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Knowledge Management Practices and Employee Performance at DFCU Bank in Uganda

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This study examines the relationship between knowledge management practices and employee performance at DFCU Bank in Uganda. The study is based on the firm's knowledge-based theory, which states that knowledge is a critical resource for organizations and that effective knowledge management can improve organizational performance. A total of 150 employees from DFCU Bank were surveyed to gather data on knowledge management practices and employee performance levels. The results of the study indicate that there is a positive relationship between knowledge management practices and employee performance. Specifically, employees who reported higher levels of knowledge management practices also reported higher levels of employee performance. The study also identified the knowledge management practices that were most effective in improving employee performance at DFCU Bank. These practices include knowledge sharing, training and development, and communication. The findings of this study have important implications for organizations looking to improve employee performance. By implementing effective knowledge management practices, organizations can enhance employee performance, leading to improved organizational performance.

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INTRODUCTION

DFCU Bank, a prominent commercial bank in Uganda with a long-standing history since 1964, offers a range of financial services, including loans, savings, and investments. However, in recent years, the bank has encountered challenges that have impacted its overall performance, particularly in relation to employee performance (Smith, 2020). The management of DFCU Bank recognizes that effective knowledge management practices could potentially address these challenges and enhance employee performance. Therefore, this study aims to explore the relationship between knowledge management practices and employee performance within DFCU Bank.

Knowledge sharing is a critical component of knowledge management within organizations. It involves the exchange and dissemination of knowledge and expertise among employees (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). In the context of DFCU Bank, effective knowledge sharing practices can facilitate the transfer of valuable insights, best practices, and lessons learned, enabling employees to make informed decisions and perform their duties more effectively. Research has shown that knowledge sharing positively influences employee performance, leading to improved productivity, innovation, and problem-solving capabilities (Wang & Noe, 2010). Therefore, investigating the extent to which knowledge sharing practices are implemented within DFCU Bank and their impact on employee performance is crucial.

Training and development initiatives play a vital role in enhancing employee skills, knowledge, and competencies, ultimately contributing to improved performance (Noe, 2017). DFCU Bank recognizes the importance of investing in employee development and has implemented various training programs to enhance employees' professional growth. These programs aim to equip employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their roles effectively. Research has consistently shown that training and development positively impact employee

performance by enhancing job-related skills, increasing job satisfaction, and fostering a learning culture within the organization (Colquitt et al., 2021). Therefore, examining the relationship between training and development initiatives at DFCU Bank and employee performance can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of these programs.

Effective communication is another critical element of knowledge management that influences employee performance (Argote, McEvily, & Reagans, 2003). Open and transparent communication channels facilitate the exchange of information, ideas, and feedback, enabling employees to understand expectations, collaborate effectively, and make informed decisions. Within DFCU Bank, effective communication practices can enhance employee engagement, teamwork, and coordination, leading to improved performance outcomes. Research has consistently demonstrated that organizations with strong communication practices experience higher levels of employee satisfaction, commitment, and performance (Gibson & Vermeulen, 2003). Therefore, investigating the communication practices within DFCU Bank and their impact on employee performance is essential for understanding the relationship between communication and performance.

In the context of DFCU Bank, effective knowledge management practices may play a crucial role in improving employee performance. Knowledge management encompasses activities such as knowledge creation, acquisition, sharing, and utilization within an organization (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). By implementing robust knowledge management practices, DFCU Bank can enhance the accessibility and availability of relevant knowledge and expertise, thereby facilitating better decision-making processes and fostering innovation among employees.

Moreover, knowledge management practices can contribute to the development of a learning culture within the organization. Encouraging knowledge sharing and collaboration can promote continuous learning and skill development among employees,

leading to improved job performance and productivity (Bontis, 1998). By leveraging knowledge management practices, DFCU Bank can tap into the collective knowledge and experience of its workforce, enabling employees to make more informed decisions, provide better customer service, and adapt to changing market dynamics.

