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Knowledge Retention Practices and Performance of Public Research Institutions in Kenya

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Abstract

In the dynamically changing environment, knowledge is becoming the most important resource for organisational performance, surpassing other resources such as land and capital. Therefore, retaining organizational knowledge is the key characteristic of sustainable improvement in organisational performance. On the contrary, publicly funded research institutions in Kenya lose experts' knowledge from retiring employees. Knowledge management in publicly funded research institutions in Kenya seems to be a major challenge contributing to poor service delivery and gaps in work performance. Therefore, based on the Human Capital theory, this study sought to fill the gap by establishing the influence of knowledge retention practices on the performance of publicly funded research institutions in Kenya. The study used stratified random approaches to sample 135 respondents out of 6,799 employees in Kenya's 12 publicly funded research institutions. Both qualitative and quantitative primary and secondary data were collected to achieve the study objectives. While qualitative data was analysed through thematic methods, quantitative data were analysed using both descriptive statistics (mean scores, percentages and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Multiple Regression Analysis) through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. It was established that adopting knowledge retention practices such as succession planning, use of retirees, mentoring and coaching are associated with a significant positive influence on the performance of publicly funded research institutions in Kenya. Based on the findings, the study recommends the management of public research firms provide regular training and mentoring programs to employees to help them retain knowledge and improve their skills. The organizations can also conduct exit interviews with departing employees as a useful way to capture their knowledge and insights before they leave the organization. This information can then be used to improve knowledge retention and prevent the loss of critical knowledge.

Keywords: *Knowledge Retention Practices, Performance, Public, Research Institutions, Kenya*

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1.0 Background of the Study

In recent years, organizations have transacted in a disruptive and volatile environment caused by intense foreign competitors, rapid technological change, shorter product life cycles, and customers increasingly demanding more customized products (Sherehiy & Karwowski, 2014). This led to the realization that there is a need for an agile workforce in the organization, which can result in quality improvement, better customer service, learning curve acceleration, and economy of scope and depth, among other things (Sohrabi, Asar & Hozoori, 2014). Ahammad, Tarba, Liu and Glaister (2016) find two critical elements or competencies needed to achieve workforce agility. Firstly, having a scalable workforce means having a workforce whose actions are aligned with the business needs and is configured quickly and easily and transformed from one human resource configuration to another. However, constant reconfiguration increases the risk of loss of knowledge and may lead to disconnection in an employee's valuable social network and relationships (Mohajan, 2016). Ramona and Alexandra (2019) name fast organizational knowledge creation and retention the second competency in an agile workforce. Similarly, Ahammad et al. (2016) recognize that continually creating, adapting, distributing and applying the knowledge is critical in turbulent environments. Organizations should strive to retain a wealth of knowledge before they lose it (Inkinen, 2016). North and Kumta (2020) posit that when discussing Knowledge Management, the primary concern is how to tap into the brains of employees retiring, moving on to new jobs or otherwise leaving the organization. Knowledge is lost through retirement and movement of people, but this can be overcome by documenting previous processes and procedures, forming communities of practice and harvesting knowledge (Girard & Girard, 2015).

Retaining important information and knowledge has remained the organization's main challenge and strategic goal (Alhawari & Al-Jarrah, 2012). Knowledge can be retained in an organization through various practices involving education, training, establishing communities of practice and professional networks, documenting the processes and use of advanced software to capture work processes (Katzy et al. 2012). Most of the knowledge in organizations is tacit knowledge gained and built up through years of experience (Arif & Wamitu, 2015). This knowledge must be captured and stored in the organizations' repositories, such as databases, records, and software. Knowledge Retention is a fundamental part of learning and development within an organization as it allows knowledge to be used effectively and efficiently (Persky & Murphy, 2019). Knowledge retention plays a significant role in knowledge management, allowing organizations to store, access, and use the knowledge and information necessary to make decisions and inform their operations (Hislop et al., 2018). Knowledge Retention also allows for the transfer of knowledge within an organization, which is key to developing a culture of learning and collaboration. Additionally, Knowledge Retention helps organizations preserve institutional memory and maintain shared knowledge, which is important for organizational learning and growth (Malathi & Vanathi, 2019).

