Influence of Knowledge Management on Employee Performance at Kenya Power and Lighting Company

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[1*]**Dida Jattani Gulompo, [2]Dr. Nancy Rintari (PhD), [3]Ruth Kanyaru**

[1]Kenya Methodist University

[2,3]Lecturer Department of Business Administration, Kenya Methodist University

https://orcid.org/0009-0008-6775-1218

Abstract

Purpose: To find out the influence of Knowledge management on employee performance at Kenya Power and Lighting Company.

Methodology: The study was conducted in the Mount Kenya region, covering nine counties, and employed a descriptive research design to collect data from 1200 KPLC employees. Simple random sampling was used to select respondents from each of the nine operational clusters within KPLC. Data analysis was performed using SPSS Version 25, with descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) for summarizing the data, and multiple regression analysis for examining the relationships between variables. The results were presented in tables to facilitate easy interpretation of the findings.

Results: The study established a statistically significant positive relationship between knowledge management and employee performance at Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC). The correlation coefficient of 0.468 indicated a moderate positive relationship between the two variables. The R-squared value of 0.219 demonstrated that knowledge management practices explain 21.9% of the variance in employee performance. The adjusted R-squared value of 0.215 confirmed the model's reliability even when accounting for additional variables. The regression coefficient (B = 0.504) implies that a one-unit increase in knowledge management leads to a 0.504 unit increase in employee performance. The regression model was statistically significant, with an F-statistic of 30.129 (p < 0.05), thereby confirming that knowledge management is a valid predictor of employee performance at KPLC. These results highlight the importance of structured knowledge-sharing systems in improving efficiency, innovation, and staff productivity in Kenya's energy sector.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy, and Practice: This study contributes to knowledge management theory, policy, and practice in public utilities, particularly within KPLC. Theoretically, it supports Social Exchange Theory, emphasizing the role of knowledge sharing in improving performance. Policy-wise, it advocates for integrating knowledge management into human capital development, with platforms like digital repositories and mentorship programs. Practically, it highlights the importance of fostering a culture of collaboration, incentivizing knowledge sharing, and incorporating it into performance appraisals to enhance employee productivity and organizational resilience.

Keywords: *Knowledge Management, Employee Performance, Kenya Power and Lighting Company*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Employee performance was a critical determinant of organizational success, influencing both operational efficiency and overall competitiveness. Organizations that prioritized employee performance were better positioned to achieve strategic goals, improve their service delivery, and remain competitive in their respective industries (Kibui et al., 2020). In knowledge-intensive sectors such as energy, employee performance was intrinsically linked to the availability, accessibility, and effective utilization of knowledge. At Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC), employee performance played a pivotal role in ensuring reliable electricity distribution, customer satisfaction, and organizational sustainability.

Knowledge management, as a function of human capital development, was essential to enhancing employee performance. It involved the systematic process of creating, sharing, utilizing, and managing organizational knowledge and information. By capturing both tacit and explicit knowledge, knowledge management enabled employees to make informed decisions, solve problems efficiently, and innovate continuously (Nonaka & Toyoma, 2021). In the dynamic work environment of technical and utility-based organizations like KPLC, knowledge management became a strategic asset that drove productivity, engagement, and learning.

Globally, leading organizations demonstrated the value of knowledge management in boosting employee performance. Google, for example, integrated mentorship and peer learning into its knowledge-sharing culture through programs like "Googler-to-Googler," which promoted continuous learning and collaboration (Kaufman, 2018). Microsoft emphasized a growth mindset and lifelong learning, encouraging employees to engage in knowledge acquisition and reflection as core performance strategies (Dweck, 2022). Siemens, in Europe, built organizational agility and innovation capacity by embedding knowledge management into its training, leadership development, and digital learning platforms (Farndale et al., 2020). These examples underscored the role of knowledge management in cultivating high-performing and adaptable employees.

In Kenya, and more specifically within KPLC, knowledge management was increasingly recognized as a key component of employee development and organizational effectiveness. As noted by Kibui et al. (2020), enhancing employee competencies in the energy sector depended significantly on access to information and shared expertise. Yet, many organizations, including KPLC, faced persistent challenges such as fragmented knowledge-sharing systems, limited documentation of institutional memory, and insufficient incentives for collaborative learning. These barriers hindered operational efficiency, compromised decision-making, and reduced employee productivity.

