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Influences of Knowledge Management Processes on Employee Performance in Food Manufacturing Firms in Kenya

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Abstract

This research aimed to assess the influences of knowledge management processes on employee performance in food manufacturing firms in Kenya; and decomposed processes into three constructs of knowledge creation, sharing and application. The study adopted post-positivism philosophy and used explanatory research design with stratified proportionate sampling technique. A sample of 384 respondents from a target population of about 12,643 employees from 60 food manufacturing firms was obtained using Fisher's (1991) formula. A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was used to collect primary data - quantitative and qualitative, which underwent descriptive and inferential analyses. The study findings revealed that knowledge management processes had a positive and significant relationship with employee performance as $t_{cal}=15.184>t_{crit}=1.96$ at $p=0.000$. Thus, null hypothesis that knowledge management processes have no significant influence on employee performance was rejected; with regression outcome of $\beta=0.676$, $p=0.000$ indicating that a unit enhancement in knowledge management processes results in employee performance enhancement by similar units in the same direction. The study concluded that knowledge management processes influence employee performance. Industry management should ensure continuous needs assessment on knowledge management processes, for continued suitability to support knowledge management system and facilitate employee performance.

Keywords: *Knowledge management; Knowledge management processes, employee performance.*

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1. Introduction

Literature depicts that no single definition of knowledge management fits all as it diversely acquires contextual leanings. Spender (2015) viewed pluralism in the understanding of concepts, definitions, and terminologies as immaturity of knowledge management as a field of study while Arrau (2015) documented it as an acknowledged academic and professional purview, declaring it a well-established area of research in recent years. Given the concurrence in definition of management, it suffices to contextualize knowledge in this research; as Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) position that knowledge is justified true belief, which incorporates justification conditions (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2018) in respect to relationships concerning concepts in a particular area of study (Fernandez & Sabherwal, 2015).

To mitigate ensuing volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity in global business arena, knowledge remains a key ingredient for adjustments to survival and growth of organizations (Abidi & Joshi, 2018). Hence, it is this perceived value in knowledge that necessitates its capture, utilization, and overall management for organizational success (Yaghoubi, et al., 2017). In consonance with this, Rezny et al. (2019) declared knowledge a significant resource - an intangible asset that remains highly valued for competitiveness; and confirmed in Koech & Cheluget (2019) that competitiveness of a firm is enhanced when its competitors are unable to access its protected knowledge. Thus, knowledge management enables access tools for information collection, generation, classification, and dissemination through a central depository system that supports overall business strategy; hence, Inkow (2020) expression that knowledge management is a discipline that deals with collection, processing, sharing, use and measurement of internal and external information potential of an organization.

Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) framework of socialization, externalization, combination and internalization (SECI), supports conversion of tacit and explicit knowledge, as a pedestal for knowledge creation and sharing. It enables codification of internally generated and externally acquired knowledge into explicit knowledge that supports work processes and employee performance. This was demonstrated in Ortega-Gutiérrez, et al. (2015) assertion that organizations generate knowledge from inside and outside, hence requiring internal processes for integration and utilization, buttressing Martelo & Cegarra (2014) position that knowledge management processes become a necessity that bridges generation and capture of new knowledge to mainstreaming for application or utilization in company operations.

In the view of Inkinen et al (2015), ultimate benefit of knowledge management processes lies in their ability to enhance effective utilization of knowledge assets, in tandem with Hbabi & Alomari (2020) position that knowledge management processes positively impact employee innovativeness for generating, storing, sharing and applying knowledge for improved work performance. In their study on relationship between knowledge management and employee performance, Rahmayanto et al. (2019) decomposed knowledge management into knowledge infrastructure, resources, and processes, operationalizing the latter into knowledge creation, sharing, and application, which this study adopted in conceptualization for instrumentation and field survey. The current study investigates influence of knowledge management processes - creation, sharing, and application, on employee performance in food manufacturing firms.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Knowledge-Based View (KBV) of the Firm

Drucker (1993) first conceived knowledge capital concept before Grant (1996) declared knowledge-based view (KBV) of the firm that Fernandez & Sabherwal (2015) documented as unique, valuable, not substitutable and difficult to imitate. KBV posits that an organization exists as an entity operating on knowledge interactions featuring: employee competencies, organizational internal structures and environmental external structures; with knowledge as fulcrum for competitiveness. Thus, resource base of a successful firm increasingly comprises knowledge-based assets, validating the notion that knowledge drives organizational performance.

Grant (1996) held that an employee is the primary actor in knowledge creation, sharing and its principal repository in knowledge protection to benefit from its application. Prospectively, Curado (2014) opined that knowledge is the most strategic resource of the firm, declaring that knowledge asymmetry among firms in an industry determines their performance differentials

owing to variation in their capabilities and competencies, one major component of which is knowledge management processes and its versatility. The knowledge theory of the firm underpins knowledge management, which advocates for knowledge creation, sharing and application, which are critical for employee and organization performance.