Knowledge retention significantly impacts organizational performance, as it allows organizations to use the knowledge and information they have acquired and stored (Levallet & Chan, 2018). Knowledge Retention can also help organizations identify gaps and make the most of existing knowledge, leading to increased efficiency and effectiveness. Additionally, Knowledge Retention can help organizations identify any disruptive changes in the industry and prevent them from becoming a threat to the organization (Malathi & Vanathi, 2019). Ultimately, Knowledge Retention is a fundamental part of knowledge management, and organizations need to understand the importance of Knowledge Retention and the role it plays in their operations (Gupta & Agarwal, 2022). Knowledge Retention can help organizations make the most of their knowledge and information, leading to increased efficiency, effectiveness, and performance. Additionally, Knowledge Retention can help organizations to store, access, and transfer knowledge, which is key to organizational learning and growth (Afridi, Gul & Naeem, 2019).

Kenya has 12 publicly funded research institutions with mandates to research key policy areas such as agriculture, policy, information technology, forestry, industry, marine and crime prevention. However, a Human Resource Audit conducted in Kenya at the National and County levels in 2014/15 under the Capacity Assessment and Rationalization of the Public Service (CARPS) Programme revealed that public research institutions are faced with an ageing workforce who retire, leaving knowledge vacuum because of the poor knowledge management practices in the organizations. Akoko (2020) also stated that most research firms lack adequate knowledge management practices necessary for retaining sophisticated, tacit knowledge that resides with employees (Given the importance of knowledge audit in this process, this study sought to establish the extent to which it has been implemented and the effect it has on the performance of publicly funded research institutions in Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although knowledge is becoming the most important resource for driving research institutions' performance, many institutions are continuously losing significant valuable expert knowledge hidden inside the leaving experts without being explicitly codified and retained by the former organization (Mwanzu, Wendo & Kibet, 2021; Mahajan, 2016). Research firms, having invested considerably in disseminating valuable knowledge for organizational performance, suffer the immense loss of knowledge after the departure of employees owing to a shortage of appropriate Knowledge Management practices. Most research firms lack adequate knowledge management practices necessary for retaining sophisticated, tacit knowledge that resides with employees (Akoko, 2020; Mohajan, 2016).

Akoko (2020) documented that up to 75% of Kenya government-employed researchers leave employment three years after joining public research institutions. The knowledge loss makes it difficult for these publicly funded research institutions to sustain their past competitive performance levels (Ernst & Young, 2015). Although there is a wide range of empirical studies on knowledge management (Sousa & Rocha, 2019; Santoro, 2018; Pinky, 2014), the literature indicates that knowledge management in the human resource context is a relatively new area and as such, the relationship between knowledge management and organization performance is not conclusive (Egeland, 2017; Thaul, 2014). There is, therefore, the need to devise practices for knowledge management to deal with the potential knowledge loss and to ensure the retention of knowledge of retiring experts for sustainable improvement of organization performance. However, conceptual research gaps exist in most of the previous studies linking knowledge management to organizational performance, which have largely focused on knowledge management considering systems and not human resource aspects (Cabrales & Paniagua, 2018; García-Gutiérrez et al., 2019). This study hence sought to determine the influence of knowledge retention on organizational performance while focusing on the human resource aspect of knowledge sharing as opposed to systems.

1.3 Objective of the Study

To determine the influence of knowledge retention practices on the performance of publicly funded research institutions in Kenya.

