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Effect of Knowledge Sharing on Destination Competitiveness: Tourism Stakeholders' Perspectives

Abstract

This study used the case of Baringo County, Kenya, to investigate the effect of knowledge sharing by primary tourism stakeholders on a destination's competitiveness. A mixture of sampling techniques, including purposive, stratified, and simple random sampling, was used to select a sample of 259 respondents from a study population of 732 stakeholders. Baringo County was targeted purposively due to its tourism potential while stratification was done to ensure all sectors were represented in the study. A total of 246 completed questionnaires were received and used in the analysis. While the principal component analysis was used to explore the underlying knowledge sharing factors, regression analysis was used to establish the effect of knowledge sharing on destination competitiveness. The findings revealed that knowledge sharing among primary tourism stakeholders could predict 26.1% ($R^2 = .261$) of destination competitiveness. There was no significance at $p=.05$ between internet connectivity, organisation linkages and social networking, and destination competitiveness. However, there was a positive and significant relationship between staff orientation and development and destination competitiveness ($\beta=0.324$, $t=4.908$, $p=000$). Hence, knowledge management practices by stakeholders specifically sharing of knowledge in product and service delivery are crucial for destination competitiveness. This study provides contribution to the related literature as well.

Keywords: *Competitiveness, destination, knowledge management, knowledge sharing, stakeholders.*

Jel Classifications: L83, O55, Z32

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1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world (Mihalic, 2014; Øian, Fredman, Sandell, Sæþórsdóttir, Tyrväinen, & Jensen, 2018); and it is estimated to increase at an average of 3.3% per annum, reaching 1.8 billion by the year 2030 (UNWTO, 2019). The United Nation's designation of 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development significantly boosted the acknowledgement of tourism as an economic development tool with a capacity to stimulate economic growth through creating jobs, attracting investment and fostering entrepreneurship, while preserving ecosystems and biodiversity (United Nations, 2017). The importance of tourism to many national economies (Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013; Mihalic, 2014; World Travel and Tourism Council, 2012) has consequently pushed several sector players to engage in intense competition as they seek out factors that influence choices made by tourists on the destinations to visit (Barbosa, De Oliveira & Rezende., 2010; OECD, 2010). Moreover, the turbulent business environment within many economies and complex networks within a tourism destination (Díaz & Rodríguez, 2016) has forced tourism businesses to interrogate their competitive strategies.

Many researchers assert the need for businesses operating in a rapidly and changing environment to act fast, adapt quickly, and create new advantages that will keep them one step ahead of their competitors (Saravanan, 2017). Likewise, a considerable body of research on sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) has emerged during the last two decades (Azizah & Norshuhada, 2010; Kimari, 2010; Ndung'u, 2006; Ngigi, 2006; Oyeyo, 2008; Saravanan, 2017; Wunyu, 2010). These studies identified several SCA sources which include; low-cost leadership, quality of products, speed of delivery of product, focusing on specific segments of the market, innovation, developing of human assets, knowledge management practices, entering into strategic alliances, creating virtual organisation, and building of learning organisations. However, the studies did not delve into knowledge sharing among tourism stakeholders as a source of destination competitiveness.

Fugate, Stank, and Mentzer (2009), Paulin and Suneson (2012), and Savolainen (2017) describe knowledge sharing as the exchange of information and learning from one source to another. Likewise, Brčić and Mihelič (2015), Kim and Lee (2013), Mohajan (2019), and Rao, Yang and Yang (2018) describe knowledge sharing as a process through which experience, information, skills, and expertise are exchanged, shared and transferred among organisation members. Some of the benefits of knowledge sharing are identified as; enhancing of existing organisational business processes, introducing more efficient and effective business processes (Brčić & Mihelič, 2015; Kelleher & Levene, 2009) and promoting a collaborative and integrated approach to access and use of organisational knowledge assets (Bhojaraju, 2005). This paper is therefore guided by the view that tourism destinations could consider knowledge sharing as an asset upon which to take advantage of and gain competitiveness.

It is worth noting that although generation and application of new knowledge to feed innovation and product development has been adjudged critical for competitiveness, most organisations in Kenya have primarily been slow in adopting knowledge management practices (Cheruiyot, Jagongo & Owino, 2012). Currently, a majority of studies on knowledge management in Kenya have been conducted in disciplines such as manufacturing (Nyawade, 2005; Wangari, 2009), information communication technology (Murianki, 2008), banks (Asava, 2009) and veterinary services (Ogare, Jalang'o & Othieno, 2010). Consequently, research on knowledge management practices and competitiveness in tourism destinations has been limited (Ruhanen & Cooper, 2004; Tsai, Song & Wong, 2009; Zehrer, 2011). Just like Asheim and Coenen (2005) and Saxenian (1996) examined regions as units in identifying competitiveness, this study used the case of Baringo County, Kenya, to investigate the effect of knowledge sharing by primary tourism stakeholders on a destination's competitiveness.