Effective knowledge management in KPLC was essential not only for enhancing employee performance but also for addressing sector-specific demands such as technological advancements, customer service expectations, and regulatory compliance. As Kang et al. (2020) emphasized,

organizations that developed robust knowledge systems empowered their employees to innovate and perform more effectively. This was particularly vital for KPLC, where the ability of employees to apply technical knowledge in real time determined the reliability and quality of energy services provided to millions of Kenyans.

This study sought to explore the influence of knowledge management on employee performance at Kenya Power and Lighting Company. It aimed to identify how knowledge-sharing systems, information access, collaborative platforms, and organizational support contributed to employee productivity and effectiveness. By focusing on the role of knowledge management as a strategic enabler, the study contributed to the broader discourse on human capital development and organizational performance within the public utility sector. It also offered actionable insights for institutional leaders and policymakers aiming to foster high-performance work environments through evidence-based knowledge management practices.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Employee performance is central to the success of Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC), particularly in achieving operational efficiency, reliable service delivery, and strategic competitiveness in Kenya's energy sector. Knowledge management, as a pillar of human capital development, plays a crucial role in enhancing employee performance by ensuring that staff have access to the right knowledge, expertise, and collaborative learning opportunities. Global studies have consistently highlighted the value of investing in human capital particularly knowledge sharing, learning systems, and skill development as essential for improving employee productivity. For example, Bakhsh et al. (2020) reported that organizations prioritizing human capital development experience a 24% increase in employee performance, while Bhatnagar (2019) found that training and development initiatives could boost organizational productivity by up to 27%. These findings underscore the significance of structured knowledge management practices in shaping employee outcomes and driving sustainable performance.

Despite the global endorsement of knowledge management as a performance-enhancing tool, KPLC like many organizations in Kenya's energy sector continues to face considerable challenges in this area. Research by Muriuki (2023) revealed that employee performance in the sector lags approximately 30% behind potential, largely due to gaps in training, knowledge accessibility, and professional development. Furthermore, only 35% of employees in Kenya's energy sector reportedly have access to structured development opportunities, well below the global average of 60%, while 55% expressed concerns about lacking the necessary competencies to meet organizational goals (Muriuki, 2023). These figures illustrate a serious disconnect between employee needs and the current state of knowledge and resource management in the sector.

At KPLC, the lack of a formalized knowledge management framework has exacerbated underperformance by limiting opportunities for employees to acquire, apply, and share vital

institutional knowledge. According to Karanja and Mwangi (2021), the absence of strategic human resource development programs including knowledge-sharing mechanisms has left many employees ill-equipped to navigate the evolving technical and operational demands of the energy industry. Noe et al. (2021) further emphasizes that inadequate investment in employee development stifles innovation and undermines service delivery, both of which are critical to meeting KPLC's organizational objectives.

In light of these challenges, there is a clear need to investigate how knowledge management influences employee performance at KPLC. This study aims to address the current knowledge gaps by examining how knowledge-sharing systems, access to organizational information, and collaborative platforms affect employee outcomes. By identifying the enablers and barriers to effective knowledge management within the organization, this research seeks to propose targeted interventions that can enhance employee capability, foster innovation, and improve overall performance. The study ultimately contributes to strengthening human capital strategies in Kenya's public utility sector and offers evidence-based insights to guide institutional reforms and policy development aimed at improving employee performance through effective knowledge management.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

To find out the influence of Knowledge management on employee performance at Kenya Power and Lighting Company.

1.4 Hypothesis

$H_0 1$: Knowledge management has no significant influence on employee performance at Kenya Power and Lighting Company.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

Social Exchange Theory (SET), proposed by George C. Homans in 1958, provides the theoretical framework for examining the influence of knowledge management on employee performance. SET posits that human relationships are based on reciprocal exchanges in which individuals seek to maximize benefits while minimizing costs. Within organizational settings, this theory is instrumental in understanding why employees choose to share or withhold knowledge. Homans (1958) emphasized that individuals participate in interactions expecting equitable rewards in return, such as recognition, support, or career advancement

The SET was expanded by incorporating the dynamics of power and status within exchange relationships. He argued that employees who possess valuable knowledge often hold more influence, which can affect the willingness of others to engage in knowledge-sharing behaviors. Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) further contributed to the theory by introducing the idea of

dependency, suggesting that individuals are more inclined to contribute knowledge when they perceive a mutual dependency or aim to reduce their reliance on others by sharing expertise.

Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) extended the theory into organizational behavior, emphasizing that perceived fairness, trust, and reciprocity are key motivators for knowledge-sharing behavior. They highlighted that when employees perceive knowledge exchanges as fair and rewarding, they are more likely to contribute to organizational learning and performance. In support of this, Noe et al. (2021) argued that team-level exchanges foster a culture of collaborative learning, which is essential for building organizational capacity and enhancing individual performance outcomes.

