

**KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AS A STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING
COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN
NGONG DIVISION IN KENYA**

By

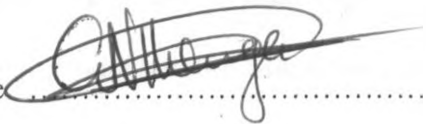
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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS
ADMINISTRATION (MBA), OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

NOVEMBER, 2011

DECLARATION


I declare that this is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My special and sincere thanks go to my supervisor Mr. Jeremiah Kagwe for his guidance, support, suggestions, useful comments and constructive critique which were all instrumental to the successful completion of this research work. I also wish to appreciate the support and encouragement from my friends and family during the tough time that I had to balance between the demands of a rigorous academic program and an equally demanding work environment. My gratitude to God Almighty who renewed my strength at every single stage of this study.

God bless you all.

DEDICATION

This research paper is dedicated to my family for their inspiration, encouragement, understanding and prayers towards the successful completion of this course. I pay glowing tribute and gratitude to the Almighty God who has given me the wisdom to undertake this course.

ABSTRACT

The management of knowledge is promoted as an important and necessary factor for organizational survival and maintenance of competitive strength. To remain at the forefront organizations need a good capacity to retain, develop, organize, and utilize their employees' capabilities. Knowledge and the management of knowledge appear to be regarded as increasingly important features for organizational survival. The objective of the study was to determine knowledge management as a strategy for achieving competitive advantage in private primary schools in Ngong division in Kenya. The research design was a survey of private primary schools in Ngong division. The study used both primary and secondary data which was collected using a questionnaire. The data was summarized using descriptive measures, percentages and frequency distribution tables while tables and graphs will be used for presentation of findings.

The findings from the study were that most of the schools do not manage knowledge. Knowledge management has helped schools to achieve reduction in operational costs, development of appropriate plans to compete successfully with other schools, makes knowledge profitable, avoids information overload to individual teachers, helps in the use of corporate information strategically and ensures privacy and security of information. The schools which have adopted knowledge management have gained competitively over other schools through exploitation of resources effectively, identification of the schools opportunities, assist in focusing current and potential market place change for opportunities, been able to scan its environment better, enhancement of competitor risk evaluation and the schools' have been able to achieve performance leadership in national exams from the knowledge management practices it has been adopting.

The challenges facing the management of knowledge in the schools consisted of the existence of a gap in knowledge management between new employees and the rest of the staff, the existence of a gap between knowledge management practices recommended by the top management and the one adopted by the school, existence of mismatch between the schools' knowledge management practices and the external business environment, existence of a gap between knowledge management in schools and one expected in the market and the existence of a gap in the budget between the current knowledge management requirements and those available.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

KM - Knowledge Management

R &D - Research and Development

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The dominant paradigm in strategic management until the 1990s was that business management was determined by the appeal of the sectors in which the company was competing and by the competitive position of the company in those sectors (Wiggins and Ruefli 2002). This focus provides an external explanation for a firm's competitive advantage, based on capitalizing on the relative imperfections of the sector in which the firm is competing. However, in recent years the idea of analyzing firm's competitive advantage from an intra-organizational perspective according to its own capabilities has made the targeting of business strategies easier (Ray *et al.*, 2004). The acceptance of the concept of the firm as a unit of resources and capabilities has prompted interest in identifying the nature of these varying resources and in evaluating their potential for generating profits. The management of knowledge is promoted as an important and necessary factor for organizational survival and maintenance of competitive strength. To remain at the forefront organizations need a good capacity to retain, develop, organize, and utilize their employees' capabilities. Knowledge and the management of knowledge appear to be regarded as increasingly important features for organizational survival.

According to Drucker (1993), the most valuable assets of the 21st century enterprise are its knowledge and knowledge workers. The ability of enterprises to exploit their intangible assets has become far more decisive than their ability to invest and manage their physical assets. Hence, to remain at the forefront and maintain a competitive edge, organisation must have a good capacity to retain, develop, organize, and utilize their employee competencies (Grønhaug

and Nordhaug, 1992). Further, Mayo (1999) posits that one of the more vibrant and effective tools used by organizations to maintain their competitive edge are the maintenance of a good knowledge management of the organisation. However, he further observes that efforts to deploy KM group-ware in some organizations are frequently met with employee reluctance to share their expertise. The likely reason for this is that employees are competitive by nature and may be more inclined to hoard than share the knowledge they possess. In addition, employees realize that their knowledge would be valuable to others and hence will be reluctant to share with others. So important is the attribute of sharing the knowledge gained by employees by virtue of their position that Mayo (1999) feels that recruiters should look for capabilities to share knowledge with new employees, as well as assessing what new knowledge they can bring to an organisation. As was pointed out by Kim et al (2003), in order for enterprises to be successful in the exploitation of their knowledge assets, an appropriate “fit” between the organization’s mission and objectives and its knowledge management strategy should be found. This means that the goals and strategies of knowledge management should be reflective of those of an organization. Strategists (strategic business managers and knowledge managers) should therefore take note of the major impact of knowledge on the formulation of corporate strategy and organizational success. Furthermore, enterprises need to ensure that their knowledge strategy and knowledge program is consistent with corporate ambitions, and that the techniques, technologies, resources, roles, skills, culture, etc. are aligned with and support the business objectives (Kim et al, 2003). When such alignment between the knowledge management strategy and the business strategy is clearly established, the knowledge management system will be moving in a direction that holds promise for long-lasting competitive advantage.

1.1.1 Knowledge Management

According to Pillania (2005), knowledge management (KM) is defined as a systematic, organized, explicit and deliberate ongoing process of creating, disseminating, applying, renewing and updating the knowledge for achieving organizational objectives. Knowledge management is usually concerned with capturing an organization's know-how and knows-what through creation, collection, storage, distribution, and application (Miller, 1999). It thus means identifying and harnessing the collective knowledge of the organization gained through experience and competencies. According to Gopal and Gagnon (1995), knowledge cannot easily be stored - Knowledge is something that resides in people's minds rather than in computers. Unlike raw material, knowledge usually is not coded, audited, inventoried, and stacked in a warehouse for employees to use as needed. It is scattered, messy, and easy to lose (Galagan, 1997).

The process of knowledge management depicts the primary activities of the KM value-adding chain. To ensure effective KM processes, organizations must dedicate effort to building infrastructures that enhance knowledge systems, knowledge culture, organizational memory, knowledge sharing, and knowledge benchmarking (Gopal and Gagnon (1995). However, KM processes and their enabling capabilities do not automatically lead to performance outcomes. KM efforts must be effectively directed towards building and improving organizational capabilities, such as responsiveness to customers, new product development, organizational learning, and strategic flexibility.

However, Pillania (2007) observes that KM processes and their enabling capabilities do not automatically lead to performance outcomes. KM efforts must be effectively directed towards building and improving organizational capabilities, such as responsiveness to customers, new

product development, organizational learning, and strategic flexibility. This requires that all the knowledge processes are inter-linked and aligned to the workings of the macro-structural enabling elements.

According to Michalisin *et al.*, (2007), each individual in the organization contributes knowledge based on personal interpretation of information. Group interpretations and assimilation of knowledge are dependent on the synergy of the total membership of the group. In addition, organizational knowledge is built on the unique past history of the organization's own experiences and accumulated expertise. According to Michalisin *et al.*, (2007), new organizational knowledge results in improved products, processes, technologies, or services, and enables organizations to remain competitive and viable. Being the first to acquire new knowledge can help the organization attain a valuable strategic advantage. The synergy of specific groups cannot be replicated. Thus the group represents distinctive competence which is non-substitutable.

