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Abstract

The role of university education is recognized as critical since it produces people equipped with the knowledge and skills to make strategic contributions toward the economic development of a country. Universities as 'knowledge intensive' organizations thrive on the production and dissemination of knowledge and rely heavily on the human resource component to facilitate, generate and disseminate it. The management of knowledge has become important to the institutions in view of its abundance and this has led to the development of several emerging issues such as the roles played by platforms created for sharing knowledge and cultural factors. Review of literature reveals that the culture of an organization affects how it is able to create a suitable environment to improve the performance of its employees. Knowledge culture represents that part of an organization in which its values, beliefs and norms influence the manner in which knowledge is utilized to attain competitive advantage. A knowledge culture that is supportive in promoting knowledge creation initiatives and sharing of the same is in a better position to build a strong knowledge base. Further review of literature shows that there are limited number of empirical studies that have been done to study the relationship between knowledge culture and employee performance in these institutions. This paper sought to contribute to this growing body of knowledge by determining the nature of this relationship in public universities in Kenya. The study was anchored on the resource-based view. Descriptive survey design was applied and descriptive and inferential statistics used to analyze the data. The target population consisted of 495 employees from 10 public universities in Kenya selected on the basis of their size and age. The study reported a significant and positive relationship between knowledge culture and employee performance when moderated with organizational structure in public universities in Kenya.

Keywords*: *Knowledge Management, Knowledge Culture & Employee Performance

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1. Introduction

The advent of the Internet and the World Wide Web, has made unlimited sources of knowledge available and experts now recognize the dawn of the knowledge age taking over from the Industrial Era (Schiuma, 2012). Globalization, the proliferations of technology, workforce diversity, and the knowledge society have sparked a wave of learning, training and workplace education in organizations from all sectors. The consequence of this trend is the emergence of knowledge-based economies where importance is placed on effective management of human capital to ensure that workers continue to create the right value for the economy (Omotayo, 2015). Around the world the workforce is rapidly changing, and dynamics are altering how organizations perceive the acquisition, use and generation of knowledge.

According to the Commission of University Education (CUE) website, Kenya currently has 31 public and 18 private chartered universities (cue.or.ke). Universities as both labor and knowledge intensive organizations thrive on the production and dissemination of knowledge and rely heavily on the human resource component to facilitate and continually generate and disseminate it (Kilika *et al*, 2012). Every organization has a culture that is unique and distinct from any other, which evolves over a long period of time and is a reflection of the core values, beliefs and norms of the organization.

The culture of an organization influences how it is able to create a suitable environment to improve the performance of its employees (Cole, 2011). According to Cavalier and Lombardi (2015) the "psychological climate" of the organization, can either support or present a hindrance to implementation of the KM process in most organizations. Knowledge culture can therefore be defined as that part of an organization in which its values, beliefs and norms influence the manner in which knowledge is utilized to attain competitive advantage (Eaves, 2014). The extent of the influence of this type of culture is to a large extent dependent on the type that exists in the organization and the willingness of the employee to share their knowledge (Pirkkalainen & Pawlowski, 2014; Pawlowski & Bick, 2012).

Organizational culture presents itself in various forms. The results-oriented culture encourages employees to innovate so as to be able to create new knowledge (Cole, 2011). Tightly controlled organizations have formally well written policies and standards, which encourage attention on efficiency and timely delivery (Shih & Huang, 2010). In job-oriented cultures, focus is on effective performance of tasks and pays little attention to the needs of the employees (Suppiah & Sandhu, 2011). In this type culture, employees exhibit willingness to share their own knowledge so as to improve the way they work (Woodman & Zade, 2011).

A closed cultural organization tends to be very inward looking and rather secretive to a good extent. Lastly in professionally driven cultures, individuals develop a sense of identity from the kind of work they do, even though their personal values may not be consistent to those of their employer (Chang & Lin, 2015). According to Intezari, Taskin and Paulen (2017), successful KM initiatives rely on three main types of organizational infrastructure: knowledge culture, organizational structure and knowledge technology. Each of these infrastructures are critical for organizations to manage their culture effectively, however, it is the knowledge culture that plays the most fundamental role as it deals with people, the main source of knowledge (Cavalier & Lombardi, 2015). This study adopted the results-oriented and professional-oriented cultures to

measure the extent to which their contrasts can have an impact on the knowledge culture in public universities in Kenya and they are also the types commonly found in academia (Eaves, 2014).