2. Literature Review

Competitiveness is a multi-faceted concept (Shevchenko, Kokuytseva & Ovchinnikova, 2019) which is often defined, understood, and measured differently depending on the discipline and context. Broadly, competitiveness may be viewed from either a macro, meso, or micro perspective (European Commission, 2017). At the macro perspective level, competitiveness is a national concern which is conceptualised as the degree to which a country can produce goods and services which meet the standards of the international market while maintaining and expanding the real incomes of its people over time (Dwyer & Kim, 2010). Conversely, competitiveness from a micro perspective is considered a firm-level phenomenon, i.e., firm-specific behaviour that determines competitiveness (Dwyer & Kim, 2010). This is illustrated by Porter's competitive analysis framework which emphasises industry attractiveness and its characteristics, such as the potential to enhance the firm's power vis-à-vis buyers and suppliers, thwarting potential entrants, and out positioning competitors as the key determinants of competitive advantage and long-term profitability (Porter, 1980, 1985). Out of the different focuses of competitiveness, the concepts utilised are varied. For instance, when competitiveness is evaluated according to performance and/ or efficiency criteria, the focus is on the companies', sectors, or the country's production capabilities, (Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013; OECD, 2010; Tsai et al., 2009). In this case, the indicators may include exchange rates, trade volumes, production, and capital (OECD, 2010). Further, when competitiveness is drawn from the structural characteristics such as the capacity to beat competitors in terms of efficiency, the indicators are price, quality, technology, salaries, productivity, and other production conditions (Barbosa et al., 2010; OECD, 2010). Therefore for evaluation of competitiveness to be done, clear boundaries must be set out stating the spheres and indicators to be considered in the assessment.

In tourism, competitiveness is linked to economics, marketing, strategic perspectives, price, quality, and satisfaction (Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013; OECD, 2010; Tsai et al., 2009). Destinations are often rated as competitive if their market share, measured by visitor numbers and financial returns are increasing (Hassan, 2000). Traditionally, those destinations that viewed competitiveness in terms of visitor numbers, tended to respond to declining visitor numbers by increasing their marketing expenditure (Buhalis, 2000). However, the strategy faced challenges as more and more destinations spent more on marketing with limited results (Vengesayi, 2003). To achieve and sustain a competitive advantage for the tourism industry, destinations should ensure their overall 'appeal,' and the tourist experience offered remains superior to that of alternative destinations open to potential visitors (OECD, 2010). Dwyer and Kim (2010) grouped factors that were likely to influence tourism destination competitiveness into either price or non-price factors. The maintenance of an inventory of most significant tourist attractions, facilities, services and experiences offered in destination, identification of major competitors and their product offerings, community support for special events, training, human resource development, the existence of laws and regulations protecting the environment and heritage and research and monitoring of environmental impacts of tourism are considered indicators of destination competitiveness (Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013; Dwyer & Kim, 2010; OECD, 2010; Tsai et al., 2009). Kozak and Rimmington (1999) observed that the competitiveness of a tourist destination was based on a combination of two fundamental elements, i.e., primary factors, such as climate, ecology, culture, architectural heritage, and specific aspects of the tourist sector, such as hotels, transport means, and entertainment.

The World Economic Forum in 2007, developed a ranking of tourism competitiveness based on models structured on thirteen key elements namely, Public policies and regulations, Environmental legislation, Safety, Health and hygiene, Priority given to the tourism sector, Air transport infrastructure, Ground transport infrastructure, Tourism infrastructure, Communications infrastructure, Prices in the tourism sector, Human resources, The national

perception of tourism, Natural and cultural resources. Barbosa et al. (2010) further grouped these elements into three areas: (i) regulatory (ii) business environment and infrastructure, and (iii) natural, cultural and human resources. A majority of previous studies on tourism destination competitiveness aim at diagnosing, competitive positions of specific destinations (Enright & Newton, 2005), particular aspects of destination competitiveness (Chacko, 1998), destination management systems (Baker, Hayzelden & Sussmann., 1996), destination marketing (Buhalis, 2000), price competitiveness (Dwyer, Forsyth & Rao, 2000), quality management (Go & Govers, 2000) and nature-based tourism (Huybers & Bennett, 2003). Several other studies sought to develop general models and theories of destination competitiveness. For instance, Crouch and Ritchie's (1999) study on the nature and structure of destination competitiveness sought to develop a conceptual model based on theories of comparative advantage and competitive advantage (Crouch, 2007). Dwyer and Kim (2010) allude to knowledge management aspects of acquisition, sharing, creation, and implementation in the discussion on destination management as an element of competitiveness. However, it is observable that knowledge management has not been analysed explicitly as a possible resource element of tourism destination competitiveness. Therefore, this study isolated knowledge sharing as a possible element of destination competitiveness in Baringo County, Kenya where the indicators used for destination competitiveness were adopted from studies by Barbosa et al (2010), Crouch (2007), Enright and Newton (2004), Gooroochurn and John and Mattsson (2005), Porter (1980) and Sugiyarto (2005).

