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## Factors Affecting Implementation of Strategic Knowledge Management in Non-governmental Organizations in Kenya: A Case of Ngos in Narok County, Kenya

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### **Abstract:**

Knowledge management implementation is the process of fulfilling knowledge management goals, hence achieving the organization's competitive advantage. Past studies on knowledge management in Kenya gives an overview of knowledge management in the country. However, no empirical study has been done to establish factors affecting knowledge management implementation. Therefore, this study sought to establish the factors that affect strategic knowledge management implementation in Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Kenya with reference to NGOs in Narok County. The study sought to address the following specific objectives; to determine the influence of information technology and organizational leadership on implementation of strategic knowledge management among NGOs in Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study population comprised of 20 NGOs operating in Narok County, with a population of 680 employees from various levels of management within their respective Organizations. Both stratified and simple random sampling methods were used to sample 240 respondents. This study employed the use of questionnaires as key instrument for primary data collection. Both quantitative and qualitative data were used in this study. Quantitative data was analyzed by descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The inferential statistics in particular included; regression analysis so as to establish the relationship between dependents and independent variables. Statistical Package for social Science (SPSS) version 20 was used to help in data analysis. The study established that Information Technology is an important aspect in strategic knowledge management. However, the relationship between the two variables has a significant but negative effect on the implementation of strategic Knowledge management in NGOs. It was also noted that organization leadership has an influence on the effectiveness of strategic knowledge management. The results showed that management support to strategic knowledge management then no significant effect in the implementation process of strategic knowledge management among the NGOS. The regression analysis revealed that all the factors considered for the study had a significant correlation and their effect on implementation of strategic knowledge management was more than 70 %. This showed that organizations that wish to have effective implementation of strategic knowledge management must adapt to the four factors as revealed in this study. The study recommended that organizations must ensure that they have an appropriate leadership and adopt appropriate IT systems to enhance the implementation process and also adopt to the various human resource management practices that motivate the employees in enhancing the implementation process on knowledge management.

**Keywords:** Information technology, non-governmental organization, organizational leadership, strategic knowledge management

### **1. Background of the Study**

Knowledge Management (KM) has been defined as "the process by which an organization creates, captures, acquires, and uses knowledge to support and improve the performance of the organization (Kinney, 1998). KM has recently been discussed in several key articles (Alavi and Leidner, 2001). KM processes can be broadly characterized as consisting of knowledge creation activities and knowledge transfer activities. Interest in KM has grown because of the belief that the creation and transfer of knowledge is essential to long-term organizational effectiveness. Nonaka, Toyama, and Konno, (2001) noted that Knowledge in an organization is the collection of expertise, experience and information that individuals and workgroups use during the execution of their tasks. It is produced and stored by individual minds, or implicitly encoded and documented in organizational processes, services and system. The Knowledge

Management approach views knowledge as the key asset of an organization and systematically develops activities to manage it efficiently. The main objectives of Knowledge Management are to promote knowledge growth, knowledge communication and knowledge preservation. Knowledge Management is a topic of great interest in the management and organizational sciences and it is argued that KM should be appropriately supported by enterprise information infrastructures (Davenport & Prusak 2000).

The myriad range of knowledge management (KM) related books, papers, conferences, workshops; is evidence that KM is no longer a buzzword. It is a discipline that needs to be considered in any modern business strategy and planning. Large numbers of organizations are taking great interest in the idea of knowledge management. In 2007, knowledge management software was \$73 billion market, and KM spending is expected to grow nearly 16 percent to an average of \$1,224 per employee in 2008 (AMR Research, (2007).

But why all this interest in knowledge management? There are wider explanations for the amount of attention being paid to knowledge management. One explanation is the attractive arguments underlying KM's value. For example, various researchers claim that KM (i) provides competitive advantage, as it allows organization to solve problems and seize opportunities, (ii) increases responsiveness and innovation, (iii) save costs, (iv) supports decision making, (v) facilitates collaboration, (vi) increases employees' productivity, (vii) reduces the negative impact associated with knowledge attrition, i.e. knowledge loss when employees leave the job (Du Plessis, 2005). Some analysts such as (Ekbja, and Hara, 2008) claim that KM is a mandatory condition of success for organizations as they enter the era of the knowledge economy. Beyond the hype, review of the literature on disappointments and failures in knowledge management impacts, noted that that 84 percent of KM projects fail to have any real impact. A disturbingly high impact proportion of programs initiated with great fanfare are cut back within two or three years. Moreover, some researchers found that there is a systematic lack of evidence for the claims put forth about the alleged knowledge management success stories. In his attack on the "nonsense of knowledge management", Wilson (2002) reported a 2001 survey carried out by Bain & Company showing that only 35 percent of a worldwide sample of 451 companies reported satisfaction rating about 3.5 on a five-point scale, when it comes to their KM initiatives. A number of researchers (Storey and Barnett, 2000) thus pointed us to the need to understand the "why" and the "how" apparently many knowledge management initiatives run into difficulties and to identify the key learning points.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are altruistic value-based organizations, made up of people who are concerned with the lack of development, and who feel strongly that they need to actively participate in development. The NGO "sector" has grown substantially since the early 1990s (Kamat, 2003) and now plays a significant role both in advocacy for policy formulation and in welfare service provision (Hudson, 2002). In the recent years, there has been a sprout of NGOs in Kenya. This has been in response to the growing demand for their services due to increasing poverty levels and the Governments' inability to meet every aspect of the of the populations' socio-economic needs. While the widespread belief is that development is primarily the Government's task, the unmet needs have been taken over by the NGO sector (Mutua, 2001). It is the intention of the proposed study to analyze the challenges affecting strategic knowledge management implementation in NGOs in Kenya with a case of NGOs operating in the Narok County.

