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Abstract

Purpose: This research aimed at examining the role of Knowledge Management infrastructure in promoting job satisfaction using organization culture, structure and information technology constructs in food firms in Kenya.

Methodology: The study utilized explanatory design with stratified random sampling under post-positivism philosophy of research for triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data. The target population for the study was 12437 employees in food manufacturing firms and Fisher's (1991) formula used to derive a sample size of 384 respondents. The study collected primary data using 5-point Likert-type questionnaire and data was analyzed using SPSS version 26 for both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Findings: The study findings revealed that knowledge management infrastructure had positive and significant relationship with job satisfaction as $t_{cal}=11.421>t_{crit}=1.96$ *at* $p=0.000$. Therefore, null hypothesis that knowledge management infrastructure has no significant influence on job satisfaction was rejected. The regression outcome of $\beta=0.568$; $p=0.000$ indicated that a unit enhancement in knowledge management infrastructure results in job satisfaction enhancement by *0.568* units in similar direction. The study concluded that knowledge management infrastructure influences job satisfaction.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Management of the firms should continually demonstrate commitment to providing for purchase, installation, usage and maintenance of determined infrastructural requirements, to support knowledge management system for optimizing job satisfaction.

Keywords: *Knowledge Management, Knowledge Management Infrastructure, Job Satisfaction, Food Manufacturing Firms*

INTRODUCTION

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) hold that knowledge is justified true belief, which incorporates the truth, belief and justification conditions (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2018) concerning relationships among concepts relevant to a particular area of study (Beccera-Fernandez & Sabherwal, 2015) and necessary for organizational success (Yaghoubi, et al., 2017). Knowledge is viewed as a key strategic resource for organizational survival, stability, growth and improvement (Al-Ali, 2013) and it is the value in knowledge, which necessitates its capture, utilization and management. This calls for adequacy of knowledge management infrastructure among other requirements.

Inkow (2020) documents knowledge management as a discipline that deals with the collection, processing, sharing, use and measurement of internal and external information potential of an organization, which makes the inherent value confer dynamic capability to a firm for competitiveness; employee satisfaction is one such capability resulting from a robust knowledge management system. El Said (2015) held that leveraging knowledge management is a valuable undertaking that benefits a firm – including employee job satisfaction and to its entire community through symbiotic relations. The study decomposed knowledge management into knowledge infrastructure, resources, processes and administration. Owing to global business volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity, the VUCA phenomenon, knowledge as a fulcrum for managing inevitability of change in organizations (Kumar, 2016) remains key for organizational success.

Shah et al. (2017) confirmed this when they asserted that knowledge infrastructure enhances employee capabilities for handling emergent technologies, dynamic stakeholder requirements and new market demands, thereby buttressing significance of knowledge management in facilitating job satisfaction. It was on this basis that this study sought to establish the extent to which knowledge management infrastructural support promotes job satisfaction in food manufacturing firms in Nairobi, Kenya. Moreover, Masa'deh et al (2019) appreciated knowledge management infrastructure as the foundation and framework that supports an organization's knowledge management system. Beccera-Fernandez and Sabherwal (2015), posited that knowledge management infrastructure constructs include organization culture, structure, information technology infrastructure, common knowledge and physical environment. These studies did not illuminate relationship between knowledge management infrastructure and job satisfaction.

Knowledge management infrastructure is prerequisite and reinforcement feature for knowledge management in an organization (Abed Al-Qader, 2014) and represents long-term basis for information and knowledge management in an organization (Pannu, 2017). Isaac et al. (2017) confirm that automation and technology upgrade enhance employee morale and enable them to improve communication quality, task execution and education acquisition leading to enhanced employee performance, promoting job satisfaction. It was against this backdrop that this study sought to determine the contribution of knowledge management infrastructure and job satisfaction; and eventually relate this to the reported Kenya's decline in manufacturing contribution to GDP from 9.3% to 6.8% between 2016 and 2023, that was evidenced with diverse incidents of employee unrests and collapse of numerous manufacturing firms (NSE, 2018).

Qureshi and Hamid (2017) view job satisfaction as employee positive feeling of psychological, physiological and environmental realms of work, resulting from evaluation of characteristics of the job, including fitness and adequacy of knowledge infrastructure. Dziuba et al (2020)

declare job satisfaction as a sense of employee achievement or success in relation to productivity, overall work performance and working conditions, as contributed-to by among others information technology infrastructure. Oluwaseun (2018) confirmed job satisfaction as among factors influencing employee performance and emphasized need for employee training and development for growth and transformation of the organization. Information technology infrastructure and its significance to job satisfaction in the food manufacturing firms in Kenya remains unexplored, making this study necessary.

Although Kianto et al. (2016) remarked that one way of achieving job satisfaction is by implementing effective performance appraisal and reward systems, Hasibuan (2008) declared that some of the indicators for assessing job satisfaction are loyalty, honesty, ability, salary levels, leadership and work environment. Though Aslan (2017) holds that job satisfaction dimensions include work, salary, promotion, supervision, growth, advancement and work environment, Unutmaz (2014) records that factors contributing to job satisfaction are work-life balance, job security, salary, benefits, recognition, work environment and opportunities for growth and development. In these mentioned studies, there is the encumbrance of knowledge management infrastructure – culture, structure and information technology, thereby illuminating their significance in achieving employee satisfaction. A dearth of studies exposing infrastructural support to job satisfaction in extant literature concerning food manufacturing in Kenya makes this study an essential contribution.