1.1.2 Competitive advantage

Achieving competitive advantage is presently recognized as the single most important goal of a firm (Porter, 1980). Porter (1985) further argues that the generic competitive strategies of cost leadership, differentiation, and focus (cost leadership or differentiation in a narrow market segment) represent different strategic orientations available to a firm to compete and achieve competitive advantage in its industry. Thus, cost leadership and differentiation represent two fundamentally different means of achieving competitive advantage and superior performance. A firm that implements a cost leadership strategy achieves competitive advantage by becoming the

lowest cost producer or service provider in the industry. A cost leadership strategy places emphases on “aggressive construction of efficient-scale facilities, vigorous pursuit of cost reductions from experience, tight cost and overhead control, avoidance of marginal customer accounts, and cost minimization in areas like R&D, service, sales force, advertising, and so on” (Porter, 1980, 35). A firm can, therefore, gain a competitive advantage over its rivals through achieving the lowest cost structure in an industry without ignoring other areas such as product and service quality (Porter, 1980). A differentiation strategy, on the other hand, focuses on developing a product or service that is unique or perceived to be unique in the minds of customers to create competitive advantage. The firm creates the perception that the firm or its products and services are superior to those of its competitors and also possess characteristics (e.g., design, quality, innovativeness) that are distinctive from those of its competitors (Miller; 1988).

A firm generates these perceptions through advertising programs, marketing techniques and methods, offering products with greater reliability, durability, features and aesthetics, and superior performance than their competitors (Mintzberg, 1988). The differentiation strategy is typically bolstered by heavy investment in research and development, marketing, and product and service innovation. Thus, organisations need to identify how to secure an advantageous competitive position where other players have not. Without achieving a competitive advantage, a firm will have few economic reasons for existing and finally will wither away. Adding values for customers, employees, and owners has become a central theme in strategic management for service companies. To create values for these stakeholders, a firm should achieve a competitive advantage over its competitors by adapting itself to the uncertain industry environment,

understanding the changing needs of customers, and responding to new market entries (Barney, 1991).

1.1.3 Knowledge Management, a Strategy to Achieve Competitive Advantage

Over the last two decades, advocates of the resource-based view have tried to explain why firms differ and how it matters (Hoopes *et al.*, 2003). According to the resource-based view rival firms compete on the basis of the heterogeneity and immobility of their resources and capabilities. Resources can be physical, human and organizational in nature, and they can be used to implement value-creating strategies. As was suggested by Barney (1991), resources which are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable, have the potential to provide firms with a sustainable competitive advantage. A set of resources that seem to match the above criteria are knowledge assets.

It is believed that a competitive advantage in today's economy depends upon the way firms manage their knowledge assets, and how effective and efficient their knowledge management processes are applied to accumulate, articulate, codify, and use knowledge assets to create value and enhance performance over time (Boisot, 1998). Carlucci *et al.* (2004) showed how the management of knowledge assets impact business performance. It is argued that business performance equates to value generated for the key stakeholders of an organization. The generated value is the result of an organization's ability to manage its business processes and, on the other hand, the effectiveness and efficiency of performing organizational processes are based on organizational competencies. Finally, the management of knowledge assets enables an organization to grow and develop the appropriate organizational competencies. Therefore, the

fact that organizational competencies are based on the effective and efficient management of knowledge assets puts it at the heart of business performance and value creation. Similarly, the effectiveness of knowledge asset management provides firms with an ability to constantly reconfigure, accumulate, and dispose of knowledge resources to meet the demands of a shifting market (Zott, 2003).

1.1.4 Private Schools in Ngong division

Ngong division consists of the Nairobi suburbs of Ongata Rongai, Kiserian, Oloolua, Matasia and Kitengela. The area has 116 primary schools of which 36 are public schools and the rest private. Competition between these private schools is therefore very high and the turnover of pupils among them especially in upper primary is of concern since most pupils who leave the school tend to go to neighboring private schools. The private schools in the division total to 80. The schools have been performing well despite the challenges they face. Over the last five years, since 2006, private schools have always had over 50 students having more than 370 marks and above, which in comparison to the challenges they face can be said a good performance (DEO Office-Ngong, 2011). Public schools in the division face a number of challenges. Some of these challenges include inadequate funding from the government and parents, shortage of the teaching staff and increased student population that has not been matched with physical population.

Whereas some schools record a steady decline in pupils' enrolment in upper classes, others record a steady increase in enrollment in these classes. Class eight performances in Kenya today is usually the bench mark of whether or not a school is successful and often with little regard as to how good grades are achieved. This has led to high turnover in staff among the private schools due to poaching of teachers from government and neighboring schools with inducements

of higher pay and often with the aim of gaining competitive advantage over each other and as a result increased enrolments. The number of private schools in the area is ever increasing. High cost schools often use their financial might to poaching experienced teachers from their competitors with incentives of better pay thus creating unfair advantage when it comes to recruitment. Free primary education if improved will affect enrolment in private primary schools. Grading system that favours public schools by giving them more admissions into secondary as opposed to private schools also presents a threat to private primary schools. In consideration of the level of competition and the increased demand from both the parents and pupils, it has become apparent that competitive advantage of the schools will depend on the way the schools manage their knowledge assets, and how effective and efficient their knowledge management processes are applied to accumulate, articulate, codify, and use knowledge assets to create value and enhance performance over time

1.2 Research Problem

The increasing importance of knowledge in the modern and competitive business world has initiated a need to focus on managing knowledge as an organizational and competitive asset (Gupta *et al.*, 2002)) as well as a source of wealth. Thus in the present day business environment, knowledge and the management of knowledge appear to be regarded as increasingly important features for organizational survival. To remain at the forefront and maintain competitive edge, organizations harness all the resources at their disposal. Employees are considered the greatest assets on which competitive advantage is built, whether in the public or private sector, whether in the corporate world or in the social world. It is these employees who carry this critical knowledge to guide the organization to greater heights of growth but as was observed by Mayo

(1998), the ability to share knowledge and collaborate is all too often missing in many organizations.

Private schools in Kenya have for a long time been given the back seat in primary education and yet they educate a majority of young Kenyans. Indeed the government cannot do without these institutions and yet it is from these very institutions that the government poaches a lot of its new teachers since they usually seek to employ “experienced teachers” (Omollo, 2008). Private primary schools are therefore constantly empowering teachers and losing them either to government or to other private schools. This means that for the institutions to maintain growth, and competitive advantage they should have mechanism of retaining teachers and or keep in place any knowledge gained in the process. Knowledge management is one of the strategic tools that the schools can utilize in gaining the competitive edge necessary for their sustenance in the competitive environment. However implementation of knowledge management system in the schools faces various challenges ranging from lack of time to implement the system, inflexible organizational structure, a lack of senior management commitment and too much emphasis on individuals rather than on teamwork. The schools have no commonly held model for knowledge creation and therefore dissemination of the same to other employees is limited. As a result the loss of teachers by the school comes with great economic loss especially in situations where the employee carries a lot of wealth of experience relating to the businesses of the institution. Hence it is imperative that private schools put in place proper mechanisms to safeguard knowledge gained by all or most of the employees to avoid loss of the vital knowledge with the movement of the employees.

Recent studies done on knowledge management include: Osano (2007) who studied knowledge management within publicly quoted firms in Kenya and found out that; some firms require new mindset for them to change the organizational culture, greater management support will be required to increase resources being directed to knowledge management practices and the existence of an action plan which will enable knowledge management assets to be used to support organizational objectives. On her part Mbugua (2010) undertook a research on knowledge management as a competitive advantage tool at Kingsway Tyres. She found out that the organisation is objective in introducing KM was to leverage implicit knowledge and at the same time retaining knowledge of employees as they exit the organisation. In addition Miringu (2010) researched on the Knowledge management as a strategic tool at Barclays Bank of Kenya Ltd. The research found out that top managers in commercial banks need to continuously acquaint themselves with the changes in the internal and external environments for effective strategies on knowledge management to be developed. Muhia (2009) in her research on Family businesses succession practices of Private schools in Nairobi, observed that passing along a business—family run or not—is a challenge involving numerous details, personal emotions and of course, money. She noted that passing along a business to family members can get especially tricky because it affects all facets of one's life, professionally and personally.

As can be evidence in the above studies, there has been no research done on the knowledge management within educational based institution and this study will therefore attempt to fill in this gap. Knowledge management in educational institutions is of importance since the students from these institutions need to be well equipped in facing the challenges of life as well has play an important role in helping the country become a middle income country by 2030. As a result of

the above, the research question to guide the study is: how has Knowledge management been used as a strategic tool in the Ngong division of Kajiado district?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were

- (i) To establish how private schools in Ngong division utilizes knowledge management as a source of competitive advantage.
- (ii) To establish the challenges the private schools face in the management of its Knowledge.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study will be important to the following stakeholders:

To the management of private schools, it will form the basis of setting up a vibrant knowledge management system and facilitate the institutions competing much more effectively in the terms of cost reduction and being able to develop new products fast because of the available knowledge. It will also assist the institutions in structuring the hiring and induction process of employees to the school due to the available knowledge. With a vibrant Knowledge management practices, the senior management of the schools will be able to set clear visions that can be achieved within a given time frame. This is because with the available knowledge, the management can more accurately set objectives that will be possible to attain. This is more on establishing a knowledge base of what the school's reality looks like.