### *1.2. Problem Statement*

Numerous organizations internationally have been attracted to the possible benefits of knowledge management hence they have implemented knowledge management projects (Ichijo, and Kohlbacher, 2007). Despite the fact that knowledge management drives the developed countries economies, Africa has not embraced knowledge management with seriousness it deserves (Karanja, 2010). Knowledge management in East Africa is largely informal; most organizations have not formally acknowledged the knowledge management initiatives (Thuku, Karanja, and Kangethe, 2010). Previous writers have noted that successful implementation of knowledge management is possible if several factors that affect knowledge management implementation are carefully considered by the implementing organizations. Information technology facilitates knowledge management, from knowledge creation to knowledge sharing. The organizational structure promotes knowledge management. Organizational leadership and human resource management is essential in implementing a knowledge management system (Aladwani, 2001).

Locally, few studies have focused on knowledge management implementation. For instance, Khaemba (2013) carried out a research on factors affecting knowledge management implementation at Safaricom Limited. No such study on factors affecting strategic knowledge management implementation in NGOs in Kenya has been carried out. This study therefore aims at establishing the factors affecting strategic knowledge management implementation in NGOs in Kenya with a focus on NGOs operating in the Narok County.

### *1.3. Objectives of the Study*

#### 1.3.1. General Objective

An analysis of factors affecting implementation of strategic knowledge management among in NGOs in Kenya. With special reference to NGOs in Narok north sub county.

#### 1.3.2. Specific Objectives

- i. To investigate the effects of information technology on implementation of knowledge management in NGOs in Narok County.
- ii. To establish how organizational leadership affects knowledge management implementation among NGOs in Narok County.

#### 1.4. Research Questions

This research aims to bring clearly the following research questions:

- i. To what extent is information technology being utilized in strategic knowledge management implementation in NGOs in Narok County?
- ii. How has organizational leadership within NGOs influenced strategic knowledge management implementation?

#### 1.5. Significance of the Study

This Study aims to analyze major barriers to implementation of knowledge management with in NGOs in Kenya. In addition, a number of recommendations shall also be suggested with a view to addressing barriers impeding the successful implementation of knowledge management strategies among organizations in Kenya. Upon achieving this goal, additional goals were also attained, such as suggesting some recommendations designed to help overcome barriers to knowledge management among NGOs in Kenya. In addition, this research also added to the knowledge management literature relevant to NGOs in Kenya and shall hopefully provide a basis for continued research in the knowledge management field in Kenya. Interested groups like Students, Researchers, Academicians and General Public also benefited. The study was of great importance as it enhanced a deeper knowledge on how to better initiate successful knowledge management strategies that gave an organization a sustainable competitive advantage.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.2. Theoretical Review

This study was based on certain theories that define the implantation of strategic knowledge management in an organization.

#### 2.2.1 SECI Theory

The Theory of Knowledge Creation, as applied in applications development, is important because literatures suggest that applications development tools and practices primarily rely on tacit and explicit knowledge interactions and conversions (Endres et al. 2007). Understanding how these interactions and conversions work within the context of applications development helps key entities, such as applications developers and program codes, to act or be organized in ways that may eventually contribute to a higher success rate of applications development projects. Using the SECI Model, which is an acronym for Socialization (tacit-tacit), Externalization (tacit-explicit), Combination (explicit-explicit) and Internalization (explicit-tacit)? The Theory of Knowledge Creation plays a significant role in knowledge management paradigms (Khalili et al.2011). For one, the SECI Model has implications both for managerial style and organizational structure, and which was able to emphasize human communication as an essential component (Rice & Rice 2005). Understanding the extent of its applicability determines how organizations may then further strategize their knowledge management models to custom-fit their goals.

Much of the recent interest in knowledge management can be traced back to Nonaka's earlier work (1988; 1991; 1994), and to the landmark exposition of the subject as studied by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). Following Polanyi, Nonaka and Takeuchi base their model on dynamic interaction between two types of knowledge. Tacit knowledge, according to Nonaka and Takeuchi, is personal, context specific, and therefore hard to formalize and communicate. Explicit knowledge, in contrast, refers to knowledge that is transmittable in formal, systematic language (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). According to Nonaka and Takeuchi, tacit knowledge includes cognitive and technical elements. The cognitive elements include mental models, such as schemata, paradigms, perspectives, beliefs, and viewpoints, and they help individuals to perceive and define their world. The technical elements, on the other hand, include concrete know-how, crafts, and skills.

The central idea in Nonaka-Takeuchi model is that new knowledge is created in articulation of tacit mental models, in a kind of mobilization process. In this process, tacit knowledge is converted into explicit form. Although new knowledge is, strictly speaking, created only by individuals according to Nonaka and Takeuchi, knowledge creation does not happen within a single individual. The transformation of knowledge between different forms is a bidirectional process. Tacit knowledge becomes explicit, but explicit knowledge also becomes tacit. Corresponding to the four possible types of knowledge conversion, there are four conversion modes. Tacit knowledge transforms to tacit knowledge through socialization; tacit knowledge transforms to explicit knowledge through externalization; explicit knowledge is converted to explicit knowledge through combination; and explicit knowledge transforms to tacit knowledge through internalization. Nonaka refers to this knowledge creation model as the SECI model (Nonaka & Konno, 1998). Innovative learning and knowledge creation is in this model understood as conversion of tacit knowledge into explicit forms where it can be combined, followed by an internalization process where this new combined knowledge becomes a part of the learner's knowledge structure.

According to Nonaka and Takeuchi, an individual can acquire tacit knowledge directly from others without using language. This socialization process happens through observation, imitation, practice, and shared experience. Externalization, on the other hand, is a process of articulating tacit knowledge into explicit concepts. In that process, tacit knowledge takes the shape of metaphors, analogies, concepts, hypotheses, and models. These we more or less successfully try to express using language. Among the various forms of knowledge conversion, "externalization holds the key to knowledge creation, because it creates new, explicit concepts from tacit knowledge". The third mode of knowledge conversion, combination, is the process of systemizing concepts into a knowledge system, and it integrates different bodies of explicit knowledge. This includes such activities as sorting, adding, and categorizing explicit knowledge.

