population.

Descriptive Statistics

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. 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.

Correlation Findings

Correlation findings examine the association between independent and dependent variables. The correlation results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation Results

		Human resource planning	Knowledge acquisition
Human resource planning	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Knowledge acquisition	Pearson Correlation	.695**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

The correlation analysis results showed that knowledge acquisition is positively and significantly associated with human resource planning ($r = 0.695$, $p = 0.000$). These findings are consistent with Papa et al. (2020) in Italy who revealed that knowledge acquisition significantly enhanced innovation performance across diverse industries. In Ghana, Adobor et al. (2019) discovered that knowledge acquisition and retention positively influenced organizational memory in public agencies, which suggested the importance of building KM capabilities and infrastructure. In Kenya, Gatuyu and Kinyua (2020) found that knowledge acquisition strategies, such as mentorship programs and technology adoption, significantly improved SME performance.

Inferential Findings

Table 4 presents the model fitness of knowledge acquisition

Table 4: Model Fitness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.695 ^a	0.483	0.481	0.241065

Note: Predictor=a (knowledge acquisition), n=187, $\alpha=0.780$

The model fitness results presented in Table 4 indicate that knowledge acquisition can explain 48.3% of the variation in human resource planning (R Square = 0.483). This suggests that knowledge acquisition practices account for a significant amount of the changes observed in human resource planning within the Public Service Commission of Kenya. The adjusted R Square value of 0.481 further supports the model's goodness of fit, indicating that 48.1% of the variability in human resource planning was explained by the model after adjusting for the number of predictors. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

		ANOVA ^a				
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.064	1	10.064	173.178	.000 ^b
	Residual	10.751	185	0.058		
	Total	20.815	186			

Note: Dependent= a (human resource planning), predictor = b (knowledge acquisition), n=187, $\alpha=0.780$

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results confirm the statistical significance of the relationship between knowledge acquisition and human resource planning. The F-statistic of 173.178 with a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) indicates that the regression model is statistically significant. This suggests that knowledge acquisition has a significant influence on human resource planning in the Public Service Commission of Kenya, and the model is a good fit for predicting the relationship between these variables. The sum of squares for regression (10.064) and residual (10.751) provides information about the total variability in the dependent variable explained by the model and the unexplained variability, respectively. The mean square values for regression (10.064) and residual (0.058) represent the average variability explained and unexplained by the model. The regression coefficient results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients

		Coefficients ^a				
Model		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 H_{01} : there is no significant influence of knowledge acquisition on human resource planning in the Public Service Commission of

Kenya is rejected. Thus, there is a significant influence of knowledge acquisition on human resource planning in the Public Service Commission of Kenya.

These findings concur with existing studies. Jaafari and Mehrara (2021) found that knowledge acquisition positively impacted human resource strategies in the higher education sector. Papa et al. (2020) discovered that knowledge acquisition significantly enhanced innovation performance across diverse industries. Keshtegar and Omidvar (2022) revealed that knowledge acquisition improved innovation performance, with HRM practices like employee retention strengthening the relationship. Imai et al. (2008) demonstrated that effective knowledge acquisition enhanced HRM practices and customer relationships in IT firms. Mannan (2015) found that knowledge acquisition fostered employee development and innovation when integrated with HRM practices such as training and performance appraisal. Castaneda et al. (2018) emphasized that knowledge acquisition is a core element of organizational learning that enhances HR planning and innovation. Zaim et al. (2018) revealed that KM practices, including knowledge sharing and utilization, significantly enhanced HRM performance.

Grover (2021) revealed a significant positive relationship between HR practices and KM processes, enhancing knowledge acquisition and sharing. Phaladi (2021) highlighted the critical role of knowledge acquisition in mitigating knowledge loss in state-owned enterprises. Ubah and Ibrahim (2021) found that recruitment and selection processes significantly impacted public sector performance. Adobor et al. (2019) discovered that knowledge acquisition and retention positively influenced organizational memory in public agencies. Gatuyu and Kinyua (2020) found that knowledge acquisition strategies, such as mentorship programs and technology adoption, significantly improved SME performance. Fombad and Sirorei (2019) highlighted the role of knowledge acquisition in enhancing academic library functions and service delivery. Thumbi et al. (2020) found that knowledge acquisition and information distribution significantly enhanced employee performance, particularly in service delivery and efficiency.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that knowledge acquisition has a significant positive influence on human resource planning in the Public Service Commission of Kenya. The conclusion is supported by the positive correlation and regression results, which indicate that knowledge acquisition explains a significant amount of the variation in human resource planning. The findings

suggest that as the organization improves its ability to acquire new knowledge from various sources, including training, external resources, and informal knowledge-sharing mechanisms, it enhances its capacity for effective human resource planning. This implies 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 suggests that knowledge acquisition serves as a foundational element in developing informed, adaptive, and forward-looking human resource strategies within the organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Public Service Commission of Kenya should prioritize and enhance its knowledge acquisition practices to improve human resource planning. The management should implement structured programs for continuous learning and development. This should 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 should create a systematic approach to integrating newly acquired knowledge into existing human resource planning processes. This should 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 should present their learnings to colleagues. The organization should 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.

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