Informed by the Knowledge-Based View (KBV) theory, which considers knowledge as the most strategically significant resource of a firm (Curado, 2006) since knowledge-based resources are inherently hard to duplicate (Curado, 2006; Moustaghfir, 2012; Yang & Liu, n.d; Yin & Jahanshahi, 2018) and socially complex (Yang & Liu, n.d.). The study appreciated the existence of different knowledge bases and capabilities which were considered possible determinants of sustained competitive advantage and superior corporate performance (Curado, 2006; Yin & Jahanshahi, 2018). Although Resource Base View (RBV) theory recognises knowledge as a critical resource of a firm, proponents of the KBV assert that RBV does not appreciate the actual value of knowledge as a strategic resource for competitiveness (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). KBV, therefore, seeks to present knowledge as a resource in an economic context (OECD, 2010) where it is embedded and carried through multiple entities including organisational culture and identity, policies, routines, documents, systems, and employees (Curado, 2006; Moustaghfir, 2012; Yin & Jahanshahi, 2018). KBV proponents, therefore, build upon and extend the resource-based view (RBV) (Curado, 2006; Yang & Liu, n.d; Yin & Jahanshahi, 2018) of the firm initially promoted by Penrose (1959) and later expanded by others (Barney, 1991; Conner, 1991; Curado, 2006; Wernerfelt, 1984). The KBV was relevant in this study because it allowed for the isolation of knowledge as a resource that could enhance the destination's competitiveness.

Knowledge management (KM) is highly significant in the tourism industry (Shaw & Williams, 2009) and an indispensable competitive tool (Cooper, 2006; Hallin & Marnburg, 2008). By and large, knowledge is categorised into two, i.e., tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge (Curado, 2006; Dalkir, 2005; Omotayo, 2015; Nonaka, 1991; Yin & Jahanshahi, 2018). Mohajan (2019), Omotayo (2015), Tzortzaki, and Mihiotis (2012) distinguish the two categories by referring to individual and organisational knowledge as tacit and explicit knowledge, respectively. Dalkir (2005), Omotayo (2015), and Rao et al. (2018) describe tacit knowledge as knowledge that is subjective and experience-based and is not expressed in words, sentences, numbers, or formulas, often because it is context-specific. Tacit knowledge includes cognitive skills such as beliefs, images, intuition and mental models, and technical skills such as craft and know-how (Bhojaraju, 2005; Omotayo, 2015, Rao et al., 2018). Tacit knowledge in the tourism and hospitality industry is attributable to various stakeholders,

especially in cultural tourism, where knowledge is embodied in a few experts (Rao et al., 2018).

Explicit knowledge, on the other hand, is objective and rational knowledge and is expressed in words, sentences, numbers, or formulas. It includes theoretical approaches, problem-solving, manuals, and databases (Nonaka, 1997; Omotayo, 2015; Yin & Jahanshahi, 2018). Thus explicit knowledge is readily available and shared within organisations by stakeholders (Curado, 2006; Mohajan, 2019; Omotayo, 2015). Despite knowledge being either explicit or tacit, it is possible to convert it from one form to another, i.e., tacit to explicit and back to tacit through knowledge conversion (Nonaka, 1997; Savolainen, 2017). The knowledge dynamics model illustrates the knowledge creation process as; socialisation-externalisation- combination- internalisation (SECI) and knowledge conversion process between tacit and explicit knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1997). Nonaka's SECI models (figure 1) portray knowledge transfer as a spiral process in which existing knowledge is either tacit knowledge or explicit knowledge. The objective of knowledge transfer is to convey either tacit or explicit knowledge.

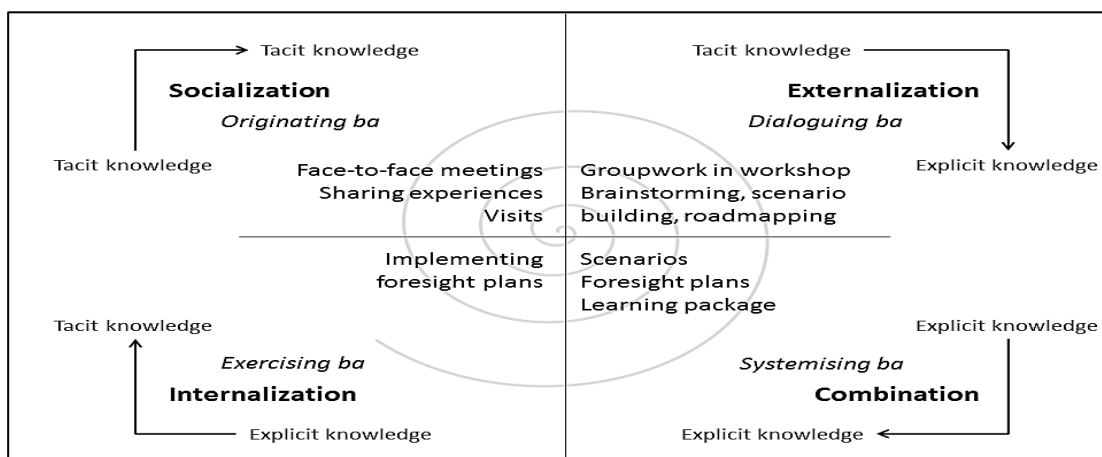


Figure 1: Nonaka's Four Modes of Knowledge Conversion (Nonaka, 1997).