Relatedly, Audretsh (2018) revealed that: German manufacturing gives the largest share in contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) in the European Community, providing the largest employment, having a conducive set of policy and legal frameworks with robust institutional arrangement and that Germany has the most skill-intensive labour force in the world. The versatile knowledge management framework remains critical in driving the stellar manufacturing success, buttressed by a motivated workforce and incentivized innovation regime that guarantees effective employee performance. This confirmed the crucial role of effective knowledge management on employee performance and manufacturing and the scenario in Kenya as a developing nation certainly becomes significantly different, though worth establishing as a matter of status ascertainment to inform appropriate interventions, to which this study becomes a contribution.

Kenya's manufacturing accounted for 9.3% of GDP (World Bank, 2016) before subsequently falling to 8.4% due to political forces, with the sector dominated by consumer goods, not capital equipment (KAM, 2018) depicting low investments in technology sector. Thereafter, KAM-UNIDO (2020) indicated that robust manufacturing requires effective knowledge management for adequacy of employee knowledge, skills and abilities to support mechanization, automation and digitalization; and demonstrated that versatile knowledge management yields high manufacturing contribution to GDP: USA at 35%, China at 30%, Germany at 28% and the UK at 16% while Kenya is an antithesis at below 7%, consistent with her low mainstreaming of knowledge management.

A dissection into potential hindrances to Kenya's knowledge management mainstreaming becomes necessary, to which this study sought to establish the effectiveness of knowledge management infrastructure, being the foundation and structure of an effective knowledge management system. Mainstreaming of knowledge management made South Africa firms attain Africa's best employee performance index and increased manufacturing contribution to exports to an average of 6.7% from 1990 to 2005; similarly, Egypt's manufactured goods contribution to exports rose by 46% in 2017 (KAM, 2018). These findings confirmed

fundamental utility of knowledge management for employee performance and manufacturing. Subsequently, manufacturing progress indexing study of KAM-UNIDO (2020) ranked Kenya at position 115 out of 152 lower than Egypt and South Africa, at positions 64 and 52 respectively, evidently showing her undesirable performance rating requiring remedial interventions, to which this study is a partial contribution.

Of course there exist varied levels of knowledge management aspects in food manufacturing firms but sustenance of a versatile knowledge management dictates that there be a robust knowledge management infrastructure as foundation and structure. Findings of low uptake of knowledge management in manufacturing firms in Nairobi was pointedly related to loss of employee satisfaction (Mosoti & Masheka, 2010; Jagongo et al., 2012), which potentially led to employee suboptimal performance. Furthermore, when Kariuki and Kiiru (2021) asserted that Kenya was losing her manufacturing dominance in Eastern Africa, one of the key factors they identified as a root cause was absence of job satisfaction; depicting influence of low uptake of knowledge management on employee performance hitherto documented in the previous studies. The studies however, did not establish influences of knowledge management infrastructure on job satisfaction, despite the latter being a factor affecting employee performance – a gap that this study sought to fill. The study embraced organization culture, structure and information technology infrastructure as constructs; with investigation focusing on their influences on job satisfaction, which was decomposed into work, supervision, salary together with employee growth and development.

Statement of the Problem

The evidence of effective knowledge management being critical for robust employee performance and stellar manufacturing characterizes strong economies of Germany, USA, China, Japan, Britain, Italy and France. These economies are demonstrated to have robust legal and policy frameworks supported by pillar institutional arrangements that ensure knowledge management provide knowledge, skills, abilities and experiences that drive innovation for enhanced employee performance. Such a pronounced set up lacks in the Kenyan context; a gap emerges concerning determination of extent to which mainstreaming of knowledge management in Kenya ought to be in order to withstand emergent global competition. There also exist significant milestones achieved in the economies of South Africa and Egypt, concerning employee performance index progress and contribution of manufacturing to GDP or exports - courtesy of enhanced mainstreaming of knowledge management. The same does not hold for Kenya as evidence of loss of competitiveness relate to low uptake of knowledge management and lack of satisfaction that retards employee performance. Extant literature provides evidence of undesirable status of Kenya on these fronts – a scenario supported by studies over a period of time (Mosoti & Masheka, 2010; Jagongo et al., 2012; Kariuki & Kiiru, 2021). It is incumbent that the current status of knowledge management in Kenya be established and particularly in the less studied manufacturing context, starting with knowledge management infrastructure – being the foundation and structure of any effective knowledge management system. It is pertinent that a robust knowledge management system stimulates employee satisfaction, which is essential for performance as demonstrated in the workforce of Germany. In Kenyan manufacturing context, food sector employs the largest labourforce, making it the preferred area for this investigation. Therefore, this study sought to establish the influence of knowledge management infrastructure on job satisfaction in food manufacturing firms in Nairobi, Kenya; and in due course, obtained a glimpse into extent of knowledge management mainstreaming in the food manufacturing sector.

Objective

The main objective of the study was to determine influence of knowledge management infrastructure on job satisfaction in food manufacturing firms in Nairobi, Kenya.

Hypothesis

H_1: Knowledge management infrastructure has no significant influence on job satisfaction in food manufacturing firms in Nairobi, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowledge Management Infrastructure

Imran (2014) viewed knowledge management infrastructure as organizational apparatus through which knowledge is acquired, applied, stored, protected and retrieved for use and reuse through knowledge application, which according to Masa'deh et al (2017) builds cyclic knowledge management capabilities for organizational effectiveness, namely: knowledge creation, conversion, acquisition, storage and retrieval. Lin (2013) opined that these capabilities are organizational mechanisms for creating knowledge and facilitating acquisition, storage, protection and sharing of processed knowledge. Differently, Kushwaha and Rao (2015) perceived the capabilities as two prong - technical and social infrastructure; declaring that technical infrastructure includes information technology infrastructure, tools and hardware, while social infrastructure has organizational culture, structure and human resources. There is also the Beccera-Fernandez and Sabherwal (2015) perspective that dissects knowledge management infrastructure as comprising capabilities categorized into five elements: common knowledge, organization structure, information technology, organizational culture and physical environment; which this study adopted and so the investigation evaluated the influences of organizational culture, structure and information technology infrastructure on job satisfaction.

