

**University of Nairobi**

**Factors Influencing Information Channel  
Preferences in Accessing Educational  
Materials by High School Teachers: A Case  
Study of Keiyo District Kenya //**

**Research Project Submitted by:**

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**2006**

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in Accessing Educational Materials by High School  
Teachers: A Case Study of Keiyo District Kenya //**

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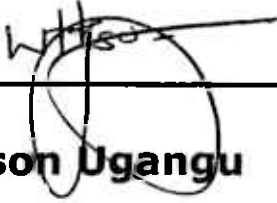
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## Declaration


I hereby declare that this is my original work. It has not been presented for a degree or any other examination in another institution of learning.

Sign  Date 22/5/2006

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**Wilson Ugangu**

**This report has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University supervisor**

Sign  Date 22/06/06

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**Mr. Kamau Mubuu,  
Lecturer, School of Journalism**



## **Abstract**

This study explored some of the factors which influence information channel preferences for accessing educational materials among secondary school teachers in Keiyo district of Kenya. The study was mainly informed by the theoretical postulations espoused by pioneering communication scholars such as Katz, Blumler and Joseph Klapper under the uses and gratifications perspective, which consider media audiences as active participants in the communication process. In this regard, effort was made to establish whether teachers are an active audience who choose from the available range of channels those that suit their needs of accessing information relating to their profession.

This was done by way of examining the various factors which teachers consider while choosing media channels for accessing information from among the various possible functional alternatives at their disposal, in line with the postulations set forth in the uses and gratifications approach to communication.

Blumler and Katz's uses and gratification theory suggests that media users play an active role in choosing and using the media. Users take an active part in the communication process and are goal oriented in their media use. The two theorists further argue that a media user seeks out a media source that best fulfills the needs of the user. Uses

and gratifications assume that the user has alternate choices to satisfy their need.

To investigate these issues, this study adopted a survey research methodology where views were solicited from key informants to enrich data collected through the survey. The target population comprised high school teachers in Keiyo district of Kenya. The study sample was drawn using a multistage sampling approach.

The following objectives guided the study;

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- What factors influence choice of information channels for accessing educational materials among high school teachers in Keiyo district
- Which socio-structural factors inhibit use of certain information channels for accessing educational materials among secondary school teachers in Keiyo district
- The need to establish whether teachers in Keiyo district are an active audience which proactively searches for information relating to their profession
- Set out specific recommendations on information channel preferences by secondary school teachers as well as factors, which inhibit use of certain channels.

In a nutshell, the results of this study indicate that high school teachers in Keiyo district do indeed exercise a degree of choice and preference in regard to channels of information that they ultimately attend to in search of information relevant to their profession.

It also emerged that various personal as well as social-structural factors influence media channel choices made by individual high school teachers in Keiyo district. At the level of personality factors, one's attitude and perceptions of a given media channel and personal career aspirations were seen as being strong determinants of the choice of media channels for accessing information.

The results invariably lend credibility to the argument that even among individuals of similar demographic and ideological backgrounds, the motivations to attend to various media and particular messages within them- and gratifications obtained from exposure vary widely. This indeed means that media audiences are not passive actors in the communication process.

Beyond the normal attention given to source, channel, message and receiver, the perspective of communication that this study follows is that which acknowledges that there are several other equally important underpinning factors which influence the communication process. The study puts emphasis on the fact that focus on the end users of information and the considerations they make in choosing channels and whether to attend to messages is critical to understanding the communication process.

The big effects theorists of the 1920s, saw media audiences as passive actors in the communication process. This implied that the

communication process was unidirectional with messages originating from the sender and received by the receiver without any form of action in the reverse direction. However, the strong influence of personality factors such as attitude, perceptions, personal career goals and other personal considerations as important variables which underpin the communication process clearly disapprove the notion that suggested among other things that media audiences are homogenous and by extension, they were bound to attend to the same media channels without objections or exercising the privilege of choice in regard to what suits their needs and circumstances.

The study showed that high school teachers in Keiyo district are an active audience who do not just wait for information to reach them from the ministry of education. They engage in active information seeking behavior by way of subscribing to various specialized educational magazines and bulletins. This very act of engaging in active information seeking enables them to expand the range of information channel choices available for accessing useful information related to their professional pursuits. This behavior is in line with the active audience perspective central to the uses and gratifications approach.

The findings of this study also show that teachers in Keiyo district have a good idea about which channels of communication serve their information needs better. The results showed that they preferred channels that are efficient in information relay, easy and cheap to access. It would be instructive for the Ministry of Education to utilize

channels of communication that are preferred by teachers in any particular locality of the country.

According to the results, most teachers are out of touch with their employer, mainly due to the fact that Ministry of Education communication channels are slow and therefore inefficient in serving their information needs. It would be of great benefit if the ministry invested in channels that are efficient for information delivery to ensure timely dissemination of information to teachers in the field.