There are people in any tourism destination who have various levels of the stake in the success of it (Baggio & Cooper, 2010). Such stakeholders work in the same direction for a destination to be competitive and successful. Furthermore, effective management of knowledge assets among such stakeholders is vital for significant acquisition, creation, sharing, and storage of assets (Rao et al. 2018). The generation and use of new knowledge to feed innovation and product development is critical for the competitiveness of both tourism destinations and enterprises (Hjalager, 2002; Rao et al., 2018). Various scholars have long recognised this pivotal role of knowledge as a competitive tool. However, the tourism sector has been slow in adapting its knowledge in its management approach (Stamboulis & Skayannis, 2003) mainly due to weak linkages between industries and academic researchers (Simkova, 2009). The significance of knowledge management in the tourism industry stems from the fact that consumption of the tourism product involves significant interaction between tourism stakeholders and visitors (Rao et al., 2018; Ahmed & Dwyer, n.d). Through these interactions, both groups mutually affect each other, hence calling upon the knowledge managers (tourism suppliers) to be in charge and influence the outcome to derive the desired impact on visitors.

Knowledge sharing involves exchanging information and knowledge from one source (person, group or organisation) to another (Fugate et al., 2009; Paulin & Suneson, 2012; Savolainen, 2017; Rao et al., 2018). Many researchers attribute the success of knowledge

management (KM) processes to effective knowledge sharing practices (Jarboe & Alliance, 2001). Studies by Cooper (2006), Hjalager (2002); and Sigala and Chalkiti (2015) report that new knowledge creation and innovation behaviour among destination stakeholders rely on knowledge sharing. Rao et al. (2018) writing about knowledge sharing observe that knowledge sharing among tourism companies facilitates the transfer of customer information along the tourism supply chain, thereby laying the foundation for improving customer satisfaction. Aubke, Wöber, Scott, and Baggio (2014), Bouncken (2002), Edwards, Cheng, Wong, Zhang, and Wu (2016) and Olsen and Connolly (2000) acknowledge that knowledge sharing among stakeholders set a strong foundation for excellent customer relationship management. Moreover, with advancements in information and communication technologies, tourism increasingly requires sharing, transfer, storage, and reuse of knowledge to enhance information dissemination capabilities and intrinsic value (Sungsoo, Uysal & Chang, 2002). However, as Rao et al. (2018) noted, most of the knowledge created in tourism is tacit knowledge, often locked in the human mind (Omotayo, 2015). However, when knowledge is shared within an organisation, employees can get to know the knowledge assets at their disposal (Ahmed & Dwyer, n.d;). If put into proper use, knowledge resources may inform innovative ways of developing new products, processes, strategies (Rao et al., 2018) that will influence the behaviour of stakeholders and consequently provide a competitive edge for the destination (Jarboe & Alliance, 2001; Rao et al., 2018). Liu and Chen (2005) and Omotayo (2015) acknowledged that knowledge resides in those employees who engaged in the knowledge process of accessing, sharing, creating, transferring, and maintaining. However, on the flipside this proves to be a challenge to knowledge advancement. It relies on the employees sharing behaviours or habits (Chatenier, Verstegen, Bieman, Mulder, and Omta, 2009), thus hard to monitor and control (Liebowitz, 2011).

Contrary to having the numerous benefits attributed to knowledge sharing, knowledge is equated with power when an organisation is in economic competition. Inherently, when people or organisations are in a competitive mode, they may not be willing to share knowledge with their competitors (Goh, 2002). Likewise, the presence of dominant network members or the feeling of dependence would reduce members' willingness to share knowledge (Chatenier et al., 2009). Nonetheless, McDermot (1999) locates knowledge management in the belief that knowledge is constructed in social settings, and as such, individuals have to interact for knowledge to be produced. Hence, both formal and informal mechanisms of sharing information are critical in tourism destinations. While formal knowledge sharing mechanisms are led by management, informal ones are much more flexible and involve diverse strategies that may not have definite boundaries (Rao et al., 2018). Often, individuals in organisations prefer to contact other people to find, retrieve, and use it. This strategy is chosen because it is faster, and the providers of information tend to specify the source of information that is trusted and credible. Besides people, technology offers a new medium through which employees with similar professional interests, problems, and responsibilities can share knowledge. Such knowledge sharing is achieved through group e-mails, social media discussion groups/interactions, and other virtual networks or workspaces (Edwards et al., 2016).

This study was conceptualised around knowledge sharing by stakeholders and its effect on the competitiveness of a tourism destination. Indicators of knowledge sharing were derived from previous studies by Dalkir (2005), Tsoukas and Vladimirou (2001), and; Zyngier, Busterin, and Luisa (2001). Consequently, Knowledge sharing by tourism stakeholders in Baringo County was assumed to involve both formal and inform strategies, including, channels of sharing information (branches), awareness, websites, connectivity, internet, social networks, receptiveness to new ideas, willingness to share, orientation by experienced staff, leadership, leverage over best practices and membership to a professional body to give the

destination an edge over the other competitors. Based on the aforementioned discussion, the study current study proposes the following hypotheses;

Hypothesis 1: There is significant relation between internet connectivity and tourism destination competitiveness

Hypothesis 2: There is significant relation between organizational linkages and tourism destination competitiveness

Hypothesis 3: There is significant relation between social networking and tourism destination competitiveness

Hypothesis 4: There is significant relation between staff orientation and development and tourism destination competitiveness

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Area.