To the government, this research will form an invaluable source of reference especially the Ministry of Education in coming out with policies to guide educational institutions in the

management of employees affairs and also bargaining agreements between employers and employees. This research therefore will lend a hand in employee conflict resolution mechanism of the schools, government as well as business organizations.

To Scholars: This study is expected to increase body of knowledge to the scholars in the service industry and make them be in touch with how knowledge management can act as a competitive advantage tool in the service industry.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the major issues relating to how knowledge management can be utilized as a strategy for competitive advantage in private primary schools in Ngong division. The chapter covers literature on knowledge management, strategic management and how knowledge management can be utilized as a strategy for achieving competitive advantage.

2.2 Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is concerned with the exploitation and development of the knowledge assets of an organisation with a view to furthering the organization's objectives. The knowledge to be managed includes both explicit, documented knowledge, and tacit, subjective knowledge. Management entails all of those processes associated with the identification, sharing and creation of knowledge. This requires systems for the creation and maintenance of knowledge repositories, and to cultivate and facilitate the sharing of knowledge and organisational learning. Organisations that succeed in knowledge management are likely to view knowledge as an asset and to develop organisational norms and values, which support the creation, and sharing of knowledge (Davenport et al, 1998).

According to Galagan (1997), knowledge management processes should among others incorporate generating new knowledge, accessing knowledge from external sources, representing knowledge in documents, databases, software and so forth, embedding knowledge in processes, products, or services, transferring existing knowledge around an organization, using accessible knowledge in decision making and measuring the value of knowledge assets and the impact of knowledge management. Demerest (2003) developed a model in which he identifies four phases

of knowledge management within an organisation: knowledge construction, knowledge dissemination, and knowledge use and knowledge embodiment. The model emphasizes the construction of knowledge within an organisation, with both scientific and social contributions to this construction process. According to the model, constructed knowledge is then embodied within an organisation, both through explicit programs, but also through social interchange. Following embodiment there is a process of dissemination of the espoused knowledge throughout the organisation and its environments. Ultimately the knowledge is seen as being of economic use in respect of organisational outputs. There is also a recognition that the process moves back and forth between the different phases.

The field of KM can be seen as an integral part of the broader concept “intellectual capital”, Roos *et al.*, (2007). According to Guthrie (2006) the distinction between KM and “intellectual capital” is that KM is about the management of the “intellectual capital” controlled by the company. However, too often the delineation between the two terms is unclear and seldom adequately addressed. A firm’s tangible and intangible resources, which are under the control of the firm’s administrative organ (referred to as an organization’s condition in (Rutihinda, 1996), may be grouped into two main categories: firm resources and firm capabilities (Grant, 1991). According to Grant (1991), this designation implies that resources are inputs into the production process and the capability of a firm is the capacity, what it can do, as a result of teams of resources working together. A firm’s distinctive competence is based on the specialized resources, assets, and skills it possesses, and focuses attention on their optimum utilization to build competitive advantage and economic wealth (Rutihinda, 1996).

Knowledge-based theory of the firm postulates that knowledge is the only resource that provides sustainable competitive advantage, and, therefore, the firm's attention and decision making should focus primarily on knowledge and the competitive capabilities derived from it (Roberts, 1998). The firm is considered being a knowledge integrating institution. Its role is neither the acquisition nor the creation of organizational knowledge; this is the role and prerequisite of the individual. Knowledge resides in and with individual people; the firm merely integrates the individually owned knowledge by providing structural arrangements of co-ordination and co-operation of specialized knowledge workers. That is, the firm focuses on the organizational processes flowing through these structural arrangements, through which individuals engage in knowledge creation, storage, and deployment (Roberts 1998).

Employee know-how and organizational culture are said to possess the characteristics of strategic assets (Michalisin *et al.*, 2007). Employee know-how is one component of organizational knowledge and a crucial strategic resource (De Hoog and Van der Spek, 2006). If the process of knowledge management is a function of the organizational culture and employees' collective knowledge, then it follows that organizational knowledge is almost certainly a strategic asset. To be a strategic asset, the resource must be inimitable, rare, valuable and non substitutable.

2.2.1 Theories of Knowledge Management

A number of frameworks have been developed with regard to the issue of converting knowledge into improved performance. The stream of research on "organizational learning" is diverse in terms of the meaning of the organizational learning concept. Furthermore, it is not very attentive

to strategic implications of learning (Crossan *et al.*, 1999). March (1991), stipulates that organizational learning requires a balancing of “exploration” and “exploitation” of knowledge. Organizational learning studies have their relative advantage in the in-depth discussion about the dynamics of knowledge, rather than strategy.

Another field of knowledge management is the “knowledge-based view of the firm” as advanced by (Grant, 1996; Conner and Prahalad, 1996; Spender, 1996), which is strategic in its orientation, focusing the mechanisms that drive relative performance and competitive advantage. It rests intellectually on the ideas of the resource-based view as advocated by (Barney, 1991; Peteraf, 1993), focusing explicitly on knowledge as the ultimate resource. A central feature of the knowledge-based view is the notion of “tacitness” (Grant, 1996), because tacit knowledge is a potential source of competitive advantage due to its limited transferability. Thus the knowledge-based view partly approaches the management of knowledge conversion. But although the knowledge-based view clearly suggests that knowledge can be a source of sustained competitive advantage, it is relatively unclear about the ways in which knowledge is utilized in order to contribute (Spender, 1996). However, the four key managerial heuristics proposed by Spender (interpretive flexibility, boundary management, identification of institutional influences, distinguishing between systemic and component features) do not say much about the issues associated with the materialization of knowledge, but rather about how new knowledge is created and organized.

Another similar approach is the “competence-based view”, primarily represented by (Sanchez (2001). They argue that firms utilize competence in order to reach set goals, regardless of whether it is reduced costs or competitive advantage. But the core of the competence-based

perspective lies in its approach to the nature of knowledge, and of its discussion of learning processes (Sanchez, 2001). For instance, the difference between data, information, knowledge and interpretive frameworks is highlighted, as is the difference between learning and sense-making. A key feature of this school of thought is the transformation of knowledge into competence, which is made through learning cycles, encompassing individual, group and organizational learning (Sanchez, 2001).

2.3 Strategic Management

A strategy is a framework through which an organization can assert its vital continuity whilst managing to adapt to the changing environment to gain competitive advantage. Strategy is a mediating force between the organization and its environment; there are consistent streams of organizational decisions to deal with the environment (Mintzberg, 1994). According to Ansoff (2002), strategic management process is a systematic approach to the major and increasingly important responsibility of general management to position and relate the firm to its environment in a way which will assure its continued success and make it secure from surprises.

Gole (2005) proposes that strategic management is a process, directed by top management to determine the fundamental aims or goals of the organization, and ensure a range of decisions which will allow for the achievement of those aims or goals in the long-term, while providing for adaptive responses in the short-term. The three core areas of corporate strategy: strategy analysis, strategy development and strategy implementation. Strategic analysis deals with examining the environment within the organization operates. Strategy formulation is concerned with determining where the organization is, where it wants to go and how to get there. It involves carrying out situation analysis that leads to setting of objectives. Vision and mission

statements are crafted and overall corporate objectives, strategic business unit objectives and tactical objectives are also developed. Strategy implementation on the other hand is the process of allocating resources to support an organization's chosen strategies. This process includes the various management activities that are necessary to put strategy in motion and institute strategic controls that monitor progress and ultimately achieve organizational goals. Strategy evaluation includes review of external and internal factors that are bases for strategies formulated, measuring performance and taking corrective action, if necessary. This is important as all strategies are subject to future modification depending on environmental turbulence (Robbins and Coulter (1996).