Although the 21<sup>st</sup> century is taunted as the information age, it is clear from the findings of this study that teachers in rural localities like Keiyo district of Kenya are disadvantaged by structural factors such as availability and access to modern channels of communication like the internet and computers. This clearly limits the channel choices they make for accessing information. The lesson here is that as we endeavor as a country to modernize the educational sector, due attention has to be given to the plight of teachers and others who require quick and efficient access to information in regions of the country that are far removed from urban set-ups, so that regional disparities can be eliminated. Resources will need to be set aside for increasing rural teachers' capacities to utilize new media especially the

internet, as a way of widening the functional information resource alternatives available for their use.

The results of this study on the whole, point to one instructive reality; that in planning communication, it is important to go beyond the traditional models of communication in which communication is seen as a linear process which merely involves a communicator or source, a message and an audience. Other perspectives of the communication dynamic, for instance the uses and gratifications approach as demonstrated by this study clearly show that there are other equally vital considerations that need to be taken into account to realize communication.

If this reality was to be taken as a strong consideration informing communications plans within the Kenyan Ministry of Education, it should result in better relations between teachers in the field and their employer at the ministry Headquarters in Nairobi. It is clear from the results of this study that teachers feel alienated from their employer largely as a result of the communication strategy adopted by the ministry.

# **Chapter One**

## **1.0 Introduction/Preamble**

This study sought to explore some of the factors that influence choice of channels for accessing educational materials by teachers in Keiyo district of Kenya. In every day life, the choices that people make are often influenced by certain factors. These factors may relate to one's personality or motivated by their social-structural environmental.

Teachers have a whole range of choices of information channels to turn to for educational materials and information. For instance, ministry channels like the occasional news bulletins through the district education offices, field educational supervisors, workshops, educational resource centers, newspapers, television, educational magazines among others. However, depending on their career, professional needs and socio-structural circumstances, the choices they make for accessing information will tend to be influenced by a gamut of factors.

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In the past, the Kenya Institute of Education has played a vital role in providing regular school broadcasts which among other things, served to supplement classroom teaching and updating teachers on important developments in the education sector. This service aimed at stimulating educational growth and development in the country by

providing an information resource for those involved in the sector. (KIE 1987).

However, due to various constraints, mainly financial, the Kenya Institute of Education school broadcast service did not last long enough. Increased funding costs, especially towards the end of the eighties, saw the service reduce its output of broadcast programmes to schools and the teaching fraternity. (KIE) This meant that teachers had to henceforth rely on the ministry of education information bulletins, educational seminars and ordinary media channels for information on education development in the country as well as other relevant educational materials.

Indeed, recognizing the information gap left, the East African Standard, a leading daily newspaper in the country, recently launched a special pullout magazine dedicated to education and career matters as a channel for providing additional relevant information for teachers in the country. Published weekly, the magazine carries topical stories relating to education. In addition, the pullout offers opportunity to teachers from all over the country to write incisive pieces on topical issues on education and other career matters relevant for teachers (East African Standard- School and Career weekly magazine).



The thinking at the Ministry of Education has been that ministry information channels are sufficient for providing information needed by players in the field. The ministry of education communication structure is mainly modeled along the traditional top –down approach. This means that information from headquarters is transmitted through various structures at the provincial, district down to zonal level offices, where local officers disseminate it to various schools. This sometimes means that information takes a long time to reach the end user.

This age-old approach may however not be the most convenient in a 21<sup>st</sup> century reality where information movement is swift; and through multiple channels. In such a reality, individuals have a whole spectrum of opportunities to select from depending on certain personal and environmental determinants. It is these that the present study made an attempt to examine among teachers in Keiyo district of Kenya.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

So far it would appear that no study has addressed the factors that influence media channel preferences among teachers in Kenya. Yet, in order to effectively reach an audience, one must know it. This can be done through a deliberate effort aimed at understanding both the personal as well as social-structural factors influencing communication

channel preferences among members of the target audience. The present study, which targets high school teachers in Keiyo district of Kenya, thus aimed at providing useful data regarding channels of choice for accessing education materials as well as the various factors influencing such choices.

Additionally, it is important to understand whether teachers are an active audience that searches for information useful to their careers as educationists. The active audience perspective thus provides a framework for understanding the basic motivations for the various channel choices that high school teachers in Keiyo district make.

The assumption at the Ministry of Education as noted is that communication through ministry channels is sufficient in providing timely information on education to teachers in the field. The proposed study however offers a chance to investigate whether teachers prefer ministry of education information channels, or indeed, if there are other channels that they prefer and the reasons for this. This study thus endeavours to answer the following questions:

1. What factors influence channel preferences for accessing educational materials among high school teachers in Keiyo district

2. What are the preferred channels for accessing education materials among high school teachers in Keiyo district of Kenya
3. What proportion of teachers in Keiyo district actively search for information relating to their profession

## **1.2 Goals of the study**

The goals of this study are to:

1. Establish the factors influencing the choice of information channels for accessing educational materials among high school teachers in Keiyo district;
2. Identify and examine the socio-structural factors inhibiting the use of certain information channels for accessing educational materials among secondary school teachers in Keiyo district;
3. Establish whether teachers in Keiyo district are an active audience which proactively searches for information relating to their profession; and
4. Make specific recommendations on information channel preferences by secondary school teachers as well as factors, which inhibit use of certain channels.