This study was carried out in Baringo County, Kenya. It is bordered by Turkana County and West Pokot to the North, Samburu County, and Laikipia County to the East, Nakuru County, and Kericho County to the South, Uasin Gishu County to the South West and Elgeyo Marakwet County to the West (figure 2). The County has immense tourism potential as exhibited by the impressive, attractive scenery, including, Kipkogom/ Kapkiamo rocky cliffs, Kerio valley, the physical features such as Lake Baringo, Lake Bogoria, Lake Kamnorok, Nuregoi, Cheploch Gorge. Other attractions include the Lake Kamnorok game reserve, Lake Bogoria National Reserve and the hot springs and geysers, numerous reptile parks, diverse bird species, Kabarnet Museum, Nature conservancies (Ruko, Kaptuiya, Morop/ Tarambas, Ngenyin, and Kimngochoch), prehistoric sites at kipsaraman, the highland forests and lowland Arid and Semi-Arid Lands flora and the Equator crossing at Mogotio. Besides, the County has a tourism Information and Resource Centre at Mogotio, numerous Curio Businesses, cultural centers, and hospitality establishments (Keitany, 2016).

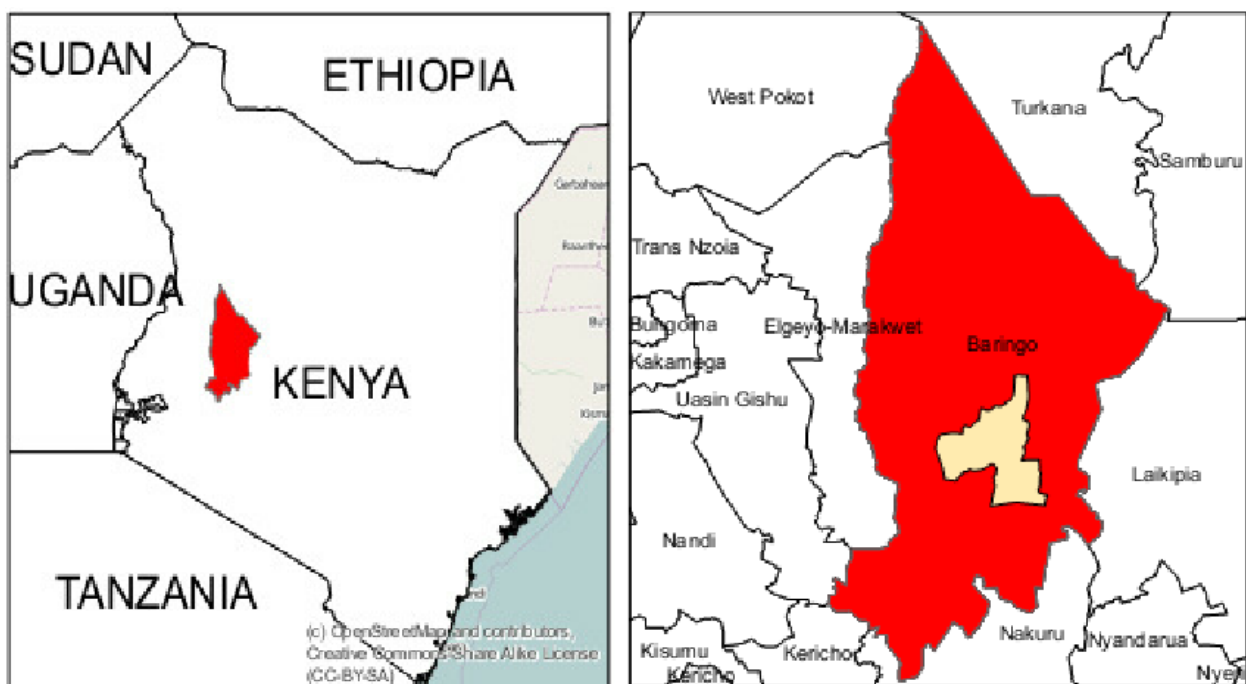


Figure 2: Map Showing the Location of Baringo County in Kenya (OSMF,2004).

3.2 Research Design and Sampling Techniques

The study was guided by a post-positivist research paradigm and adopted a mixture of descriptive and explanatory correlation research designs to find out the effect of knowledge sharing on destination competitiveness. Oso and Onen (2005) noted the design allows for sampling and collection of numeric data to enable explanations and predictions, over and above, taking care of independent variables. The study targeted primary stakeholders (firms/entities without which tourism could not be able to take place) within Baringo County(the tourism destination). These primary stakeholders were individuals or groups who actively participated in the delivery of the tourism product. They included: staff working for Kenya Wildlife Services, Kenya Forest Services, the County Government which manages natural resources, hotels, transport companies, National Museums of Kenya, Private conservancies and attractions, tour companies, financial institutions, convention centres, and destination marketing organisations. The target population was divided into strata based on the organisations the respondents were drawn from (table 1) to ensure representation while considering the sizes and importance of each stratum. The Yamane formulae ($n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$) at 95% confidence level was used to arrive at a sample size of 259 respondents.

