Resource Management Challenges and Learners Academic Performance in National Examinations: What are the coping strategies in Public Primary Schools in Makindu District, Makueni County, Kenya?

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Abstract: *The gist of the study was to examine the challenges and main coping strategies on resource management and academic performance amongst primary schools in Makindu District, Makueni County, Kenya. The study was premised on Hunts (2007) theory on project management. A descriptive survey design was adopted. A combination of Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were s used to draw 25 head teachers, 200 teachers and 25 chairpersons of Parents Teachers Association(PTAs), yielding a total sample of 250 respondents. Interview schedules and questionnaires were used to collect data from chairpersons and headteachers/teachers, respectively. The study established that the various resource management challenges were: inadequate funding by the Government through the Ministry of Education, overstretched physical facilities as well as inefficient utilization of the available physical and human resources in schools. In addition, there was a positive and significant correlation between the effectiveness of resource management strategies and learners' academic performance in national examination. The researcher recommended that schools managers should involve teachers and learner in decision making process and management strategies that enhance learners academic performance in national examinations in the study locale of Makindu District, Makueni County, Kenya.[189 words].*
Keywords: *Resources, Management strategies, Academic performance, National Examinations, Public Primary Schools, Makindu District, Makueni County, Kenya.*

I. Introduction

Background to the study

Literature is abundant which attempts to relate the effects of resources on classroom management and effective curriculum implementation (Coleman &Anderson 2001; Birimana & Orodho, 2014; Orodho, 2013; Orodho, Waweru, Ndichu & Thinguri, 2013; Sherman, Bohlander& Nell, 1996; Woodford, Jack, Gillard, Crazy, & Glennonn, 2003; Waweru & Orodho,2014).A study by Birimana and Orodho on teaching and learning resource availability and teachers effective classroom management and content delivery in secondary schools in Huye District, in the Republic of Rwanda established that there was a positive and significant correlation between teaching and learning resources and teacher effective classroom management, content delivery and eventual students academic performance. This finding was in tandem with the findings documented earlier by Orodho, Waweru, Ndichu and Nthinguri (2013) in Kenya which established that the challenges of availability and adequacy of learning resources was found to negatively affect teacher effectiveness in the use of teaching methods as well as focus on individual learner, hence fostering discipline and good attainment of good academic results. The finding also echoed the results of a study by Waweru and Orodho (2014) in secondary schools in Kiambu District, Kenya on management practices and students academic which established that effective resource management is a prerequisite to enhanced students academic performance. All the foregoing studies allude to the fact that resource management strategy is the efficient and effective deployment of an organization's resources when they are needed, and are very critical to enhanced academic performance in schools. Such resources may include financial resources, inventory, human skills, production resources, or information technology. It consists of analysis, decisions, and actions an organization undertakes in order to create and sustain competitive advantages (Birimana & Orodho, 2014; Gregory, 2005) . All students have equal chances to do well in exams. Major difference in their conditions of life has little impact on their performance. The government in most countries of Africa allocates resources to schools but the performance differs.

In Makindu District like any other district in Kenya, every year around the end of December Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) results are released except last year when the results were released in mid January after the exam delay together with the marking due to the teachers strike called by the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT). This is when most parents complain so much through the media about the poor results in their schools. Most parents demonstrate in streets demanding removal of some teachers from particular schools due to the poor performance in KCPE Examinations .It is against this backdrop that this study was premised with the ultimate concern regarding the challenges of resource endowment on students' academic performance in public primary schools in Makindu Division, Makueni County, Kenya.

State of the Art Review

Throughout the world, educational policy makers, practitioners, and scholars have acknowledged the importance of principal leadership in the generation and implementation of innovations (Harris, 2004). Exams are necessary part of education. Education of one kind or another, however, has existed in all human societies, but exams have not, and the practice of requiring frequent exams is very recent. Innovation is still relatively rare in the world.

In the United States of America exams are purely for grading and completion of a particular level of education. Exams are an indicator of what students know and intelligence in general.

Literature is abundant which attempts to relate the concepts of teaching and learning resources and eventually on their overall influence on classroom management and effective curriculum implementation (Coleman &Anderson 2001; Orodho, 2013; Orodho, Waweru, Ndichu & Thinguri,2013; Sherman, Bohlander& Nell, 1996; Woodford, Jack, Gillard, Crazy, & Glennonn,2003). Orodho, Waweru, Ndichu and Nthinguri(2013) established that the challenges of availability and adequacy of learning resources was found to negatively affect teacher effectiveness in the use of teaching methods as well as focus on individual learner , hence fostering discipline and good attainment of good academic results. According to Woodford et. al. (2003), a resource is a useful or valuable possession or quality of a country, organization or person. Sherman et. al. (1996) contends that resources available for organizations are human, financial, physical and informational. Coleman and Anderson (2001) say that in education area resources fall into two main categories: those used to provide support services such as the running costs of the buildings, administration and management and those for operational core of teaching and learning like physical or tangible resources.