## **1.3 Study Assumptions**

This study was guided by the following assumptions:

- That teachers make media channel choices from available functional alternatives to access educational materials and information, and that those choices are influenced by certain personal as well as environmental factors;
- That media use motives are guided by psychosocial motivations, resulting in the selection of a preferred medium or channel among functional alternatives.
- That media audiences are not passive actors in the communication process. They in fact engage in active information seeking behaviours
- That certain environmental and structural reasons inhibit use of certain information channels

## **1.4 Operational definitions**

### **1.4. 1. Information channel**

Most textbook definitions of the media explain channels as a means of transmission; a channel for carrying a message to an audience. Further, media channels or information channels can be defined as a means of physical transmission; a medium for carrying a message to an audience (Davis Foulger).

This study will however adopt Murphy's (1977, p. 12) definition of information channels. Murphy looks at a channel as the means by which a message is carried from sender to receiver.

#### 1.4.2. Psychological factors

Psychological factors refer to the entire gamut of factors that are unique to an individual and directly influence the choices that such individuals are likely to make. For instance, motivational levels, attitude, personal goals and perceptions

#### 1.4.3. The active audience

Active audience refers to an audience that overtly exhibits information seeking behaviours for instance subscribing to international magazines and other specialized professional bulletins.

#### 1.4.4. Social-structural factors

Social-structural factors refer to any other considerations that individuals take into account for instance cost, accessibility and ease of use before making choices. Such factors are conditioned by several social and environmental factors.

## **1.5 Rationale for the study**

Given the critical role that teachers play in translating educational policy into the desired reality, it is important to understand how they access relevant information needed to do this. The present study thus aims at establishing channel choices as well as some of the various factors that influence channel choices for accessing educational materials by teachers in Keiyo district.

Over the years, Kenya's Ministry of Education has mainly relied on its own structures to communicate with teachers on the ground. Ministry communication structures are top down in orientation. Information originating from headquarters passes through provincial, district and finally zonal offices before it reaches teachers in schools. There is an element of bureaucracy here, which slows information flow, thus making it rather unreliable.

Given this functional weakness inherent in Ministry of Education communication structures, it is important to understand what other functional choices high school teachers have to fill the gap.

Current debates on revamping the education system in Kenya have mainly centred on the economic costs that such an exercise would require. Little however is being said about how teachers at various levels of the education system should access such information. The Koech Commission is a good case in point where governmental efforts that have generated good recommendations on the educational sector in the country, but saying little in regard to how the information should reach the end user. (Koech report 2000)

Teachers can only be in a position to play a facilitative role in educational development if they have access to relevant and up to date information regarding educational development in the country as well as good knowledge of global trends in education. Knowledge regarding their information channel preferences is thus critical in developing strategies that ensure that vital information required by teachers is transmitted through channels that they will have little difficulty accessing.

For planning purposes especially at the education ministry, it is critical to ask questions regarding how teachers access vital information on education. Such questions are fundamental in identifying gaps regarding what channels teachers prefer vis-à-vis what is available.

Additionally, it helps identify the inhibiting factors that render certain channels unsuitable for use by teachers in certain geographical regions of Kenya. For instance, the use of Internet as an information source may not be as popular in many rural regions of Kenya.

This study also provides useful data that could be used to guide and inform intervention programmes like computer training programmes, mobile library services as well as provision of Internet connection for rural schools in the country to ensure that teachers have easy access to modern and therefore more efficient communication infrastructure.

The significance of investigating information sources preferred by teachers in Keiyo district also lies in the fact that such a study has the potential of generating essential information for policy makers regarding the various factors that influence choice of information sources. Such information is vital in making decisions regarding information dissemination. It is vitally important for the ministry of education to be sensitive to attendant factors like channel choice, ease of access and personal preferences as important determinants influencing teachers involvement in the country's educational reform programme.



A close reading of the 1976 Kamunge Report on Education in Kenya, the 1983 Mackay Report as well as the recent Koech Report of 2000, reveal that no effort was made to address issues regarding how the various recommendations would percolate down to teachers and other stakeholders.

Daniel Lerner (1958), Wilber Schramm (1964), as well as Everett Rodgers and Shoemaker (1966); suggest that information and the ease with which one can access it are important factors in any transformation process. Transformation in the educational sector is only possible in circumstances where teachers are given priority in terms of mechanisms of access to information so that they can translate the new vision with proper understanding and the necessary critical abilities that are needed in implementation.