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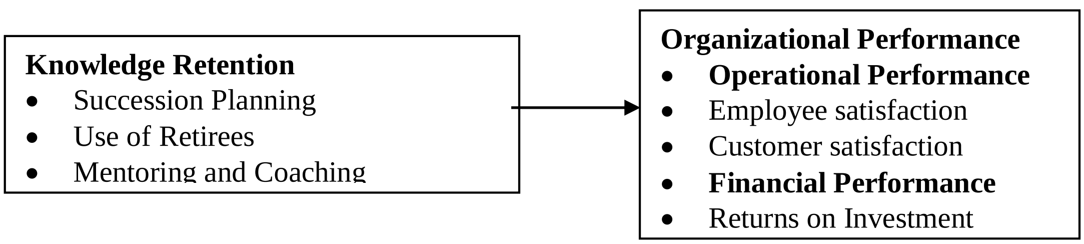
2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the Human capital theory by Becker (1964) suggests that highly technical experts in temporary employment create new and specific knowledge within the organizations that engage them, which knowledge would not otherwise be developed internally, and is especially valuable in dynamic and competitive industries (José Chambel & Sobral, 2011). Prieto Pastor, Perez Santana and Martin Sierra (2010) added to human capital practices to retention on the assumption that the risk of collaborators leaving the firm and consequent loss of knowledge should be minimized. Organizations are expected to find the best ways of employee retention (Riveros & Tsai, 2011), whose talent and expertise are determinants of high performance, through human resource practices.

The ageing workforce and its effect on organizations provide the framework for how succession planning and knowledge transfer practices must be understood and implemented. This shift in the work environment suggests a different approach to retirement. Once a succession plan is created, tacit and explicit knowledge needs to be shared with the identified future leaders to make them successful (Marginson, 2019). Drawing from the above propositions, this study proposed that knowledge retention leads to an increase in the skills, knowledge and abilities of employees, which in turn contributes to improved firm performance.

2.2 Conceptual Framework



Independent Variables **Dependent Variable**

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

Through an empirical review, a study by Gholami et al. (2013) looked into the effects of knowledge management practices on the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). They used Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to analyse data from 282 senior managers randomly selected from these enterprises. The results indicated that knowledge acquisition, retention, storage, creation, sharing and implementation all had significant effects on knowledge management, while productivity, financial performance, staff performance, innovation, work relationships, and customer satisfaction had significant effects on organizational performance. In Nepal, a study by Gnawali (2020) assessed the impact of knowledge management practices (storage, creation, sharing and utilization) on the performance of IT companies. To do this, a descriptive survey was used to collect primary data via questionnaires. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the results, which showed that the independent variable, that is, knowledge retention has a positive correlation to perceived organizational performance, indicating that they have an impact on the performance of the selected companies.

Oztekin et al. (2015) conducted a study to explore how knowledge retention practices influence the financial and non-financial performance of service-based firms in Istanbul. The survey-based study employed an exploratory factor analysis and path analysis with a sample of 83 managers out of 300 companies. Results revealed that knowledge retention practices had a positive, significant effect on both financial and non-financial performance. The study concluded that knowledge management practices had a greater influence on financial performance than on non-financial performance. Focusing on Nigeria, a study by Amodu, Okafor and Inyada (2014) revealed that knowledge management is a major determinant of organizational performance as well as for improvement of organizational performance. The study notes that appropriate knowledge access, retention and utilization leads to competitive advantage. Therefore, knowledge access is a key element for their corporate success.

Zaki and Soliman (2017) conducted a study in Egypt to assess the impact of knowledge management on the performance of Egyptian banks. The target population was 40 registered banks, but the sample size was reduced to 3 banks via simple random sampling. The research design was descriptive, and 50 bank employees were surveyed using self-administered questionnaires. Cronbach Alpha was used to assess the reliability of the data, and SPSS was used to analyse the findings. The results showed that practices such as using retirees and succession planning are essential for successful knowledge retention in knowledge management, which has a positive effect on banks' performance. In Rwanda, Byukusenge and Munene (2017) conducted a study to investigate the connection between knowledge management practices, innovation, and their impact on the performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). They employed a cross-sectional research design with a sample size of 377 SMEs, all located in Kigali, who were selected using a random sampling technique. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPPS, and Structural Equation Modelling was used to test the hypotheses. The findings showed that technology innovation enabled SMEs to maintain an up-to-date database and made it easier for employees to access the information, which improved knowledge storage and, in turn, SME performance. The study concluded that there is a positive relationship between innovation and knowledge management practices which promotes and increases organizational performance.