Organization Culture

Obeidat et al. (2016) embraced organization culture as a set of assumptions, beliefs, rules, standards and systems accepted as norms affecting thinking and decision-making, which is shared with new employees for problem solving in the organization (Pannu, 2017). It may be a barrier or an enabler to knowledge management. Islam et al (2015) declared that a supportive culture – with inherent flexibility, focus, adaptability and change oriented, is a necessity for effective knowledge management system; as it facilitates knowledge acquisition, sharing, coordination and utilization. Thus, culture can influence attributes of organizational success such as customer service, innovativeness, quality and performance to the extent it is pivoted on trust, learning and engagement.

Although a litany of scholars has perceived culture in the dimensions of being passive, aggressive or constructive, Lin (2015) styled organizational culture into five approaches: process versus result-oriented, loosely versus tightly controlled, employee versus job-oriented, open versus closed systems and, parochial versus professionally-oriented. Every organization as a unique environment would in practice find their suitability in these culture types whether singly or in combination. Akpa et al (2021) expressed significance of theoretical foundations anchoring organizational culture - Schein's theory of organizational culture, Denison organizational culture model and theory of organizational excellence by Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman; and affirmed that employees with clearly spelt out work ethics, supported by consistency, adaptability and effective communication experience optimal employee engagement and job satisfaction.

Of particular interest to this investigation was the study by Awino et al., (2018) that tested the impact of organization culture on the relationship between firm-level strategy and performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Kenya using Competing Values Framework (CVF) model. The study empirically confirmed full moderation effect of organizational culture on firm-level strategy and organizational performance. The results hinted that when firms develop healthy organizational culture, firm-level strategy benefits massive synergy, demonstrating that organizational culture has a significant effect on firm-level strategy and performance relationships. Knowledge management being a firm-level strategy inside which is found organizational culture therefore affects performance that in turn influences job satisfaction. This study sought to establish the extent to which knowledge infrastructure including but not limited to culture, influence job satisfaction in food manufacturing firms, courtesy of knowledge management mainstreaming.

Organizational Structure

Organization structure as formal assignment of administrative units, allocation of employment functions, delegation of authority and integration of work activities is crucial as it promotes effective communication, knowledge sharing, leveraging technology and; facilitates clarity of roles, responsibilities, delegation and authority. Muriu (2019) affirmed that organization structure is the frame that holds all organizational elements together to which Masa'deh et al. (2016) assigned two approaches: centralization - the degree of authority and control in decision making; and formalization - the officially documented rules, procedures and policies governing the working relationship and decisions. In enhancement, Ebro (2024) typifies organization structure into formalization, centralization and specialization – the approach this study adopted. For organizational success desired by all, Alawode et al. (2024) asserted that structure links organizational resources to confer stability, resist stress and survive harsh business forces.

In respect to food manufacturing context, Ugwu and Orga (2022) conducted a study with the objective of evaluating organizational structure effects on productivity in food manufacturing firms in Nigeria. The investigation focused on relating task allocation, coordination mechanisms, safety cost and cost reduction to productivity by the firms and concluded that structure had significant relationship with productivity in food manufacturing firms in Nigeria. The investigation highlighted that task allocation and coordination mechanism had significant relationship with units of output produced, waste reduction and cost reduction in the food firms. Diverse studies demonstrate that variety of structures exist and that it is the approach to creating and tactically applying a structure that lead to desired levels of productivity or performance. Therefore, it is the consciousness, clarity and objectivity with which management adopts and handles a chosen structure that makes it suitable to a food manufacturing firm, making it non-imitable. Thus, each management establishes its own organization structure for efficient handling of its business activities owing to uniqueness of each firm.

Information Technology

Masa'deh, et al. (2017) opined that for a firm to operate its knowledge management satisfactorily, it requires a robust information technology infrastructure facet - hardware, software, networks, operating system, data storage and integration capabilities; which Mir et al. (2017) classified into three: knowledge generation tools that enable acquisition, creation, conversion and synthesis; knowledge codification tools that capture tacit and explicit knowledge for access and transfer; and knowledge transfer tools for knowledge sharing and distribution. Integrating these infrastructure facilitates knowledge generation, codification and

transfer, promoting knowledge management efficiency; which stimulates employee satisfaction and performance.

Discussions continue to rage concerning rapid progress of digital technologies and their bombarding effects on work domain. Digitalization greatly affects operationalization of organization structures, enable connectivity anytime-anywhere and actualizes real-time data delivery; which creates performance super-highway as well as technostress creators or techno-stressors. Stankevičiūtė (2022) investigated the relationship between technostress creators and employee well-being in terms of work-life balance and job burn—out. Findings revealed that techno-overload and techno-invasion reduce work-life balance and lead to job burn—out. The study declared that ubiquity of technologies is a root cause of technostress due to associated work-overload, incessant demand for increased productivity, excessive dependence on technology; and perpetual need to adapt to emerging ICT applications, functionalities and workflows. The research recommended that organizations should formulate and implement policies and practices for limiting impacts of technostress creators. Thus, the study provided evidence of significant effects of infrastructure on employee performance and satisfaction.

Digital technology continues to transform how work is designed, performed and managed thus rapidly changing the traditional workplace; with tremendous impact on work-life balance. Adisa et al., (2024) posited that digitalization enhances connectivity, availability, efficiency, productivity, work flexibility and control. They observed that owing to complexity that characterizes its usage and outcomes, digitalization may positively or negatively affect work-life balance of employees. Thence, infrastructural efficiency facilitates performance and promotes job satisfaction. To umbrella these, Bhandari (2024) asserts that information technology infrastructure is critical in promoting efficiency in organizational communication, productivity and profitability; which influence job satisfaction and employee performance.