Nsubuga (1978) writes that school teaching and learning resources include buildings particularly classrooms with lockable doors for storage of materials, teaching aids like textbooks, visuals aids and other scholastic materials. According to Sood (2000), at a bare minimum level, schooling would require a building; some provision for seating children, drinking water, and sanitation facilities, teaching material; teachers and provision for upgrading skills of teachers. Lack of any of these would render the schooling experience ineffective.

Farrell (1993) writes that a teaching and learning resource is any support material available for use by the teacher in the class and a reading material for children. Mintzberg (1979) contends that resources directly utilized in teaching and learning are clearly classrooms and curriculum support resources (i.e. books, stationery materials and equipments, wall pictures, blackboards, audio-visual aids, globes, maps, atlases, concrete objects and classroom environment). Callahan and Clark (1982), UNESCO (1996) and Kabaana (1999) recommend audio-visual materials namely wall pictures, charts diagrams, films tape-recorders, maps, blackboards, projectors, motion pictures, television, radios and video.

NCERT (2005) arguments that teaching and learning resource appear in three types. The first type of instructional materials includes such objects and phenomena as minerals, rocks, raw materials; semi finished and finished manufactured articles, and plant and animal specimens. Included among these materials are reagents and apparatus for producing chemical and other reactions and for demonstrating and studying such reactions during laboratory sessions. Also included in the first group are materials and equipment for students' expeditions and other travel, as well as supplies, instruments, and equipment for production training and for courses in drafting and the representational arts. Among such supplies, instruments, and equipment are wood, metal, plastic, and glass objects, measuring and monitoring instruments and equipment, equipment for the assembling and finishing of various products, and machines and machine tools.

The second type of educational materials, that of representations of actual objects and phenomena, NCERT (2005) goes on to say that this category includes three-dimensional materials (castings, globes, and experimental models), two-dimensional materials (charts, pictures, photographs, maps, diagrams, and drawings), and audiovisual materials (motion pictures, film clips, filmstrips, slide sequences, transparencies, records and tape recordings, and radio and television broadcasts). Audiovisual materials, including the resources of films, radio, and television, help acquaint students with the achievements of modern science, technology, industry, and culture and with phenomena that are inaccessible to direct observation. Audiovisual materials also acquaint students with early periods of history and with distant places in the world and in space. Such materials elucidate natural and social phenomena and enable students to study the inner world of matter and the internal motion of waves, elementary particles, atoms, molecules, and living cells.

The third type of instructional materials, that of written descriptions, includes scientific, scholarly, reference, and methodological teaching aids, as well as textbooks, books of problems and exercises, books for recording scientific observations, laboratory manuals, manuals for production training, and programmed textbooks (NCERT, 2005). Another type of instructional materials is technological instructional media. Among these are equipment for the transmission and assimilation of information recorded on film or on phonograph recordings: film projectors, tape recorders, phonographs, and television sets. Monitoring devices include punched cards and various types of automatic apparatus. Teaching machines include language-laboratory machines, closed-circuit television systems, and computers (NCERT, 2005).

With regard to the effects of resource availability on classroom management and content delivery, Ominde cited in Kabaana (1999) aver that teaching and learning resource availability helps teachers teach effectively in convenient and comfortable surroundings. The lack of physical resources inevitably hampers the teaching; depress the spirit of the children and the enthusiasm of the teachers. In a similar vein, Eicher, et. al. (1982) counsels that in order to improve the effectiveness of their teaching, teachers use techniques and tools like the simple tool as the blackboard and technology techniques and tools as experimentation in laboratories, drama classes in the school theatre, radio, television, video and audio cassettes and computers to supplement what they can do with their local resources.

The need for the availability of teaching and learning resources for teacher effective classroom management and content delivery is stressed by Eicher et.al. (1982) as they compare education to a motor-car industry. They say that like in motor-car industry teachers use techniques and tools to achieve their goals. These are like the simple tool as the blackboard and technology techniques and tools as experimentation in laboratories, drama classes in the school theatre, radio, television, video and audio cassettes and computers. Doff (1988) stresses the interrelation of teachers, teaching and learning resources and students in teaching and learning operational core of education. He says, "Teaching is a three-way relation between the teacher, the materials he/she is using and the students."