According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) knowledge creation carried out in formal education and training at schools usually takes this form. In business contexts, one of the main roles of middle management is to create new concepts through combining various sources of organizational knowledge (Nonaka, 1988). Internalization, the fourth conversion mode, is a process of embodying explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge. Experiences through socialization, externalization, and combination are “internalized into individual’s tacit knowledge bases in the form of shared mental models or technical know-how,” and therefore become valuable assets. Organizational knowledge creation is a continuous process where the different modes of knowledge conversion interact. Nonaka and Takeuchi describe this dynamic process as a knowledge spiral. In this spiral of knowledge creation, the socialization mode starts with building a “field” or “space” of social interaction (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Nonaka & Konno, 1998). After such a social interaction field exists, externalization is triggered by meaningful dialogue that sustains collective reflection. As a result, the combination mode is triggered by networking and integrating the newly created knowledge with existing stocks of explicit knowledge. Finally, “learning by doing” triggers internalization. The different phases of knowledge conversion lead to different knowledge contents:

Based on these considerations, Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) propose a five-phase model of the organizational knowledge creation process. The first phase consists of sharing tacit knowledge within the organizations. The rich and untapped knowledge that resides in individuals must first be amplified within the organization. In the second phase, tacit knowledge that is shared, for example, by a team within an organization, must be made explicit. In the third phase, this explicit knowledge must be justified, so that the rest of the organization can determine if the new concept is worthy of pursuit. If the organization gives a “go-ahead” for the new concept, it then has to be converted into an archetype, for example, a prototype or an operating mechanism. The last phase extends the knowledge created across the organization. Such cross-leveling of knowledge may involve also outside constituent such as customers, distributors, subcontractors, and other stakeholders.

Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) has indicated that While knowledge conversion is a social process its effects in the appear to be on the individual while the second depicts the passage from individual to inter-organizational knowledge via group and organizational levels. Through this process an individual’s knowledge is amplified as a part of the knowledge network of an organization. This is the process of organizational knowledge creation and it too is described as a ‘spiral’. Although it has been noted intuitively attractive, there are little empirical studies conducted to examine the SECI Model as a process model in practice (Rice & Rice 2005) such as in applications development. On the contrary, one of the key subjects explored in the development of the SECI Model was an applications developer. There are then debates that arose. One of which is the Universalist-Pluralist debate that criticizes the applicability of the model where the level of cultural influence, based on Japanese car manufacturing companies, is the core of the debate (Hong 2010; Andreeva & Ikhilchik 2012; Cayaba 2012). Other criticisms or debates on the SECI Model point out the existence or non-existence of a cycle and the unidirectional or multidirectional property of the conversions. Since there is no strong empirical basis, the model is conceived by some as seriously flawed. Consequently, there are studies that say the conversion modes are not coherent, which then argue that the paradigmatic status of the theory is unwarranted (Gourlay 2003; Rice & Rice 2005). However, this study adopted this theory as a basis for understanding the aspects of knowledge management in an organization because of its richness in explaining the interactions in the organizations knowledge development and management.

### 2.2.2. Structuration Theory

Adopting structuration theory, Becker et al. (2002) view organizations as social systems, patterns of reproduced social practices brought forth by knowledgeable agents. They place particular emphasis on the structure of signification, suggesting that at the heart of any interaction is mutual knowledge, and at the core of mutual knowledge are interpretative schemes, through which a universe of shared meaning is produced and sustained in interaction. The context-free dimension of signification, communication, and interpretative schemes, creates recursively connected processes of knowledge generation and knowledge use. From this perspective, they suggest that an organization cannot “know” anything; organizational knowledge is individual knowledge socially embedded within so-called transactive knowledge systems. Bonifacio et al. (2002) see large organizations, such as companies and universities, typically structured into components that need to operate with a high degree of autonomy yet also require coordination. Using a structurationist view, they purport that technology architectures shape organizational forms, and organizational forms in turn affect the appropriation of technology. Knowledge in social form is affected by and affects technological architecture; KM systems, therefore, should be designed for consistency with distributed social forms in which organizational knowledge is created. They believe that “knowledge is intrinsically distributed, embedded and localized within the context of informal communities”.

This idea has strong precedent within the work of Yoo et al. (1999) who, in accordance with Giddens, explain that human actors are not only constrained by social structures such as culture and information systems but also creatively construct social systems in which they live, in turn constraining their future actions. This implies that users of, say, KM systems creatively shape the technology, based at least in part on the unique characteristics of their culture. Individual users of KM systems, therefore, are not only consumers of objective knowledge stored in the system but also active creators of their own knowledge.

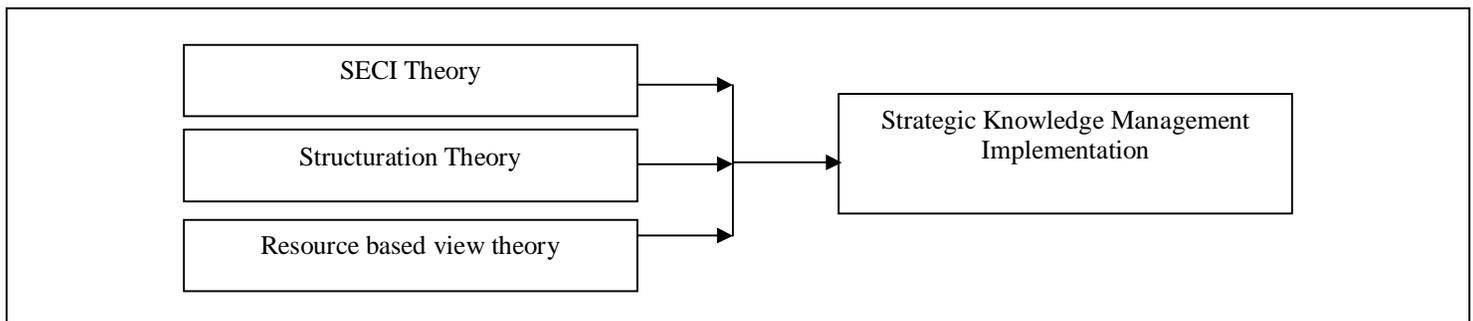
Marshall and Rollinson (2004) share Francis Bacon’s maxim that “knowledge sharing is power.” They believe that the power-knowledge nexus remains a point of contention with organizational knowledge, the two sides being those for knowledge as-object codification, and those who emphasize its inseparability from the context of action. Marshall and Rollinson analyzed the delivery of a telephone-exchange software project and demonstrated how central consideration of power yields new insights beyond prior contributions to the study of practice-based organizational learning. One of their foundational concepts is enactment, which considers the interplay between power and knowledge including rules, norms and resources, and interacting agents. To explain the dynamic process of knowledge creation and utilization, Nonaka and Toyama (2003) revisit the SECI process and advance it by incorporating