2. Theoretical and Empirical Literature

2.1 Resource-Based View

Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm was initially introduced by Barney (1991) as a managerial framework to exploit strategic assets to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. According to RBV, it is significantly easier to exploit new opportunities using resources and competencies that are already available, rather than having to acquire new skills, traits or functions for each emerging opportunity (Almarri & Gardner, 2011). A strategic resource is an asset with characteristics like uniqueness and difficultly in copying or substituting it, (Ketchen & Short, 2015), and competitors are unable to find ways to take advantage of its benefits, (Nguyen, 2010).

The nature of the strategic resources is either tangible like physical assets or intangible like the knowledge and skills of employees, image of the firm and its culture, (Rothermel, 2012). Another key term in the resource-based view is capabilities. Whereas resources refer to ownership of resources, capabilities are about the ability of the organization or what it is able to do, (Ketchen & Short, 2015). Ambula (2015) advocates that identification of core competencies and investing in organizational learning is one of the ways of nurturing and maintaining them.

2.2 Knowledge Culture and Employee Performance

Knowledge culture is that part of an organization's culture that affects how knowledge is shared and leveraged among organizational members and comprises the values, beliefs and norm (Travica, 2013). A study by Chang and Lin (2015) on the "relationship between organizational culture and the KM process showed that cultures which are job and results oriented are likely to affect positively in building the employee willingness to participate in the KM process but a culture where levels of formalization and standardization that is strict rules and regulations, has negative effects. A study by Mohaydin (2007), on how knowledge management (KM) practices can be used in improving performance in Malaysian universities found that info-culture has an impact on how effectively KM initiatives can be put in place with info-structure have the highest impact. A study by Yusuf and Wanjau (2014) on to investigate what factors influence the adoption in State Corporations in Kenya found that the existing organizational culture in those Corporations do not support and encourage knowledge sharing and therefore lack defined KM initiatives.

The culture of an organization also affects employee performance and motivation levels and they are likely to put more effort in their work since they feel more committed to achieve the goals of the organization (Travica, 2013). In order to build a culture that is likely to build desired behaviors and outcomes from employees, institutions should try and link their culture to how they evaluate their employees' performance (Davoren, 2015). The existing organizational culture influences how the sub culture of knowledge will evolve and determine its success.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Kothari 2013). Further, Oso and Onen (2009) posits that through descriptive research design, questions pertinent to what is happening, how it has happened and why it has happened can be answered. The study used

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descriptive research design since it enables the researcher generalize the findings to a larger population to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena and to describe "what exists".

3.2 Target Population

The complete enumeration of all the elements under consideration in a study is known as target population (Polit & Beck, 2004). According to Commission for University Education (CUE) website (www.cue.or.ke), Kenya has 31 public chartered Universities. The target population was drawn from employees working in the 10 chartered public universities in Kenya which is estimated at 495 based on information obtained from the university websites. The unit of analysis was 10 selected public universities using the criteria of those which have been in existence for more than 10 years.

3.3 Sampling Frame and Techniques

A sample is selected through sampling process (Oso & Onen, 2009). Sampling technique can be either probabilistic or non-probabilistic, in the former there are equal chances of being selected while in the latter the respondent is selected through subjective criteria (Kothari, 2013). The study used stratified sampling method that uses a stratum which is a subset of the population that shares at least one common characteristic, (Kothari, 2013). This technique allows the researcher to perform a sound study on a small sample selected to provide information which is rich in qualitative context in order to answer research questions and meet objectives. The sample size for employees was calculated based on Yamane's formula (Yamane, 1967).

$n= N/ (1 + N*e^2)$;

where, n= the sample size, N = the size of population, e = the error of 5 percentage points; $n= 495/ (1+495*0.05^2)$ n = 221. By using Yamane formula with sampling error of 5% and 95% confidence intervals yielded a sample of 221 from a target population of 495. Resultant sample from each stratum is distributed as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample Size Public Universities - 10 years old and above

University	Deans/Directors	Senior Management	Total
University of Nairobi	33	22	55
Moi University	27	16	42
Kenyatta University	20	11	31
Masinde Muliro	19	5	24
Egerton University	15	4	19
Maseno University	13	3	15
Kisii University	6	2	8
Technical University of Mombasa	4	2	6
Technical University of Kenya	11	2	13
Dedan Kimathi University	5	2	7
Total	**153**	**68**	**221**

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3.4 Data Processing and Analysis

After the data collection the questionnaire were coded, entered and analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 22. The social demographic characteristics of the respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Simple regression analysis was carried out to show the nature of the relationship between employee core competencies and employee performance, (Kothari, 2011). The level of significance was tested at 5% whereby if the p value was less than 0.05 then there was enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. Regression model was of the form;