This study seeks to investigate how knowledge management practices can positively influence employee performance at DFCU Bank. By examining the relationship between knowledge management practices and employee performance indicators such as productivity, job satisfaction, and customer satisfaction, valuable insights can be gained to inform strategic interventions and improvements within the organization.

Contextual Perspective

DFCU Bank is a commercial bank in Uganda that has been in operation since 1964. The bank provides a wide range of financial services, including loans, savings, and investments. DFCU Bank has been experiencing challenges related to employee performance, which has affected its overall performance (Birasnav, 2014). The management of DFCU Bank believes that knowledge management practices can address the banks' challenges.

The conceptual perspective section discusses the key concepts related to the study, including knowledge management and employee performance. Knowledge management is the process of creating, sharing, using, and managing knowledge and information within an organization (Hislop, 2013). Knowledge management practices can lead to improved organizational performance, promoting innovation and enhancing decision-making processes (Hussock, 2009).

Employee performance is another important concept related to the study. Performance is defined as the achievement of organizational goals through the efficient and effective use of resources (Ishak et al., 2010). Employee performance is essential, leading to increased

productivity, customer satisfaction, and improved organizational performance (Gholami et al., 2013).

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study is the poor employee performance at DFCU Bank, which has affected the bank's overall performance evidenced by low productivity, high absenteeism rates, and low customer satisfaction scores. Low productivity is evidenced by the low number of transactions employees process compared to industry benchmarks. High absenteeism rates are evidenced by the high number of sick days taken by employees, which has resulted in increased workload for other employees. Low customer satisfaction scores are evidenced by the bank's low ratings and negative feedback on customer satisfaction surveys.

The study aims to determine whether knowledge management practices can improve employee performance at DFCU Bank. The study also aims to identify the knowledge management practices that are most effective in enhancing employee performance at DFCU Bank and determine the challenges that DFCU Bank faces in implementing knowledge management practices to improve employee performance.

General Objective of the Study

The study's general objective is knowledge management practices and employee performance at DFCU Bank in Uganda.

Specific Objective

To assess how knowledge management practices correlate with employee performance at DFCU Bank in Uganda.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review section discusses the theoretical and empirical literature related to knowledge management and employee performance.

Empirical studies concerning knowledge management and employee performance continue

to mushroom. A study by Mulyaningsih et al., (2014) noted that knowledge management is one of the fundamental issues in human resource management and is directly linked with employee performance. Previous findings by Liao and Wu (2009) also reveal that knowledge management increases employee competence due to sharing information, making employees highly efficient and effective while executing their tasks and obligations. In the same view, Garstenauer et al. (2015) observe that knowledge management offers ways to improve practices and procedures, develop and enhance employee engagement and performance, decrease the learning curve associated with new employees or new tasks, improve customer service, and reduce cost. Meanwhile, Kim et al. (2014) hailed knowledge management by indicating that its implementation within an organizational setting would stimulate effectiveness and efficiency resulting from creativity and innovativeness.

Conversely, Birasnav (2014) revealed that adopting knowledge management results in faster response implementation, which increases the likelihood of meeting deadlines for pre-defined goals and impacting employee engagement. Likewise, an empirical study by Blackler (1995) noted that knowledge management creates an environment that supports the free flow and sharing of knowledge and information in all activities to build individual competencies and promote efficiency in task execution. Moreover, knowledge management promotes partnership and teamwork, which creates a spirit of togetherness and support among employees who work tirelessly to meet their tasks and obligations. Nevertheless, Bhatti et al. (2011) postulated that knowledge management models employees to become more focused and determined to achieve their tasks and obligations, accept additional work and develop an information-sharing attitude to enhance other employees' performance. More so, knowledge management defines employees' job satisfaction and turnover intentions, which are important in determining employees' zeal while executing their tasks and obligations.