Eastern philosophies and structuration theory. Calling upon Giddens' idea that structuration theory studies the ways in which social systems are produced and reproduced through social interaction, they examine the issue of synthesizing environment and internal resources to demonstrate how knowledge is fashioned through interactions between human agency and social structures. The crux of Nonaka and Toyama's argument is their link between the concepts of knowledge and the dimensions of structuration, with a strong emphasis on dialectic thinking and acting. A focus of attention is the SECI model of knowledge creation, which demonstrates that the recursive interaction between agents and the external environment contributes to knowledge processes when converting tacit to explicit knowledge.

### 2.2.3. Resource Based View Theory

Building on the resource based view theory of the firm (Wernerfelt, 1984) this study applies a knowledge based view of the firm. Resources that are valuable, unique, and difficult to imitate can provide a basis for a firm's competitive advantage. In turn, these competitive advantages produce positive returns. Knowledge is such a resource. The special capabilities of organizations for creating and transferring knowledge are being identified as a central element of organizational advantage (Khandewal and Gottschalk, 2003). Davenport et al., 1998 state that scholars and observers from disciplines as disparate as sociology, economics, and management science agree that a transformation has occurred – knowledge is at center stage.

According to Alavi and Leidner (2001), the interest in organizational knowledge has prompted the need to manage knowledge to the organization's advantage. They cite two surveys. A survey of European firms found that almost half of the companies suffered a significant setback from losing key staff, with 43% of the firms experiencing impaired client or supplier relations, and 13% of the firms facing loss of income because of the departure of a single employee. In other survey, the majority of companies believed that much of the knowledge they needed existed inside the company, but that identifying that it existed, finding it, and leveraging it remained.



*Figure 1: Theoretical Framework  
Theories Dependent Variable*

### 2.3.1. Information Technology

Knowledge sharing is as much a people and organizational issue as it is a technology challenge. The term "hybrid solutions" refers to necessary interactions between people and technology to facilitate sharing practices (Davenport, 1996). Similarly, Ruddy (2000) Argued that improving knowledge sharing in a meaningful way requires a "delicate marriage of technology with a keen sense of cultural or behavioral awareness". Most companies' find it challenging to create an environment in which people both wants to share what they know and make use of what others know. Technology has the ability to offer instant access to large amounts of data and information and to enable long distance collaboration that facilitates a team approach, both in and between business functions and subsidiaries. Riege and O'Keeffe (2003) supported the significance of self-managed R&D teams to increase knowledge-sharing practices in international new product development processes.

There is little doubt that technology can act as a facilitator to encourage and support knowledge sharing processes by making knowledge sharing easier and more effective. The key issue, however, is to choose and implement a suitable technology that provides a close fit between people and organizations. Technology that works effectively in some organizations may fail in others.

Irrespective of the size of a firm, many formal knowledge-sharing practices depend on an IT infrastructure that includes some kind of shareware from one of the many providers such as Fuji-Xerox, IBM, or Microsoft. There are numerous infrastructures available, offering support in data acquisition, organization, storage, retrieval, search, presentation, distribution and reproduction. Hence, it is not necessarily a case of merely building a KM and sharing strategy based on a comprehensive database or sophisticated e-mail system (Sarvary, 1999). Hendriks (1999) recommended the use of new systems, arguing that the use of new sharing technology may enhance people's motivation for knowledge sharing, as it often removes temporal, physical and social distance barriers, by improving the process and locating knowledge carriers and seekers.

Even if technology is rarely the ultimate solution to, or driver of, a knowledge sharing strategy, the integration of the right technology is important. There is little doubt that numerous technologies such as the Internet and Intranet, e-mail systems, or inclusive groupware software assist greatly in reducing formal communication barriers. Technology is multi-faceted; hence it is necessary for an organization to integrate an infrastructure that supports various types of communication. There are several technological dimensions, such as business intelligence technologies to assess competitive and economic environments, collaboration and distributed learning technologies to overcome structural and geographical hurdles, knowledge discovery technologies to find new internal and external

knowledge, knowledge mapping technologies to track sources of knowledge about employees' suppliers, distributors, subcontractors and customers, and security technologies (Gold et al., 2001).

Mismatches with employees' need requirements can also cause barriers. Software systems should support work-related processes of individuals, who decide which information to access and store, or forward to other people. Existing and new technologies are often quite capable of supporting effective knowledge sharing processes, however, unless there is a close fit between employees' need requirements, technology in itself can become a barrier. Not because of technical problems but because actual problem solutions do not match people's need requirements (O'Dell and Grayson, 1998). Another potential barrier to developing or maintaining the right IT infrastructure is the compatibility of technology, the integration of existing and new systems. This issue arises when existing hardware and software components suited for one purpose need to be used in conjunction with another new system or a different system in another location. It appears that this location of a system that suits all functional areas within global organizations is almost impossible.

### 2.3.2. Organizational Leadership

Organizational Leadership is regarded as an important component of successful KM implementation. A leader is a role model for others in continuous learning. KM requires an unusual manner of leadership to guide others to achieve the highest levels of OP (Ray, 2008). Leadership is defined as the support of top management for achieving KM activities (Ashoh; Belardo; Crnkovic, 2007). Several researchers have investigated the relationship between leadership and KM in this regard, Lakshman (2007) considered leadership role as a key variable in the relationship between KM and OP improvement. He identified two internal and external dimensions of leadership role in supporting KM implementation. These dimensions depend on the leader's comprehension of the importance of KM implementation. Internal dimension is the leader's comprehension of the importance of technological and socio-cognitive role in the KM implementation. External dimension is the leader's comprehension of the importance of customer-focused knowledge in the KM implementation (Lakshman, 2007). Moreover, Singh (2008) emphasized that the leadership style is a key role in the KM processes for gaining competitive advantage. He suggested four leadership styles i.e. directive, supportive, consulting and delegating in the implementation of KM. The results indicate that directive and supportive styles of leadership are significantly and negatively related to KM processes, but the consulting and delegating styles are positively and significantly related to KM processes.