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \acute{\varepsilon}$

Where; Y = Employee Performance, X_1 = Knowledge Culture

4. Findings and Discussions

4.1 Descriptive Statistics of Knowledge Culture

The study sought to establish the relationship between knowledge culture and employee performance in public universities in Kenya. As shown in Table 2, majority 44.6 percent agreed that employees in public universities in Kenya understood their institutions' mission and vision statements. Secondly, 55 percent agreed that they valued one another's unique strengths and abilities in Public universities in Kenya. Thirdly, 37.6 percent agreed that they make use of one another's unique strengths and abilities in Public universities in Kenya. Also, 44.1 per cent agreed that they participate in information sharing in their institutions. Further, 36.1 percent strongly agreed and 34.2 percent agreed that employees in public universities in Kenya support and trust each other. Also, majority 43.6 agreed and 34.7 percent strongly agreed that they share information and experiences in public universities in Kenya. A study by Mathis and Jackson (2011) shows that firms that have a good culture also tend to have efficient employee training programs which impact positively on skills flexibility.

These findings corroborated with Chang and Lin (2015) who supported the need to align components of knowledge culture with the needs of employees so as to develop healthy working environment conducive for desired employee performance. Similar sentiments were echoed by. In Kenya, Bagaja and Guyo (2015) called for alignment of employee behaviors to a knowledge sharing culture to enable them acquire new knowledge to improve their performance and better utilize other scare resources effectively.

Concerning conduct of respective universities majority mean 3.9 and standard deviation 1.0 agreed that public universities in Kenya provide a suitable atmosphere for information sharing. Secondly, majority mean = 4.0 and standard deviation = 1.0 agreed that public universities encourage employee participation in decision making. Thirdly, majority mean = 4.4 and standard deviation = 0.7 agreed that public universities support team spirit. Further, 48.5 percent strongly agreed and 32.2 percent agreed that public universities encourage attendance to seminars and workshops. Also, majority 48.5 percent strongly agreed and 36.6 percent agreed that in Public universities in Kenya trust exist amongst staffs. Majority 64.4 percent strongly agreed and 27.7 percent agreed that public universities in Kenya have opportunities for sharing knowledge. Majority agreed mean = 4.0 and standard deviation = 1.1 that in public universities employees are encouraged to generate new ideas and innovations. Moreover, it was agreed mean = 3.7 and standard deviation = 1.1 that in Public universities in Kenya those who came up with new ideas were highly respected and those

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sharing knowledge were perceived as experts (mean = 3.8, standard deviation = 1.2). Also, majority mean = 4.0 either agreed that Public universities in Kenya encouraged brainstorming and discussions as solution gathering strategies or teams were delegated to solve emerging issues and challenging projects. On overall majority agreed that knowledge culture has influence on employee performance in Public universities in Kenya mean = 4.0 and standard deviation= 1.0.

A study by Yusuf and Wanjau (2014) however revealed that, State Corporations in Kenya did not have adequate knowledge sharing mechanisms and this therefore restricted the flow of information within respective departments which may have contributed to the slow development a vibrant knowledge sharing culture within them. Otunga (2016) found that there was significant positive relationship between power, culture and productivity in universities in Kenya. Owino (2020) study indicated that organizational culture is a major source of sustainable competitive advantage in the microfinance industry in Kenya. A study by Ongwae, Lagat and Odunga (2018) offered support to the key roles of culture and structure in positively influencing employee performance in Kenyan universities. Further Mwangi and Waithaka (2018) concluded that cultures of power, task, role and person influences the performance of public universities in Kenya.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Knowledge Culture