Job Satisfaction

Najimuddin and Abeysundara (2019) surveyed job satisfaction status among factory workers at a food manufacturing plant and considered five factors: gender of employees; the distance employees travel to reach the workplace; mode of transportation of employees to reach the workplace; work arrangements in the workplace and family issues of employees. The investigation found work arrangements in the workplace to be the most significant factor influencing job satisfaction of the machine operators; which remains crucial for performance optimization in manufacturing context.

Recognizing that business environment is very dynamic and that appropriate human resource is key source of innovation for required maneuverability, Singh, Kumar & Meet (2023) asserted that managing human resource remains top priority for organizational survival and growth. And this calls for job satisfaction among employees; which they observed, would generate motivation, efficiency and productivity. Their study in a food manufacturing plant concluded that job stress, salary and communication were of most concern to employees and recommended that human resource managers be on high alert to ensure prevalence of optimal job satisfaction. The essence of communication as a significant factor from the study highlighted the inherent role of information technology and culture suitability for employee satisfaction at workplace, making knowledge infrastructure a key component for organizational success.

One of the key contributors to job satisfaction is training and development, which confers additional knowledge, skills, abilities and experiences, making employees apt at their work;

and plays the critical role of enhancing employee productivity, satisfaction and retention. In their study in a Tea Factory in Kenya, Chepkosgey et al., (2015) found that in addition to improving operational flexibility of employees, increasing employee commitment to work and enhancing employee concern to customer care; training also enhances job satisfaction, loyalty and commitment to the organization thereby reducing employee turnover. The study confirmed that on-the-job training through apprenticeship, mentoring, job rotation and delegation significantly influence employee satisfaction and enhances performance. The use of training as an intervention automatically involves utilization of information technology infrastructure to achieve behaviour change, acculturation for performance, which confirms influence of knowledge infrastructure on job satisfaction.

Implementation of aspects that make a firm competitive, flexible, adaptive and agile are mandatory for survival and growth in the global business environment characterized by rapid metamorphosis. One such aspect is high job satisfaction, as it confers high morale, enhanced engagement, reduced absenteeism, increased production and low turnover intention; lack of it, in the converse – generates liability tendency as an employee: becomes inefficient and ineffective, shows less or no commitment to work, depicts counterproductive work behavior and increased absenteeism or turnover. Gladys & Yvonne (2018) study on compensation, working conditions and employee satisfaction in food manufacturing firms at Kilifi EPZ and declared that compensation had higher correlation with satisfaction; and that compensation, benefits and job security not only significantly affected employee satisfaction but also influenced productivity. The investigation concluded that satisfied employees demonstrate high loyalty, productivity and; provide knowledge, ideas, innovation, expertise, experience and cooperation for organizational success. The study recommended that to achieve optimal productivity and reduced labour turnover, the firms must formulate policies that guarantee job satisfaction by increasing compensation and improving working conditions.

Knowledge Management Infrastructure and Job Satisfaction

This study examined influences of knowledge management infrastructure - culture, structure and information technology, on job satisfaction. Each dimension is investigated in an attempt to determine its relationship with job satisfaction in food manufacturing firms. Kumar (2018) found that companies with well-founded cultures experience enhanced productivity and quality work life balance through precise formal guidelines that motivate employee commitment, consistency and adaptability, which improve job satisfaction. Joseph and Kibera (2019) decomposed culture into clan, adhocracy, market and hierarchy constructs; and found dominance of clan and hierarchy cultures, over the outward-oriented cultures of market and adhocracy; concluding that culture being unique to an organization, is neither mimicked nor destroyed by competition. Thus, alignment of organizational culture with employee expectations stimulates job satisfaction with positive domino effects on performance.

In appreciating that business environment remains volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous, Lin and Huang (2021) declared learning culture as critical for operational efficiency, effective integration of employees, anchoring agility and flexibility for embracing change and, entrenching capability for continuous improvement practices. Therefore, an organization can achieve its best functioning culture using training and benchmarking mechanisms among others. One of the pillars anchoring effective organization culture is availability of an effective organizational structure.

Muriu (2019) averred that effective organizational structure is the frame that holds all elements of the organization together. Its versatility ensures operational relevance that facilitates

strategic fitness and seamless coordination for organizational growth with enhanced employee job satisfaction. Relatedly, Ebro (2024) held that structure significantly influences alignment of objectives thereby improving employee and supervisor relations; facilitating multidimensional information flow; enhancing clarity of roles for performance; and ease of coordination, thereby improving job satisfaction and employee performance. In congruence, Goga (2023) found that structure had strong positive correlation with performance, as regression analysis showed positive and significant impact on productivity and performance. From the studies can be declared that knowledge management infrastructure manipulation impacts employee performance and job satisfaction.

One of the key factors determining whether an individual will enter and continue in an occupation is job satisfaction. Diverse researches document varied outcomes concerning studies on job satisfaction. Perera et al., (2014) examined the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance in 17 apparel firms in view of the importance of the apparel sector in the economic development of Sri Lanka. The study concluded that employees' satisfaction enhances performance and confers delivery of superior products, which achieves customer loyalty for competitiveness, increased revenues, decreased costs and improved market share. These are critical features that are dependent upon organizational strategy, part of which is knowledge management that heavily relies on infrastructure for superior results that attain competitiveness.