Locally, Kithuka (2020) conducted a study to establish the effect of local, Kithuka (2020) conducted a study to establish the effect of knowledge management practices on the performance of Solidaridad Eastern and Central Africa. One of the knowledge management practices was knowledge storage. The target population was a census of the 52 employees of the Solidaridad Eastern and Central Africa, Kenya office drawn from the different job levels. Through regression analysis, the study established that knowledge management practices, including knowledge retention, significantly and positively influenced the performance of Solidaridad International, East and Central Africa, and Kenya Offices, explaining up to 85.4% of the changes in the performance of the organization. In another study by Wanjiru (2018) to determine the relationship between leadership, knowledge management and innovation, 39 Kenyan commercial banks were chosen as the target population. The research design adopted was a descriptive cross-sectional one, and the data was collected through self-administered questionnaires. After the data collected were analysed with SPSS, it was found that the practices of keeping records of internal best practices, having an easily accessible database, and regularly updating the database positively impacted organization performance. The study concluded that knowledge retention was a driving force behind organizational innovation and had an influence on knowledge management.

Caroline, Mugun and Loice (2015) sought to explore the connection between knowledge storage, retrieval, retention and employee performance in a study informed by Human Capital Theory, Resource-Based View, and Knowledge-Based View Theory. The study employed an explanatory design and utilized a sample size of 343 employees taken from a population of 3,147 public technical institutions in the Rift Valley region. Random sampling was used to identify the participants involved in the study, who were asked to complete a questionnaire. The data was then analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics presented as frequencies, percentages, charts, and graphs. The results suggested a relationship between knowledge storage, retrieval, retention and employee performance, with employee engagement moderating the connection. Similarly, Cumari (2018) investigated the connection between knowledge management practices, including knowledge retention and the performance of the Kenya Bureau of Standards. A descriptive design was used, and data were collected from 22 employees across various departments and regional offices utilizing questionnaires. The collected data was then coded into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. The results indicated that the key KM practices, including knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, knowledge storage, retention, knowledge retrieval, and knowledge dissemination, had a positive and significant impact on KEBS performance.

3.0 Research Methodology

This study adopted a survey research design. It targeted twelve (12) publicly funded research institutes in Kenya classified as either Medical-Biological Sciences Research, Agriculture and Natural Resource Management or Social, economic and industrial sciences Research. A total of 6,799 research personnel were where stratified random sampling technique was adopted to sample 135 respondents. The data used in the study was collected using three key methods: document analysis, questionnaires and interviews (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, since both qualitative and quantitative data were used, the data analysis methods were qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative data were transcribed and then analysed through thematic methods. Quantitative data from structured questionnaires, on the other hand, was analysed using both descriptive statistics (mean scores and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Correlation and Regression Analysis). A regression model was used in the determination of coefficients of the predictor variable about the dependent variable (organizational performance), as shown.

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

Where Y = Organizational Performance, X_1 = Knowledge Retention, β_0 is the constant term and ε = error term.

4.0 Research Findings and Discussion

The researcher administered 135 questionnaires to respondents from research institutions focusing on medical-biological sciences research, research institutes focusing on particular crops and natural resources, and research in the social, economic and industrial sciences. Out of the number, 102 (76%) were correctly responded to and returned. This response rate was adequate since, according to Babin and James (2010), a response rate of 50% is acceptable for analysing and publishing, while 60% is good and above 70% is considered very good.