Porters (2007), five forces theory of strategic planning provides a framework that models an industry as being influenced by five forces. Porter assumed that companies, when implementing strategies, must do so within the framework of five forces; the force of suppliers, the force of buyers the force of substitute products, the force of new entrants and the force of competitive rivalry. The five-force model looks at the strength of the five distinct competitive forces, which, when taken together, determine long-term profitability and competition. The strategic business manager seeking to develop an edge over rival firms use this model to understand the industry context in which the firm operates (Porter, 2007). The "five forces" model can be used to help strategists better understand the competitive dynamics of their marketplaces and align their organization successfully against each of the forces. The model can also be used to assess the general attractiveness of a market place and to help strategists decide whether, where and how to compete in a market place.

Burkhardt's theory of strategic planning points out that strategic planning determines the company's current position, where they want to go, how to get there and how they will know if they got there or not. Current position of the company can be assessed with the help of SWOT analysis. Strategic planning should respond to changing circumstances of the environment in the best possible way. It can be described as externally oriented planning i.e. their own products and competitor products will be viewed from an outsider's point of view. Therefore setting goals is necessary and an approach must be developed to achieve these goals. There is no one perfect strategic planning model. Each organization has to develop its own model of strategic planning often by selecting a model and modify it (Burkhardt, 2005).

2.4 Knowledge Management as a Strategy to achieve Competitive Advantage

Over the last two decades, advocates of the resource-based view have tried to explain "why firms differ and how it matters (Hoopes *et al.*, 2003). According to the resource-based view rival firms compete on the basis of the heterogeneity and immobility of their resources and capabilities (Peteraf and Bergen, 2003). Resources can be physical, human and organizational in nature, and they can be used to implement value-creating strategies. As was suggested by Barney (1991), resources which are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable, have the potential to provide firms with a sustainable competitive advantage. A set of resources that seem to match the above criteria are knowledge assets.

However, a number of scholars have questioned whether the mere possession of bundles of these strategic assets is sufficient to sustain any competitive advantage, especially in situations of rapid and unpredictable market change, termed high velocity or dynamic markets (Eisenhardt and

Martin 2000). It is believed that a competitive advantage in today's economy depends upon the way firms manage their knowledge assets, and how effective and efficient their knowledge management processes are applied to accumulate, articulate, codify, and use knowledge assets to create value and enhance performance over time (Boisot, 1998).

Carlucci *et al.* (2004) showed how the management of knowledge assets impact business performance. It is argued that business performance equates to value generated for the key stakeholders of an organization. The generated value is the result of an organization's ability to manage its business processes and, on the other hand, the effectiveness and efficiency of performing organizational processes are based on organizational competencies. Finally, the management of knowledge assets enables an organization to grow and develop the appropriate organizational competencies. Therefore, the fact that organizational competencies are based on the effective and efficient management of knowledge assets puts it at the heart of business performance and value creation. Similarly, the effectiveness of knowledge asset management provides firms with an ability to constantly reconfigure, accumulate, and dispose of knowledge resources to meet the demands of a shifting market (Zott, 2003). Dynamic capabilities are therefore the organizational and strategic routines which firms use to achieve new resource configurations as markets emerge, collide, split, evolve and die. Dynamic capabilities are unique to individual firms, reflecting their individual idiosyncrasies, their specific path-dependencies, and hence are considered the source of sustainable competitive advantage and long-term superior performance (Teece et al, 1997).

Knowledge management strategies are closely linked to overall business strategy. On the one hand, market and environmental knowledge is collected to feed into the business strategy. On the

other hand, there is clear focus on KM implementation within the framework of overall business strategy. Additionally, business strategy drives the changes towards better alignment between strategy, culture, structure and technology. This systematic approach to KM requires top management support as well as organization-wide participation (Foote, 2006). KM performance measurement is an integral element of the systematic approach.

The strategic KM approach particularly emphasizes knowledge benchmarking, either internally or with other organizations, to identify the knowledge gaps and KM best practices. It is essential for organizations to develop the ability to identify knowledge from a strategic point of view, obtain and absorb such knowledge, and consequently refine it for organizational use (Taylor *et al.*, 2005). These elements should be highlighted in the knowledge value chain in order to achieve strategic flexibility through KM.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the proposed research design, data collection and the techniques for data analysis that was used.

3.2 Research design

The study adopted a survey research design. In addition, the researcher adopted this researcher design because the study was concerned about univariate questions in which the researcher asked questions about the size, form, distribution and existence of factors in which knowledge management can be utilized as a source of competitive advantage among the private schools in Ngong division. This method also facilitated the drawing of inferences and help in maintaining the continuity of the research process.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of the private primary schools in Ngong division. According to the Ministry of Education-Ngong divisional office, there are 80 (Eighty) private Primary Schools in Ngong Division with most of the schools located within Ngong township and its surrounding. The selection of Ngong division as the area of study is due to the growth in population and schools in the area. The level of competition in the division with the growth of both private and public schools as well as the high quality of education required by the stakeholders, it becomes imperative that private schools should get to know how their knowledge management should be utilized as a source of competitive advantage.

3.4 Sample of the Population

In the study, the researcher used systematic sampling design where the researcher picked every 2nd schools from a list of the private primary schools in the Ngong division. The list of the schools was obtained from the education office. From this sampling design a total of 40 schools were picked for the study. This sample size was considered to be adequate since according to Kottler (2002), a sample of 10% of the total population is considered representative.

3.5. Data Collection

The study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through self-administered questionnaires that consisted of both open and closed ended questions designed to elicit specific responses for qualitative and quantitative analysis respectively. A questionnaire is a useful tool for collecting data from respondents because of the need to provide a means of expressing their views more openly and clearly. Secondary data was obtained from the reports in the education office as well as parent ministry annual reports. Respondents were the headmasters or the deputy head masters of the schools or owners of the schools involved in day to day management. These respondents are deemed to be versed with the management issues in the schools and therefore were resourceful in this research. The questionnaire was administered through “drop and pick later” method. The respondents were expected to give an insight into how they manage their knowledge and also how they use it to gain competitive advantage.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics to summarize and relate variables which were attained from the administered questionnaires. The data was classified, tabulated and

summarized using descriptive measures, percentages and frequency distribution tables while tables and graphs was used for presentation of findings. However, before final analysis is performed, data was cleaned to eliminate discrepancies and thereafter, classified on the basis of similarity and then tabulated. This method of analysis is most desirable as it enabled the researcher to have an insight how knowledge management strategies has been adopted as a source of competitive advantage by the private secondary schools in Ngong.

CHAPTER FOUR

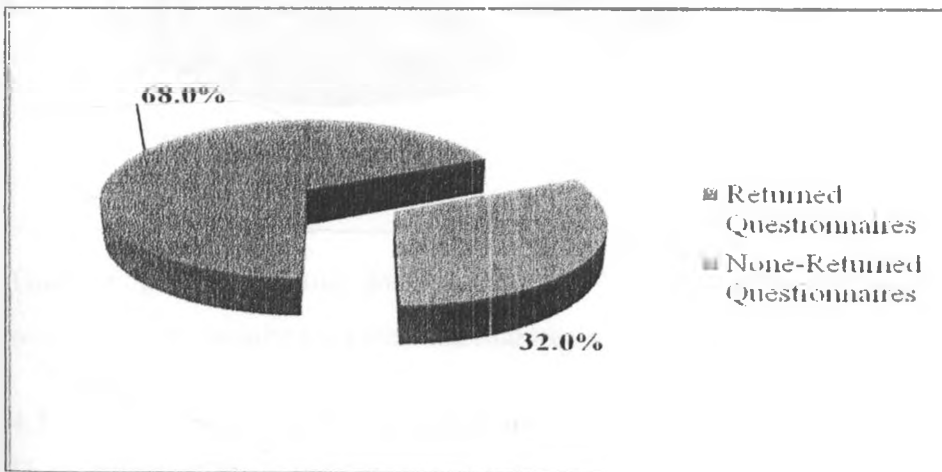
DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

The research objective was to establish knowledge management as a strategic competitive advantage tool and the challenges the private schools face in the management of its knowledge in private primary schools in Ngong. This chapter presents the analysis and findings with regard to the objective and discussion of the same. The findings are presented in percentages and frequency distributions, mean and standard deviations.

4.1 Characteristics of the respondents

Figure 4.1: Respondents characteristics



A total of 34 questionnaires were issued out. The completed questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency. Of the 34 questionnaires issued out, only 23 were returned. This represented a response rate of 68%.