Finally, the findings of this study are useful in highlighting the inhibitions for teachers' access and use of certain information channels. Such findings can in a fundamental way inform national educational planning efforts, which seek to involve teachers in educational reform efforts. Additionally, this study is also instrumental in helping to focus the attention of policy makers in the educational

sector on the primacy of information channels as vital cogs in the communication process.

The top-down information structure used by the Ministry of Education presupposes that teachers who are at the lower end of the ladder passively wait for information to trickle through from the national, provincial, district and zonal level administrative structures.

However audience studies by various scholars such as Joseph Klapper (1960) that talked of individual information seeking strategies among audiences, Katz and Wedell 1977; Wilcox 1978 suggest that attitudes towards a medium are important in predicting audience receptivity to messages from a source. This reveals fundamental knowledge regarding audiences and factors that influence choice of information channels.

Such knowledge is thus central in guiding our thoughts on whether teachers in Keiyo district are an active audience that searches for information from various sources and actively discriminates among the various choices available, thus only attending to those which satisfy their information needs without necessarily waiting to receive ministry of education communiqués through local ministry officials at the

district or zone levels. Secondly, it gives food for thought in reflecting over and questioning the postulations espoused by the big effects communication model which states that media audiences behave in a homogenous manner, even in their choice of channels for accessing information.

## **Chapter Two**

### **2.0 Literature Review**

This chapter is a review of theories of communication as well as other past studies that offer relevant conceptual framework for understanding audience channel preferences and factors that influence such choices. It particularly considers the postulations set forth in the uses and gratifications approach as a basis for understanding audience preferences and choices in regard to choice of information channels.

Reference to theories of communication is important in helping us to gain an understanding of the dynamics that influence behaviour and people's actions. This study's main concern of identifying the factors that influence channel preferences among high school teachers in Keiyo district of Kenya can clearly be explained within the context of a conceptual framework that draws from established theories that explain the behaviour of media audiences. Peter Nwosu (1995) notes that theory provides the common sense, assumptions and the intellectual guidance upon which research and, ultimately society are based.

Mclean (1972) sees mass communication as being part skill, part art, and part science. The emphasis on science is because mass

communication contains certain verifiable principles. Understanding how these principles work becomes a key for examining ways in which future communication can meet specific goals more effectively. Past studies have sought to explain different aspects of the communication process. For instance, attention has been given to the source, channels as well as messages. The focus of this present study is audiences and what they choose to do with information channels.

It is for this reason that this study makes reference to the work of various scholars who have studied media audiences following the uses and gratifications approach, as well as the big effects approach to explain the dynamic of audience preferences of channels for accessing information and media content that is relevant to their needs. This chapter also provides an elaborate conceptual background for understanding the active audience perspective and how this phenomenon becomes a basic determinant for influencing choices that people make regarding suitable channels for accessing information.

## **2.1 A Uses and Gratifications Approach**

The uses and gratifications approach arose originally in the 1940s and underwent a revival in the 1970s and 1980s. This approach originated as a reaction to traditional mass communication research emphasizing

the sender and the message. It on the contrary stressed the active audience and user of the media.

Uses and gratifications theory looks at what people do with media. Uses and gratifications theory was first propagated by theorists such as Herta Herzog (1942) and Paul Lazarsfeld (1944) as they studied radio listeners. Schroder notes that the uses and gratifications research, in defining media audiences as 'active', broke decisively with the dominant paradigm of media effects in the late 1950s, asking not what the media do to people, but what people do with media" According to David K. Perry, author of *Theory and Research in Mass Communication*, Elihu Katz gave uses and gratifications research its present name in the late 1950s.

One of the most famous studies done on uses and gratifications was by Wilbur Schramm and Lyle Parker; *Television in the Lives of Our Children*. In this study, Schramm and Parker looked to discover viewing behaviors; how these behaviors were affected by societal factors such as age, sex, intelligence, economic status, and so on; and what the effects were, such as emotional and cognitive effects. Since then there have been countless studies concerning this overarching theory.

Another pertinent factor to note is that the approach springs from a functionalist paradigm in the social sciences. It is an influential tradition in media research, which focuses on why people use particular media rather than on media content. In contrast to the concern of the 'media effects' tradition which focuses on what media

do to people, (which assumes a homogeneous mass audience and a 'hypodermic' view of media), uses and gratifications can be seen as part of a broader trend amongst media researchers which is more concerned with 'what people do with media', thus allowing for a variety of responses and interpretations. (Barwise and Ehrenberg 1988).

The uses and gratification theory suggests that media users play an active role in choosing and using the media. Users take an active part in the communication process and are goal oriented in their media use. It further says that a media user seeks out a media source that best fulfills the needs of the user. Uses and gratifications assume that the user has alternate choices to satisfy their need.

Uses and gratifications theory takes a more humanistic approach to looking at media use. Blumler and Katz believe that there is not merely one way that the populace uses media. Instead, they believe there are as many reasons for using the media, as there are media users. According to the theory, media consumers have a free will to decide how they will use the media and how it will affect them.