4.1 Descriptive Findings of Knowledge Retention

The respondents rated their level of agreement with statements on knowledge retention practices on a scale of 1 to 5 as shown in Table 1.

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Table 1 : Descriptive Findings of Knowledge Retention

Statement	Mean	SD
Mentoring and Coaching		
The Organization: Encourages active listening which helps the mentee to better reflect on the topics being discussed and better retain the knowledge.	3.87	1.10
Encourages mentors and coaches to help mentees and coaches set achievable goals to help in focusing on learning process, and encourages the mentee to strive to meet their goals.	3.83	1.14
Provides mentees with regular individual and constructive feedback to help ensure that knowledge is retained.	3.73	1.07
Encourages mentees to take calculated risks and try out new ideas is a great way to help them retain knowledge.	3.88	1.12
Adopts modelling to demonstrate the behavior expected of the mentee or coachee so as to help them understand the concepts and retain the knowledge.	3.89	1.05
Encourages reflection whereby the mentee to reflect on their experiences and consider how they can apply their knowledge in the future.	3.82	1.08
Encourages following up with mentees by checking in on their progress, providing guidance and support, and offering resources to help them retain and apply the knowledge.	3.86	1.09
Use of Retirees		
The Organization: Uses retirees to provide valuable guidance to younger colleagues by serving as mentors where they share their experience and expertise, and help develop the skills of younger employees.	3.82	1.10
Enables retirees to provide their expertise as consultants to organizations on a project basis, enabling them to share their knowledge and experience without having to commit to a full-time role.	3.84	1.11
Uses retirees to complete special projects such as developing training materials, conducting research, or helping to develop new products or processes.	3.79	1.12
Uses retirees to help transfer knowledge to the next generation of workers by providing coaching and other forms of support.	3.81	1.10
Succession Planning		
The Organization: Invests in mentoring program which allows senior workers to share their experiences, advice, and expertise with younger workers to help reduce the knowledge gap between generations.	3.86	1.14
Has adopted cross-training which enables employees to learn skills from other departments or roles to help ensure that knowledge is shared and retained in case of changes or turnover.	3.84	1.13
Has adopted job shadowing which allows employees to observe and learn from experienced workers in the organization.	3.76	1.06
Average	**3.83**	**1.10**

Key: Very Low Extent = 1 – 1.4: Low Extent = 1.5 – 2.4: Moderate Extent = 2.5 – 3.4: High Extent = 3.5 – 4.4: Very High Extent = 4.5 – 5.4, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

The findings in Table 1 showed an agreement that publicly funded research organizations in Kenya encourage active listening, which helps the mentee to better reflect on the topics being discussed and better retain the knowledge (M = 3.87; SD = 1.10), encourage mentors and coaches to help mentees and coaches set achievable goals to help in focusing on the learning process, and encourages the mentee to strive to meet their goals (M = 3.83; SD = 1.14), provides mentees with regular individual and constructive feedback to help ensure that knowledge is retained (M = 3.73; SD = 1.07) as well as encourage mentees to take calculated risks and try out new ideas is a great way to help them retain knowledge (M = 3.88; SD = 1.12). The organizations also adopt modelling to demonstrate the behaviour expected of the mentee or coaches to help them understand the concepts and retain the knowledge (M = 3.89; SD =1.05), encourage reflection whereby the mentee reflect on their experiences and consider how they can apply their knowledge in the future (M = 3.82; SD = 1.08) as well as following up with mentees by checking in on their progress, providing guidance and support, and offering resources to help them retain and apply the knowledge (M = 3.86; SD = 1.09). This implies that as part of their knowledge retention practices, the organizations have adopted mentorship and coaching to a high extent.