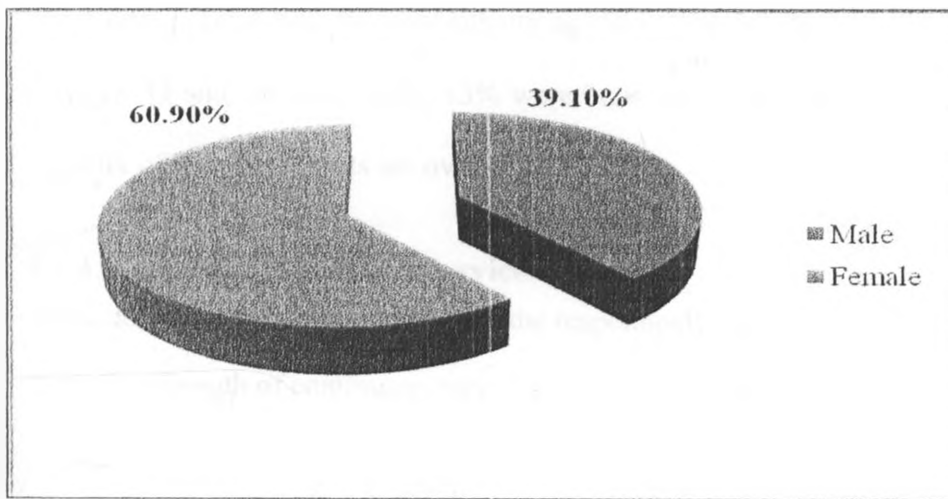
4.2 Demographic and respondents profile information

The demographic information considered in this study included the gender of the respondents' age, and length of continuous service in the school, duration of school's existence and ownership of other schools.

4.2.1 Respondents gender

These describe the respondents' gender.

Figure 4.2: Respondents' Gender

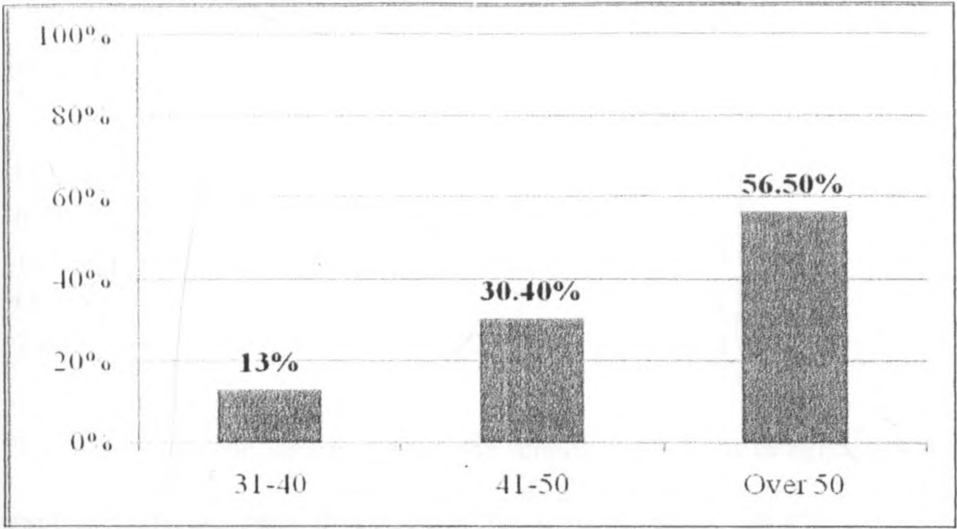


The findings from the study indicates that 60.9% of the respondents were female while 39.1% were male. The results indicates that majority of those running the schools are female.

4.2.2. Age bracket of the respondents

These describe the respondents age bracket.

Figure 4.3: Respondents age bracket



The findings regarding the respondents age was that 56.5% were over 50 years, 30.4% were between 41 and 50 years while 13% were between 31 and 40 years. The results indicates that majority of the respondents are over 40 years.

4.2.3. Length of continuous service

These describes the duration in which the respondents have been working in the schools.

Table 4.1: Length of continuous service

Years	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 5	5	21.7	21.7
5-10	9	39.1	60.9
Over 10	9	39.1	100.0
Total	23	100.0	

The results indicates that 39.1% of the respondents have worked in their respective schools for a period of over 10 years, 39.1% of the respondents said they have worked for a period of between 5 and 10 years while 21.7% said they have worked for less than 5 years.

4.2.4. Length of school existence

These describes the duration of time the school has been in existence.

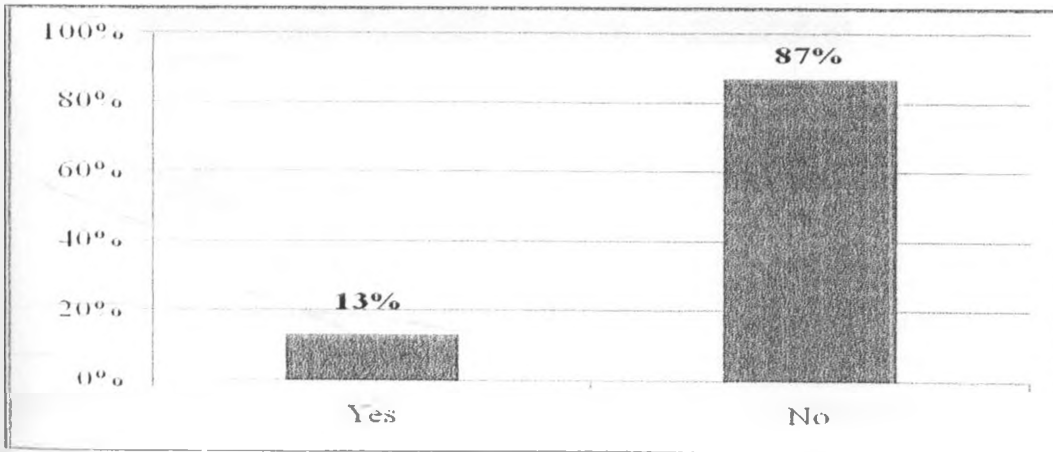
Table 4.2: Length of school existence

Years	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Under 5	3	13.0	13.0
6-10	10	43.5	56.5
11-15	3	13.0	69.6
Over 16	7	30.4	100.0
Total	23	100.0	

The findings on the length of time the schools have been in existence shows that 43.5% of the respondents have been in existence for 6 to 10 years, 30.4% said their school has been in existence for over 16 years, 13% said theirs has been in existence for 11 to 15 years while 13% of the respondents said their school has been in existence for under 5 years. The results indicate that the majority of the schools have been in existence for over six years.

4.2.5. Own or manage other schools

Figure 4.4: Own or manage other schools



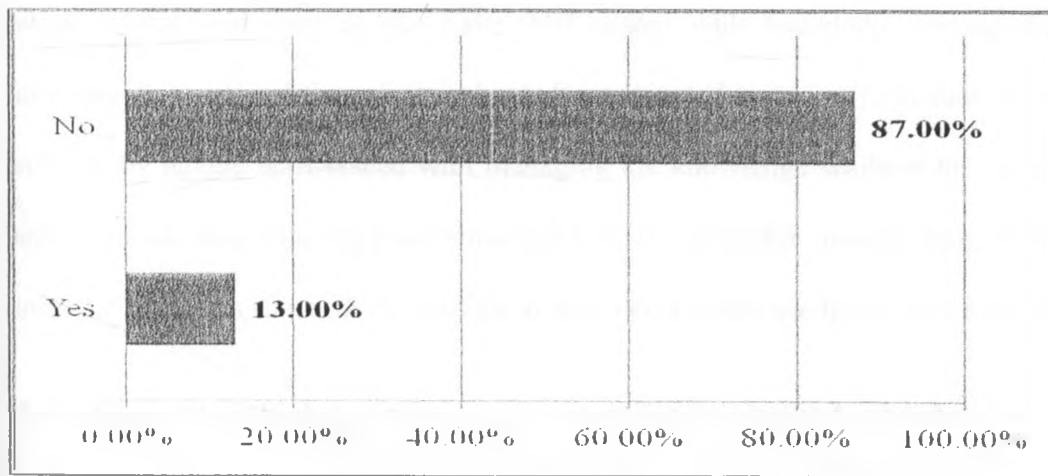
The findings indicates that majority of the respondents (87%) do not own or manage other schools while 13% said they own or manage other schools. This indicates that some of the respondents have other schools somewhere else.