Blumler and Katz values are clearly seen by the fact that they believe that media consumers can choose the influence media has on them as well as the idea that users choose media alternatives merely as a means to an end. Uses and gratification is the optimist's view of the media. The theory takes out the possibility that the media can have an unconscious influence over our lives and how we view the world. The idea that we simply use the media to satisfy a given need does not seem to fully recognize the power of the media in today's society.

Uses and gratification theory can be seen in cases such as personal music selection. We select music not only to fit a particular mood but also in attempts to show empowerment or other socially conscience motives. There are many different types of music and we choose from them to fulfill a particular need.

Katz et al, (1974) further described the uses and gratifications approach as one concerned with the social and psychological origins of needs, which generate expectations of the mass media or other sources which lead to differential patterns of media exposure or engagement in other activities resulting in need gratifications and other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones.

Katz, Gurevitch and Haas 1973; Mcquail et al., 1972; Rosengren and Windahl 1972 indicate that among the most important assumptions of the uses and gratifications approach are that; 1. The audience is active, thus 2. Much of the media use can be conceived as goal directed, and when 4. Substantial audience initiative links needs to media choice, 5. Media consumption can fulfil a wide range of gratifications.

Katz and Blumler 1974 also observed that media use is purposive, goal directed behaviour, and therefore audiences are active and conscious



consumers of information, motives and discriminate among available functional alternatives. Members of any given audience thus actively discriminate among the available alternatives for the appropriate media channel that suits their needs and circumstances.

Philip Palmgreen et.al., assert that the uses and gratifications approach suggests that we ask not what the media do to people, but what people do with the media. This position, voiced the concerns of many mass communication researchers who felt the need for a shift to a vision of the mass communication process that more clearly embraced the concept of an active audience. An active audience will thus not just go for the prescribed channel especially in contexts where alternatives might exist.

Izcaray and McNelly (1987) found that audience members select specific media channels purposefully; radio and television for entertainment and newspapers for information about politics, government and crime.

In a 1991 study of media audiences in Freetown Sierra Leone, Professor Donald Taylor observed that audiences are driven to attend to particular media channels and content in relation to felt needs, motives, attitudes towards the media system and a plethora of other

social and psychological determinants of media use. Clearly, such a perspective forms a formidable conceptual background for any assessment that aims at investigating information sources preferred by a given audience.

The central assumption being examined in the present study is that there are certain factors that influence people's preferences for media channels. Further, that these factors result from people's needs, motivations and attitudes towards a media system.

Katz and Wedell 1977; Wilcox 1978 concluded that attitude towards a medium is important to predict audience receptivity to messages from that source. Shingi and Mody 1976 in their study did point out the fact that interpersonal communication and cultural values influence the degree to which new messages are received from particular sources.

The uses and effects model of communication specifically puts premium on preferences of information channels among audiences as an important aspect in media/audience interactions. Its basic explanations revolve around notions of audience initiative, coexistence of the mass media among functional alternatives to gratify felt needs,

and individual motivation to select content as well as sources (Taylor 1991)

The uses and gratifications approach recognizes that personality factors like mood can affect media choice. Zillmann (cited by McQuail 1987: 236) have shown the influence of *mood* on media choice: boredom encourages the choice of exciting content and stress encourages a choice of relaxing content. Similarly, mood could affect the channels people turn to for information.

The same TV programme may gratify different needs for different individuals. Different needs are associated with individual personalities, stages of maturation, backgrounds and social roles. Developmental factors seem to be related to some motives for purposeful viewing: e.g. Judith van Evra argues that young children may be particularly likely to watch TV in search of information and hence more susceptible to influence (Evra 1990: 177, 179).

The traditional models of communication view communication as a linear process, which starts with the communicator, the message and the receiver. In other words, for communication to occur, these three elements are all that is needed. Harold Laswell (1948) summarized the communication process as: Who says What to Whom through What channel.

However, according to other perspectives like the uses and gratifications as well as other more elaborate communication models like the Bernlund's transactional model, the communication process is much more complex than the postulations of the traditional linear models of communication. That factors such personality factors and the various other differences among the receiving audiences ultimately influence choice, access and the final use to which the communication will be put to.

In examining the role of the audience in a typical communication process, Kline and Tichenor (1972) make reference to the outstanding work by among others Katz, Blumler and Klapper (1959 – 1964) which is referred to as the study of information- seeking behavior. The distinguishing point of this work is the contrast that is clearly evident between this approach and the long dominant communication effects approach, which for instance is clearly illustrated in Schramm's (1954) structural model of communication. In that model, the key elements of communication are a communicator, message and audience, with arrows indicating that the major flow is from communicator to message to audience.

However, Kline and Tichenor note that the work done Katz, Blumlar and Klapper clearly shows that audiences are not passively sitting

waiting for whatever information through which ever channel. The information seeking argument shows that the arrow between the message and audience should indeed be reversed to indicate movement from audience to message.