A plethora of researches abound from academics, authors and practitioners on job satisfaction from diverse contexts including fast food industry, which currently plays an increased critical role owing to global demographic dynamism and related rapid socioeconomic upheavals that have generated internal management constraints and challenges. Fast food restaurants client niche is elitist, educated, time conscious and quality sensitive and being service oriented, remains deeply dependent on employee-customer interface experience for repeat business; hence the need for employees that provide super service to customers who in turn demonstrate loyalty to the restaurant brand. Noting that Nigeria work environment was replete with human resource challenges and that fast food restaurants were no exception, Kwahar & Ukeh (2024) investigated effects of age and gender on job satisfaction among employees of fast food restaurants in Makurdi metropolis. The study revealed that age significantly affects employee satisfaction; gender had no significant effect on satisfaction while age-and-gender-together significantly affect employee satisfaction in fast food restaurants. The study recommended: reducing rate of casual staff on payroll as job insecurity impedes satisfaction and; increasing emphasis on employee training and education particularly refresher courses on human relations to sharpen job perception and service execution. The study entrenched significance of human capital as it recognized the need for recruitment and retention of talented employees in fast food restaurants, with emphasis on demographic suitability relating to age, gender, race and education. From the foregoing, it is fundamental that towards job satisfaction enhancement in the fast food firms, heads of human resource ought to ensure prevalence of employee passion for the job, suitable pay, job security, sufficient job autonomy and adequacy of supervisory support.

The Mutua (2016) study on retail bakery design and operational performance in Nairobi operationalized independent variable constructs as among others; well-trained customer service staff, retail automation and specialization, easy communication and long term customer relationship; relatedly, the dependent variable was also decomposed to among others flexibility of processes and short lead times. Pertinent to note is that all these constructs are sensitive to employee satisfaction and given that key to sustaining this business is service delivery, which

largely depends on employee satisfaction, it is incumbent upon management to guarantee high satisfaction for company survival and growth. Moreover, the study observed that retail business competition had matured to fierce and cut—throat level in the food industry, what with the penetration of portable in-house bakeries, milk and juice dispensers. Thus, firms not able to recruit and retain talented or high performing personnel risk high turnover, inefficiency, ineffectiveness and low productivity as they will have to make do with less satisfied employees due to their inability to provide sustained employee job satisfaction.

One of the features influencing job satisfaction in food manufacturing sector is effective career planning programs co-joined with employee performance for mutual gains to employee and the firm (Chetana & Mohapatra, 2017) through establishment, alignment and attainment of career objectives (Jackson & Tomlinson, 2020). According to Kumar & Yadav (2023), such programs include establishing objectives, offering guidance, planning for future leadership transitions, evaluating talents as well as providing training and growth prospects. These have fundamental impacts on employee motivation, satisfaction and performance. Murithii and Muo (2023) asserted that effective career planning significantly influenced loyalty to the firm, motivation and satisfaction thereby improving performance in the flour milling firms. They further held that efficient career planning exposed strengths and weaknesses, established explicit career goals as well as accorded essential skills and information for excellence in respective positions. It is therefore pertinent that career planning programs is among the aspects that can significantly build and sustain employee satisfaction leading to enhanced performance in the food manufacturing firms.

In the scientific arena, Karani (2013) sought to assess input-output transformation process in purple passion fruit production in Central-Eastern and North-Rift Kenya in order to identify avenues for improving and sustaining productivity. The overall mean Technical Efficiency (TE) was at a low of 59% which depicted huge loss for the average farmer given that the critical mass were not in the most technically efficient lot. The study recommended up-scaling of passion fruit farming information systems so as to provide a basis for optimal use of production resources. It remains factual that lackluster information system generates low morale and lack of satisfaction.

Conceptual Framework

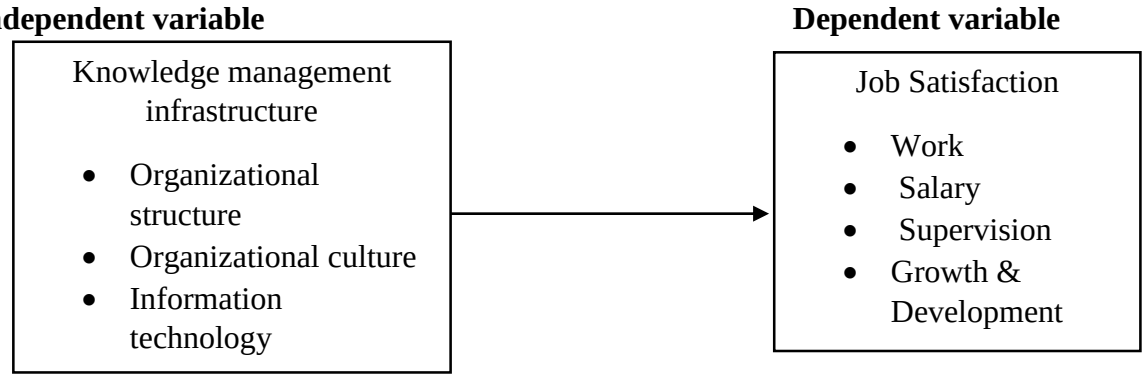

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted post-positivism philosophy to accommodate triangulation of qualitative and quantitative findings (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020) and employed explanatory research design with stratified proportionate sampling technique, using Yamane (1974) formula to obtain a sample of 370 respondents from a target population of 8974 employees from 375 food manufacturing firms (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). A pilot study was conducted, covering 40 respondents from 10 firms separate from sampling frame, to improve the instrument validity and reliability (Middleton, 2023). The survey involved 5-point Likert-type scale questionnaire (Mcleod, 2023), with 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree; to collect quantitative primary data for hypothesis testing in addition to structured interviews. The data was collected through a drop-and-collect survey technique and thereafter exposed to SPSS version 23 aided analytics – descriptive and inferential. For respondent's trust and privacy, a briefing was conducted to explain the aim of the survey including agreeing to hard or soft copy questionnaire. In total, 275 questionnaires were collected from respondents, achieving a response rate of 74%.