2.1.2 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

It was the question, "What do people want from their jobs?" that led Fredrick Herzberg to develop the Two-Factor Theory in 1959; using data from interviewing 203 engineers and accountants in Pittsburgh. The period experienced a deep into the root of motivation - the gist of engagement with workforce to stimulate them into giving best performance. This led to publication of an article, "One More Time: How do You Motivate Employees?" And from this was developed Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, also called the two-factor theory, which view job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction as existing on two different continua, each having its own set of factors (Herzberg, et al. 1959; Herzberg, 1991).

The theory advocates for management focus on employee needs regarding motivator and hygiene factors to achieve job satisfaction and motivation for peak performance. It holds that presence of motivators such as work itself, responsibility, achievement, recognition, opportunity for growth, and self-development lead to job satisfaction, while deficiency in hygiene factors such as company policies and administration, work conditions, salary, supervision, relationship with managers and peers, promote dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 2003). On the strength of the theory, therefore, management has to in a mutually exclusive manner, continually address each continuum to attain desired levels of satisfaction. Alshmemri et al (2017) expressed that both motivation and hygiene factors, have varying effects on job satisfaction, declaring that hygiene factors advocate for need to avoid unpleasantness while motivation factors promote need for individual growth and self-actualization.

However, critics hold that the theory has a substantive leaning on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, yet there exist significant undercurrents about applicability of needs hierarchy relative to employee demographics - generational disparities and preferences. For instance, Rahman et al. (2018) and Kotni & Karumuri (2018) found that hygiene factors such as salary and job security played major roles in motivating employees and causing job satisfaction, yet they are not intrinsic factors. Thus, supervision and interpersonal relationships serve as important predictors of job satisfaction despite being extrinsic factors. Recently, Nickerson (2023) held that motivators are potent in driving motivation and job satisfaction while inadequacy of hygiene factors erode motivation and leads to absence of job satisfaction. Hence, the theory remains critical for this study as it provides a platform that underpins the framework for job satisfaction, the dependent variable.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

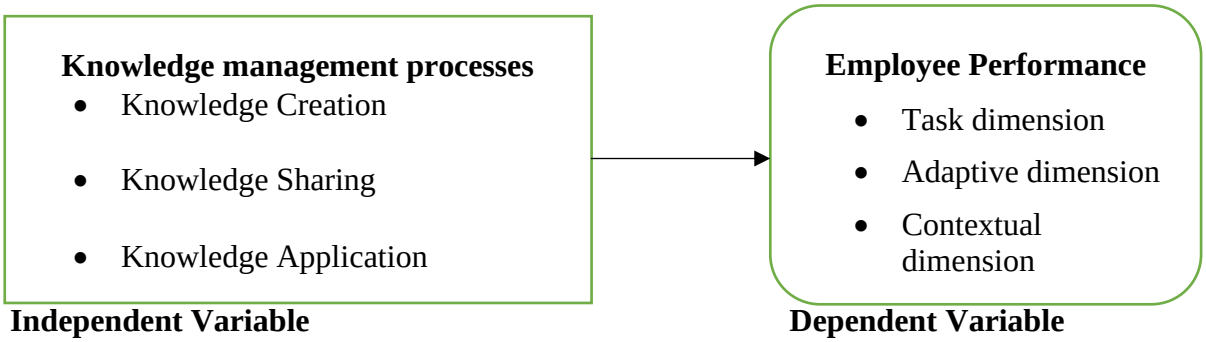
Intangible assets play a critical role in knowledge economy, necessitating emphasis on human capital and employee motivation (Kianto, et al., 2016), which requires effective knowledge management support with versatile knowledge management processes. In their study, Abd et al (2013) considered knowledge acquisition, application, conversion, and protection as constructs in their study while Wu & Chen (2014) adopted knowledge creation, transfer, integration, and application. Differently, Chang & Lin (2015) used knowledge creation, storage, transfer, and application as constructs and in sync with these, Nawab, et al. (2015) and Tan & Wong (2016) viewed knowledge management processes as continuum of elements ranging from creation, capture, acquisition, organizing, storage, retrieval, sharing and application to utilization; which confirmed diversity in conception of knowledge management

processes. Depending on the contextual study one adopts, a variety of combinations can be used for investigating corresponding knowledge management processes impacts, including on employee performance.

Rahmayanto, et al. (2019) study on employee performance considered latent variables such as cost, quality, discipline, and commitment, while John et al. (2020) emphasized employee deliverables with respect to level and functional units, viewing employee performance as divisible into five aspects: tasks, contextual and adaptive dimensions, employee organizational citizenship and employee counterproductive work behavior; which Abouzeid (2018) declared critical in conducting comprehensive measurement of employee performance. In their study on tertiary institutions in Kenyan education sector, Koech & Cheluget (2019) investigated the relationship between knowledge management and employee performance, decomposing the latter into task, adaptive, and contextual constructs, also adopted in this study, with recommendation that further studies be conducted in contexts other than education sector.