Providing sensory experiences for children in the classroom helps children learn better. In early grades, an opportunity for learning through manipulating objects pays dividends for internalizing knowledge by children (Badeka, 1999). A famous child educationist named Badeka (1999) wrote extensively that many years ago several play way methods were used to weave knowledge into stories and games for primary school children, exposing children to real life situations where teacher creates a conducive learning environment and the children are motivated to create their own knowledge by exploring, analyzing and understanding.

Elisabeth and Shuard (1980) contend that in order to foster the learning, the teacher should give the learners chance for practical work. In this respect, teachers should be availed with a wide range of materials. They advise teachers to allow children to make their own conclusion from their findings. Children should be let discover knowledge and answers to challenges in their daily lives. Of course the practices mentioned above are possible with the availability of sufficient and adequate teaching and learning resources for teachers (Elisabeth and Shuard, 1980). Resources help the teacher organize and manage the classroom environment as an efficient learning environment and thereby maximize engagement rates (Creemers & Reezigt, 1996; Kyriakides, 2008). Doyle (1986) claims that resources promote good preparation, smoothness and momentum lesson pacing and clarity about when and how students can get help and about what options are available when they finish. Kabaana (1999) writes that materials enable the teacher to bring into a classroom the situation which was impossible to being possible. He suggests a case in point where a teacher is teaching about irrigation scheme in hilly areas, hence by the use of these equipments he brings the real situation of irrigation in the classroom just by the use of a screen which can show the pictures. According to Kabaana (1999), the use of audio-visual aids like tape recorders, radios, television can enhance pupils' better understanding because they produce plays, speeches, music which can capture the pupils' attention.

Farrant (1980) asserts that wall sheets including picture charts, diagrams, maps on which selected information is portrayed make pupils react easily and the effect of this is a visual impression of the pupils. The pictures represent subjects containing a lot of information that need to be disseminated to the pupils. It is this technique that helps a teacher illustrate and bring a sense of reality in classroom. Farrant (1980) also says that maps, atlases and globes are used in social sciences and help pupils master because they symbolize something that is real and at the same time do so in form of a summary of what would be taught to the pupils. The author adds that if such instruments are not available for teachers the possibility of pupils knowing geography would be limited, failure to have chance to know their geographical situation in one way or another affect their academic performance.

School leaders across the nation are exploring ways to better educate students and improve school performance. School-based management offers a way to promote improvement by decentralizing control from central district offices to individual school sites. It attempts to give school constituents-administrators, teachers, parents and other community members--more control over what happens in schools. Endorsed by many organizations, including the National Governors' Association, School based management is being tried in districts of varied size and wealth. But so far, we have only a small bit of knowledge about how to make School based management work.

Decentralized management has a longer history in the private sector, however. For several decades, organizations have been implementing "high-involvement management," a practice that like School based management decreases centralized control to encourage self-management by employees. Studies of decentralization in the private sector suggest that high-involvement management is most appropriate in organizations where the work (like teaching in schools) is complex; is best done collegially or in teams; involves uncertainty in its day-to-day tasks; and exists in a rapidly changing environment.