Table 1: Study target population.

INSTITUTION	Population	Sample size
County Government of Baringo	86	33
Kenya Wildlife Service & Natural Attractions	33	13
Kenya Forest Service & Conservancies	284	105
Transport, Tour Companies, Boat Owner Companies	12	5
Hotels and Restaurants and Lodges	237	84
Financial Institutions	55	21
Museums	25	10
TOTAL	732	259

Source: Baringo County records (2019).

Whereas Baringo County was purposively targeted as the study area (Keitany, 2016), stratified and simple random sampling techniques were employed to select respondents from each targeted organisation/institution.

3.3 Measurement of the Variables and Questionnaire Development

The study used a survey questionnaire with two sections, each with specific rubrics and instructions. The first section comprised of questions on background information about the respondents and their respective institutions. The second section sought responses on the level of agreement with fourteen (14) statements on knowledge sharing and twenty-one (21) statements on destination competitiveness, based on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Items used to measure knowledge sharing were derived from previous studies (i.e., Dalkir, 2005; Tsoukas & Vladimirov, 2001; Zyngier et al, 2001). These items included; staff awareness of new knowledge, staff sharing of ideas, organisations sharing new ideas, presence of websites, presence of internet connectivity, staff access to internet and intranet, social networks, the receptiveness of new ideas, sharing of challenges, staff orientation, leadership, leveraging of best practices and membership to professional bodies. Likewise, destination competitiveness was measured by items derived from studies by Barbosa et al (2010), Crouch (2007), Enright and Newton (2004), Gooroochurn and Sugiyarto (2005), John and Mattsson (2005) and Porter (1980). These items included tourists' arrivals, tourist satisfaction, innovativeness, quality of services, prices, transparency, revenue, efficiency, feedback, and follow-ups. The values of the items in knowledge sharing and

destination competitiveness yielded Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.70$ (Kothari, 2004), thus indicating that the measurement scales used were reliable.

3.4 Data Management and Analysis

The data collected was prepared for analysis through editing for completeness, coding, cleaning, accommodating missing data, and identifying outliers. Using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21, descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviation, were performed to generate descriptive characteristics. Principal component analysis using the varimax rotation was performed. Factor analysis was performed on 14 knowledge sharing items to explore the underlying knowledge sharing factors. After that, regression analysis was performed to determine the effect of knowledge sharing on destination competitiveness.

4. Results

4.1 Sample Characteristics and Descriptive Statistics

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 2. The respondents were 39.4% female and 60.6% male despite employing simple random sampling to give all targeted respondents and equal chance to participate in the study. Apparently the sector was male dominated hence the higher number of male respondents. A majority of the respondents (24.8%) had an undergraduate Bachelors's degree. In terms of age, most of the respondents (41.5%) were aged between 31 and 40 years and were drawn from both public (38.6%) and private (39%) tourism organisations within Baringo County.

Table 2: Sample characteristics (N=246).

Variable	Category	Frequency	Per cent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	149	60.6	60.6
	Female	97	39.4	100.0
	Total	246	100.0	
Age	18-30	26	10.6	10.6
	31-40	102	41.5	52.0
	41-50	79	32.1	84.1
	51-60	34	13.8	98.0
	Above 60	5	2.0	100.0
	Total	246	100.0	
Highest educational qualifications	KCPE	6	2.4	2.4
	KCSE	18	7.3	9.8
	Certificate	58	23.6	33.3
	Diploma	59	24.0	57.3
	Bachelor	61	24.8	82.1
	Masters	27	11.0	93.1
	PHD	17	6.9	100.0
	Total	246	100.0	
Type of ownership	Private	96	39.0	39.0
	Public	95	38.6	77.6
	Partially owned government	32	13.0	90.7
	Owned by the community	23	9.3	100.0
	Total	246	100.0	

As evident in Table 3, the majority of the respondents agreed that: their organisation has other branches or offices in different locations and staff within the organisation readily share the ideas they have with others ($M=3.61$, $SD=1.32$), the staff was aware of all new knowledge within the Organisation ($M=3.95$, $SD=0.851$), the organisation shares its new ideas with other firms that offer similar goods/service ($M=3.63$, $SD=1.15$), the organisation has a website, and there is internet connectivity within the Organisation ($M=4.00$, $SD=0.910$). A majority of the respondents agreed that staff in the organisation have access to the internet and intranet ($M=4.06$, $SD=0.897$), are members of a social network, such as, WhatsApp, Telegram ($M=4.24$, $SD=0.845$), workmates are receptive to new ideas ($M=4.09$, $SD=0.806$) and job-related challenges at the workplace are readily shared ($M=4.02$, $SD=0.803$). The standard deviations for a majority of items were relatively small compared to the mean values, indicating that the data points were close to the means and represented the data observed.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for knowledge sharing.