Validity of the Research Instrument

Three types of validity were tested in the study which included; content validity, face validity and construct validity. Experts' opinions including, supervisors, human resource experts and data collection experts were sought to enhance content validity. Their comments were incorporated in improving the instrument. They also accorded face validity in ensuring that the instrument does not appear insultingly simplistic, far too difficult or too repetitive. The study utilized factor analysis (factor loadings) to ascertain construct validity of items in the questionnaire. The threshold for factor loadings as indicated by Steenkamp and Maydeu-Olivares (2023) should be over 0.50. Therefore, this study retained items that had factor loading of 0.5 and above, both for the dependent (job satisfaction) and independent variables (knowledge management infrastructure).

Reliability of the Research Instrument

Reliability of the research instrument was determined using Cronbach's Alpha and according to Vaske (2017), the reliability of the construct is acceptable when Cronbach's alpha value is greater than 0.7. Knowledge management infrastructure as an independent variable had a reliability coefficient of 0.746 while job satisfaction had a reliability co efficient of 0.755, thus making the items suitable for the study.

FINDINGS

Descriptive Results

Knowledge Management Infrastructure

The study sought to explore the influence of knowledge management infrastructure on employee performance in selected food manufacturing firms in Nairobi, Kenya. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with various statements provided. This was done using a five-point Likert scale where: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree. The findings were as shown in Table 1.

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Table 1: Knowledge Management Infrastructure

Statement	Mean	SD
Organizational Culture		
Employee trust in the organization that supports team spirit and knowledge sharing as a corporate practice is present	3.65	1.38
I am encouraged to learn for improved performance as part of the organizational core values	3.5	1.34
I am always provided with resources and necessary support for performance	3.86	1.5
Performance is emphasized as part of our organizational culture.	4.22	1.04
Mean	**3.81**	**1.32**
Organizational Structure		
I experience effective communication with the employees and management, enhancing employee performance.	3.26	1.4
Current structure promotes teamwork among individuals and departments, facilitating employee performance in the company.	3.3	1.45
The structure facilitates knowledge transfer in the firm, promoting employee performance.	4.02	1.12
Allows interactions that motivate employee creativity and career progression in the firm, enhancing employee performance	3.64	1.33
Mean	**3.56**	**1.33**
Information Technology		
Our company has adequate Internet and Intranet facilities that sufficiently serve the organization for information and communication, promoting employee performance	3.71	1.3
Our company emphasizes employee adoption of new technology for work performance and knowledge sharing	3.67	1.24
Our company uses technology to promote group learning and collaboration.	3.46	1.16
Mean	**3.61**	**1.23**
Grand Mean	**3.66**	**1.30**

For findings on culture, employees from the different firms generally agreed that there was a significant level of trust within their organizations, supporting team spirit and knowledge sharing as a corporate practice; with a mean score of 3.65, indicating that most respondents felt positively about this aspect. However, the standard deviation of 1.38 revealed that a notable minority either disagreed or were neutral, reflecting varied experiences across different firms. A similar situation prevailed regarding encouragement to learn for improved performance as part of the organizational core values, with a mean score of 3.5 and standard deviation of 1.34. For provision with resources and necessary support for performance, respondents generally agreed, as shown by a mean score of 3.86; though high standard deviation of 1.5 indicated significant variability in responses, suggesting that while majority felt adequately supported, others did not share this view. Performance was strongly emphasized as part of the organizational culture, as reflected by highest mean score of 4.22. This high level of agreement indicates that the majority of respondents recognized performance as a core focus in their organizations. However, the standard deviation of 1.04 indicated that variability existed.

In terms of organizational structure, effective communication between employees and management enhancing performance attained moderate level agreement with a mean score of 3.26 and standard deviation of 1.4 indicating significant differences in experiences about the effectiveness of communication. Current structures promoting teamwork among individuals and departments, facilitating employee performance had a mean score of 3.3 with relatively high standard deviation of 1.45 depicting highly varied experiences among respondents, concerning teamwork and performance as supported by structure. However, a large majority of the respondents agreed that their organizational structure facilitated knowledge transfer within their firms, thereby promoting employee performance, to a mean score of 4.02, indicating strong concurrence. Interactions that motivated employee creativity and career progression had a mean score of 3.64 with standard deviation of 1.33 showing moderate concurrence albeit with variability as a notable minority disagreed with motivational aspects of their interactions within the organization.

For information technology, the majority of respondents agreed that their companies had adequate Internet and Intranet facilities that sufficiently served the organization for information and communication, promoting employee performance with a mean score of 3.71 and standard deviation of 1.3. The high standard deviation is indicative of wide variability in adequacy of installed network facilities in the industry, with potential to insufficiency for information and communication services to the firms. Company emphasis on adoption of new technology for work performance and knowledge sharing, registered moderate agreement at mean score of 3.67 with a reduced standard deviation of 1.24 pointing to diminished variability. This is suggestive of the fact that there is more concurrence on prevalence of not high adoption of new technology in the industry, thereby hindering knowledge sharing and work performance. Finally, the use of technology to promote group learning and collaboration received a reduced mean score of 3.46 with depressed standard deviation of 1.16 showing decreased variability. This may be indicative of idle capacity on installed ICT resources that may arise from poor training of users or employee resistance to change resulting from poor adaptability skills.

Knowledge management infrastructure grand mean was 3.66 with standard deviation of 1.30, indicating that majority of the respondents agreed with the statements, though with marked variation. This was majorly attributable to very low use of technology in promoting group learning and collaboration, with high potential to hinder company learning culture as well as hamper team building and knowledge sharing; these would diminish job satisfaction. The low use of technology links to low adoption of technology for knowledge sharing and work performance whose equally not high performance has potential of lowering job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on various statements provided, using a five-point Likert scale where: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree. Findings in Table 2.