This study's conceptual framework entailed independent variable – knowledge management processes, decomposed into knowledge creation, sharing, and application constructs as predictor variables influencing employee performance - the dependent variable; operationalized into task, adaptive, and contextual dimensions, as presented in the following figure showing envisaged interactions - see Figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



2.3 Empirical Review

Knowledge creation stimulates an organization to develop new ideas and solutions for tapping opportunities, encouraging employee learning, and enhancing innovativeness (Nowacki & Bachnik, 2016), which promotes employee performance. Juan et al. (2018) argued that firms exploit propensity through knowledge creation and sharing, improving their dynamic capabilities, courtesy of social capital theory - interactions, networks, and continued learning, which in turn promote employee performance.

In Nepal Khanal and Poudel (2017) investigated knowledge management, employee satisfaction, and performance, with results demonstrating that knowledge management processes – knowledge obtaining, organizing, and applying, had a positive relationship and significant impacts on employee performance, similar to findings of Cegarra-Navarro et al. (2016). When Sangiorgi and Siboni (2017) investigated on amount, nature, and management of voluntary intellectual capital disclosure under knowledge management processes, findings revealed a significant amount of intellectual disclosure in social reports, of benefits for utilization in decision-making; concluding that university's central role as knowledge silos require robust knowledge management processes for knowledge dissemination, transfer, and sharing, construed as pertinent for prompt decision making and performance enhancement.

Rahmayanto, et al. (2019) assertion that knowledge management drives responsiveness to innovation, customer care and stakeholder interests and their conclusion that knowledge sharing enhances employee performance; buttressed Nowacki & Bachnik (2016) conclusion that knowledge creation sprouts new ideas and solutions for tapping unfolding opportunities that enable learning, innovativeness and promote employee performance. Relatedly, Aflah (2022) case study in Indonesia demonstrated that knowledge sharing had a positive and significant effect on individual diversity interaction, concluding that knowledge sharing enhances employee performance. It remains critical to note that knowledge creation and sharing accelerate learning, innovativeness, access to target markets, and employee performance (Ritala, et al., 2015), as knowledge application strengthens firm operations, develops new products, and generates new knowledge (Boateng & Agyemang, 2015). These help in improving employee performance (Mardani et al., 2018) and resolving enterprise challenges (Boateng et al., 2018).

When Tadesse (2020) investigated influence of knowledge acquisition, sharing, creation, and retention on organization performance in Ethiopia, findings revealed a strong and positive relationship between knowledge management and employee performance, concluding that knowledge management is critical for competitiveness. Similarly, in Nigeria, Ayetigbo et al. (2023) investigated impacts of knowledge acquisition, conversion, and protection on employee performance with findings that knowledge acquisition had positive impact on employee performance; knowledge conversion enhanced employee performance; and knowledge protection increased company competitiveness. The study recommended that firms strategically acquire, convert, build, and protect relevant knowledge for enhanced performance. This entrenched Lin (2015) conclusion that knowledge sharing achieves transfer of wisdom, skills, and technology for effective work processes thereby enhancing employee performance.

On delivery of veterinary services in Kenya, Ogara et al. (2010) found rich, uncoordinated, and unutilized knowledge, which demonstrated inadequacy of knowledge management processes. The study concluded that abundant tacit knowledge was not converted to explicit knowledge, thereby impeding institutional memory and hampering knowledge utilization. Relatedly, Wamitu (2016) reported that absence of a defined platform for knowledge sharing remains an impediment to performance enhancement in Kenya's public sector. In both instances, a codification gap existed – lack of documentation, a significant hindrance to knowledge sharing. The studies exposed inadequacy of processes for capture and integration of tacit and explicit knowledge, leading to knowledge under-utilization, potential for sub-optimal performance, and dissatisfaction with public service.

In the Kenya private sector, Akinyi (2017) examined effects of knowledge sharing on institutional functioning, with findings demonstrating that knowledge creation, acquisition, sharing, and reuse have a positive and strong correlation with performance; while hoarding hinders knowledge sharing efficiency as staff turnover hampered growth of organization tacit knowledge base. The study concluded that knowledge management processes positively influence performance through effectiveness of standardized, repeatable procedures, prompt decision making and enabling the firm to leverage its size.

When Mosoti and Masheka (2010) recorded a slow uptake of knowledge management practices among organizations in Nairobi, while Jagongo, et al. (2012) documented poor organizational practices with inefficient technological capability as critical factors leading to low uptake of knowledge management, they laid a platform for investigating extent of knowledge management mainstreaming in Kenya. They exposed possibility of knowledge management being a potential impediment to employee performance in Kenya's manufacturing sector owing

to critical role of knowledge as a resource in the knowledge economy and 4IR sphere. Thus, need to ascertain extent of knowledge management mainstreaming and its effects on employee performance suffices.