Despite its utility, Social Exchange Theory is not without criticism. Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) contended that not all knowledge-sharing behaviors are driven purely by rational reciprocity. Some individuals contribute out of altruism or organizational commitment, rather than expecting direct returns. Furthermore, the theory has been critiqued for overemphasizing dyadic relationships, overlooking the influence of broader social networks and group-level dynamics in shaping knowledge management practices.

Nevertheless, SET remains a robust framework for understanding how knowledge management contributes to employee performance, particularly in knowledge-intensive organizations like KPLC. The expectation of mutual benefit in knowledge exchange whether through recognition, learning, or career progression continues to drive knowledge-sharing behaviors in modern workplaces. Applying SET to KPLC's context allows for an exploration of how structured and informal knowledge exchanges influence employee motivation, engagement, and overall performance. By leveraging this theory, the study contributes to understanding how reciprocal and trust-based interactions can enhance organizational learning and support strategic goals in the energy sector.

2.2 Empirical Review

Knowledge management has become a vital organizational strategy for enhancing employee performance in today's fast-paced, knowledge-intensive environments. Through structured knowledge-sharing systems and collaborative practices, organizations are better able to leverage internal expertise, foster innovation, and enhance employee efficiency (Becker, 2023). In the context of Kenya Power and Lighting Company, where technical knowledge and operational accuracy are crucial, effective knowledge management is especially significant.

Omolo, (2020) investigated the relationship between knowledge management and employee performance in Europe's technology sector. Their study of 400 employees found a strong positive correlation (r = 0.78), demonstrating that structured knowledge management practices led to increased job satisfaction and improved performance. Similarly, Mwende and Mungai (2021) explored this relationship in East African universities and found a significant correlation (r = 0.72)

between knowledge management and performance among 250 academic staff, emphasizing the importance of collaborative platforms and workshops in promoting continuous learning.

In Kenya's financial sector, Cascio, (2021) surveyed 150 bank employees and reported a 25% increase in productivity among those actively engaged in knowledge-sharing initiatives. Their findings suggest that structured knowledge systems help facilitate performance improvement through informed decision-making and process efficiency. Mwanzia et al. (2023) found comparable results in the Kenyan telecommunications industry. Their study of 300 employees revealed a strong correlation (r = 0.68) between knowledge management and employee performance, with improved collaboration and problem-solving skills cited as key outcomes.

Studies from other sectors reinforce these findings. Cheng et al. (2020) found that participation in knowledge-sharing initiatives among 200 medical professionals in Asia's healthcare sector led to a 30% improvement in patient care quality. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2021) demonstrated a 20% increase in customer satisfaction in China's hospitality industry due to structured knowledge management programs.

In Kenya's non-governmental and agricultural sectors, the importance of knowledge management was also evident. Karanja and Mwangi (2021), in a mixed-methods study of 100 NGO workers, found that employees who participated in knowledge-sharing activities demonstrated higher productivity and job satisfaction. Ndung'u and Wambua (2022) studied 200 agricultural employees and found significant improvements in creativity and efficiency linked to collaborative learning and knowledge exchange.

In the manufacturing sector, Kinyua and Kamau (2021) surveyed 250 employees and identified a strong correlation (r = 0.70) between knowledge-sharing behaviors and enhanced performance. They concluded that knowledge management not only supports teamwork but also improves overall organizational performance by ensuring that employees are continuously learning and adapting.

Collectively, these empirical studies highlight the pivotal role of knowledge management in driving employee performance across different sectors. They affirm that organizations that prioritize knowledge-sharing platforms, institutional memory preservation, and collaborative learning are more likely to experience improved productivity, engagement, and innovation. For KPLC, these findings suggest that investing in formal knowledge management frameworks and fostering a knowledge-sharing culture can significantly enhance employee effectiveness and service delivery. Future research may further explore the role of digital platforms, remote work dynamics, and artificial intelligence in advancing knowledge management strategies.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in the Mount Kenya Region of Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC), covering nine counties: Nyeri, Kirinyaga, Murang'a, Embu, Tharaka Nithi, Meru, Isiolo,

Marsabit, and Laikipia. The research employed a descriptive research design to examine the influence of knowledge management on employee performance. As defined by Creswell (2014), a descriptive design involves collecting data to describe characteristics of a population and is suitable for identifying patterns, relationships, and trends. This design was appropriate as it enabled the researcher to collect measurable data on current knowledge management practices and their impact on employee outcomes.