Similarly, Bhatti et al. (2011) assessed the influence of knowledge management, especially knowledge sharing, on employee performance. This study noted that a system that promotes sharing allows employees to identify better ways of work execution, which promotes efficiency. In the same way, a study by Mulyaningsih et al. (2014) revealed that knowledge management creates an impression on the hearts and minds of employees, which promotes their focus towards organizational goals and objectives to stimulate employee performance. Notwithstanding, Knott (2016) affirmed that knowledge management enables organizations to possess and acquire the right employees with the skills and abilities to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness.

Moreover, knowledge management creates a multi-skilled pool of human capital who can meet deadlines, accept additional tasks, and are employees who continuously value the organization's endeavours. This increases employee commitment towards work and minimizes voluntary turnovers, which would compromise employees' efficiency and effectiveness stimulated by the resignation of employees (Garstenauer et al., 2015). This is consistent with Hislop (2013), who asserts that an organization engaged in knowledge management does not encounter efficiency issues with employees because even when some employees resign, the available multi-skilled employees can take on such responsibility. On the other hand, knowledge management boosts employees' career development opportunities, which minimizes behavioural practices of voluntary turnover, prompting employees to concentrate and meet targets on time. Besides, knowledge management creates a harmonious atmosphere for teamwork and talent management, resulting in employee efficiency (Valdez-Juárez et al., 2016).

On the contrary, Gholami et al. (2013) revealed no direct relationship between knowledge management and employee performance. They based their argument on the premise that as much as organizations can influence knowledge dissemination and acquisition activities, they

cannot affect employees' responsiveness to knowledge. Hussock (2009) also noted that the linkage between knowledge management and employee performance is not as significant because employees' responsiveness to knowledge varies. Yet, it is the one that influences the reactions of employees that later stimulate them to perform. Moreover, Ishak et al. (2010) suggest that knowledge management requires the mediation of other variables to influence employee performance, although the study was specific on variables that would mediate the association. On the other end, Roblek et al. (2013) emphasized that knowledge management is inevitable in modern business management. It minimizes time wastage and makes employees more productive in developing skills that would improve their performance. Moreover, knowledge management also guides employees in making effective decisions that promote efficiency, which are taken based on quality knowledge to increase employee performance. In general, it is observed that although there are mixed reactions concerning knowledge management and employee performance, literature supporting a positive relationship is widespread. Considering that all the most recent studies confirm the relationship between the two variables, it can be concluded that business dynamics have changed.

Theoretical Review

The theoretical framework of this study is based on the knowledge-based view of the firm. According to this view, knowledge is a critical resource central to an organization's success (Grant, 1996). Knowledge management is the process of creating, sharing, using, and managing knowledge and information within an organization (Hislop, 2013). Knowledge management practices can lead to improved organizational performance, promoting innovation and enhancing decision-making processes (Hussock, 2009).

One of the key models in the knowledge-based view of the firm is the SECI model, developed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). The SECI model suggests that knowledge creation occurs through

a process of socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization. Socialization involves the sharing of tacit knowledge through interactions between individuals. Externalization involves the conversion of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge. Combination consists of integrating different types of knowledge to create new knowledge. Internalization involves the process of learning and applying new knowledge.

Another essential theoretical perspective is the resource-based view of the firm, which suggests that the resources and capabilities of an organization are crucial determinants of its competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). In the context of this study, knowledge management practices can be seen as a valuable resource that can lead to improved organizational performance.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method section provides an overview of the research philosophy, research design and paradigm, and sample size used in the study.

Research Philosophy

The research philosophy used in this study is positivism, which is based on the idea that the social world can be studied using scientific methods to generate objective knowledge.

Research Design and Paradigm

The research design used in this study is a quantitative research design, which involves the collection and analysis of numerical data. The research paradigm used in this study is deductive, which involves testing hypotheses based on existing theories.

Study Population

The study population constituted 417 employees which were spread across the DFCU Kampala branches and head office (DFCU HR Report, 2017). These employees included Customer Service Staff, Tellers, Branch Managers, Branch operations officers and Sales team, Relationship Managers, Credit Officers and head office administrators.