	N=202						
To what extent do employees	**SD**	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**	**Mean**	**Std. Dev**
Understand the university's mission and vision statements	2.5	7.9	5.9	39.1	44.6	4.2	1.0
Value one another's unique strengths and abilities	0.5	7.4	10.9	26.2	55	4.3	1.0
Make use of one another's unique strengths and abilities	2	9.9	19.3	37.6	31.2	.9	1.0
Participate in sharing of information	4.5	11.9	19.8	44.1	19.8	3.6	1.1
Support and trust each other	4.5	11.4	13.9	34.2	36.1	3.9	1.2
Share information and experiences	1.5	5.4	14.9	43.6	34.7	4.0	0.9
My university							
Provides a conducive atmosphere to share information with others	4	6.4	18.3	41.1	30.2	3.9	1.0
Encourages employee participation in decision making	2.5	5.9	18.8	36.1	36.6	4.0	1.0
Encourages team spirit	1	0.5	6.9	41.6	50	4.4	0.7
Has a working environment that is open, conducive and harmonious	0.5	4	14.4	33.7	47.5	4.2	0.9
Trust exists among staff	2	5	26.2	34.7	32.2	3.9	1.0
Attendance to seminars and workshops is encouraged	2.5	4.5	12.4	32.2	48.5	4.2	1.0
New ideas and innovations are encouraged and recognized	3.5	11.4	11.9	32.2	41.1	4.0	1.1
Trust exists among staff	2	2.5	10.4	36.6	48.5	4.3	0.9
We have opportunities to share knowledge	0	3.5	4.5	27.7	64.4	4.5	0.7
We are encouraged to generate new ideas and innovations	3	7.9	17.3	34.7	37.1	4.0	1.1
People who come up with new ideas and innovations are highly respected	4	9.9	26.7	33.2	26.2	3.7	1.1
The employees sharing knowledge are perceived as experts	5.9	8.4	19.3	33.2	33.2	3.8	1.2

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Brainstorming and discussions are encouraged as means for getting solutions	2.5	8.4	14.4	36.6	38.1	4.0	1.0
Teams/groups are given new and challenging projects to address emerging issues	3	8.9	14.4	33.7	40.1	4.0	1.1
Overall Average						**4.0**	**1.0**

SD- Strongly disagree. D- Disagree, NS-Not sure, A-Agree, SA- Strongly agree

4.2 Employee Performance in Public Universities

As shown in Table 3 majority 41.1 percent of respondents strongly agreed and 31.2 percent agreed that they are able to meet their targets in Kenyan public universities. Secondly, majority mean = 3.8 and standard deviation = 1.2 agreed that they are able to fulfill their responsibilities. Thirdly, majority 47.5 percent agreed and 32.7 percent that there are collaborate well with their respective employees. Further, majority 36.1 percent agreed and 25.2 percent strongly agreed that employees in public universities understand each other well. Similarly, 51.1 percent strongly agreed and 40.1 percent agreed that they understand other employees very well. In addition, majority mean = 4.4 either agreed that they come up with creative ideas in their work place or are open to criticism. Also, majority mean = 4.4 either agreed that they try to learn from feedback they receive from fellow employees or they take challenging tasks whenever they are available. Majority strongly agreed mean = 4.5 that either they start new tasks once they have completed others or they seek for help when need arises. Further, majority mean = 4.3 agreed that they take initiatives whenever they are problems to be solved.

At their respective work places majority agreed mean = 4.4 agreed that in public universities in Kenya they continuously update their job knowledge. Also, majority mean = 4.3 agreed that they work at keeping their job skills up to date. Further, majority strongly agreed mean = 4.6 and 4.5 that they come up with creative solutions to new problems and they are able to cope with unpredictable situations at work respectively. Finally, majority mean = 4.4 either agreed that they easily adjust to changes in their work place or recover fast after difficult work situations in their places of work. On overall majority agreed on current state of their job performance (mean = 4.3; standard deviation= 0.9).

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Table 3: Agreement on Status of Employee Performance

	n=202						
	SD	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**	**Mean**	**Std. Dev**
I am able to meet my targets	4	6.9	16.8	31.2	41.1	4.0	1.1
I am able to fulfill my responsibilities	5	15.3	13.4	27.7	38.6	3.8	1.2
Collaborations with others goes well	3	4.5	12.4	47.5	32.7	4.0	0.9
Other employees understand me well when I tell them something	7.9	13.9	16.8	36.1	25.2	3.6	1.2
I understand others well when they tell me something	1.5	2.5	5	40.1	51	4.4	0.8
Communication with others leads to desired results	1	3.5	6.9	28.7	59.9	4.4	0.8
I come up with creative ideas at work			3.5	39.6	56.9	4.5	0.6
I take initiative when there is a problem to be solved	4.5	1.5	2.5	39.6	52	4.3	0.9
I start new tasks myself when new ones are finished	0.5	1	3.5	38.1	56.9	4.5	0.7
I ask for help when needed	0		5	42.6	52.5	4.5	0.6
I am open to criticism of my work	2.5	1	6.9	31.2	58.4	4.4	0.9
I try to learn from the feedback I get from others on my work	2	4.5	5	31.2	57.4	4.4	0.9
I take on challenging work tasks, when available	3.5	0	5.9	34.2	56.4	4.4	0.9
I work at keep my job knowledge up-to-date	1	4	2.5	38.6	54	4.4	0.8
I work at keeping my job skills up-to-date	3.5	3	5.4	34.7	53.5	4.3	1.0
I come up with creative solutions to new problems	0	0	5.9	32.2	61.9	4.6	0.6
I am able to cope with uncertain and unpredictable situations at work	0	3	6.9	25.2	64.9	4.5	0.8
I easily adjust to changes in my work	1	2.5	4.5	37.1	55	4.4	0.8
I recover fast, after difficult situations or setbacks at work	1	3.5	4	39.1	52.5	4.4	0.8
Overall average						**4.3**	**0.9**