3. Methodology

The study adopted post-positivism philosophy and explanatory research design with stratified proportionate sampling technique. From 58 food manufacturing firms with a population of 12643, a sample of 384 respondents using Fisher's (1991) formula was obtained. Primary data for analysis and hypothesis testing was collected using a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire, including a pilot study (Mcleod, 2023) covering 40 respondents from 10 food manufacturing firms and results used for improving the data collection instrument. Questionnaires were administered through a drop-and-collect technique for collecting primary data. A briefing was conducted to explain aim of the survey, surety of trust, privacy, and confidentiality to respondents, including availability of choice to use hard or soft copy questionnaires. Data obtained was cleaned, collated, and exposed to descriptive and inferential analysis - SPSS version 26 aided.

The instrument was exposed to validity determination in content, face, and construct validity dimensions. Human resource experts and data analysts critiqued the instruments for face and content validity improvements. For construct validity, the instrument underwent factor analysis, with Steenkamp and Maydeu-Olivares (2023) position that suitable threshold for factor loadings should be ≥0.50. Only statements with factor loading of 0.5 and above, were retained in the instrument for both independent and dependent variables.

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, α, was used to determine instrument reliability, which according to Vaske (2017) is acceptable at $\alpha \geq 0.7$ as the study adopted. Knowledge management processes as an independent variable had a reliability coefficient of 0.722 while job satisfaction - the dependent variable had a reliability co-efficient of 0.727, indicating that items in both variables were suitable for the study.

4. Findings and Discussion

From distribution of 384 questionnaires, were received a total of 322 questionnaires, which upon cleaning and collation yielded 297 questionnaires accepted as meeting requirements and fit for analysis, achieving a response rate of 77%. The outcomes were presented as descriptive and inferential findings.

4.1 Descriptive Findings

For interpretation of Likert scale responses, the researcher adopted use of frequency, percentage, and mean for each statement in the variable as well as each construct and sub-construct; and used the following ranking on Likert mean scores: Very low=3.20 and below, Low=3.21 to 3.44, Average= 3.45 to 3.75, High= 3.76 to 4.49, Very High= 4.50 and above. The cut-off mean score adopted for the study was 3.75; with statements with lower scores requiring improvement.

4.1.1 Knowledge Management Processes Descriptive Outcome

The objective of the study was to establish the influence of knowledge management processes on job satisfaction. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements provided, using a five-point Likert scale, where: 1=strongly disagree – SD; 2=disagree – D; 3=neutral – N; 4=agree – A; and 5=strongly agree - SA. In the table; M = mean while STD = standard deviation, both of Likert scores. The data was analyzed into percentages

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- concerning the number of respondents to each of the five response options, with its mean and standard deviation as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Results for Knowledge Management Processes

Item No	Statement	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	M	STD
1.	**Knowledge Creation (KC)**							
KC1	The organization creates knowledge through research and development activities	10.14%	8.70%	12.68%	43.84%	24.64%	3.64	1.23
KC2	Our organization provides meetings for employees to exchange ideas and experiences	9.78%	12.68%	7.97%	33.70%	35.87%	3.73	1.33
KC3	Employees from diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise work together on projects for work improvements	9.42%	8.70%	4.71%	65.58%	11.59%	3.61	1.1
KC4	The organization supports apprenticeship, attachment and internship programs that generate knowledge	10.87%	6.88%	9.78%	33.33%	39.13%	3.83	1.31
	Average	**10.05**	**9.24**	**8.79**	**44.11**	**27.81**	**3.70**	**1.24**
2.	**Knowledge Sharing - KS**							
KS1	Our organization encourages mentoring and coaching programs where experienced employees share their knowledge, skills and insights with upcoming colleagues.	10.14%	7.25%	11.23%	49.28%	22.10%	3.66	1.19
KS2	Our organization has internal social networks where employees connect, communicate and share knowledge freely.	9.78%	11.59%	10.87%	30.43%	37.32%	3.74	1.33
KS3	Our organization organizes knowledge fairs and expos where employees communicate and showcase ideas	10.14%	10.87%	10.87%	42.75%	25.36%	3.62	1.25
	Average	**7.52**	**9.90**	**10.99**	**40.82**	**28.26**	**3.67**	**1.26**
3.	**Knowledge Application - KA**							
KA1	My organization modifies its products, strategies and behavior in light of	8.70%	10.87%	9.06%	31.88%	39.49%	3.83	1.3

	emergent experience and acquired knowledge.							
KA2	The organization emphasizes the use of its knowledge base in solving work-related problems at individual and team levels.	9.78%	10.14%	11.96%	31.88%	36.23%	3.75	1.31
KA3	All staff are directed to utilization of new knowledge acquired as routine in their operations.	10.87%	8.70%	8.70%	43.12%	28.62%	3.7	1.27
KA4	Our company encourages using new knowledge for purposes of improving customer satisfaction and supplier services	6.88%	11.23%	10.14%	38.04%	33.70%	3.8	1.21
KA5	Our organization is effective in exploiting acquired knowledge to improve its company-wide productivity and performance	6.52%	10.14%	11.96%	39.49%	31.88%	3.8	1.18
	Average	8.55	10.22	10.36	36.88	33.98	3.78	1.25

The outcomes were summarized from statement results to construct performance and variable scores, in percentage for number of respondents, together with mean and standard deviation based on Likert scores. Table 2 gives a summary of all constructs and their comparative scores summarized.