The findings also revealed that the organizations ese retirees to provide valuable guidance to younger colleagues by serving as mentors where they share their experience and expertise, and help develop the skills of younger employees (M = 3.82 ; SD = 1.10), enabling retirees to provide their expertise as consultants to organizations on a project basis, enabling them to share their knowledge and experience without having to commit to a full-time role (M = 3.84 ; SD = 1.11), use retirees to complete special projects such as developing training materials, conducting research, or helping to develop new products or processes (M = 3.79; SD = 1.12) and also to help transfer knowledge to the next generation of workers by providing coaching and other forms of support. (M = 3.81; SD = 1.10). This also implies that as part of their knowledge retention practices, the organizations have adopted the use of retirees to a high extent. Lastly, it was also determined that the organizations invest in a mentoring program which allows senior workers to share their experiences, advice, and expertise with younger workers to help reduce the knowledge gap between generations. (M = 3.86; SD = 1.14), have adopted cross-training, which enables employees to learn skills from other departments or roles to help ensure that knowledge is shared and retained in case of changes or turnover (M = 3.84; SD = 1.13), as well as adopted job shadowing, which allows employees to observe and learn from experienced workers in the organization (M = 3.76; SD = 1.06). This similarly implies that as part of their knowledge retention practices, the organizations have adopted succession planning to a high extent.

Knowledge retention is essential in achieving and maintaining a high-performing organization. It allows organizations to benefit from the experiences and expertise of their employees, as well as to develop and build upon their existing knowledge and capabilities. By retaining this knowledge, organizations can maximize their operations' efficiency and effectiveness while gaining a competitive edge. Knowledge retention also helps organizations foster creativity and innovation. When employees can access and refer to the knowledge and information that exists in the organization, they can generate new ideas and solutions to problems. This helps organizations stay ahead of the competition and remain competitive.

Further, knowledge retention enables organizations to reduce costs and time associated with understanding and learning new processes, procedures, and technologies. As a result, organizations are better equipped to respond quickly and effectively to changes in their industry. Concerning the publicly funded research firms in Kenya, according to the findings, they have implemented knowledge retention practices such as succession planning, mentoring and using retirees in appreciation of its importance and benefits. Similar results were also established by Katzy et al. (2012).

In addition to the quantitative results, the study also sought to obtain an in-depth analysis of the knowledge retention practices in the organizations through KII questions. In the KII, the respondents were asked to discuss the effectiveness of knowledge retention in their organizations. The summarised responses presented in Table 2 indicate that it improved efficiency: Retaining knowledge helps organizations improve their efficiency since the same task does not need to be repeated repeatedly. It also leads to cost savings: By retaining knowledge, organizations can save money since they do not have to spend time and resources training new employees. Lastly, it was documented that it creates a competitive advantage. Retaining knowledge helps organizations maintain a competitive edge since they can quickly and accurately process tasks.

Table 2: Summary of Key Themes of Knowledge Retention Practices

Question	Summary of Main Themes
How effective do you think knowledge retention is in enhancing knowledge management?	Majority of the employees felt that knowledge retention improves efficiency, leads to cost savings and creates competitive advantage.

Organizational Performance

The organizational performance of the publicly funded research firms in terms of non-financial measures (customer satisfaction index and employee satisfaction index both out of 10) and returns on investment was established through the document analysis guide. The results in Figure 2 indicate that on a scale of 1 to 10, the research organizations averaged an index of 7.31 in 2016, which then increased steadily to 7.35 in 2017 and 2018 before a further increase to 7.67 in the year 2020. This implied an improvement in the ranking to demonstrate that the customers rated the services from publicly funded research institutions better. Generally, these values are above 70% to imply a good ranking from the customers on their satisfaction rate.