Furthermore, Politis (2001) examined the relationship between transformational leadership (which includes attributed charisma, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation), transactional leadership (which includes contingent reward and consideration), and various dimensions of knowledge acquisition (which includes communication, personal traits, control, organization and negotiation). Politis (2001) found a strong positive relationship between various styles of transformational leadership and transactional leadership, and various dimensions of knowledge acquisition. In addition, he considered middle managers as gatekeepers of information and knowledge. He recommended that further studies should re-examine these variables. Besides, Crawford (2005) looked at the relationship between styles of transformational leadership and KM processes. He hypothesized that transformational leadership styles leads to the creation of knowledge culture in the organization, which leads to successful implementation of KM processes and to more innovation. The results indicated that transformational leadership style, which consists of charisma, individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspiration, is significantly related to KM processes (which consist of acquisition, creation and application). He suggested the needs for future research to investigate the relationship between transformational leadership styles and KM.

Lack of managerial direction and leadership can limit knowledge sharing practices. Since knowledge sharing is effectively voluntary and conscious sharing is a new behaviour to learn for some people that may require training and ongoing support, clear guidelines seem to be an obvious prerequisite for effective sharing on all organizational levels (Ives et al., 2000). The challenge to managers is to create an environment in which people both want to share what they know and make use of what others know. People cannot always be expected to share their knowledge and insights simply because it is the right thing to do. Managers need to reassure employees that they should not sit on ideas or concepts for fear of their intellectual property being stolen. The solution is to develop that idea or concept in collaboration with other people (Gurteen, 1999). Hence, the emphasis of managers' expectations, long-term commitment and supportive role are fundamental to creating a knowledge-centric sharing culture (McDermott and O'Dell, 2001; O'Dell and Grayson, 1998).

### 2.4 Conceptualization Framework

A conceptual Framework is a set of coherent ideas or concepts organized in a manner that makes them easy to communicate to others. A framework can help to explain why a project is done in a particular way. It can also help to understand and use the ideas of others who have done similar things. The relationship was providing in Figure 2

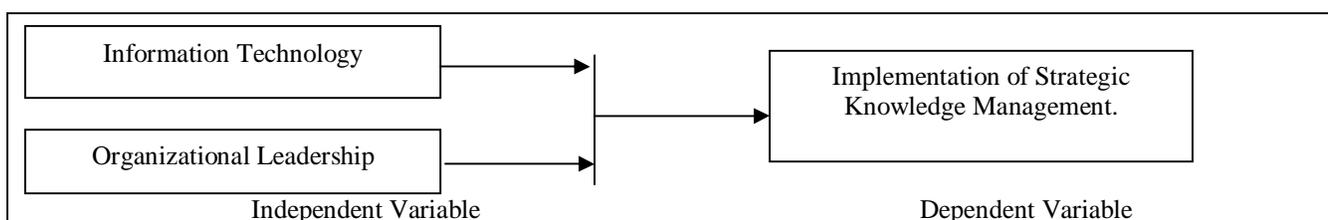


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework  
Source: Author (2017)

Figure 2 shows the relationship that exists between factors considered as influencing the implementation of strategic knowledge management in NGOs in Kenya. It is indicated that with the right information technology in place the NGO was able to effectively implement the strategies. However, it was noted that there are factors not discussed in this study that may pose a challenge to the effective implementation process.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Design

The study adapted a descriptive survey design. This design allows the researcher to collect data by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals (Gay, Mills and Airasian 2009). Descriptive survey research requires the collection of standardized quantifiable information from all members of a population or a sample and also, they are the most popular data collection methods in business and social science research (Creswell, Fetters and Ivankova ,2004). The design is an effective tool to get opinions, attitudes and descriptions as well as getting cause-and-effect relationships. Surveys are chiefly used in studies that have individual people as the units of analysis. This study design will be adopted since it provided an opportunity for in-depth study into factors affecting strategic knowledge management implementation in NGOs in Kenya.

#### 3.2. Target Population

A population is defined as the total collection of elements about which we wish to make some inferences (Cooper and Schindler, 2003). The study population comprised of 20 NGOs operating in Narok County with a total membership of 680 staff. They included Managing Directors/CEOs/Chairman/ Board of Directors, Program/Finance Managers, Human Resource Managers, Project Officers, Field Officers.

#### 3.3. Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

##### 3.3.1. Sample Size Determination

A sample is a subset of the population in question and consists of selected members from the particular population so as to be representative of the whole population with relevant characteristics (Creswell, et al ,2004). Sampling is described as the selection of a proportion of the total number of units of interest for the ultimate reason of being able to draw general conclusions about the total number of units (Saunders, 2007). With 95% confidence level, this study used a formula by Kothari, (2004) with assumption of that the proportion of all defectives in the population was 0.5 on the basis of results of the pilot study. In this case the desired sample size (nf) was determined using the following formula given by Mugenda and Mugenda (2004). This formula was considered suitable as it was assumed to give an accurate sample size than any other method.

$$\begin{aligned} nf &= n / (1 + (n/N)) \\ &= 384 / (1 + (384/680)) \\ &= 384 / (1 + 0.6) \\ &= 384 / 1.60 \\ &= 240 \text{ respondents} \end{aligned}$$

Where: nf= the desired sample size (when population less than 10,000)

n = the desired sample size (when the population is more than 10,000)

N=the estimate of the population size.

The 240 respondents arrived at was 35% of the entire population. This was acceptable because Gay et al. (2009) noted that a study sample of 10% or more of the study population was acceptable for a social study.