Quality Management

Total quality management (TQM) and supply chain management (SCM) have been identified as the two most important strategies for manufacturing, services and small-to-medium size enterprises (SMEs); and have become a prerequisite for success in the global market. TQM and SCM act as important tools to achieve competitive advantage together with strengthening organizational competitiveness (Sila et al., 2006; Vanichchinchai and Igel, 2009). TQM is an integrated approach, consisting of principles and practices, whose goal is to improve the quality of an organization's goods and services through continuously meeting and exceeding customer's needs in most competitive ways. TQM focuses on enhancing customer satisfaction (Gunasekaran and McGaughey, 2003). On the other hand, SCM is seen as an approach to improve competitive performance by integrating the internal functions of an organization and linking these with the external operations of suppliers, customers and other members of the supply chain. This may lead to changes in the traditional structure of the organization (Tutuncu and Kucukusta, 2008). SCM focuses on coordination and configuration of the processes that are necessary to make products on time (no delay), reproducibly, and in a satisfactory condition (quality assurance) together with handling procurement of the material/service inputs. In addition to the above, TQM is a total system approach which works horizontally across functions and departments, involving all employees, top to bottom, and extends backwards and forwards to include the supply chain and customer chain. SCM takes a vertical view of the relationship between the buyer and supplier, focusing on the performance of upstream and downstream organizations (Kanji and Wong, 2003). Both upstream and downstream organizations have to be managed directly or indirectly by companies in order to satisfy their customers. TQM applications help reduce process variance, which has a direct impact on supply chain performance measures, such as cycle time and delivery dependability. TQM practices result in set-up time reduction, allowing improved schedule attainment and correspondingly faster response to market demands (Flynn & Flynn, 2005). This helps in synchronizing, to a greater extent, the whole supply chain (Tutuncu & Kucukusta, 2008; Ferdows et al., 2004). TQM practices ensure that processes are followed and customers are satisfied. SCM includes a set of approaches and practices to effectively integrate suppliers, manufacturers, distributors and customers for improving the long-term performance of the individual organizations and the supply chain as a whole in a cohesive and high-performing business model (Chopra & Meindl, 2001). Thus, it is important to have a customer-focused corporate vision in place while striving to implement TQM and SCM practices effectively both upstream and downstream (Sila et al., 2006); doing so can produce a number of competitive advantages for the supply chain. Based on this evaluation, there is a need to study which TQM and SCM practices are responsible to achieve the goals of the organization by appeasing the customer and keeping the supplier relation intact for long-term. It is, therefore, necessary to identify the TQM and SCM practices for success of these strategies in all types of organizations.The researcher agrees that school administration have to relate well vertically and horizontally with all stakeholders in the education system in order to achieve its goal.

Understanding the need for change is the first step in a transition. Having a vision of what the change entails and what it is trying to accomplish is the next. This includes defining high performance in a manner that can be agreed to by the various stakeholders who become partners in the effort. An explicit focus on educational outcomes frames the change to School Based Management in a way that replaces issues of who gains and who loses power. Developing a shared vision of the organization links people together and provides goals and criteria for change activities and ongoing decisions. School districts and the schools within them should involve stakeholders at all levels in forming the vision, and then in giving it substance at the local level. Superintendents and principals will play a key role in making this happen. Susan Moore (2005).

According to Wolk (2003), "Teacher-student relationships permeate the classroom, with relationships both helping and hindering learning and influencing everything from curriculum to choice of teaching methods." Wolk asserted that for most teachers, "their relationships are their teaching" (p. 14). Current literature on building relationships as a means to manage classrooms includes recommendations such as using gentle interventions, finding time for bonding, avoiding punishments, and building activities that ensure success for all students (Hall & Hall, 2003).

School leadership and academic performance

The early academic research on school leadership focused primarily on the individual role of the school head (Camburn, Rowan, & Taylor, 2003). Later on, however, leadership in schools was increasingly viewed as a collaborative rather than an exclusively individual activity (Smylie, Conley, & Marks, 2002) and the research focus broadened to include other players including teachers. This perspective positions school leadership not just as a function of what the principal does but rather a "dyadic, shared, relational, strategic, global and complex social dynamic" model (Avolio et al,2009: 3). Marks and Printy (2003) posit that school leaders seeking to improve academic performance of their schools often involve teachers in dialogue and decision making. The belief that leadership matters when it comes to academic performance is generally accepted within educational leadership studies (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Spillane et al, 2004; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008), yet some scholars have questioned the validity of this claim (Witziers, Bosker, & Krüger, 2003). Those that hold this divergent position have argued that there is no sufficient proof that school leadership really matters. Some empirical studies, especially in the Netherlands, have reported finding no significant influence of school leadership on students' academic performance (Hallinger & Heck, 2005). There is thus little consensus about how school leaders impact school outcomes and little is known about how leadership is enacted within the schoolhouse and the means by which it influences school outcomes (Spillane et al, 2004).These contrasting positions leaves the question about the degree of influence of school leadership on students' academic performance unanswered.

Most contemporary studies that have sought to understand the relationship between school leadership and academic performance have focused on the distributed/shared aspects of leadership (for example Harris, 2004; Leithwood et al, 2007; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). This focus is driven by a widespread belief about the superior benefits of distributed against concentrated leadership. Moreover, it has been argued that distributed forms of leadership reflect the reality of the day-to-day division of labor in schools and minimize the probability of error in decision making by use of additional information available from diverse, leadership sharing sources. (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). Distributed leadership has also been seen to enhance organizational learning by creating opportunities for capacity-building and exploiting individual capacities of its members (Harris, 2004; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). Hopkins and Jackson (2002:95) argue that "…distributed leadership along with social cohesion and trust" are at the core of capacity building. Two forms distributed – additive and holistic – have been identified by Leithwood et al (2007). The additive or cumulative pattern of distribution has different individuals uncoordinatedly engaging in leadership activities while the holistic pattern is a conscious alignment of leadership activities to foster collaboration between leaders and followers (Gronn, 2000; Mascall et al, 2008). However, it is not clear which pattern of leadership has greater influence on school academic performance (Harris, 2004).