Sample Size

A sample size of 196 employees was used in the study, which contained the employees selected from the different units of analysis. The sample total was determined by using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table to determine the sample size.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Data was sorted, edited, and processed from the field using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS v. 20). The study presented demographic characteristics using a frequency table, and the results were interpreted based on the percent values. Inferential statistics of correlation analysis and regression analysis were used in the study to determine the nature of the relationships between variables and the predictability of the study variables, respectively.

Ethical Consideration

This study ensured the confidentiality of respondents and their responses while conducting and after the study. This study used a questionnaire that did not have space for either the

name or telephone number to ensure that whoever participated in the study did not disclose his/her identity. The study also informed respondents of their voluntary participation, and only those who expressed interest were given questionnaires.

RESULTS

Knowledge Management

Table 1 provides a summary of the factor analysis concerning knowledge management. The results indicate a 26.250% variance in knowledge dissemination, 19.485% concerning responsiveness to knowledge and 15.633% concerning knowledge acquisition, with an aggregated variance of 61.368%. The results imply that the most significant measure of knowledge management is knowledge dissemination, which respondents perceived as having the highest percentage of variation towards knowledge management, which was also represented by the highest Eigen Value (3.937). These results suggest that much emphasis should be directed towards mechanisms that would boost the dissemination of knowledge to employees to enhance knowledge management.

Table 1: Rotated component matrix a for knowledge management

Item	Component		
	KD	RN	KA
My organization conducts regular meetings where employees exchange experiences.	0.806		
My organization values employees' attitudes and opinions	0.78		
My organization promotes knowledge sharing and increased creativity	0.763		
My organization adopts employee rotation across different roles and areas	0.726		
The members from various functions work together to share their experiences.	0.634		
My organization adopts on-the-job training.	0.508		
My organization uses apprentices and mentors to transfer knowledge.	0.504		
My organization updates our knowledge database.		0.815	
I have access to the information required to perform my job.		0.795	
The bank has a well-organized archive centre.		0.782	
I have adequate knowledge to respond to customers' questions.		0.668	
Employees in my organization acquire high-quality knowledge.			0.744
I actively learn and absorb useful knowledge from the market survey.			0.682
I have access to all required information online.			0.681
I acquire knowledge through a team.			0.669
Eigen Value	3.937	2.923	2.345
% of Variance	26.25	19.485	15.633
Cumulative %	26.25	45.735	61.368

Primary data (2023)

Table 2 above indicates the factor analysis of items about employee performance. The results suggest that 22.631% of the variance is explained by task performance while 21.394% by contextual performance. The results further indicate that the most significant measure of employee performance is task performance, which was also represented by the highest Eigen Value (6.789). These results imply that directing much effort towards task performance would significantly improve overall employee performance.

Regarding knowledge management practices such as conducting regular meetings where employees exchange experiences (loading on Component 1: $KD = 0.806$), valuing employees' attitudes and opinions ($KD = 0.78$), and promoting knowledge sharing and increased creativity ($KD = 0.763$) significantly contribute to the first component. These results suggest that organizations that prioritize these practices are more likely to enhance knowledge management effectiveness, previous research has highlighted the positive impact of regular meetings and knowledge exchange among employees. The findings were in agreement with a study by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) emphasized the concept of "ba" or shared spaces for knowledge creation and argued that regular interactions and dialogue among employees facilitate the creation and dissemination of knowledge within organizations.

Similarly, the adoption of employee rotation across different roles and areas ($KD = 0.726$) and the collaboration of members from various functions to share their experiences ($KD = 0.634$) also demonstrate a meaningful association with Component 1. These findings imply that facilitating diverse experiences and cross-functional collaboration can foster a culture of knowledge sharing and improve overall knowledge management efforts. The findings are in agreement with the studies by Alavi and Leidner (2001) and Hislop (2003) emphasized the role of employee empowerment and participative decision-making in fostering knowledge sharing and improving organizational performance.