The target population consisted of 1,200 employees, including both technical and administrative staff across the nine counties. Due to the geographical dispersion, a cluster sampling technique was used, with each county treated as a distinct cluster. Within each cluster, simple random sampling ensured that all employees had an equal chance of being selected. The sample size was determined using the Yamane (1967) formula, resulting in a sample of 300 respondents. The sample was proportionally distributed across all counties and was representative of the larger population.

Data was collected through self-administered questionnaires designed to capture relevant information aligned with the study's objectives. The questionnaires focused on knowledge-sharing behaviors, access to information, engagement in learning platforms, and perceived performance. Participants completed the questionnaires independently to ensure privacy and encourage honest responses. Pre-testing was conducted on 10% of the sample to refine the questionnaire items. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, achieving the acceptable threshold of $\alpha \geq 0.70$. Construct, content, and face validity were confirmed through expert evaluation.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 25. Multiple regression analysis was employed to assess the relationship between knowledge management and employee performance. Diagnostic tests, including normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk), linearity (ANOVA), multicollinearity (VIF), heteroscedasticity (Breusch-Pagan), and autocorrelation (Durbin-Watson), were performed to ensure validity. Descriptive statistics and inferential analysis were used, with results presented in tables. The study adhered to ethical standards, with approval obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). Participation was voluntary, confidential, and anonymous, ensuring data integrity and respondent protection.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Reliability Analysis

A pilot test was conducted to assess the suitability of the study's questionnaires in addressing the research objectives. The reliability of the instrument was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The knowledge management construct achieved a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.828, as shown in Table 1, which exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.7. According to Hair et al. (2021), coefficients above 0.7 indicate high internal consistency and reliability. These findings

confirm the appropriateness of the instrument for measuring the influence of knowledge management on employee performance at Kenya Power and Lighting Company.

Table 1: Reliability Test Instrument

Instrument	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Knowledge Management	0.828	6

4.2 Response Rate

A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed, and 266 were duly completed and returned, resulting in a response rate of 86.66%. This high return rate was facilitated by the use of self-administered questionnaires and clear communication of confidentiality protocols. According to Baruch and Holtom (2008), response rates above 70% are considered excellent for academic research. Johnson and Wislar (2012) further assert that high response rates enhance the validity of findings by minimizing non-response bias. Therefore, the data collected in this study is both statistically robust and generalizable.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics of Knowledge Management

The study aimed to examine employees' perceptions of knowledge management practices at KPLC. The results, presented in Table 2, revealed that 68.4% agreed and 21.5% strongly agreed that they actively participate in knowledge management activities (Mean = 4.01, SD = 0.807). Similarly, 65.0% agreed that shared knowledge during team discussions is beneficial (Mean = 3.98, SD = 0.825). A notable 62.8% agreed and 21.4% strongly agreed that knowledge management enhances teamwork (Mean = 3.94, SD = 0.841). Furthermore, most respondents agreed that sharing knowledge improved their job performance (Mean = 3.90, SD = 0.854) and contributed to team performance (Mean = 3.84, SD = 0.875). These findings align with studies by Nonaka & Toyama (2021), Hislop et al. (2022), and Grant (2023), who underscore knowledge management as critical for collaboration, innovation, and employee performance.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Knowledge Management

Statements (N=266)	Mean	Std. Dev
I actively participate in knowledge management activities within the organization.	4.01	0.807
The knowledge shared during team discussions is relevant and beneficial to my work.	3.98	0.825
Knowledge management practices have improved collaboration within my team.	3.94	0.841
Sharing knowledge with my colleagues has helped me perform better in my role.	3.90	0.854
I have gained valuable insights from the knowledge shared by my colleagues.	3.87	0.862
Knowledge management activities have contributed to enhancing my team's performance	3.84	0.875

4.4 Regression Analysis of Knowledge Management and Employee Performance

The relationship between knowledge management and employee performance was analyzed using regression analysis. The results in Table 3 indicate a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.468, suggesting a moderate positive relationship. The R-squared value of 0.219 indicates that knowledge management accounts for 21.9% of the variance in employee performance, while the adjusted R-squared of 0.215 supports the reliability of this estimate. The standard error of 0.308 shows minimal deviation from the predicted regression line. These findings support the notion that structured knowledge-sharing contributes meaningfully to performance outcomes.