Table 2: Job Satisfaction

Statement	Mean	Std Dev.
Work		
My form of employment – casual, contract or permanent, is satisfying.	3.97	1.19
My work conditions are satisfactory	3.87	1.12
Feedback on my work performance is satisfactory	3.72	0.99
Salary		
The current level of salary is satisfying.	3.62	1.1
Reward given for extra-performance is adequate	3.71	1.13
The remunerations are punctually and regularly released	3.82	0.94
Supervision		
My direct supervisor knows my job well	3.54	1.03
My effort and commitment are appreciated by my direct supervisor.	3.79	1.11
I receive appropriate feedback from my supervisor	3.76	1.23
Growth and Development		
The coaching and mentorship offered by the employer meet my expectations for career progress.	3.55	1.19
The company helps me build effective networking for career growth and development	3.71	1.08
My growth and development compare favorably with peers in the industry	3.57	1.03
Average	**3.72**	**1.10**

For employment engagement, majority of respondents agreed that their form of employment whether casual, contract or permanent, is satisfying, as reflected in mean score of 3.97 and standard deviation (SD) of 1.19. Similarly, most of them agreed that their work conditions are satisfactory, with a mean score of 3.87 and diminished standard deviation of 1.12. Most of respondents felt that feedback on their work performance is satisfactory, as indicated by a mean of 3.72 and much diminished standard deviation of 0.99 indicating industry concurrence over the matter. Regarding salary satisfaction, a majority of the respondents agreed that their current level of salary is satisfying, shown by a mean of 3.62 and standard deviation of 1.10. Additionally, most of the respondents felt that the rewards given for extra performance are adequate, with a mean of 3.71 and increased standard deviation of 1.13 depicting increased industry variability. A strong majority agreed that remunerations are punctually and regularly released, which is reflected in a mean score of 3.82 with much depressed standard deviation of 0.94 indicating high industry concurrence on the score.

For supervision, a moderate number of respondents agreed that their direct supervisors know their job well, with a mean of 3.54 and standard deviation of 1.03. Most of the respondents felt that their efforts and commitment are appreciated by direct supervisor, at mean score of 3.79 and standard deviation of 1.11 signaling increased variability. Majority of respondents agreed that they receive appropriate feedback from their supervisor, at mean score of 3.76 though with increased standard deviation at 1.23, showing significant variability in the industry. Regarding growth and development, respondents agreed that the coaching and mentorship offered by their employer meets their expectations for career progress, to a mean of 3.55 with standard deviation of 1.19. Majority of them felt that their company helps them build effective

networking for career growth and development, with a mean score of 3.71 and depressed standard deviation at 1.08 depicting increased concurrence with the score. Respondents agreed that their growth and development compare favorably with peers in the industry, to a mean of 3.57 and standard deviation of 1.03

The overall mean of the responses was 3.72 implying that most of the respondents agreed with the statements with standard deviation of 1.1 connoting that responses were clustered around the mean. The mean score was deterred by poor coaching and mentorship perception alongside inferior self-esteem among respondents relative to industry peers.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between knowledge management infrastructure and job satisfaction as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Pearson's Correlation Results

		Knowledge management infrastructure	Job satisfaction
Knowledge management infrastructure	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Job satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	0.568**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

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

Findings in Table 3 shows that there is a moderately strong, positive and significant relationship between knowledge management infrastructure and job satisfaction (r=0.568; p=000<0.05); which implies that a change in knowledge management infrastructure leads to a change in job satisfaction in the same direction.

Regression Analysis

A linear regression analysis was conducted to test the null hypothesis that "Knowledge management infrastructure has no significant influence on employee job satisfaction in selected food manufacturing firms in Kenya" as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Model Summary for Knowledge Management Infrastructure

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.568a	0.323	0.32	0.32152

a Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge_management_infrastructure

From findings in Table 4, the adjusted R square was 0.32 implying that 32% of the variations in job satisfaction among employees in food manufacturing firms in Kenya is explained by knowledge management infrastructure (organizational culture, organizational structure and information technology constructs). This shows that 68% of the variations in employee performance is explained by other factors not in the model.

Further test on ANOVA showed that the regression model was a good fit as indicated by a significant F-statistic (F=130.429, p=000<0.05) as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: ANOVA Table for Knowledge Management Infrastructure

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	13.483	1	13.483	130.429	.000b
	Residual	28.325	274	0.103		
	Total	**41.808**	**275**			

a Dependent Variable: job_satisfaction
b Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge_management_infrastructure

Results from the ANOVA table show that the knowledge management model that predicts job satisfaction among employees in food manufacturing firms in Kenya is significant; implying that knowledge management infrastructure is statistically satisfactory in predicting the employee job satisfaction in food manufacturing firms in Kenya. A regression coefficient was then determined for the knowledge infrastructure as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Regression Coefficient for Knowledge Infrastructure

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.288	0.199		6.484	0
	Knowledge_management _infrastructure	0.611	0.054	0.568	11.421	0

a Dependent Variable: job_satisfaction

The regression coefficient for knowledge management infrastructure was 0.568 indicating that a unit change in knowledge management infrastructure would result to a change in employee job satisfaction by 0.568 units. The t-statistic for the regression coefficient for knowledge management infrastructure was greater than 1.96 (t_{cal}=11.421>t_{crit}=1.96) and the corresponding p value was less than 0.05 (p=0.000). Therefore, the null hypothesis that *Knowledge management infrastructure has no significant influence on employee job satisfaction in selected food manufacturing firms in Kenya* was rejected. It was then concluded that knowledge management infrastructure has a statistically positive and significant influence on job satisfaction in food manufacturing firms in Kenya.