Table 2: Knowledge Management Processes (KP) Construct Summarized Scores

Item No.	Construct	Disagreeing	Neutral	Agreeing
KC	Knowledge Creation	19.29	8.79	71.92
KS	Knowledge Sharing	17.42	10.99	69.08
KA	Knowledge Application	18.77	10.36	70.86
	Mean for KP	18.49	10.05	70.62

Table 2 was transformed to achieve outcomes of disagreeing and agreeing responses, maintaining neutral responses - for not being explicit. Thus Table 3 shows crystallized responses, by summing up SD with D into a set of disagreeing while A is lumped up with SA into a set of agreeing. The table supports horizontal analysis for all the constructs and vertically gives variable grand mean on the constructs.

Table 3: KP Snapshot of Descriptive Performance

Item No.	Construct	Disagreeing	Neutral	Agreeing
KC	Knowledge Creation	19.29	8.79	71.92
KS	Knowledge Sharing	17.42	10.99	69.08
KA	Knowledge Application	18.77	10.36	70.86
	Mean for KP	18.49	10.05	70.62

Findings in Table .3 show that close to 72% agree with operating aspects of knowledge creation in the industry with close to 9% neutral while 19% disagreed, both requiring root cause analysis for corrective actions. Weaknesses identified under knowledge creation included ineffective creation of knowledge through research and development activities, inadequate fora for exchanging ideas and experiences, and inability of employees from diverse backgrounds to work together. To forestall deleterious effects of these shortfalls, industry managers have to institute corrective measures to improve knowledge creation contribution to influence of knowledge management processes on job satisfaction. The significance of this lies in the Nowacki & Bachnik, (2016) emphasis that knowledge creation enables an organization to develop new ideas and solutions for tapping opportunities through employee learning and innovativeness; which have potential to enhance employee performance and job satisfaction.

Knowledge-sharing neutral response was almost 11% with 17% disagreeing, implying requirement of diagnostic intervention to turn around close to 28% of respondents, using three dimensions of knowledge sharing – structural, relational, and cognitive; buttressed in social capital theory (Juan et al., 2018), with potential to influence job satisfaction. Areas requiring improvements in knowledge sharing were the ineffectiveness of mentoring and coaching programs, poor internal social networks, inadequate utilization of knowledge fairs and expos and showcasing of ideas; and need to enhance communication. The necessity for required intervention is entrenched in Lin (2015) position that knowledge sharing yields transfer of wisdom, skills, and technology for the effectiveness of work processes, enhanced performance and job satisfaction. Moreover, the envisaged corrective actions would enhance knowledge sharing contribution to knowledge management processes' influence on job satisfaction, as in Ritala, et al. (2015) assertion that knowledge sharing accelerates learning, innovativeness, access to target markets and employee performance, which are intrinsic motivations stimulants to job satisfaction.

Knowledge application attained close to 71% agreeing; with 10% neutral and 19% disagreeing requiring needs assessment to determine corrective actions. The aspect of knowledge application requiring improvement was poor routine adoption and utilization of new knowledge, with potential to deter performance and satisfaction. Converting the disagreeing respondents creates synergy through the alignment of efforts in tandem with Boateng & Agyemang (2015) declaration that knowledge application strengthens firm operations, develops new products and generates new knowledge, useful in resolving enterprise challenges (Boateng, et al., 2018), improving employee performance (Mardani, et al., 2018) and enhancing job satisfaction. Further benefits would accrue from corrective actions relative to Rahmayanto, et al. (2019) observation that knowledge application promotes responsiveness to innovation,

customer care, and stakeholder interests, confirming that employee performance and job satisfaction are dependent upon the effectiveness of knowledge creation, sharing and utilization.

For the processes variable, 29% for neutral and disagreeing respondents required root cause analysis for aspects of knowledge management processes, earlier mentioned for each construct by assessing work environment factors similar to Cegarra-Navarro, et al. (2016) assertion the factors influence knowledge management processes of acquisition, conversion, and application, concluding that bulk of organizational knowledge arises from external sources making knowledge management processes significant factors for performance, with potential to enhance job satisfaction.

Table 2 gives Likert mean scores of 3.70; 3.67 and 3.78 respectively for knowledge creation, sharing, and application, indicating knowledge sharing is most limiting influence of knowledge management processes on employee performance. To mitigate this, industry managers need to undertake diagnostic interventions to determine factors jolting propensity of knowledge management processes in these firms given Ayetigbo et al. (2023) confirmation that knowledge acquisition, conversion, and protection positively impact employee performance and competitiveness; with a recommendation that firms strategically acquire, convert, build and protect relevant knowledge for enhanced performance, potentially improving job satisfaction.