Statement	Std.			
	Mean	Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Your organisation has other branches or offices in other locations	3.61	1.323	-.608	-.834
Staff in your Organisation are aware of all new knowledge within the Organisation	3.95	.851	-.708	.495
Staff within your Organisation readily share the ideas they have with others	3.60	1.221	-.805	-.216
Your organisation shares its new ideas with other firms that offer similar goods/service	3.63	1.153	-.617	-.360
Your organisation has a website	4.00	.912	-.812	.438
There is internet connectivity within your Organisation	4.00	.910	-.843	.524
Staff in your Organisation have access to the internet and intranet as they perform their duties	4.06	.897	-.899	.695
Staff in your Organisation are members of a social network, i.e. WhatsApp, Telegram	4.24	.845	-1.093	1.147
Your workmates are receptive to new ideas from other departments/colleagues	4.09	.806	-.911	1.258
Job-related challenges at the workplace are readily shared through advisory meeting	4.02	.803	-.840	1.398
Experienced staff within your organisation readily orientate others on work procedures	3.98	.947	-.939	.746
There are staff within your organisation who take leadership to ensure knowledge is shared	3.99	.917	-.945	.988
Best practices in your organisation are leveraged upon/ advocated for	4.07	.825	-.621	.066
Staff within your Organisation are members of professional groups	3.97	.866	-.811	.787

4.2 Principal Component Analysis

Principal components analysis (PCA) was performed on all the items of knowledge sharing. Four factors were extracted with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. Together, these four factors explained 65.642% of the variance (Table 4). The Kaiser-Meier-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (0.835) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p<0.0001$) proved that the data was appropriate to conduct a factor analysis. The four factors were labelled as: "Internet

connectivity," "Staff orientation and development," "Organisation linkages," and "Social networking."

Table 4: Factor analysis with varimax rotation for knowledge sharing items.

	Factors			
	1	2	3	4
The organisation has a website	.789			
There is internet connectivity within your Organisation	.836			
Staff in the Organisation have access to internet and intranet as they perform their duties	.785			
Experienced staff within your organisation readily orientate other staff on work procedures		.685		
Staff in the Organisation take leadership to ensure knowledge is shared		.758		
Best practices in the organisation are leveraged upon/advocated for		.774		
Staff within the Organisation are members of a professional group		.674		
The organisation has other branches or offices in other locations			.749	
Staff in the Organisation are aware of all new knowledge within the Organisation			.589	
Staff within the Organisation readily share the ideas they have with others			.715	
The organisation share its new ideas with other organisations that offer similar goods/services			.632	
Staff in the Organisation are members of a social network, i.e. WhatsApp, Telegram				.651
The workmates are receptive to new ideas from other departments/colleagues				.806
Job-related challenges at the workplace are readily shared through advisory meeting				.750
KMO	.835			
Approx. Chi-Square	1390.89			
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (P<0.001)	9			
df=105		1.473	1.380	1.052
Eigenvalues	5.289	10.52	9.854	7.511
% of Variance (65.642)	37.757			

4.3 Results of Regression Analysis

The four factors were used in the regression model to predict the effect of knowledge sharing on destination competitiveness. The regression analysis fitness model was set as:

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$. Where: Y= The dependent variable (Destination competitiveness); β_0 -Constant term; β_1 , β_2 , β_3 , and β_4 - Regression coefficients; X_1 - Internet connectivity; X_2 – Staff orientation and development; X_3 – Organisational linkages; X_4 – Social networking.

The model summary results revealed an R^2 value of .261, which indicates that 26.1% of destination competitiveness could be predicted by knowledge sharing among primary tourism stakeholders (Table 5). Additionally, the F value revealed a 21.274 level, while the significance value was .0001. The data set was deemed significant since the alpha value was less than .05. The null hypothesis; Knowledge sharing by primary tourism stakeholders does not affect a tourism destination's competitiveness was therefore rejected.

ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC PAPER

Were, O.E., Dammianah, K. and Jackson, T.

2021, Vol.6, No.1, pp. 777-796. DOI:10.26465/ojtmr.2018339541

Table 5: Model Summary.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.511 ^a	.261	.249	.40766	.261	21.274	4	241	.000

Finally, the standardised coefficients were examined to check which, if any, of the knowledge sharing factors contributed to the explanation of destination competitiveness. Table 6 displays the standardised beta weights for each of the knowledge sharing factors.

Table 6: Multiple regression analysis: significance of beta weights.

Variables	Beta	t	Sig
Internet connectivity	.107	1.508	.133
Staff orientation and development	.324	4.908	.000
Organisational linkages	.121	1.887	.060
Social networking	.092	1.317	.189

The results showed that a unit increase in internet connectivity, staff orientation and development, organisational linkages, and social networking led to 0.107, 0.324, 0.121, and 0.092 gains in destination competitiveness. Although there was no significance at $p=0.05$ between internet connectivity, organisational linkages, and social networking; and Destination competitiveness, there was a positive and significant relationship between staff orientation and development; and destination competitiveness ($\beta=0.324$, $t=4.908$, $p=0.000$).