4.3 Knowledge management in the school

Knowledge management is the act of systematic, organized, explicit and deliberate ongoing process of creating, disseminating, applying, renewing and updating the knowledge for achieving organizational objectives. It is concerned with the exploitation and development of the knowledge assets of an organization with a view to furthering the organization's objectives.

4.3.1 Understand and appreciate role of knowledge management

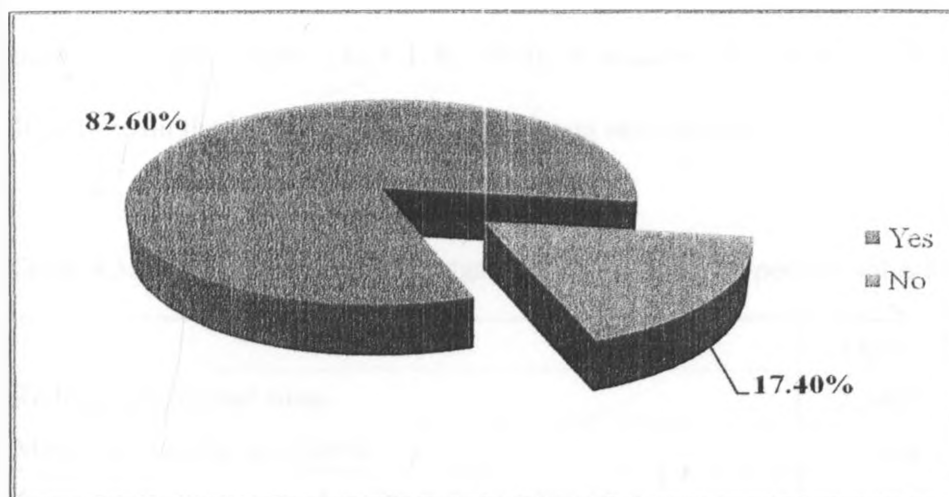
Figure 4.5: Understand and appreciate role of knowledge management



The results on the understanding and role of knowledge management was that, 87% of the respondents said they do not understand and appreciate the role of knowledge management while 13% said they understand the role. The results shows that the schools management have not put in place measures to tap the knowledge from the staff who work in their schools.

4.3.2 Existence of staff tasked with knowledge management

Figure 4.6: Existence of staff tasked with knowledge management



The respondents who had indicated earlier that they understand and appreciate knowledge management in their schools on being asked of the existence of staff tasked with knowledge management in their schools shows that 82.6% of the respondents said they have staff tasked while 17.4% said they do not have staff tasked with knowledge management. The results indicate that some of the private schools have initiated measures to manage knowledge in their schools by having staff tasked with managing the knowledge while at the same time there are some schools which having understood the role of knowledge management, they have not taken initiative to assign some of the staff the role to manage knowledge in their schools.

4.3.3 Extent to which knowledge management has helped school achieve objectives

The respondents were to give their opinion on the extent to which knowledge management has helped schools achieve their objectives in a five point Likert scale. The range was 'strongly agree (1)' to 'strongly disagree' (5). The scores of strongly agree/agree have been taken to represent a variable which had mean score of 0 to 2.5 on the continuous Likert scale; ($0 \leq S.E < 2.4$). The scores of 'moderate extent' have been taken to represent a variable with a mean score of 2.5 to

3.4 on the continuous likert scale: ($2.5 \leq M.E. < 3.4$) and the score of both low extent and very low extent have been taken to represent a variable which had a mean score of 3.5 to 5.0 on a continuous likert scale; ($3.5 \leq L.E. < 5.0$). A standard deviation of >0.5 implies a significant difference on the impact of the variable among respondents.

Table 4.3: Extent to which knowledge management has helped school achieve objectives

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reduce operational costs	2.2043	.7648
Makes knowledge profitable	2.4348	.7277
Avoids information overload to individual teachers	2.5217	.7304
Ensures privacy and security of information	2.7826	.5997
Helps in the use of corporate information strategically	2.6087	.6563
Helps in developing appropriate plans to compete successfully with other schools	2.3913	.5830

The results in table 4.3 above indicates that only two factors had a mean of less than 2.4 (moderate extent) and these factors indicates the extent to which knowledge management has helped the schools achieve its objectives to a great extent. These factors were reduction of operational costs (mean 2.2043) and development of appropriate plans to compete successfully with other schools (mean 2.3913). There was low variation among the respondents as indicated by standard deviation of 0.7648 and 0.5830 for reduction of operational costs and of appropriate plans to compete successfully with other schools respectively.

The respondents on the other hand were moderate as to the extent to which knowledge management has helped their schools. They indicated that it has helped make knowledge profitable (mean 2.4348), avoids information overload to individual teachers (mean 2.5217), helps in the use of corporate information strategically (mean 2.6087) and ensures privacy and

security of information (mean 2.7826). There was a slight variation among the respondents as indicated by the standard deviation of the factors.

4.3.4 Extent to agreement on the qualities of knowledge management and the role it plays

The respondents were to give their independent opinion on the extent of agreement on the qualities of knowledge management and the role it plays in schools in a five point Likert scale. The range was 'strongly agree (1)' to 'strongly disagree' (5). The scores of strongly agree/agree have been taken to represent a variable which had mean score of 0 to 2.5 on the continuous Likert scale; ($0 \leq S.E < 2.4$). The scores of 'moderate extent' have been taken to represent a variable with a mean score of 2.5 to 3.4 on the continuous likert scale: ($2.5 \leq M.E. < 3.4$) and the score of both low extent and very low extent have been taken to represent a variable which had a mean score of 3.5 to 5.0 on a continuous likert scale; ($3.5 \leq L.E. < 5.0$). A standard deviation of >0.5 implies a significant difference on the impact of the variable among respondents.

Table 4.4: Extent to agreement on the qualities of knowledge management and the role it plays

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Brings to light business opportunities and problems that will facilitate proactive strategies	2.1609	.4489
Provides basis for continuous improvements	1.8696	.4577
Sheds light on competitor schools strategies	2.9130	.6683
Improves speed to market schools services	2.3217	.5931
Improves the ability of the school to survive	2.1739	.5762
Provides a means of better assessment of clients	2.2783	.7304
It improves the understanding of the external customers	2.5652	.5897

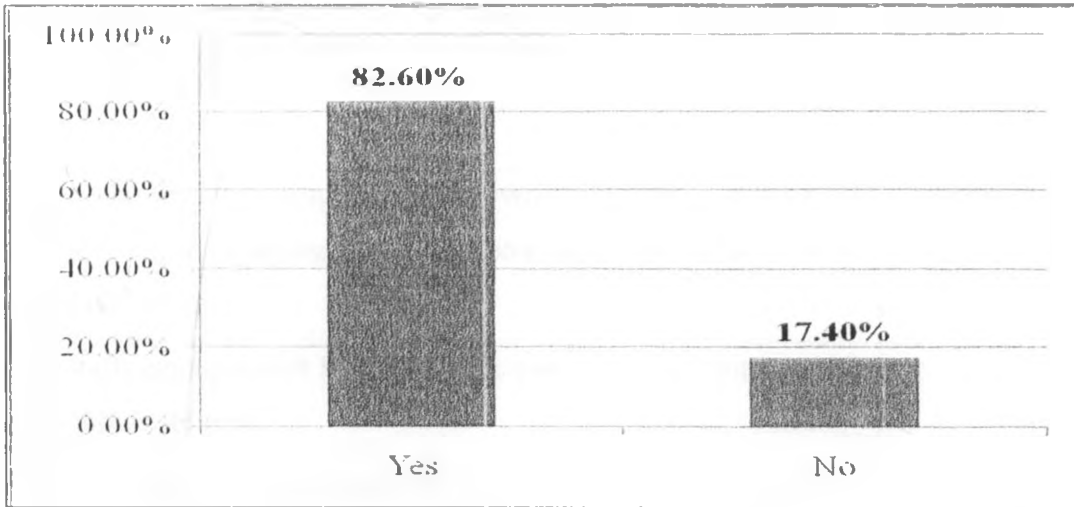
The findings in table 4.4 above indicates that the respondents agreed that knowledge management qualities and roles were providing basis for continuous improvements (mean 1.8696), brings to light business opportunities and problems that will facilitate proactive strategies (mean 2.1609), improves the ability of the school to survive (mean 2.1739), provides a means of better assessment of clients (mean 2.2783) and improvement of speed to market school services (mean 2.3217). On the other hand the respondents agreed to a moderate extent that knowledge management improves the understanding of the external customers (mean 2.5652) and shedding light on competitor schools strategies (mean 2.9130). The results indicate that knowledge management has qualities which play a critical role in the running of schools.