4.1.2 Employee Performance Descriptive Outcome

With knowledge management and job satisfaction as independent and mediating variables, the study considered employee performance as its dependent variable, and decomposed it into three constructs – task, adaptive and contextual performances, each investigated on their varied aspects. The respondents indicated their level of agreement with the statements provided, using a five-point Likert scale, where: 1=strongly disagree – SD; 2=disagree – D; 3=neutral – N; 4=agree – A; and 5=strongly agree - SA. In the tables; M = mean, while STD = standard deviation, both for Likert scores. The data was analyzed into percentages - concerning the number of respondents to each of the five response options on corresponding statements, as shown in Table 4 summary.

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Table 4: Summary of Results for Employee Performance

Item No	Statement	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	M	STD
	Task Performance - TP							
TP1	I always meet the work quality required	5.07%	3.26%	1.45%	47.83%	42.39%	4.19	1.00
TP2	Planning and organizing work is a task I adequately attain	0.72%	18.48%	11.96%	26.45%	42.39%	3.91	1.16
TP3	I am result-oriented in line with our operating culture	5.80%	17.03%	20.65%	24.28%	32.25%	3.60	1.26
TP4	Prioritizing tasks to dispense is within my discretion	1.45%	19.57%	17.03%	23.91%	38.04%	3.78	1.19
	Average	**3.26**	**14.59**	**12.77**	**30.62**	**38.77**	**3.87**	**1.15**
	Adaptive Performance - AP							
AP1	I am able to keep my job knowledge up-to-date	2.17%	18.12%	14.49%	20.29%	44.93%	3.88	1.23
AP2	I readily learn new tasks, technologies and procedures making my job skills up-to-date	0.00%	19.20%	17.03%	22.83%	40.94%	3.86	1.15
AP3	I readily adjust my work goals whenever necessary	1.09%	15.94%	19.20%	24.64%	39.13%	3.85	1.14
AP4	I always undertake problem solving creatively	0.00%	17.75%	17.75%	24.64%	39.86%	3.87	1.13
	Average	**0.82**	**17.75**	**17.12**	**23.1**	**41.22**	**3.87**	**1.16**
	Contextual Performance - CP							
CP1	I am a consistent participant in team activities at work	1.45%	22.46%	18.12%	19.20%	38.77%	3.71	1.23
CP2	I find it easy co-operating with others at work	1.81%	22.83%	22.46%	20.29%	32.61%	3.59	1.21
CP3	I experience effective communication in the execution of my work	1.45%	18.48%	22.83%	21.01%	36.23%	3.72	1.18
CP4	I commonly volunteer to undertake tasks beyond my responsibility for purposes of effective work execution	1.09%	15.58%	18.84%	22.10%	42.39%	3.89	1.15
CP5	I like taking challenging assignments in my work	1.09%	14.86%	13.04%	26.45%	44.57%	3.99	1.13
	Average	1.38	18.84	19.06	21.81	38.91	3.67	1.21

The outcomes were summarized from statement results to construct performance and eventual variable, in percentage number of respondents, together with mean and standard deviation from Likert scores. Table 5 gives a summary of all the constructs and their comparative scores summarized for ease of interpretation.

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Table 5: Employee Performance (EP) Construct Summarized Scores

Item No.	Construct	STD %	DA %	N %	AG %	STA %	M	SD
TP	Task Performance	3.26	14.59	12.77	30.62	38.77	3.87	1.15
AP	Adaptive Performance	0.82	17.75	17.12	23.1	41.22	3.87	1.16
CP	Contextual Performance	1.38	18.84	19.06	21.81	38.91	3.67	1.21
	Grand EP Means	1.82	17.06	16.32	25.18	39.63	3.80	1.17

Table 5 was further transformed to outcomes of disagreeing and agreeing responses with neutral responses as an exclusion for not being explicit. Thus Table 6 involved summing up SD with D into a set of disagreeing while A is lumped up with SA into a set of agreeing. The table supports horizontal analysis for all the constructs and vertically gives variable grand means.

Table 6: Employee Performance Snapshot of Descriptive Results

Item No.	Construct	Disagreeing %	Neutral %	Agreeing %
TP	Task Performance	17.85	12.77	69.39
AP	Adaptive Performance	18.57	17.12	64.32
CP	Contextual Performance	20.22	19.06	60.72
	Mean for EP	18.88	16.32	64.81

Task performance recorded about 69% of respondents' concurrence with the prevailing situation while close to 13% remained neutral as nearly 18% disagreed, the latter two groups requiring root cause analysis. Thus, 31% not in agreement with task performance statements was a cue to unravel aspects requiring modifications to enhance employee performance. Pradhan & Jena (2017) hold that task performance concerns explicit job behavior with clear responsibilities in the job description and that it requires cognitive ability, facilitated by task knowledge, task skills and task habits; with prior experience and ability to do the job as main antecedents. It matters that industry managers determine suitability of these in their firms for purposes of heightened performance. Fithriyana et al. (2022) opined that hiccups in task performance can be related to either task complexity or human capability concerns. They declared that task complexity concerns factors relating to workload requirements for undertaking operative tasks including ambiguities; while human capability axis, involves determination of whether employees have suitable synthesis of cognitive and physical abilities such as requisite skills, training, and experience matching the task requirements.