5. Conclusions, Implications and Limitations

The absence of studies on the effect of knowledge sharing on tourism destination competitiveness in Kenya motivated the study. The results generally revealed that each of the four knowledge sharing factors i.e internet connectivity, organisation linkages, social networking, and staff orientation and development contributed positively towards a tourism destination's competitiveness, however only staff orientation and development factor had a significant effect on destination competitiveness. It was noted that the primary tourism stakeholder organisations with branches or offices in other locations had their staff readily sharing their ideas with others. Generally, there was awareness by the staff of the new knowledge within the organisations and that such organisations shared their new ideas with other firms that offered similar goods/services. Knowledge sharing by these organisations was facilitated through websites and internet connectivity within the organisations. The staff acknowledged to having access to the internet and intranet as they performed their duties. Enhanced knowledge sharing was attributed to the use of social networking platforms such as WhatsApp and Telegram by staff in various organisations. Indeed these findings agreed with Abdul-Jalal, Toulson & Tweed (2013) who found that knowledge sharing capabilities amongst Malaysian IT companies were important for knowledge sharing success.

The study found that within the tourism sector, workmates were receptive to new ideas from other departments/colleagues, and job-related challenges at the workplace were readily shared through advisory meetings. The experienced staff within the organisation readily orientated others on work procedures and there was staff within the organisation who took leadership to ensure knowledge was shared. The best practices in the organisation were leveraged upon/ advocated for. Indeed these findings explained the existence of a relationship between the knowledge sharing factors and the destination's competitiveness. The study consequently adjudged knowledge sharing as a vital part of knowledge management because as employees share, the knowledge asset changes ownership from the individual employee to

the organisation. This was consistent with Kelleher & Levene (2009) who noted that knowledge sharing enhanced organisational business processes and introduced more efficiency and effectiveness in the processes thereby making it an important asset for organisational success. This finding also agreed Lin & Chen (2008) who observed that shared knowledge enabled the firms to improve their innovative capabilities and new product competitive advantages.

On the flip side, employees who did not share their knowledge created barriers to the knowledge management process and ultimately organisation performance. Lin and Chen (2008) found that external and internal integration significantly influenced shared knowledge of internal capabilities, customers, and suppliers among new product development team members. However, despite these apparent benefits of knowledge sharing, some employees and organisations seemed to exhibit hesitant knowledge sharing behaviour which Goh (2002) attributed to the existence of persistent internal competition in work environments especially when knowledge was equated to power. In line with the premise that knowledge enhanced innovation, Liu and Chen (2005) realised that in actuality, knowledge resided in those employees who engaged in the knowledge process of accessing, sharing, creating, transferring, and maintaining. In itself, this proved to be the challenge to knowledge advancement as it relied on the employees' knowledge sharing behaviour or habits (Liebowitz & Frank, 2011).

Sveiby (2001) asserted that as one shared their knowledge, the result was increased mutual competency given that both the sharer and recipient were stimulated differently by the knowledge which yielded even greater knowledge. Indeed the finding of this study that knowledge sharing by primary tourism stakeholders had an effect on destination competitiveness agreed with Chweya et al (2014) who found a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and organisational performance. Given that stakeholders shared knowledge through e-mails and the internet, it was a good start towards Knowledge Management practices. Still, it is recommended that the tourism firms gain further from expanding into technologies like cloud computing, teleconferences, intelligent agents, and social media. They can also improve on what they already have. For instance, establish a specific portal like a Knowledge Management Portal on their intranet, where employees and management can access knowledge on various best destination practices. This practice would be geared towards continuous improvement and would facilitate the exchange of experiences among employees, suppliers, customers, community, market, and even competitors.

The study noted that the Baringo County integrated development plan (2018-2022) lacked specific measures on how the local tourism sector would leverage upon its unique knowledge resources to achieve competitiveness hence the findings of this study can be adopted to inform future policy reviews of the plan. Secondly, the Kenya Tourism Board may incorporate the knowledge management strategy specifically knowledge sharing as a key component of the tourism marketing plans and strategies for the country. Knowledge sharing may be used as a tool for enhancing vertical and horizontal linkages between the county and national levels of government and also with the members of the larger East African Community. Having established that knowledge sharing significantly affected destination competitiveness, tourism stakeholders are encouraged to leverage upon their knowledge resources. They are further encouraged to embrace knowledge sharing through ensuring the establishment of websites for their organisations, ensuring internet connectivity, and also to encourage their staff to use internet, intranet, and other social networks for communication. They are advised to offer more experiential learning opportunities for their staff and to be part of partnerships and strategic alliances. Tourism entities are also encouraged to provide requisite knowledge management architecture and technologies which will facilitate knowledge application. With only a few studies having been conducted on knowledge sharing and destination competitiveness and that this study used the case of Baringo County in Kenya

to determine the effect of knowledge sharing by tourism stakeholders on a destination competitiveness, the study recommends for similar studies in other destination

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ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC PAPER

Were, O.E., Dammianah, K. and Jackson, T.

2021, Vol.6, No.1, pp. 777-796. DOI:10.26465/ojtmr.2018339541



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ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC PAPER

Were, O.E., Dammianah, K. and Jackson, T.

2021, Vol.6, No.1, pp. 777-796. DOI:10.26465/ojtmr.2018339541