The regression model was obtained as follows:

Job satisfaction=1.228 + 0.568knowledge management infrastructure +e

Discussion

The study aimed at examining the role of Knowledge Management constructs - culture, structure and information technology in promoting job satisfaction in selected food firms in Kenya. From Armstrong (2019), r≥0.7 indicates a strong relationship, r= 0.5 to 0.69 is a moderately strong relationship, whereas r <0.5 indicates a weak relationship. In this study, the findings at 95% confidence level showed that knowledge management infrastructure and job satisfaction are positively and significantly correlated (r=0.568; p=000<0.05) depicting a moderate relationship. This means that change in knowledge management infrastructure would lead to a similar change in job satisfaction, both in magnitude and direction. The ANOVA outcome validated fitness of the correlation and regression findings confirmed that knowledge management infrastructure has a positive and significant influence on job satisfaction (β= 0.568; p<0.05). From the correlation findings that knowledge management infrastructure explains 32% of potential changes in job satisfaction, the regression outcome demonstrated

that manipulation of the constructs can significantly predict desired results by factor 0.568 as part of the 32% bracket possibility of related manipulation outcomes. The impact factor is however, moderate, indicating that the correlation exists but not very intense to be accorded status of strong nor weak.

The findings concurred with Kumar (2018) assertion that well-founded cultures confer enhanced productivity and quality work life that motivate employee commitment, consistency and adaptability, which improve job satisfaction and support performance at both individual and organization levels. Thus, alignment of organization culture with employee expectations enhances employee commitment and promotes job satisfaction. Human resource programs to achieve alignment of objectives and culture remain priority and therefore, depending on the uniqueness of its context, an organization can achieve its best functioning culture using training and benchmarking mechanisms alongside sharpened recruitment focus. It is crucial to note that culture is inimitable as it largely is inherent of causal ambiguity, thence the need for individual organizational pursuits to inculcate and maintain what works as a matter of internal identity.

Similarly, the correlation findings support Muriu (2019) position that organization structure as the frame that holds all elements of the organization together; depicting that its manipulation can be utilized to reorient related activities like communication, sharing of resources and team building efforts with predictable and significant results towards enhancement of employee satisfaction. Moreover, the study buttresses Ebro (2024) assertion that organizational structure can be used to align objectives, improve relations, facilitate information flow, ease coordination, enhance performance and stimulate satisfaction. Relatedly, the findings confirm Goga (2023) position that structure has strong positive correlation with employee productivity and performance, making it an avenue for boosting employee job satisfaction. The findings depicted that shortfalls relating to organization structure, identified as potential hindrances to performance, can predictably be manipulated using proven interventions as corrective actions as remedy for furtherance of desired performance and promote employee satisfaction.

The study findings corroborated Adisa et al., (2024) asserttion that digitalization enhances connectivity, availability, efficiency, productivity, work flexibility and control thereby enhancing employee autonomy and stimulating job satisfaction. The results also lent credence to Karungani and Ochiri (2017) position that ICT infrastructure supports coordination of activities and facilitates information flow; thereby enhancing cost reduction, improving performance and enhancing employee satisfaction. The findings displayed congruence with Isaac et al., (2017) assertion that automation and technology upgrade enhance employee morale, enable improved task execution, education acquisition and effective communication, which promote job satisfaction. Moreover, Bhandari (2024) assertion that information technology infrastructure promotes efficiency in organizational communication, productivity and profitability points to its influence on job satisfaction and employee performance as demonstrated in the model, ANOVA and regression outcomes of the investigation. From the study findings, manipulations on infrastructure can predictably be undertaken to increase job satisfaction in the entire continuum of needs assessment; purchase of hardware, software, operating systems and networks; installation; training and commissioning; and maintenance, towards achieving employee and organizational goals.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study concluded that there existed positive and significant correlation between knowledge management infrastructure and job satisfaction. Knowledge management infrastructure can explain 32% of variations arising in job satisfaction. Validation of the model construed that changes in knowledge management constructs - culture, structure and information technology, lead to predictable and significant changes in job satisfaction among employees. The moderately strong correlation justifies investing in robust information technology infrastructure; with emphasis on suitable cultural practices; fostering supportive work environment factors; and ensuring structure relevance to company strategies. These ultimately boost employee morale, improving performance and job satisfaction.

Recommendations

The study exposed diverse areas for improvements. Concerning organization structure, weaknesses were in relation to effectiveness of communication, teamwork and employee creativity. On these, it behooves human resource managers at firm level, to determine corresponding hindrances or impediments and ensure participatory execution of corrective measures. Managers and supervisors ought to be empowered to mainstream policy and practices that enhance group activities, innovation promoting and multidirectional non-formal interactions to encourage information exchange and knowledge sharing freedom in communication. On information technology infrastructure, ICT managers jointly with heads of finance and human resources, should conduct comprehensive needs assessment and develop matrix of requirements as a strategic tool for purchase, installation and maintenance of hardware, software, systems and network facilities, determined necessary for the company. ICT managers must accompany this with specific trainings to eliminate low adoption of technology, given its deleterious effects such as hindering use of technology in collaborations and group learning as well as hampering knowledge sharing. To improve on weaknesses pervading culture construct, heads of human resources at firm level ought to: empower supervisors with skills to accomplish suitable employee relations, team building and enhanced trust; endear knowledge management-in-charge to inculcate learning culture in a companywide approach and; in liaison with head of quality management, demonstrate non-negotiable approach to adherence to use of approved procedures at all points of use. These would enable deep internalization of knowledge and quality management systems

For culture construct improvements, human resource managers should empower the supervisors with team building skills so as to eliminate factors causing lack of trust among employees. Lastly, heads of human resource management should together with managers in charge of knowledge management and quality management systems undertake measures to enhance internalization of knowledge management practices in their firms to promote dynamics of organization learning for improved efficiency and job satisfaction.

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