##### 3.3.2. Sampling Procedure

The study used proportional simple random sampling to select the respondents from each category of the population. Ballot papers were used where numbers of the required sample were written on small pieces of paper and the employees asked to pick. Those who picked the blank papers were not use in the study.

#### 3.4. Data Collection Instruments

The study used questionnaires to collect primary data which aims at providing the views and opinions of the respondents. The questionnaire was applicable in data collection for this study because of its numerous advantages and its ability to yield the most satisfactory range of reliable data (Mugenda 2003). The questionnaire is thought to provide confidentiality and it gives the respondent time to fill out of his / her schedule. Similarly, the questionnaire ensures that sensitive matters can be discussed without much pressure on the respondents (Gay et al, 2009). Questionnaires are also easier to administer thereby making it possible to reach a large population. A researcher is able to design questionnaires in a way that simplified analysis (Likert scale format, open or closed ended format and multiple choices). The study questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section was to seek demographic information from respondents, whereas, section B comprised of questions or statements that enabled the respondents to evaluate the extent to which the variables understudy affects each other. The items were measured on a (5) point Likert scale with anchors, "strongly agree" (5), "Agree" (4), "Neutral" (3), "Disagree" (2), "Strongly disagree" (1). The questions were made short and simple to understand because a short and simple questionnaire is preferred because it yields a high response rate.

### 3.5. Pilot, Validity and Reliability of the Study

The pilot test group was encouraged to make comments and suggestions concerning the instruments. The feedback helped to review the questions before the actual study. The researcher selected ten percent (10%) of the total number of one to ten percent (1% - 10%) of the sample size as recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (1999). Following this rule, a proportion of 24 respondents were considered appropriate for the pilot test. Kothari (2004) also observed that 10% of the sample is most appropriate for a pilot study. The pilot study was carried out among employees in NGOs in Narok north who were excluded from the main study which was outside the study area. The pilot study was used to determine validity and reliability of the instruments.

To enhance criterion related validity a standardized Questionnaire (S.Q.) was developed. Standardized Questionnaire was taken to the supervisor to seek expertise opinion pertaining to its content and modifications were made and the suggestions were to be incorporated in the study.

To enhance reliability of the research instrument, the researcher prior to the actual study conducted a pilot test where a few questionnaires were prepared and subjected to 24 respondents who represented the sample selected for the study. According to Struwig and Stead (2001), for consistency to be present, the alpha reliability coefficient must be at least 0.6 or above. The study established that the reliability of the instrument was 0.722 and therefore the questionnaire was considered as reliable for use in the study.

### 3.6. Data Collection Procedure

The researcher proceeded to collect the data. The respondents were given a maximum of two weeks to return the filled questionnaire which were summarized, coded, entered into the computer then by the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), the data was analyzed.

### 3.7. Data Analysis and Reporting

After data collection, the questionnaires were coded, summarized, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The first section of the questionnaire contained questions seeking the background information of the respondents. This section was analyzed using descriptive statistics to indicate the magnitude of the responses in terms of means, percentage and frequencies. Subsequently, second and third sections was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics of percentages, means and frequencies and in order to establish the relationship between independent variable and the dependent variable inferential statistics was used to show whether the relationship that exists is significant or not. The statistical tests were done at 95% significant level meaning that the study allowed for an error of 5%. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) were used to analyze the data which were presented using tables, charts, and graphs. The regression model to support the study was developed as shown.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + e$$

Where

Y = strategic knowledge management implementation

X<sub>1</sub> = information technology

X<sub>2</sub> = Organizational leadership

β<sub>0</sub> = constant,

β<sub>i</sub> = coefficients of regression, i = 1, 2,

e = error term

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Information Technology

In trying to establish the information technology applied by the organizations in their various activities. The study sought to establish those IT systems used, effectiveness of communication in the implementation process and the technical support provided during the implementation process.

The study sought to find out whether the organization uses information technology in strategic knowledge management in the NGO. For this to happen the organization must be in a position to adopt the best IT Infrastructure/System. The respondents were asked to establish the various information technologies used in the organizations. The results revealed that majority 84.6% of the respondents were aware of the use of wide area networks in their operations at the NGOs. About the internet use majority 70.8% said yes with only 20.9.2% saying No and not sure respectively. On the use of Knowledge data base, majority 60% indicated yes similarly on the use of local area network 44.6% indicated yes for its use, while 30.8% said no they did not use the local area networks. The study noted that majority of the respondents were much aware of the wide area network and the internet use compared to the other IT systems used in the organizations.

The respondents were asked to indicate whether communication in the organization influenced the strategic implementation of knowledge management in the organization. The study sought to establish whether the workers share knowledge or information. The respondents were asked to express their view on various statements that sought to explain the link between communication and implementation of knowledge management among employees in the NGO world. On a scale of 1-5 where 1- strongly disagrees, 2- disagree, 3- not sure, 4- agree and 5- strongly agree. The results presented indicated that majority of the respondents 112(62.6%) agreed with the statement, 54(30.2%) strongly agreed and only 13 (7.3%) said they were not sure whether the organization regularly

updates databases for good work practices, Lessons learned and listings of experts in the organization is a strategic knowledge management practice enhanced by communication in the organization. This means that the respondents are keen on issues of knowledge management in the organization. On whether preparing written documentation such as lessons learned, training manuals, good work practices and articles for publication is a knowledge management strategy implemented through communication in the organization. Among the respondents 80(44.7%) strongly agreed, 65(36.3%) agreed and the rest 34(19.0%) were not sure. This clearly shows that the employees of NGOs understand knowledge management and the effect of communication in implementation the KM strategy in the organization.

The respondents were also asked to indicate whether knowledge management helps in facilitating collaborative work by project teams that are physically separated ("virtual teams"). The response was quite varied. However, majority 70(39.1%) still agreed with the statement, while 30(16.8%) strongly agreed. It was also noted that 34(19.0%) strongly disagreed, 33(18.4%) were not sure and 12(6.7%) disagreed. This indicates that NGOs practice knowledge diversity through collaboration via the virtual teams. The variation in the response could be attributed to the different categories of respondents.