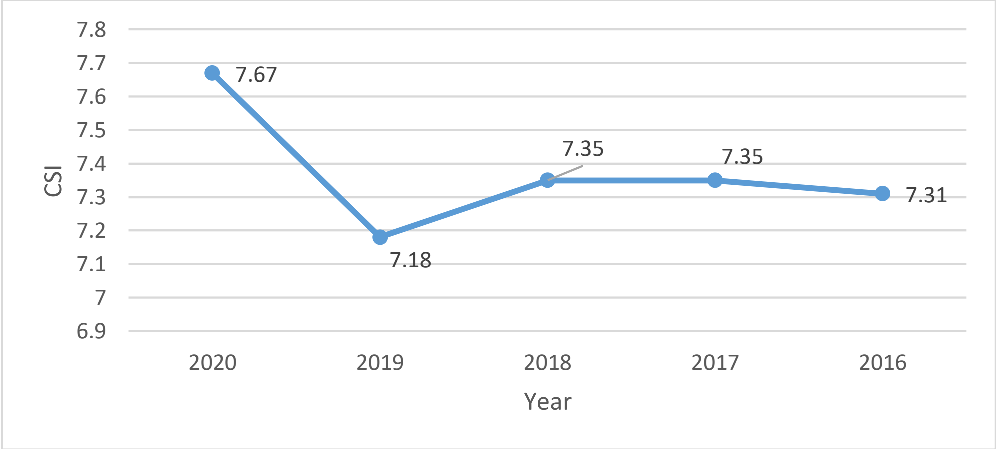

Figure 2: Average Customer Satisfaction Index Trends (2016 – 2020)

The employee satisfaction index was also established and presented in Figure 3 as a trend. The results show that on a scale of 1 to 10, the research organizations averaged an index of 7.82 in 2016, which decreased to 7.65 in 2019, perhaps due to the transition to a new government.

However, the index increased to and improved to 8.12 in the year 2020. These values are above 70% to imply a good ranking from the employees.

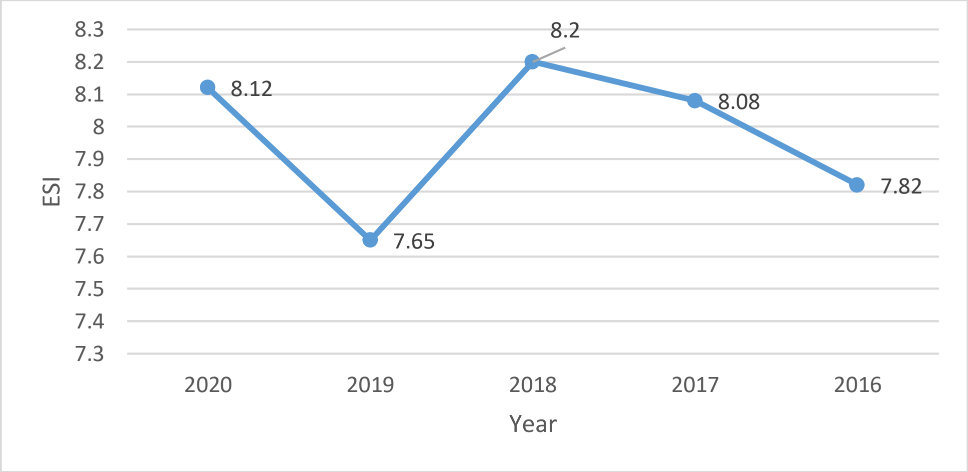

Figure 3: Average Employee satisfaction Index Trends (2016 – 2020)

Figure 4 also shows the percentage number of organizations falling in various ranges of ROI. It was established that most organizations had an ROI averaging between 5% and 9% for the last five years, which is a good positive ratio, as recommended by Chalutz Ben-Gal (2019). Those below the low-performance zone of less than 5% were a third of the number of firms.