4.4 Knowledge management as a competitive tool

Competitive advantage in today's economy depends upon the way firms manage their knowledge assets, and how effective and efficient their knowledge management processes are applied to accumulate, articulate, codify, and use knowledge assets to create value and enhance performance over time. It is essential for organizations to develop the ability to identify knowledge from a strategic point of view, obtain and absorb such knowledge, and consequently refine it for organizational use

4.4.1 Knowledge management as source of competitive advantage

Figure 4.7: Knowledge management as source of competitive advantage



The results indicates that the 82.6% of the respondents indicated that knowledge management was a source of competitive advantage while 17.4% said it was not. The findings shows that some of the schools have been managing knowledge in their school in order to gain competitive advantage over its competitors.

4.4.2: Role of knowledge management as a source of competitive advantage

The staff respondents were to give their opinion on the role of knowledge management as a source of competitive advantage in a five point likert scale. The range was 'strongly agree (1)' to strongly disagree (4). The scores of strongly agree/agree have been taken to present a variable which had mean score less than 2.5. The scores of disagree/strongly disagree have been taken to represent a variable with a mean score of 2.5 to 4.0. A standard deviation of >0.5 implies a significant difference on the impact of the variable among respondents.

Table 4.5: Role of knowledge management as a source of competitive advantage

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Due to the schools management of knowledge practices, it has been able to focus in assessing current and potential market place change for opportunities	2.1739	.3875
The staffs engaged with KM also participate in the development of the schools strategy	2.3478	.4869
With the effective management of knowledge, the school has been able to exploit its resources effectively	2.0000	.6742
With effective KM practises, the school has been able to scan better its environment	2.2609	.4489
Identification of the schools opportunities has been enhanced with the effective management of knowledge	2.1304	.5480
Competitor risk evaluation has been enhanced with KM practices.	2.6087	.5830
The school has been able to achieve performance leadership in national exams from the KM practices it has been adopting.	2.6957	.6349
The school has been able to achieve differentiation and focus leadership from the KM practices it has been adopted.	2.3913	.5830
Shareholders and stakeholders value has been improved through the adoption of effective KM practices.	2.1304	.5480

From the findings, the respondents agreed that the role played by knowledge management as a source of competitive advantage was to exploit its resources effectively (mean 2.0000), shareholders and stakeholders value has been improved (mean 2.1304), has led to identification of the schools opportunities (mean 2.1304), assist in focusing current and potential market place change for opportunities (mean 2.1739), the school has been able to scan its environment better

(mean 2.2609), the staff engaged with knowledge management also participate in the development of the schools (mean 2.3478) and that the school has been able to achieve differentiation and focus leadership from knowledge management practices it had adopted (mean 2.3913).

The respondents were also in agreement that competitor risk evaluation has been enhanced with KM practices (mean 2.4087) and that the school has been able to achieve performance leadership in national exams from the KM practices it has been adopting (mean 2.4957). The results indicate that the schools have been using knowledge management in order to gain competitive advantage over other schools.

4.5 Challenges facing knowledge management in the school

This section of the questioner aimed to establish what challenges the schools faces in the management of knowledge. In addition, the section wished to find out the strategies used by the schools to overcome the challenges.

4.5.1 Challenges facing knowledge management

The staff respondents were to indicate the challenges facing knowledge management in their schools in a five point likert scale. The range was 'strongly agree (1)' to strongly disagree (4). The scores of strongly agree/agree have been taken to present a variable which had mean score less than 2.5. The scores of disagree/strongly disagree have been taken to represent a variable with a mean score of 2.5 to 4.0. A standard deviation of >0.5 implies a significant difference on the impact of the variable among respondents.

Table 4.6: Challenges facing knowledge management

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Technological changes have affected the operations of the school on adoption of the KM	1.8217	.84582
There has been a mismatch between the schools KM practices and the external business environment	2.1391	.68870
A gap exists between KM practices in the school and one expected in the market	2.2391	.75181
A gap exists between KM practices recommended by the top management and the one adopted by the school	2.1304	.54808
Due to effective KM there is an adverse effect on pupil's performance when teachers leave	3.0435	.36659
A gap exists in KM between new employees, and the rest of the staff	1.6087	.58303
A gap exists in the budget between the current KM requirements and those available	2.3043	.55880

The results in table 4.6 above indicate that the schools encounter all the challenges except only one. The respondents indicated that there is a gap that exists in knowledge management between new employees and the rest of the staff (mean 1.6087), that technological changes affects the operations of the school on adoption of knowledge management (mean 1.8217), that there is a gap which exists between knowledge management practices recommended by the top management and the one adopted by the school (mean 2.1304), that there has been a mismatch between the schools knowledge management practices and the external business environment (mean 2.1391), that a gap exists between KM practices in the school and one expected in the market (mean 2.2391), that a gap exists in the budget between the current knowledge management requirements and those available (mean 2.3043). The results above indicate that the schools encounters the challenges in maintain the knowledge and therefore they might not be able to achieve their objectives if the challenges are not addressed. The respondents however

indicated that there was no adverse effect on pupil's performance when the teachers leave (mean 3.0435).

4.5 Discussions of the Findings

The management of knowledge in the schools investigated is promoted as an important and necessary factor for its survival and maintenance of competitive strength. To remain at the forefront the schools need a good capacity to retain, develop, organize, and utilize their employees' capabilities. Knowledge and the management of knowledge appear to be regarded as increasingly important features for organizational survival. This finding is found to be in line with that of Mayo (2009) who observed that for an organization to remain vibrant and effective and therefore create a competitive advantage they need to institute effective maintenance of a knowledge management.

In addition, it was also found out that the schools recognized that for the knowledge to be valuable, it needs to be hard to be replicated and the staff should be taken care of in order to avoid a loss of the same. As was suggested by Barney (1991), resources which are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable, have the potential to provide firms with a sustainable competitive advantage.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section covers the summary of the findings, conclusion, recommendations and the limitations of the study.

5.2 Summary

The study established that majority of the respondents were female and who are managers of the schools. The respondents were over forty years of age and have been working at the schools for over five years. The respondents indicated that the duration of existence for the schools varied, however majority of the schools have been in existence for over six years and these coincides with the period the respondents' have been working in the schools. This implies that the respondents were the owners of the schools. The respondents indicated that they do not own or manage other schools although some of them indicated that they own/manage.

The respondents indicated that they do not understand and appreciate the role of knowledge management as they do not have the staff undertaking knowledge management and therefore the schools will suffer as knowledge is an asset and which assist the organizations to develop norms and values, which support the creation and sharing of knowledge. The findings indicates that knowledge management has helped schools to achieve reduction in operational costs, development of appropriate plans to compete successfully with other schools, makes knowledge profitable, avoids information overload to individual teachers, helps in the use of corporate information strategically and ensures privacy and security of information.

The qualities and role of knowledge management in the schools included providing basis for continuous improvements, bringing to light business opportunities and problems that will facilitate proactive strategies, improving the ability of the school to survive, providing a means of better assessment of clients, improvement of speed to market school services, knowledge management improves the understanding of the external customers, and shedding light on competitor schools strategies. The role played by knowledge management in the schools will enable them to attain competitive advantage and therefore the school management should seek for ways in which they can manage their employees' knowledge by providing structural arrangements of co-ordination and co-operation of specialized knowledge workers.