In order to have effectiveness in the implementation of strategic knowledge management in the NGOs technical support is a factor of great importance. This study sought to establish whether the respondents were aware of this ideology or not. The respondents were asked to indicate their awareness level for IT upgrading in the organization and also whether they were aware of the process of upgrading the systems. The results presented shows that majority of the respondents 61.3% agreed and 14.1% strongly agreed while 19% strongly disagreed that there is a process of upgrading the IT systems in the organizations. This shows that most of the respondents were much aware that technical support was a key requirement in implementation of knowledge management. It was also noted that most respondents 41% strongly agreed that there was a recent IT upgrade in the organization. This showed that their respondents were aware of what was happening in the organization in terms of IT and the implementation of strategic knowledge management. This shows that information technology was an important factor to consider in effectively implementing knowledge management in the NGOs. The response clearly shows that the staff is very much aware and hence involved in the process that is why majority of them are able to follow up on the happening and provide appropriate results.

#### *4.2. Organizational Leadership*

It was important to note whether organizational leadership plays a role in enhancing effectiveness in implementation of strategic knowledge management. The respondents were asked to provide their views on the various organizational leadership issues. The respondents were asked to indicate whether knowledge management was a responsibility of all staff or the management and also to give their opinion on the policies that govern implementation of knowledge management the respondents were asked to indicate whether Organization knowledge management practices were a responsibility of all the employees or just the management.

The results of the study noted that majority of the respondents 84(46.9%) disagreed with the statement that knowledge management practices is the responsibility of the managers and the executives. While 42(23.5%) strongly agreed with the statement. This indicates that majority of the employees in the NGOs believe that knowledge management implementation is not a management responsibility. On whether knowledge management is a responsibility of the non-management workers most of the respondents 81(45.3%) were not sure, 63(35.25) strongly disagreed and 24(13.5%) disagreed. Only 11(6.2%) strongly agreed with the statement. This indicates that knowledge management was not a responsibility of non-management workers in the NGOs.

It was also important to establish whether implementation of knowledge management was a responsibility of the knowledge management unit. The results showed that most of the respondents 60(33.5%) disagreed, 31(17.3%) strongly disagreed, 33(18.4%) agreed and 44(24.6%) strongly agreed. It is clear again that majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement meaning that knowledge management implementation is not just a responsibility of the knowledge officers in the management unit. Finally, it was important to establish whether knowledge management was used as an explicit criterion for assessing worker performance. The respondents noted that 101(56.4%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement 51(28.5%) agreed while 27(15.1%) strongly agreed with the statement. This shows that although most of the respondents indicated that disagreed with the statement but also a large number had indicated agreement. This shows that knowledge management is not implemented in the organization for the purpose of assessing workers performance.

The study also sought to establish policies and strategies adopted by the organizations in support of the strategic knowledge management. Policies are important in the implementation of any new concepts in the organization. In order to establish whether employees in NGOs understood the policies and strategies in place to support implementation of KM the employee's opinion were sought. The results show that most of the respondents 60(33.5%) strongly agreed with the statement that the organization has a written knowledge management policy, 57(31.8%) disagreed while 47(26.3%) were not sure. This response could be attributed to the fact that the respondents were randomly selected from all the sectors of the organization and since strategy and policies are top management issues it was possible that some of the respondents might not have been aware of the existence of the written policy on knowledge management. On whether the organization has value system or culture intended to promote knowledge sharing most of the respondents 131(73.2%) agreed, 39(21.8%) strongly agreed and only 9(5.0%) were not sure. This shows that the employees were formed of the value system or culture that promoted knowledge sharing. This indicates that the implementation of KM in NGO could be a success because the employees were aware of the policies and the strategies in place to promote the implementation of KM. Similar response was observed when the respondents were asked whether the organization uses partnership or strategic alliances to acquire knowledge. Most of the respondents 131(73.2%) agreed, 39(21.8%) strongly agreed and 9(5.0%) were not sure. This shows that the respondents are well aware of the strategies used in the organization to implement knowledge management. This indicates that

organizations that intend to have effective implementation of the strategic knowledge management must put in place proper policies and strategies that will facilitate the process of implementation.

#### 4.3. Effect of Strategic Knowledge Management on the Performance of the Organization

It was important to establish what the employees felt generally about KM and the performance of the organization. The respondents were asked to indicate whether strategic knowledge management is effective in enhancing performance of the organization. The results indicated that most of the respondents 63.1% agreed, 10.8 % strongly agreed and 18.8% disagreed. This means that implementation of strategic knowledge management in the organization has an influence on the performance of the organization.

#### 4.4. Correlations Analysis

The study sought to establish whether there was any relationship between the variables under study. The variables defining the independent variable were correlated against the dependent variable. Correlation analysis assists the researcher to establish the nature of the relationship in order to make a valid conclusion and recommendation about the variables. Normally a correlation coefficient lies between +1 and -1. A positive correlation means the two items under test affect each other in a way that when one improves the other also improves and a negative correlation means that when one factor increases the other reduces. The test of significance in the relationship is done at either a significant value of 5% or 1%. The results revealed that there is a weak negative but significant correlation of -0.442 with a p-value 0.000 at 1% level of significance. This indicates that implementation of knowledge management does not necessarily require the use of IT. This shows that organizations can still embrace knowledge management even without investing heavily in IT.

About Organizational Leadership (OL) also correlated negatively with the implementation of strategic knowledge management among NGOs. The result shows that the correlation coefficient of OL and implementation of KM was -0.237 which is very weak but also very significant at 1% level. This means that the leadership in the organizations under study does not have a very direct effect on the implementation of strategic knowledge management in the organization. It shows that effective implementation of knowledge management does not necessarily depend on the leadership in place at that particular time.