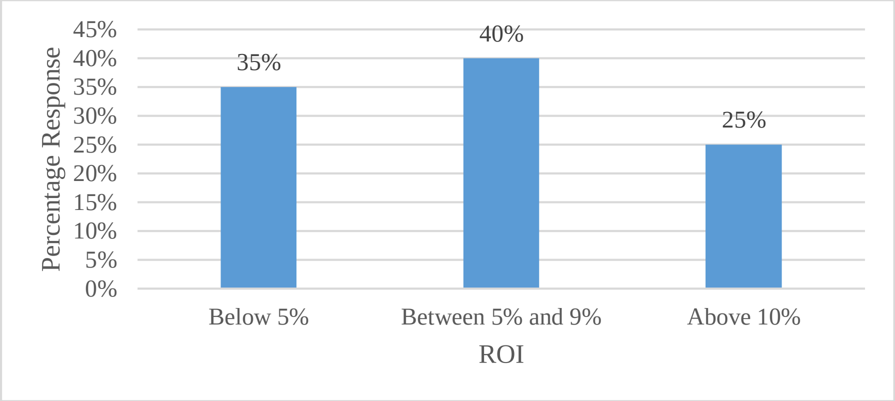

Figure 4: Average ROI

4.2 Regression Analysis of Knowledge Sharing and Organizational Performance

A regression analysis was used to establish the influence of knowledge retention on the overall organizational performance. The study results are presented in Table 3.

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Table 3: Regression Analysis of Knowledge Retention and Organizational Performance

Model Summary					
R	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**		
.927a	0.859	0.855	0.944		
ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	533.658	3	177.886	199.616	.000
Residual	87.332	98	0.891		
Total	620.99	101			
Coefficients					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		**Standardized Coefficients**		
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**t**	**Sig.**
(Constant)	-1.404	0.376		-3.735	0.000
Succession Planning	0.404	0.352	0.162	1.149	0.253
Use of Retirees	0.712	0.294	0.293	2.422	0.017
Mentoring and Coaching	1.171	0.297	0.491	3.94	0.000
Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance					
Predictors: (Constant), succession planning, use of retirees, mentoring and coaching					

The multiple regression results demonstrate that knowledge retention practices (succession planning, use of retirees, mentoring and coaching) account for up to 85.9% of the variation in organizational performance of publicly funded research institutions in Kenya (R-square = 0.859). This shows that knowledge retention practices (succession planning, use of retirees, mentoring and coaching) significantly contribute to the organizational performance of publicly funded research institutions in Kenya. ANOVA was used to establish the model fitness of the regression model linking knowledge retention practices (succession planning, use of retirees, mentoring and coaching) to the organizational performance of publicly funded research institutions in Kenya. The results showed that the regression model was significant and a good fit (Sig < 0.05). This implies that the model was a good predictor of organizational performance. The model coefficients indicated that all the knowledge retention practices (succession planning, use of retirees, mentoring and coaching) positively influence the organizational performance of publicly funded research institutions in Kenya ($\beta = 0.404; 0.712; 1.171$), respectively. Furthermore, retirees and mentoring and coaching significantly influence organizational performance (P-value < 0.05). Albers (2012) similarly found that knowledge retention practices enhance improved productivity and organizational output.

5.0 Conclusions

Adoption of knowledge retention practices such as succession planning, use of retirees, mentoring and coaching are associated with a significant positive influence on the performance of publicly funded research institutions in Kenya. Knowledge retention allows organizations to maintain their competitive edge by ensuring employees have the latest information and skills necessary to succeed. It gives organizations the ability to tap into the collective intelligence of their employees, which can help them find creative solutions to difficult problems.

6.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends the management of public research firms implement knowledge retention practices such as training and mentoring. Regular training and mentoring programs can help employees retain knowledge and improve their skills. This can also help in transferring knowledge from experienced employees to new hires. There is also a need to enhance performance metrics. Measuring employee performance and tracking key metrics can help identify areas where knowledge retention may be lacking. Organizations can develop targeted interventions to improve knowledge retention by analysing this data. Exit Interviews can also be conducted. Conducting exit interviews with departing employees can be a useful way to capture their knowledge and insights before they leave the organization. This information can then be used to improve knowledge retention and prevent the loss of critical knowledge.

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