Statement of the Problem

The poor performance has persisted despite the implementation of free primary education. When results are announced every year, the same sentiments on poor performance are expressed. What is striking though is just how little systematic research has been undertaken on resource management strategies in relation to learners' performance in national examinations in public primary schools (Harris, 2004). Therefore the evidence based is very weak and urgent steps are needed to develop a comprehensive research program in this area. The majority of public primary schools in Makindu District performed poorly in KCPE posting a mean grade of 300 out f a possible 500 marks. The performance in public primary schools in the national examination in Makindu district has persisted to be poor despite the implementation of free primary education. What strikes most is how little have been undertaken by school administrators on resource management strategies in Kenya. It has being reported that well managed resources stand a better chance of performing better than miss managed resources.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to find out the resource management strategies in relation to learners' performance in national examinations in public primary schools of Makindu district, in Makueni County. The researcher was guided by the following research objectives.

i)   To analyze the main resource management constraints that influence students academic performance in primary schools in Makindu District, Makueni County, Kenya.

ii) Analyze the relationship between resource management strategies and pupils' academic performance in national examinations in the study locale.

Hypothesis of the study

H_O1: strategies applied in physical resource management have no significant relation on the learners' performance in national exam (KCPE).
H_O2: strategies applied in human resource management have no significant relation on the learners' performance in national exam (KCPE).

Theoretical and Conceptual Frame Work
The study was based on Hunt theory (2007) on Assessment. The principles of effective resource management are potentially applicable to any project type across different industries. It has been established that the basis of these principles have been designed so as to accommodate variety of tasks but still fine tuning is required during the management of certain resources. The role of resource manager is seen central to the process of resource management but it has been established in literature that it should not be regarded as one man task since it requires other individuals and their competencies that are grouped together and who are dedicated to achieving the particular objectives of the resource (Pinkerton, 2003). The school of thought that believes in blending both hard and soft issues to build upon resource management techniques is growing. It can be concluded that resource management skills and process although are generalized for any type of resource within any school but these are more appropriate for some than others. Levine (2002) has suggested that weather an organization is involved in managing projects or not in the traditional sense, but it requires the management of its assets and project management provides overall process and skills needed to achieve any change objectives.

II.   Research Design And Methodology

Research Design and Locale
The study used a descriptive survey research design. The researchers choose descriptive survey because it involves gathering cross-sectional data from a wide range of respondents and making interrelationships between the various variables of interest (Brooks, 2013; Orodho, 2009a;). The research was conducted in public primary schools in Makindu district; Makueni County.makindu district is located along Nairobi-Mombasa high way. Makindu district borders Kathozweni district to the east, Nzaui district to the north, Kibwezi district to the south and Kajiado County to the west. Makindu District was chosen basically because the District Development Plan laments that resources in primary schools are inadequate. Thus, it is was the contention of this paper that these resources would either be unavailable or the few that are available were not being managed effectively, hence the need to establish whether these variable could be related to the poor learners' academic performance being witnessed in the district.

Population and Sample selection
The target population was 2120 comprising of 60 headteachers, 60 chairpersons of the Parents Teachers Association (PTAs) and 2000 teachers distributed in 60 primary schools in Makindu District, Makueni County. Purposive sampling was used to select 25 schools to constitute the sampling units for the study. From each school, purposive sampling technique was used to select a headteacher and chairperson of PTA, from each school yielding 25 headteachers and 25 chairpersons of PTA. Simple random sampling was used to select 10 percent of the teachers, yielding 200 teachers. The entire sampling process yielded total sample of 250 respondents to participate in the study. This sample size constituted 31 percent of the entire population, hence deemed adequate to be a representative sample (Orodho, 2009a, 2012; Brook, 2013).