#### 4.5. Regression Analysis

In this study, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to test relationship among variables (independent) on implementation of strategic KM. The research used statistical package for social sciences (SPSS V 20.0) to code, enter and compute the measurements of the multiple regressions. The independent variables that were studied, explain 70.6% of the implementation of strategic KM as represented by the  $R^2$ . This therefore means that other factors not studied in this research contribute 29.4% of the variation in the implementation of strategic KM on the NGOs. Therefore, further research should be conducted to investigate these other factors (29.4%) and how they will affect implementation of strategic KM in the NGOs. The significance value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 indicates that the model is statistically significance in predicting how various factors affect implementation of strategic KM among the NGOs. The F critical at 5% level of significance was 104.491. Since F calculated is greater than the F critical (value = 6.219), this shows that the overall model was significant.

Multiple regression analysis was conducted as to determine the relationship between implementation of KM and the four variables (IT and OL). As per the SPSS generated table above, the equation ( $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \epsilon$ ) becomes:

$$Y = 1.299 - 0.559X_1 + 0.044X_2$$

The regression equation above has established that taking all factors into account (Information Technology and organizational leadership) constant at zero, implementation of KM of nongovernmental organizations will be 1.229. The findings presented also shows that taking all other independent variables at zero, a unit improvement in implementation of IT use will lead to a -0.559 increase in implementation of Strategic KM of nongovernmental organizations while a unit increase in organizational leadership will lead to a 0.044 increase in implementation of Strategic KM of nongovernmental organizations. This suggests that organizational leadership contribute most to implementation of Strategic KM of nongovernmental.

## 5. Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.2.1. Information Technology

On information technology applied by the organizations in their various activities. The study sought to establish those IT systems used, effectiveness of communication in the implementation process and the technical support provided during the implementation process. It was noted that organization uses information technology in strategic knowledge management in the NGO. This happened when the organization adopts the best IT Infrastructure/System, such as the use of wide area networks in their operations, use of Knowledge data base and use of local area network. Communication in the organization was influenced by IT which influenced the strategic implementation of knowledge management in the organization.

It is noted that NGOs practice knowledge diversity through collaboration via the virtual teams. The variation in the response could be attributed to the different categories of respondents. The respondents were asked to indicate their awareness level for IT upgrading in the organization and also whether they were aware of the process of upgrading the systems. The results show that majority of the respondents agreed that most of the respondents were much aware that technical support was a key requirement in implementation of knowledge management. This shows that information technology was an important factor to consider in effectively implementing knowledge management in the NGOs. The response clearly shows that the staffs are very much aware and hence involved in the

process that is why majority of them are able to follow up on the happening and provide appropriate results. This is in line with Gold et al., (2001) who indicated that even if technology is rarely the ultimate solution to, or driver of, a knowledge sharing strategy, the integration of the right technology is important. There is little doubt that numerous technologies such as the Internet and Intranet, e-mail systems, or inclusive groupware software assist greatly in reducing formal communication barriers. Technology is multi-faceted; hence it is necessary for an organization to integrate an infrastructure that supports various types of communication

### 5.2.2. Organizational Leadership

Organizational leadership plays a role in enhancing effectiveness in implementation of strategic knowledge management Shih, and Chiang, (2005). Based on the study the respondents indicated that knowledge management was not a responsibility of all staff or the management and also to give their opinion on the policies that govern implementation of knowledge management. The respondents indicate that Organization knowledge management practices were a responsibility of all the employees or just the management. The results indicated that majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement that knowledge management practices is the responsibility of the managers and the executives meaning that employees in the NGOs believe that knowledge management implementation is not a management responsibility. Majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement that knowledge management implementation is not just a responsibility of the knowledge officers in the management unit. This shows that knowledge management is not implemented in the organization for the purpose of assessing workers performance. It was also established that policies and strategies adopted by the organizations are important in the implementation of any new concepts in the organization.

The results show that most of the respondents strongly agreed that the organization has a written knowledge management policy. Yahya, and Goh, (2002) argued that Organization also has value system or culture intended to promote knowledge sharing most of the respondents. This shows that the employees were formed of the value system or culture that promoted knowledge sharing indicating that the implementation of KM in NGO could be a success because the employees were aware of the policies and the strategies in place to promote the implementation of KM. This shows that the respondents are well aware of the strategies used in the organization to implement knowledge management. Therefore, organizations that intend to have effective implementation of the strategic knowledge management must put in place proper policies and strategies that facilitates the process of implementation. This agrees with Politis (2001) who found a strong positive relationship between various styles of leadership and various dimensions of knowledge acquisition. However, he indicated that middle managers are gatekeepers of information and knowledge and hence they may make the process effective or not. This could be the reason for the low correlation obtained in this study.

### *5.3. Conclusion*

The study concludes that information technology and organizational leadership affects the implementation of strategic knowledge management of the NGOs. The study further concludes that organization structure plays an important role in the implementation of the strategic knowledge management. The study also deduced that IT systems used that are effectiveness of communication in the implementation process and the technical support provide during the implementation process. It was noted that organization uses information technology in strategic knowledge management in the NGO. The study also concludes that implementation of KM in NGO could be a success because the employees were aware of the policies and the strategies in place to promote the implementation of KM. This shows that the respondents are well aware of the strategies used in the organization to implement knowledge management. Therefore, organizations that intend to have effective implementation of the strategic knowledge management must put in place proper policies and strategies that facilitates the process of implementation.

### *5.4. Recommendations*

From the study findings, it was clear that information technology and organizational leadership affect the implementation of strategic knowledge management of the NGOs. The study therefore recommends that in order to ensure that the NGOs embrace the implementation of KM; they should ensure that they put in place an appropriate IT system as it has a significant effect on the implementation of strategic KM at the organizations to a great extent, the NGO management should increase their investment in IT even as a facilitator of effective implementation of the process. The study also recommends that though organizational leadership has no significant effect on the implementation of KM in an organization, but it has a role to play that is why a combination of the four factors gives a very high correlation and regression factor.

## **6. Areas of Further Research**

The study recommends that further research should be done on the effect of IT in enhancing the implementation of strategic KM in the organization. It is important to establish why IT has a negative but significant effect to implementation of KM. Further studies should be done on the effect of on the financial sustainability of profit making organizations.

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