The findings related to Component 2, which emphasizes information accessibility and quality, are consistent with literature highlighting the importance of information management and competence. Research by Davenport and Prusak (1998) and Choo (1999) emphasized the significance of information retrieval, organization, and access in enabling employees to make informed decisions and perform their tasks effectively.

The emphasis on continuous learning, market surveys, and collaborative knowledge acquisition in Component 2 aligns with the literature on organizational learning and knowledge creation. Studies by Senge (1990) and Nonaka and Konno (1998) emphasized the importance of continuous learning, knowledge acquisition from external sources, and collaborative learning processes in facilitating organizational innovation and performance improvement.

It is important to note that while the findings of the current study align with existing literature, each study has its own unique context and specific findings. The current findings from the rotated component matrix analysis in the study provide empirical evidence that supports and reinforces the existing literature on knowledge management and employee performance. By corroborating and extending the existing knowledge, the present study contributes to a deeper understanding of the factors influencing knowledge management effectiveness within organizations.

The factor analysis results presented in *Table 2* provide valuable insights into the dimensions of employee performance. The analysis revealed two distinct factors, namely Total Performance (TP) and Collaborative Performance (CP). The items under the TP factor exhibited high factor loadings, ranging from 0.611 to 0.74, which indicates a strong connection between these items and overall individual performance. This suggests that employees who perform their duties in a timely and satisfactory manner, effectively and efficiently carry out their tasks, and prepare accurate and timely reports are likely to demonstrate higher levels of overall performance.

These findings align with existing literature highlighting the significance of individual task accomplishment and quality output in assessing employee performance.

Table 2: Showing factor analysis of items about employee performance

Item	COMMENT	
	TP	CP
I perform my duties in a timely and satisfactory manner	0.74	
I effectively and efficiently perform my duties	0.737	
I prepare accurate and timely reports	0.715	
I keep complete, accurate and up-to-date records related to my duties	0.713	
I submit my work goals on time	0.695	
I efficiently and effectively use resources to accomplish work goals	0.683	
I implement my work goals well	0.642	
I plan work activities well	0.615	
I have the job knowledge required to perform	0.611	
I have additional trainings to help me perform	0.609	
I demonstrate relevant job knowledge	0.597	
I have enough experience on the job	0.571	
I review my work goals accordingly	0.422	
I have the ability to work cooperatively with others		0.73
I demonstrate the ability to improve my abilities		0.727
I am always reliable in performing work roles and carrying out instructions		0.711
I have the ability to respond to suggestions		0.701
I demonstrate honesty while executing my duties		0.687
I am willing to work collaboratively with others		0.676
I demonstrate the ability to identify, select, and exploit opportunities to train, improve my abilities		0.666
I exhibit the ability to speak		0.66
I have the ability to listen to others		0.597
I exhibit willingness to take on relevant responsibilities		0.588
I adhere to moral principles in executing my duties		0.579
I have the ability to manage critics with minimal negative defensiveness		0.572
I exhibit willingness to be accountable for my actions		0.496
I take appropriate action without being always directed		0.479
I attend to clients' needs		0.479
I identify activities to be done		0.402
Total	6.789	6.418
% of Variance	22.631	21.394
Cumulative %	22.631	44.025

Primary data (2023)

On the other hand, the items under the CP factor demonstrated strong associations as well, with factor loadings ranging from 0.572 to 0.73. These items reflect the importance of collaboration, teamwork, and interpersonal skills in the workplace. Employees who possess the ability to work cooperatively with others, exhibit reliability in performing work roles and following instructions, and respond positively to suggestions are likely to exhibit higher levels of collaborative performance. This suggests that teamwork and

effective communication play crucial roles in enhancing overall employee performance.