The information seeking perspectives also recognizes the fact that people only attend to those channels and messages that fit their needs at that point in time. Additionally, certain attributes of individuals such as the traditional locator variables, level of education and sex are related to communication behavior patterns.

### **2.3. Social structural factors as determinants for channel preferences**

In considering the factors that influence audience choice of potential information channels, the uses and gratifications approach alone does not offer an exhaustive explanation. Indeed, no one theory is capable of doing this. This is why the present study also seeks to make reference to studies carried out elsewhere to determine the social – structural factors that determine channel preferences.

Factors like convenience of cost, availability and ease of access have been found to be central principles that are likely to influence choice of information channels. A study carried out by Susan M. Verlamoff et al, of the University of Georgia on homeowners and their choice of

channels for information on gardening, the findings resulted in a list of socio-structural factors identified as key determinants for choosing certain media channels by a given audience.

Cobourn & Donaldson, (1997), have asserted that to reach an audience, one must know it, and in particular, one must find out the obstacles preventing the use of a specific information channels. A survey of urban gardeners (Kerrigan, 1993) showed that the most frequently used sources were convenient and easy. Knox (1997) provided further evidence supporting the importance of convenience in the adoption of landscape practices.

Homeowners are motivated to adopt environmental landscape practices when practices are likely to reduce their workload, incur no extra cost, conform to neighborhood norms, and prevent environmental damage. Thus, convenience, accessibility, and low cost, drive consumers in their choice of goods and services, including information.

According to this study, information channels and sources that were convenient in terms of monetary value of acquisition as well as the ease of use were most preferred.

In yet another study aimed at empirically developing a model, referred to as information seeking and use process model (or ISU process model), that would meaningfully reflect real-life practice in information seeking and use process in the workplace, Bonnie Wai-yi Cheuk of Nanyang Technological University Singapore, among other findings came up with the following postulations; that participants use easily accessible, general information sources (e.g. magazines and Internet) in focus formulating situations. Their persistence in using any information source is low. However, in ideas confirming and ideas rejecting situations, people turned to use specific and authoritative information sources and channels.

He also established that participants "pick up" or "accept what people tell them" in task initiating and focus formulating situations. And in ideas confirming and ideas rejecting situations, they use more stringent criteria such as comparing data they gathered against: (1) expectation they have formed; (2) common sense; (3) standards and specifications; and (4) information gathered from various other sources. In Ideas finalizing situation, the criteria are relaxed when they only need senior and authoritative parties to double-confirm ideas.

In 2001, the national newspaper association of America carried out a study on the movie market. The study aimed at determining the importance of newspapers and newspaper related sources in motivating moviegoers to select and attend a movie at a theatre.

The results found that a number of factors influence movie choices and that consumers look to a variety of sources about movies. The 1999 study showed the strength of newspapers as a powerful source of information for consumers about movies. It further showed how newspapers editorial environment creates an engaging experience for consumers to get movie reviews and insights about coming attractions (NAA website)

## **2.4 Critical Perspectives Informing this Study**

From the foregoing analysis, several perspectives that have been central in informing this study emerge. Foremost is the shifting focus from looking at the communication process as a linear process which merely emphasizes sender, channel, message and receiver as its key components. Studies on the information seeking behaviours of audiences conducted by Katz, Lazarsfeld, Blumlar and others clearly point to many other equally important considerations which should be acknowledged when looking at how communication flows.



The central thesis of the uses and gratifications perspective puts credence on what the audience do with the media, including the conscious choices made at any point in time regarding which channels to attend to depending on their information needs. This indeed, is a central consideration guiding this study.

It is also worthy noting that the uses and gratifications approach recognizes the active role played by audiences in the communication process. It further acknowledges that audiences are goal oriented in their media use. Media users thus seek out for media sources that best fulfil their needs. This therefore presupposes that media users have alternate choices to satisfy their needs.

Several factors ranging from personal ones like one's mood, perceptions and attitude may determine the choices that are ultimately made. It also emerges that sections of the audience might be alienated from the communication process, not by choice, but because there are factors directly relating to channel selection which prevent them from participating. Klapper (1960) notes that the media function through a nexus of other mediating influences and forces that revolve around motivational criteria, individual information seeking strategies, and socio-structural considerations.

As opposed to the postulations of the big effects model, where audiences were seen as perceive and therefore not involved in any selective process in terms of choosing from the available alternatives, uses and gratifications approach is interested in audiences' sense of initiative in selecting suitable channels for accessing information from the available functional alternatives, as well as the factors which influence such choices.

Another critical perspective informing this study borrows directly from Mcquail's 1969, view that even among individuals of similar demographic and ideological backgrounds, the motivations to attend to various media and particular messages within them and the gratifications obtained from exposure vary widely. Teachers in Keiyo district may be viewed as a homogenous group, however, it is important to examine whether this homogeneity is reflected in the choices they make in regard to channels for accessing information.