Adaptive performance agreeing respondents was about 64% with nearly 19% disagreeing and close to 17% neutral, indicating that around 36% require diagnostic interventions. The need for corrective actions to support effective adaptability aligns with Baard et al. (2014) position that uncertainty and fluidity that characterize business environment demand employee agility and

flexibility on interpersonal behavior for sustained performance. Furthermore, Park & Park (2019) emphasized the need for employee empowerment with adaptive performance features to enhance employee capability and promote career success at individual level, while improving on such dynamics as change management, organizational learning, and customer relationships at the organizational level.

Relatedly, Bendall and Henricks (2021) gave diverse antecedents from which to tailor adaptive performance interventions: organizational characteristics such as its mission and vision; team characteristics such as supervisor support; job characteristics such as job resources and decision-making autonomy; as well as individual characteristics such as self-efficacy, self-regulation, and personality factors. It is therefore incumbent that corrective measures be determined and undertaken to entrench high adaptability among employees to narrow or eliminate the gap of 36% of respondents not agreeing.

Contextual performance scored about 61% agreeing and 20% disagreeing while close to 19% remained neutral. With approximately 39% not in agreement, root cause analysis stands as a priority if the deleterious effects of poor contextual performance have to be forestalled. Campbell and Wiernik (2015) expressed that contextual performance is non-cognitive, rather prosocial, or extra-role behavior by an employee. From variability characterizing individual differences at workplace, there is a need for a focused contextual performance employee empowerment strategy to enable formation of teams and realization of individual synergies. This enhances performance efficiency as confirmed in Krekel et al (2019) assertion that contextual performance helps employee allegiance, dispensing extra assignments, fitting into teamwork, sharing critical resources, solving difficult situations, supporting decisions for improvements, and exhibiting cooperation in times of need. In dealing with cases of contextual suboptimal performance such as this, Hamzah et al. (2024) opined that root-cause analysis be aligned to three-way antecedent approach, characterized as: for determination of personal, work or organizational corrective actions.

The employee performance variable mean for agreeing was about 65% with around 16% neutral and close to 19% disagreeing, connoting that close to 35% require diagnostic interventions for retooling into agreeing. In this respect, Isaac et al (2017) asserted that effective execution of tasks, and adaptive and contextual performances require adequacy of technology, work environment suitability, clarity of deliverables, sufficient competences, effective feedback loop and relevant motivation. Similarly, in asserting the significance of employee capabilities with knowledge as its antecedent, Omunyole and Otuya (2019) contended that employee performance is dependent on cordial industrial relations, requiring adaptive and contextual techniques. They emphasized that performance success or failure of firms is anchored on employee capability as most valuable assets for combining technology, finance, information and other resources into required production, thereby requiring task, adaptive and conceptual skills and habits.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between knowledge management processes and employee performance. Findings in Table 7 show that knowledge management processes and employee performance have a positive and moderately strong significant relationship ($\rho=0.676$, $p<0.05$). This implies that enhancement or deterioration in knowledge management processes constructs would lead to a change in employee performance in the same direction. The finding resonates with Sangiorgi

& Siboni (2017) assertion that knowledge dissemination, transfer, and sharing are critical to organizations as sources of intellectual excellence.

Table 7: Correlation Analysis

		Knowledge management processes	Employee performance
Knowledge management processes	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Employee performance	Pearson Correlation	.676**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

4.3 Regression Analysis

The second objective of the study was to determine the effects of knowledge management processes on employee performance in selected food manufacturing firms in Nairobi, Kenya, with null hypothesis: H_{01}: Knowledge management processes have no significant effects on employee performance in selected food manufacturing firms in Nairobi, Kenya. A linear regression analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis. Following are the findings, presented as Tables 8, 9, and 10 for clarity.

Table 8: Model Summary Table for Knowledge Management Processes (KP)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.676a	0.457	0.455	0.27898

a Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge management processes

From Table 8, the adjusted R squared of 0.455 implied that 45.5% of the variations in employee performance is explained by knowledge management processes while 54.5% of variations in employee performance is explained by factors not in this model. The results are congruent with Khanal et al. (2017) findings that components of knowledge management processes – knowledge obtaining, organizing and applying, had positive relation with employee satisfaction and performance. Similarly, Ahmed et al. (2020) found that knowledge sharing has positive and significant impact on employee performance, asserting that when employees share knowledge, they learn from each other's experiences and expertise, leading to skill enhancement and development of new competencies, which improve employee performance.

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Table 9: ANOVA Table for Knowledge Management Processes

Model	Item	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17.945	1	17.945	230.563	.000b
	Residual	21.325	274	0.078		
	Total	39.27	275			

a Dependent Variable: performance

b Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge management processes

The ANOVA findings from Table 9 give a significant F-statistic (F=230.563, p=000<0.05), showing that regression model for knowledge management processes and employee performance is a good fit; depicting that knowledge management processes model can significantly predict employee performance. This implies that knowledge management processes as a construct is satisfactory in statistically predicting employee performance for food manufacturing firms in Nairobi, as per the regression model.