Table 3: Model Summary of Knowledge Management and Employee Performance

R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.468	0.219	0.215	0.308

4.5 ANOVA of Knowledge Management and Employee Performance

To assess the statistical significance of the model, an ANOVA test was performed. As presented in Table 4, the F-statistic of 30.129 ($p < 0.05$) confirms that knowledge management significantly predicts employee performance. These results align with Hislop et al. (2012), who emphasized the role of knowledge systems in enhancing workforce effectiveness.

Table 4: ANOVA – Knowledge Management and Employee Performance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	345.231	1	345.231	30.129	.000
Residual	1234.897	109	11.328		
Total	1580.128	110			

4.6 Regression Coefficients for Knowledge Management and Employee Performance

The unstandardized regression coefficient (B) for knowledge management was 0.504, meaning a one-unit increase in knowledge management practices results in a 0.504 unit increase in employee performance. The standardized beta coefficient of 0.468 further reinforces this positive relationship. The t-value of 5.490 (p = 0.000) confirms the statistical significance of this finding. The regression equation derived from this model is:

$Y = 4.198 + 0.504X_4$

Where:

Y = Employee Performance

X_4 = Knowledge Management

Table 5: Regression Coefficients – Knowledge Management and Employee Performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
Constant	4.198	1.102		3.808	.000
Knowledge Management	0.504	0.092	0.468	5.490	.000

These findings confirm that knowledge management through participation, relevance, collaboration, and insight-sharing plays a vital role in enhancing employee performance at Kenya Power and Lighting Company. Structured systems that encourage documentation, access, and use of knowledge are essential for sustained organizational productivity and innovation.

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The study demonstrated that knowledge management (KM) plays a critical role in enhancing employee performance at Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC). Key aspects of knowledge management identified by participants included access to knowledge-sharing

platforms, collaborative learning opportunities, and the sharing of best practices. A majority of respondents agreed that effective KM practices improved their efficiency, problem-solving skills, and job satisfaction. Employees who participated in structured KM activities reported greater productivity and team collaboration.

However, the study also revealed that KM practices are inconsistently applied across departments, limiting their overall effectiveness. Respondents cited the lack of standardized policies, unequal access to knowledge platforms, and poor implementation as key barriers to fully leveraging organizational knowledge. These inconsistencies led to mixed perceptions regarding the usefulness and accessibility of KM initiatives. The findings emphasized the need for well-designed, consistently implemented KM systems aligned with organizational goals and industry advancements.

These results are consistent with findings by Alyoubi et al. (2018), who concluded that KM significantly improves job satisfaction and performance. Akram and Hilman (2018) similarly found that KM and dynamic capabilities positively influence employee outcomes, while Wibowo et al. (2021) highlighted the role of KM in enhancing innovation, competence, and productivity. The study underscores the importance of investing in structured KM frameworks to foster collaboration, strengthen decision-making, and improve organizational competitiveness.

5.2 Conclusion

The study concluded that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between knowledge management and employee performance at KPLC. Employees with access to structured KM systems and collaborative knowledge-sharing environments demonstrated enhanced efficiency, engagement, and problem-solving ability. However, the inconsistent application of KM practices across departments was a key limitation. To maximize the benefits of KM, organizations must standardize access, ensure policy alignment, and promote equitable implementation across all functional areas. These findings reaffirm existing literature (Alyoubi et al., 2018) and confirm that effective KM strategies contribute meaningfully to improved employee performance and organizational success.

5.3 Recommendations

To strengthen knowledge management within KPLC, the study recommends the establishment of a comprehensive and formal KM framework. This should include centralized digital repositories, structured knowledge-sharing workshops, and mentorship programs that encourage documentation and dissemination of institutional knowledge. It is also essential to standardize KM practices across departments to ensure equity in access and use. Incentives should be introduced to motivate employees to actively engage in knowledge-sharing activities. These practices will not only support innovation and decision-making but also enhance operational efficiency and

employee development. As demonstrated by Alyoubi et al. (2018), structured KM systems significantly improve job satisfaction and productivity.

5.4 Contribution to the Existing Body of Knowledge

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on human capital development by establishing knowledge management as a key determinant of employee performance. It extends the application of Human Capital Theory, which posits that investment in skills and competencies yields higher productivity, and supports Expectancy Theory by showing how structured performance systems, including KM practices, lead to enhanced outcomes. Additionally, the study provides practical insights relevant to Kenya's energy sector, where gaps in knowledge infrastructure persist. By highlighting the role of KM in enhancing performance, this study offers a framework for optimizing workforce development strategies and aligning employee growth with organizational goals in resource-intensive sectors like energy.
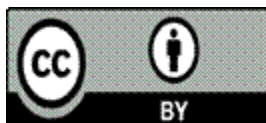
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