The schools which have adopted knowledge management have gained competitively over other schools through exploitation of resources effectively, shareholders and stakeholders value been improved, identification of the schools opportunities, assist in focusing current and potential market place change for opportunities, been able to scan its environment better, engaging staff who also participate in knowledge management to participate in the development of the schools, been able to achieve differentiation and focus leadership from knowledge management practices, enhancement of competitor risk evaluation and the school been able to achieve performance leadership in national exams from the knowledge management practices it has been adopting. The management of the knowledge by a school will lead to competitive advantage which is created by applying knowledge assets effectively and efficiently to accumulate, articulate, codify and usage of the assets to create value and enhance performance over time.

The challenges which were highlighted as facing the management of knowledge in the schools are existence of a gap in knowledge management between new employees and the rest of the

staff, technological changes which affects the operations of the school on adoption of knowledge management, existence of a gap between knowledge management practices recommended by the top management and the one adopted by the school, existence of mismatch between the schools knowledge management practices and the external business environment, existence of a gap between knowledge management in schools and one expected in the market and the existence of a gap in the budget between the current knowledge management requirements and those available.

5.3 Conclusion

From the research findings and the answers to the research questions, some conclusions can be drawn about the study. From the study it can be concluded that the private schools which have embraced the concept of knowledge management have achieved competitive advantage and at the same time there are challenges that they face in the management of knowledge.

Knowledge cannot easily be stored rather it is something that resides in people's minds rather than in computers. Unlike raw material, knowledge usually is not coded, audited, inventoried, and stacked in a warehouse for employees to use as needed. It is scattered, messy, and easy to lose. Knowledge management processes and their enabling capabilities do not automatically lead to performance outcomes rather efforts must be effectively directed towards building and improving organizational capabilities, such as responsiveness to customers, new product development, organizational learning, and strategic flexibility. This requires that all the knowledge processes are inter-linked and aligned to the workings of the macro-structural enabling elements. From the findings most of the schools do not manage knowledge and even those who have gone a step forward to manage the knowledge do not have staff whose main task

is to ensure that the institutions knowledge is managed so that in case an employee leaves the school, the knowledge which they had is not lost thus the institution losing the greatest asset.

Knowledge management has helped those schools which have adopted it to achieve some of the major objectives which they desired to and also enabled the organization to grow, reconfigure, accumulate, and dispose of knowledge resources to meet the demands of a shifting market and develop the appropriate organizational competencies. The schools which have adopted knowledge management have used it to gain competitively as they can exploit resources effectively, improve the shareholders and stakeholders value, identify the schools opportunities and assist in focusing current and potential market place change for opportunities. However, the usage of the strategy to gain competitive advantage was not without challenges which the management needs to work on if they are to realize the full benefits of managing knowledge.

5.4 Recommendations

There are high numbers of private schools which are not managing their employees knowledge and it is recommended that in order to ensure smooth continuity of the institution when an employee's leaves the institution, the management of the schools should put in place a department whose main work will be to manage the institutions knowledge. The management of the knowledge has helped the schools achieves some of its objectives and it is recommended that the institutions should continue exploring ways of more goals which they can achieve by managing their knowledge.

The usage of knowledge as a competitive tool has led to the achievement of competitive advantage by the schools over those which have not embraced the concept. It is recommended that the schools should continue using the resource as it results in improved products, processes,

technologies, or services, and enables organizations to remain competitive and viable. Being the first to acquire new knowledge can help the organization attain a valuable strategic advantage. The schools indicated that they encounter various challenges in the management of its knowledge and it is recommended that they should not give up but face the challenges by putting in place measures which will counter the challenges.

5.5 Recommendations for further research

The study confined itself to the private primary schools operating in Ngong area. This research therefore should be replicated in other private primary schools operating in Nairobi so as to establish whether there is consistency among the private primary schools on the usage of knowledge management as a strategy for achieving competitive advantage.

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APPENDIX I:
COVER LETTERS

Geoffrey A. Nthiga

School of Business, University of Nairobi

P.O BOX 30197, Nairobi

September, 2011

Dear Respondent,

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Nairobi, School of Business. I am carrying out a research on “Knowledge management as a strategy for achieving competitive advantage in private primary schools in Ngong division”. This is in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master in Business Administration, (Strategic Management) option Degree program at the University of Nairobi.

This study uses private schools in Ngong division as a survey population. The success of this research substantially depends on your help and co-operation. I hereby request you to respond to questioner as honestly as possible and the best of your knowledge. The information provided will exclusively be treated with utmost confidence; neither your name nor any other details shall appear in my report.

Thank you in advance,

Yours sincerely,

Geoffrey A. Nthiga
(Student)

Mr. J. Kagwe
(Supervisor)

APPENDIX II

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please give answers in the spaces provided and tick (✓) in the box that matches your response to the questions where applicable.

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC AND RESPONDENTS PROFILE

- 1) Name of the school:.....
2. What is your designation at the organization.....
3. Gender: male () Female ()
4. What is your age bracket? (Tick as applicable)
 - a) Under 30 years ()
 - b) 31 – 40 years ()
 - c) 41 – 50 years ()
 - d) Over 50 years ()
5. Length of continuous service with the school?
 - a) Less than five years ()
 - b) 5-10 years ()
 - c) Over 10 years ()
6. For how long has your school been in existence?
 - a) Under 5 years ()
 - b) 6 – 10 years ()
 - c) 11 – 15 years ()

d) Over 16 years ()

7.) Do you own or manage in other schools within the country? Yes () No ()

If yes, please give the areas or regions that you operate in

PART B: Knowledge Management in the School

1.) As a school, do you understand and appreciate the role of knowledge management?

Yes () No ()

2.) If yes does the school have staff tasked with undertaking knowledge management task?

Yes () No ()

3.) Please indicate the extent to which knowledge management has helped your school in achieving the following objectives;

Key

1) Strongly Agree 2) Agree 3) Moderate extent 4) Disagree 5) Strongly Disagree

FACTORS	1	2	3	4	5
Helps in reduction of operational risk					
Makes knowledge profitable					
Avoids information overload to individual teachers					
Ensures privacy and security of information					
Helps in the use of corporate information strategically					
Helps in developing appropriate plans to compete successfully with other schools					

4) Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement on the qualities of knowledge management and the role it plays in the school.

Key

1) Strongly Agree 2) Agree 3) Moderate extent 4) Disagree 5) Strongly Disagree

FACTORS	1	2	3	4	5
It brings to light business opportunities and problems that will facilitate proactive strategies.					
Provides basis for continuous improvements					
Sheds light on competitor schools strategies					
Improves speed to market the schools services					
Improves the ability of the school to survive					
Provides a means of better assessment of clients					
It improves the understanding of the external customers					

PART C: Knowledge Management as a Competitive Tool

1) Has knowledge Management been a source of competitive advantage to the organization?

Yes ()

No ()

2) The table below presents statements regarding the role of knowledge Management as a source of competitive advantage. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement by ticking on the appropriate column, using the scale below.

SA – Strongly Agree

A – Agree

D – Disagree

SD – Strongly Disagree

Statement	SA	A	D	SD
Due to the schools management of knowledge practices, it has been able to focus in assessing current and potential market place change for opportunities.				
The staffs engaged with KM also participate in the development of the schools strategy.				
With the effective management of knowledge, the school has been able to exploit its resources effectively.				
With effective KM practises, the school has been able to scan better its environment.				
Identification of the schools opportunities has been enhanced with the effective management of knowledge.				
Competitor risk evaluation has been enhanced with KM practices.				
The school has been able to achieve performance leadership in national exams from the KM practices it has been adopting.				
The school has been able to achieve differentiation and focus leadership from the KM practices it has been adopted.				
Shareholders and stakeholders value has been improved through the adoption of effective KM practices.				

Challenges Facing Knowledge Management in the School

1.) The table below presents statements regarding the possible challenges of knowledge management in the school. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement by ticking on the appropriate column, using the scale below.

SA – Strongly Agree

A – Agree

D – Disagree

SD – Strongly Disagree

Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1. Technological changes have affected the operations of the school on adoption of the KM?				
2. There has been a mismatch between the schools KM practices and the external business environment				
3. A gap exists between KM practices in the school and one expected in the market.				
4. A gap exists between KM practices recommended by the top management and the one adopted by the school.				
5. Due to effective KM there is an adverse effect on pupil's performance when teachers leave.				
6. A gap exists in KM between new employees, and the rest of the staff.				
7. A gap exists in the budget between the current KM requirements and those available.				