Table 10: Regression Coefficient for Knowledge Management Processes

Model	Item	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.399	0.147		9.523	0.000
	Knowledge management processes	0.614	0.04	0.676	15.184	0.000

a Dependent Variable: Performance

From the findings in Table 10, the t-statistic for regression coefficient of knowledge management processes is greater than 1.96 (t_{cal}=15.184>t_{crit}=1.96) with corresponding p-value of less than 0.05 (p=0.000). Therefore, the null hypothesis that knowledge management processes have no significant effects on employee performance in food manufacturing firms in Nairobi, Kenya is rejected; because results (β=0.676, p=0.000) indicated that knowledge management processes have positive and statistically significant effect on employee performance in food manufacturing firms in Nairobi, Kenya. Thus, a unit change in knowledge management processes constructs - creation, sharing and application, results in employee performance change by 0.676 units.

Following is the resultant regression model:

Employee performance = 1. 339 + 0.676 KMP + e

The findings buttress Cegarra-Navarro et al. (2016) conclusion that bulk of organizational knowledge arises from external sources making knowledge acquisition, conversion, and application significant factors for employee performance, as processes provide critical linkage to required knowledge for effective employee performance. This was further illuminated in Tadesse (2020) declaration that knowledge acquisition, creation, sharing, and retention collectively enhance job satisfaction and performance by ensuring employees are well-informed, innovative and involved in continuous improvement activities. The conclusion that knowledge management processes have a statistically significant effect on employee

performance agreed with Aflah (2022) position that knowledge sharing and application practices have positive and significant effects on individual diversity interaction, which affects both adaptive and contextual dimensions in employee performance.

5. Conclusion

The study objective was to assess influence of knowledge management processes on employee performance in food manufacturing firms in Nairobi, Kenya. The null hypothesis that knowledge management processes have no significant influence on employee performance, is rejected. From the findings, a weak performance index of knowledge creation and sharing lowered the influence of knowledge management processes on employee performance. The weaknesses caused gaps in optimizing the influence of knowledge management processes on employee performance. Correlation findings indicated a positive and moderately strong relationship between knowledge management processes and employee performance. The null hypothesis was rejected and regression showed that knowledge management processes have a statistically significant influence on employee performance.

Low scores in knowledge creation and sharing manifested need for improving internal mechanisms for knowledge capture, acquisition, and generation through research activities. Similarly, knowledge sharing ineptitude demonstrated need for strengthening aspects of knowledge sharing in its three dimensions – structural, relational and cognitive, buttressed in social capital theory to optimize dissemination of data, information, knowledge, innovation and decisions. Thus, there appeared need to emphasize employee motivation to bring out innate potential of employees for enhanced commitment to job execution and exploitation of social capital dynamics courtesy of intrinsic motivation espoused in the Herzberg Two Factor theory, which supported this study.

The study investigated manufacturing context – food sector, not covering all strata of food production and thus constrained, given diversity in technology and resources in the wider food sector. Notwithstanding inherent limitations, the study revealed clarity on relationships between knowledge management processes constructs and employee performance – task, adaptive, and contextual dimensions as opposed to commonly used latent variables like cost, quality, efficiency, and customer satisfaction. The study revealed that knowledge management processes positively influence employee performance and add to extant literature on knowledge management processes in manufacturing sector of Kenya.

6. Recommendations

Knowledge management processes variable mean Likert score of 3.72 was below industry threshold of 3.75 and therefore industry managers should undertake root-cause analysis to generate and implement corrective actions, especially concerning knowledge creation and sharing. Industry human resource managers, policy implementers, and regulators should formulate corrective actions to address ineptitudes in knowledge creation and sharing, particularly relating to: research activities and other mechanisms for knowledge generation, capture, and acquisition; as well as instruments and aspects for dissemination of data, information, knowledge, decisions and innovations.

Towards comprehensive enhancement of influence of knowledge management processes on employee performance, the respective managers – quality management, human resource, finance and other portfolios should generate and adopt a matrix for implementation of corrective actions as part of annual plans of the firms. This should be accorded strict implementation adherence to guarantee knowledge management mainstreaming and optimizing knowledge management processes influence on employee performance. This study

recommends that researchers further undertake similar studies in manufacturing and beyond to widen applicability of findings.

This study has enriched extant literature by exposing influence of knowledge management processes on employee performance and in furtherance, documented an aspect of knowledge management in Kenyan manufacturing context, which remains scanty in literature. Moreover, the study decomposed employee performance into task, adaptive, and contextual dimensions as a marked departure from commonly used traditional latent variables such as costs, commitment, efficiency and quality, which employees have no control over. Through this approach of constructs with direct and clear relationships, this study has attempted to eliminate or minimize theoretical misperceptions and empirical contradictions that commonly occur in relationships between variables.

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