Research Instruments
The study used questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire was preferred because it can be used to generate large amounts of data from large samples over a short period of time (Kerlinger, 2004; Orodho, 2012). The questionnaires were piloted using a small sample not included in the final sample to determine the validity and reliability. While validity is the extent to which the instrument measures what it purports to measure, reliability is the stability or consistency of the instrument in measuring the particular trait (Creswell, 2009; Orodho, 2009a, 2012). The content validity of the instrument was determined by discussing the items in the instrument with experts from the university in the Department of Educational Management and Curriculum Studies, School of Education. The advice by these people helped the researcher improve the validity of the research instrument. In order to test the reliability of the instrument to be used in the study, piloting was carried out in two primary schools in Makindu District. The schools are Kari- Mwailu and Kawelu primary schools. The developed questionnaires were given to two head teachers and four teachers, the answered questionnaires were scored manually, the same questionnaires were administered to the same group of subjects after a period of two weeks and questionnaire responses scored manually. A comparison was obtained between the two results. A Pearson product moment formula for the test-retest was employed to compute the correction coefficient in order to establish the extent to which the content of the questionnaires were consistent, that yielded a coefficient of r= .87. This was above the .75 level suggested by Orodho (2009a) and Creswell(2009) for establishing the reliability of the questionnaire.

Data Collection and Analysis
A research permit was obtained from the National Commission of Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) to enable the researchers collect data. The other permit was obtained from the County Director of Education, Makueni County, Kenya. The major task of collecting data started immediately after the two sets of authorization had been obtained. Data was collected primarily through the use of questionnaires and interview schedule. Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of information collected. It involves data coding, data entry and entering data in computer programme such as the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Computer version 20 (Orodho, 2009b). Descriptive statistics was used to analyze data. Descriptive statistics used percentages and frequencies. Inferential statistics such as Persons Product Moment Correlation (r) and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA using F- test) were used to test the hypotheses.

III. Research Findings And Discussion

The major Challenges facing Effective Resource Management

The headteachers and teachers were requested to indicate the main resource utilization challenges and their influence on academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Makindu District, Makueni County, Kenya. The results are depicted in Figure1. The results carried in Figure 1 indicates that the most highly rated challenge was inadequate funding cited by slightly over one third of the total sampled subjects. The second challenge, cited by 27.1 percent of the respondents was overstretched physical facilities. This challenge seem to arise from the first since in the circumstances of inadequate funding, it becomes difficult to put up enough physical facilities commensurate to the ever surging pupils enrollment. The third highly rated challenge, cited by 20.8 percent of the respondents was the inefficient management of the available physical resources. At the fourth and last position were inefficient management of the available human resources and political and legal constraints cited by 9.4 % and 7.3 %, respectively.

Further analysis by type of respondent indicated that a majority, constituting 80.0 %, 84.0% and 76.0% of the teachers, chairpersons of PTA, and headteachers of the primary schools sampled respectively agreed that there were effective physical resource management strategies in place that were geared towards the enhancement of pupils academic performance in national examinations. The minority of the respondents, especially the teachers indicated that they were not actively involved in decision making process regarding the utilization of physical resources in their respective schools.
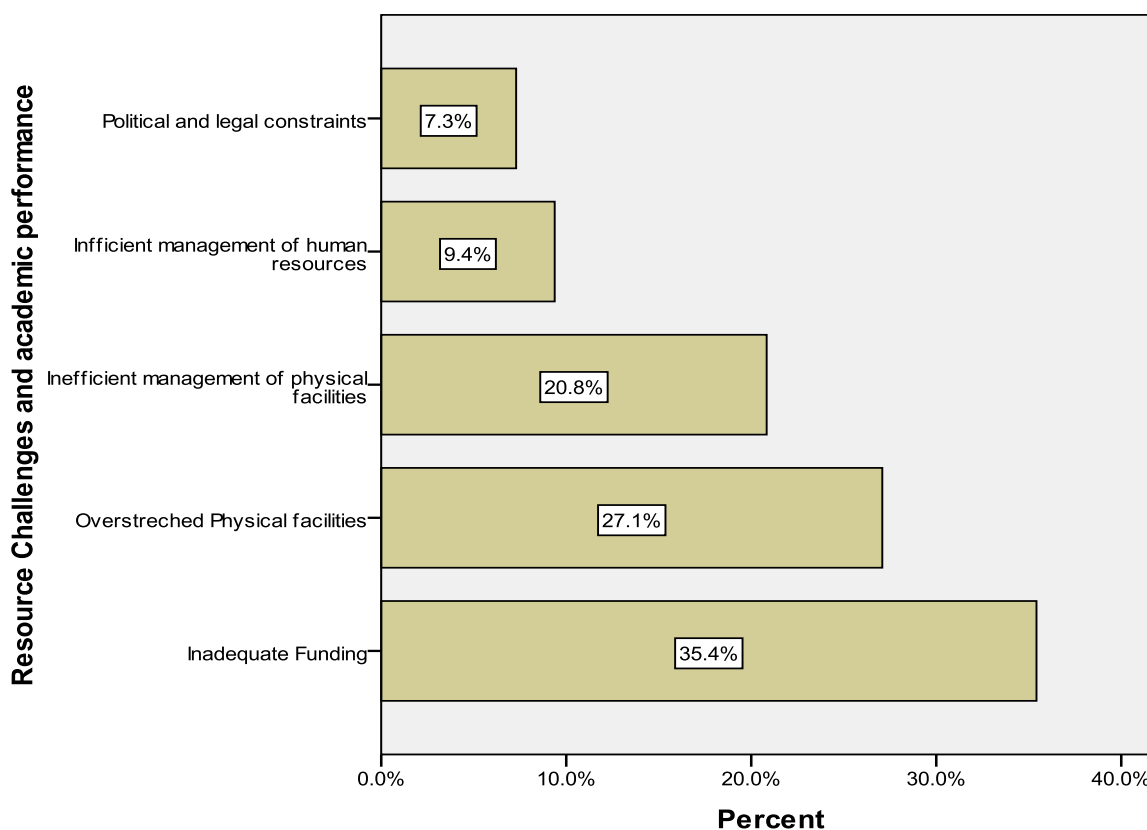
The Strategies to cope with the Challenges