The factor analysis findings further revealed that the TP factor accounted for 22.631% of the variance in employee performance, while the CP factor accounted for 21.394%. Although these percentages may appear relatively low, it is important to note that factor analysis often results in multiple factors, each explaining a portion of the total variance. Thus, the combination of the TP and CP factors accounts for a cumulative total of

44.025% of the variance in employee performance.

The findings above are in agreement with the findings in the study of Mulyaningsih et al., (2014) who noted that knowledge management is one of the fundamental issues in human resource management and is directly linked with employee performance. Previous findings by Liao and Wu (2009) also reveal that knowledge management increases employee competence due to sharing information, making employees highly efficient and effective while executing their tasks and obligations. In the same view, Garstenauer et al. (2015) observe that knowledge management offers ways to improve practices and procedures,

develop and enhance employee engagement and performance, decrease the learning curve associated with new employees or new tasks, improve customer service, and reduce cost. Meanwhile, Kim et al. (2014) hailed knowledge management by indicating that its implementation within an organizational setting would stimulate effectiveness and efficiency resulting from creativity and innovativeness.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was obtained to establish the relationship between the independent variable (Knowledge Management) and the dependent variable (Employee performance), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Showing the correlation between Knowledge Management and employee Performance

Knowledge Management and Employee Performance	Knowledge Management	Employee Performance
Knowledge Management	1	.411**
Employee Performance	.411**	1

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

In the updated table, the correlation coefficients between Knowledge Management and Employee Performance are shown.

Table 3 revealed a significant and positive association between knowledge management and employee performance ($r = .411$, $p < 0.01$). The results confirm that enhancement of knowledge management would result in an enhancement in employee performance. Henceforth, these results provide answers to the general objective.

Based on the correlation analysis, There is a significant positive correlation between Knowledge Management and Employee Performance ($r = .411^{**}$). The findings are in agreement with Hislop (2013), who asserts that an organization engaged in knowledge management does not encounter efficiency issues with employees because even when some employees resign, the available multi-skilled employees can take on such responsibility. On the other hand, knowledge management boosts employees' career development opportunities, which minimizes behavioural practices of voluntary turnover,

prompting employees to concentrate and meet targets on time. Besides, knowledge management creates a harmonious atmosphere for teamwork and talent management, resulting in employee efficiency (Valdez-Juárez et al., 2016).

On the contrary, Gholami et al. (2013) revealed no direct relationship between knowledge management and employee performance. They based their argument on the premise that as much as organizations can influence knowledge dissemination and acquisition activities, they cannot affect employees' responsiveness to knowledge. Hussock (2009) also noted that the linkage between knowledge management and employee performance is not as significant because employees' responsiveness to knowledge varies. Yet, it is the one that influences the reactions of employees that later stimulate them to perform.

CONCLUSION

It is indicated that employee performance would also improve when knowledge management is improved. These findings emphasize the need to

ensure a systematic model for knowledge management. Furthermore, this study observes that knowledge management is necessary for job satisfaction to prevail. Hence, it is essential to consider a systematic knowledge management framework to enhance employee performance and job satisfaction. Effective knowledge management practices have the potential to address the challenges faced by DFCU Bank regarding employee performance. By implementing robust knowledge management strategies, the bank can enhance the accessibility and utilization of knowledge, foster a learning culture, and ultimately improve employee performance. This study aims to explore the relationship between knowledge management practices and employee performance within the context of DFCU Bank in Uganda.

Recommendations

Recommendations Based on the findings above, the study recommends the following;

Performance-based incentives should be adopted within the reward system for financial institutions to boost employees' zeal towards their work. Most importantly, the performance ratings and targets should be communicated to employees, as well as the benefits in case such targets are achieved.

Employees should be subjected to more challenging tasks and responsibilities where employees can exercise their skills and competencies in addressing such tasks. This would necessitate financial institutions to rotate employees within the different departments within the bank effectively.

Employees should be delegated tasks and responsibilities from their immediate supervisors to enhance their skills and knowledge and also act as a channel where employees can have the opportunity to participate in decision-making in matters that relate to their job content.

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