## **Chapter Three**

### **3.0 Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

This section presents the methodological techniques used in the study. It defines the scope of the study, describes the population of interest, sampling procedures, data collection techniques, evaluation instruments used and the framework of analysis adopted for the study.

#### **3.1 Study population**

The target population for this study comprised all high school teachers in Keiyo district comprised the study population. Keiyo district has twenty-eight secondary schools. All the teachers in the twenty-eight secondary schools comprised the study population.

#### **3.3 Sampling strategy**

##### **a) Multi-stage Sampling**

The study adopted a multistage sampling strategy. At one instance, a purposive sampling approach was used to come up with twelve secondary schools from the twenty-eight in the district. The purposive technique was deemed appropriate in this case because the study had to be representative along the following dichotomies:

1. Urban/rural schools
2. Girls/boys schools/mixed schools
3. Provincial/district schools

A sample that reflects the above categories is important to the study since some of the important variables under study directly draw from these classifications. Additionally, this technique of sampling was adopted with the aim of ensuring that an appropriate mix of respondents were surveyed so that results are seen to reflect more accurately the study population.

b) Systematic sampling

At the second level of sampling, a sample of fifteen teachers was drawn from each selected school. The sample of fifteen was randomly drawn from teachers' lists for each school. Teacher lists were obtained from the local district education office as well as individual schools. The figure of fifteen was thought to be representative since most schools in Keiyo district have an average of 30 teachers.

### **3.4 Data Sources and techniques of data collection**

Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were employed. A structured questionnaire was used to collect quantifiable data on areas of interest from survey respondents. The use of qualitative techniques such as one-on-one key informant interviews

was quite essential in extracting important information that could not be tapped using quantitative techniques. Guide notes were used to guide key informant discussions with high school principals, school heads of departments, as well as zonal and district education officials in Keiyo district. Other secondary sources of data like ministry of education manuals and circulars were used to generate further data to fill any gaps in knowledge.

### **3.5 Data analysis, interpretation and presentation**

The data collected from the sample was cleaned and collapsed for analysis, triangulation and synthesis. Survey data was coded, processed and tabulated for analysis and interpreted using descriptive statistics, while the qualitative data derived from key informant interviews were analyzed along thematic matrices, interpreted and then integrated with other data to enrich the results. The analysis made a deliberate attempt to derive succinct themes and categories in order to answer the study's guide questions.

### **3.6 Problems and limitations of the study**

A key limitation of the study was mainly administrative. Lack of financial resources made it difficult to draw a larger sample of teachers for study as had originally been anticipated. However, the sample that was ultimately drawn was still sizeable enough to realise the desired results. It was also difficult and tedious getting access to essential information from the ministry of education headquarters.

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## **Chapter Four: Discussion of the Study Findings**

### **1.1. Introduction**

This section of the report presents the empirical findings of the study. A survey biased research method was employed to elicit data from 62 respondents. These data were then crosschecked and buttressed with other data obtained from key informant interviews (see methodology section). The latter yielded much of the detailed nuances on views regarding channel preferences among high school teachers in Keiyo district.

The first part of the section, gives a description of the distribution of respondents across gender categories, followed by a presentation of the various media channels for accessing educational materials preferred by high school teachers in Keiyo district. Factors that influence media channel preferences are also thematically presented indicating the degree to which each factor influences the choice of media channel that teachers make.

It concludes with recommendations that are deemed important especially for policy planners at the ministry of education headquarters to consider in their information dissemination strategies. The recommendations are derived from the in depth analysis of data derived from the various sources and multiple methodologies deployed.

## **1.2. Social Demographic Characteristics of respondents**

Table 4.1 shows how respondents were distributed across gender categories.

*Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender*

| <b>Gender</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Male          | 40               | 64.5              |
| Female        | 22               | 35.5              |
| Total         | 62               | 100               |

## **1.3. Information channels preferred by high school teachers in Keiyo district**

Teachers ranked various information channels for accessing education materials on a scale of 0 to 5. Five in this case denoted the highest degree of preference, while zero was the lowest.

### **1.1.1. The Radio**

Almost half the respondents interviewed thought radio was a most suitable channel for accessing education materials. This could mean that radio is a readily available channel of communication in comparison to the internet for instance. Radio is also a powerful information and educational tool for many people. From a uses and gratifications perspective, it is clear that teachers in Keiyo district are not only able to segregate from available functional alternatives but that they also can rank the various media channels depending on



various personal as well as environmental reasons which determine use

The preference for radio among teachers could also be due to the fact that, radio use does not require any amount of specialized knowledge or skills as is the case with channels like the internet. The fact that teachers as an audience are able to choose radio as the channel through which their professional information needs are gratified confirms the active audience postulation put forth in the uses and gratifications communication approach. See table 4.2

*Table 4.2: Radio as a channel for accessing educational materials*

| <b>Ranking</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 0              | 3                | 4.8               |
| 1              | 5                | 11.3              |
| 3              | 10               | 16.1              |
| 4              | 13               | 21.0              |
| 5              | 20               | 32.3              |
| Total          | 62               | 100.0             |

### **1.1.2. Newspapers**

Newspapers were also ranked high as suitable channels for accessing educational information. The cost element in regard to newspapers is not an inhibitive factor for Teachers in Keiyo, as is the case with other less endowed groups in society. Generally, newspapers as channels of communication carry a wide range of information on diverse subjects of interest for professional people like teachers. Predictably then most responses seemed to favor newspapers.