With regards to human resource challenge, the headteachers and teachers were requested to state whether or not the strategies used to manage human resources were used in their respective schools. The results are presented on Table 1.

Table 1: Human Resource Management Strategies

Strategies Applied	Headteachers		Teachers	
	N	%	N	%
Power to make decisions	15	60.0	120	60.0
Employee Knowledge	13	52.0	160	80.0
Performance information unit	16	64.0	170	85.0
Learner motivation	21	84.0	143	71.5
Teacher motivation	16	64.0	110	55.0

In terms of power to make decisions in school, the results in Table 1 indicated that slightly less than two thirds of teachers and headteachers agreed that the strategy was used in their schools. A good proportion of the respondents, constituting about one third of the respondents were of the opinion that the power to make decisions rested with the school managers. With regards to employee knowledge as a human resource management strategy, there were mixed results. While over three quarters of the teachers were of the opinion that employee knowledge was an important factor, only slightly more than half of the headteachers shared similar opinion. The implication of this finding is that most headteachers do not see the

central role of knowing the background of the employees as a prerequisite to effective human resource management. The involvement of employees of different background is, thus, limited. With respect to performance information unit, slightly less than two thirds of headteachers and over three quarters of the teachers agreed that performance information per unit was a human resource strategy applied in their schools. The implication is that both the headteachers and teachers perceive performance information as a critical human resource management strategy that could enhance pupils' academic performance in national examinations.

The management strategy that received the highest rating by about three quarters of both headteachers and teachers who agreed that learner's motivation was applicable as human resource strategy in their schools. It was evident that teachers and headteachers focus more on motivational styles that enhance pupils' academic performance such as rewards for top performing pupils and promises for a bright future. About two thirds of the head teachers' respondents agreed that teachers' motivation was a human resource strategy applied in their working stations, 24% strongly agreed that teachers' motivation was a human resource strategy applicable in their stations while 8% disagreed that teachers' motivation was used as a human resource strategy in their schools. Only 4% strongly disagreed that teachers' motivation was used as a human resource strategy used in their school.

Finally, the strategy to motivate teachers was least used compared to other strategies. While nearly two thirds of the headteachers considered teacher motivation as a commonly used strategy in primary schools, only about half of the teachers shared similar sentiments. It is apparent that most of the management strategies, especially those related to motivation tended to focus more on the learner than the teacher.

The Effect of the challenges on academic performance

The various variables from the challenges suggested in the previous section were cross tabulated and a correlation conducted to examine the main factors that influence students' academic performance in national examinations in schools in the study locale. The results are depicted in Table 2.

From the table 2 the probabilities of the F- values indicate that the teachers rating of various challenges show that there was a significant correlation between the various resource management strategies measured in terms of increased learners' performance and students' academic performance at $\propto$ = .05 level of statistical significance. This implies that the quality of teachers motivation, learners motivation, power to make decision and working condition have significant effect on improved academic performance. The headteachers views were consistent with those of the teachers. The correlation of the headteachers rating on these variables revealed that, there was a significant relationship between : employees knowledge and the power to make decision, physical facilities and power to make decision, learners motivation and employee knowledge, teachers motivation and employees knowledge, employee knowledge and physical facilities, performance information and physical facilities, working condition and learners motivation, working condition and teachers motivation; and students academic performance (at $\propto$ = .5 level of statistical confidence).