SD- Strongly Disagree, D- Disagree, NS- Not sure, A-Agree, SA- Strongly agree

4.3 Knowledge Culture has no Significant Influence on Employee Performance in Public Universities in Kenya

The hypothesis stated that knowledge culture had no significant influence on employee performance in public universities in Kenya. As shown on Table 4, simple linear regression analysis was adopted and the study findings with an R squared of 0.66 revealed that 66 percent of changes in employee performance in public universities in Kenya was explained by employees'

competencies management while the remaining percentage can be explained by other factors unaccounted for in the model.

Table 4: Model Summary on Test for Significant Influence of Knowledge Culture on Employees Performance in Public Universities in Kenya

Model Summary			
R	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
0.816	0.67	0.66	0.54

a Predictors: (Constant), KCUL

As shown in Table 5 on analysis of variance on influence of knowledge culture on employee performance in public universities in Kenya. There was significant influence of knowledge culture on employee performance in public universities in Kenya (F = 397.446 p value <0.05).

Table 5: Analysis of Variance on Test for Significant Influence of Knowledge Culture on Employees Performance in Public Universities in Kenya

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	115.133	1	115.133	397.446	.000
Residual	57.936	200	0.29		
Total	**173.069**	**201**			

a Dependent Variable: EMP

b Predictors: (Constant), KCUL

As shown in Table 5 there was positive and significant influence of knowledge culture on employees' performance in public universities in Kenya (β = 0.76, p value <0.05). Since p value was less than 5 percent then at 5 percent level of significance, we reject the null hypothesis and accept an alternative that there was positive and significant influence between employees' competencies management and performance in public universities in Kenya. Hence an increase in employees' competencies increases employee performance by 0.76 units. Regression analysis indicates positive and significant influence between knowledge culture and employee performance in public universities in Kenya (β = 0.76, p value <0.05). This implies that an increase in knowledge culture increases employee performance in public universities in Kenya. The findings agreed with Chang and Lin (2015) who reported positive and significant influence of knowledge culture on employee job satisfaction. Similarly, they supported Mohaydin (2007) who reported positive and significant influence of knowledge culture and employee performance. Locally, Bagaja and Guyo (2015) found positive influence of knowledge culture on employee performance.

EMP = 0.04 + 0.76 KCUL……1

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Table 6: Regression Coefficient on Test for Significant Influence of Knowledge Culture on Employees Performance in Public Universities in Kenya

Regression Coefficient					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.04	0.04		1.11	0.27
KCUL	0.76	0.04	0.82	19.94	0.00

a Dependent Variable: EMP

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Descriptive statistics revealed that majority agreed that knowledge culture has influence on employee performance in Public universities in Kenya. This was evidenced by majority of the respondents agreeing that there are creations of information sharing platforms in their respective universities, participatory decision making has been embraced in Public universities in Kenya, employees are encouraged to participate in seminars and conferences; and due recognition is given to those who share information and promotion of creativity and innovation is widely practiced.

Pearson correlation analysis revealed strong positive significant effect of knowledge culture on employee performance in Public universities in Kenya (rho = 0.8166, p value <0.05). Regression analysis revealed positive significant influence of knowledge culture on employee performance in Public universities in Kenya ($\beta = 0.76$, p value <0.05).

The hypothesis testing found that knowledge culture had a positive and significant effect on employee performance in public universities in Kenya. This shows that an increase in knowledge culture improves employee performance in these institutions. This calls for clarity on organizational goals amongst all stakeholders so as to have a common focus and purpose, identification of employee strengths and weakness and build and creation of harmonious inter and intra relationships which promotes improved performance. Further, employees in public universities should be frequently granted permission to attend knowledge management conferences, given opportunities for creating platforms for sharing knowledge which may include disseminating knowledge content, teamwork, deployment of communication systems, and managing access to and participation in information sharing platforms.

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