Table 2 Resource management strategies and learners' performance using ANOVA

				Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
power to make decision.	Between Groups		(Combined)	2.950	3	.983	19.667	.000
		Linear Term	Unweighted	1.678	1	1.678	33.551	.000
			Weighted	1.509	1	1.509	30.184	.000
			Deviation	1.441	2	.720	14.408	.000
	Within Groups			.800	16	.050		
	Total			3.750	19			
employees knowledge	Between Groups		(Combined)	4.000	3	1.333	26.667	.000
		Linear Term	Unweighted	.372	1	.372	7.430	.015
			Weighted	.171	1	.171	3.425	.083
			Deviation	3.829	2	1.914	38.288	.000
	Within Groups			.800	16	.050		
	Total			4.800	19			
performance information	Between Groups		(Combined)	2.618	3	.873	6.400	.005
		Linear Term	Unweighted	.077	1	.077	.563	.464
			Weighted	.011	1	.011	.078	.783
			Deviation	2.607	2	1.304	9.561	.002
	Within Groups			2.182	16	.136		
	Total			4.800	19			
learners motivation	Between Groups		(Combined)	20.600	3	6.867	91.556	.000
		Linear Term	Unweighted	.209	1	.209	2.786	.115
			Weighted	1.017	1	1.017	13.565	.002
			Deviation	19.583	2	9.791	130.551	.000
	Within Groups			1.200	16	.075		
	Total			21.800	19			
teachers motivation	Between Groups		(Combined)	9.600	3	3.200	1.882	.173
		Linear Term	Unweighted	.093	1	.093	.055	.818
			Weighted	.452	1	.452	.266	.613
			Deviation	9.148	2	4.574	2.691	.098
	Within Groups			27.200	16	1.700		
	Total			36.800	19			
working condition	Between Groups		(Combined)	3.200	3	1.067	.	.
		Linear Term	Unweighted	2.322	1	2.322	.	
			Weighted	2.250	1	2.250	.	
			Deviation	.950	2	.475	.	
	Within Groups			.000	16	.000		
	Total			3.200	19			

The major tone of this paper is that teachers felt that most decisions were top-down with teachers not consulted on most issues except being expected to execute decisions made at the top management level. It is evident from the findings thus far that over three quarters of all respondents were in agreement that the main coping strategies to reverse the current state of affairs was to encourage and tighten teamwork and resource sharing arrangements as well as better working conditions for teachers in their respective schools. These suggested coping strategies were geared towards ensuring efficient physical and human resource management strategies for enhanced academic output.

IV.   Conclusion And Recommendations

The main thrust of this study was to examine the resource management strategies in relation to learners' performance in national examinations in public primary schools of Makindu district, in Makueni County. The results indicate that the most highly rated challenge were inadequate funding and overstretched physical facilities cited by slightly over one third of the total sampled subjects. The other highly rated challenges were; inefficient management of the available physical resources; inefficient management of the available human resources and political and legal constraints cited by 20.8 % , 9.4 % and 7.3 %, of the respondents , respectively. With regards to physical and human resource management, it was evident that although the head teachers indicated that human resource management strategies were administered in their schools, the teachers' results were contrary. The teachers indicated that the human resource management strategies were not efficiently administered in their schools. Counter checking with the chairpersons results which revealed that human resource management strategies were administered in their schools indicated that the teachers may not be satisfied with the human resource management strategies administered in their schools. As a result, it was concluded that the teachers required a better way to be communicated to and might be involved in the decision making of their school administration.

The second objective of the study was to establish the relationship between the resource management strategies and learners performance. The study established that there was a significant relationship between consistent learner's performance and the resource management strategies. Increased learner's performance is also related with better working condition, teacher's motivation, learners' motivation, power to make decision and employees knowledge. The study revealed that no relationship between learners performance and management strategies.

The following are the recommendations of this research based on the findings of the study;

1. The school management should not ignore teachers and learners participation in their schools management strategies. Teachers and the learners should be involved in decision making as far as resource management strategies is concerned.

2. Increased learners performance is related with good working conditions, teachers' motivation, learners' motivation and employee's knowledge; therefore schools should have diversified ways of improving on the existing resource management strategies.

3. The school should set aside some funds from their budget to be utilized for teachers, learners and support staff motivation.

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