Consequently, it would seem that audiences have affinity to certain channels of communication mainly due to the diversity of the information as well as the content appeal. This observation clearly approximates the uses and gratifications assumptions on audience initiative and ability to choose channels that fit their needs.

Katz et al 1973 observed that the manner in which we use newspapers, the gratifications often sought from them, is in some measure dependant on the user's level of education, age and economic status. This situation is not in any way different among teachers in Keiyo district. The strong preference for newspapers as channels for accessing information among teachers is also reflective of their level of education compared to other groups in society. Additionally, it would also appear that newspapers as an elitist channel for accessing information are more stimulating academically compared to other channels.

Table 4.3 shows most respondents scored 3 to 4, thus giving newspapers an average to above average score. See table 4.3 for full results

*Table 4.3: Newspapers as suitable channels for accessing educational materials*

| <b>Ranking</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1              | 7                | 11.3              |
| 2              | 11               | 21.0              |
| 3              | 13               | 21.0              |
| 4              | 21               | 33.9              |
| 5              | 8                | 12.9              |
| Total          | 62               | 100.00            |

### **1.1.3. Ministry of education circulars and bulletins**

The ministry of education circulars and bulletins were ranked poorly as channels of preference for accessing educational materials. Table 1.3 shows most respondents scored 1 to 3, thus clearly indicating that ministry bulletins and circulars were inadequate as channels for accessing relevant educational materials.

Most of the information derived from key informant interviews indicated that ministry channels were not preferred by most teachers due to delays in information relay as well as a lack of completeness and professionalism in information presentation. Some head teachers observed that the inefficiency associated with Ministry of Education channels of communication had led to a communication gap between the Ministry and ordinary teachers in the field. Their perceptions and expectations of the Ministry of Education channels reflected a certain sense of frustration.

The implication here is that the Ministry of Education has to tune its communication plan to incorporate a uses and gratifications perspective that takes into cognizance the reasons why people attend to media channels. Clearly, these findings show that where a channel of information can be relied for complete, consistent and reliable information, then they are likely to be chosen by users. Other reasons, might be the that they are academically more stimulating than others.

*Table 4.4: Ministry of education circulars and bulletins*

| <b>Ranking</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 0              | 1                | 1.6               |
| 1              | 14               | 22.6              |
| 2              | 14               | 22.6              |
| 3              | 16               | 25.8              |
| 4              | 8                | 12.9              |
| 5              | 6                | 9.7               |
| Total          | 62               | 100               |

#### **1.1.4. Television**

Television generally received a fair score as a channel for accessing educational information. Television is strong tool for learning and self education for most people. This could be the reason why teachers in Keiyo have a preference for it. Another reason has to do with the fact that television as a medium of communication offers a wide range of interesting programming which most times is also educational.

*Table 4.5 shows the ranking on a scale of 0 to 5*

| <b>Ranking</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 0              | 1                | 1.6               |
| 1              | 8                | 12.9              |
| 2              | 12               | 19.4              |
| 3              | 15               | 24.2              |
| 4              | 16               | 25.8              |
| 5              | 9                | 14.5              |
| Total          | 61               | 100               |

### **1.1.5. Colleagues**

On the average, half the number of correspondents indicated that they used colleagues as sources of educational materials and information. Each member of an audience is not an isolated individual; individuals live their lives in social groups- families, neighbors, fellow workers and formal associations. The element of interdependency is thus created. People do not just rely on each other for material support, but also for information and learning. This finding clearly confirms Joseph Klapper's point that communication works through a nexus of other socially mediated factors.

### **1.1.6. Magazines and other specialized publications**

Survey results showed that most of the respondents preferred magazines and other specialized publications as suitable channels for accessing educational materials.

Most of the views from key informant interviews with department heads in selected schools in Keiyo predominantly showed that most teachers in the district had a fair access to specialized educational publications. Teachers thus exhibit a strong information seeking behavior since they are able to subscribe to specialized magazines to get access to more technical information on their profession. The search for further channels of information distinguishes teachers as information seeking. It also expands the range of useful channels of information available at their disposal for accessing educational materials See table 4.6

*Table 4.6: Magazines and other specialized publications*

| <b>Ranking</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 0              | 1                | 1.6               |
| 1              | 6                | 9.7               |
| 2              | 18               | 29.0              |
| 3              | 17               | 27.9              |
| 4              | 11               | 17.7              |
| 5              | 8                | 12.9              |
| Total          | 61               | 100.0             |

### **1.1.7. The Internet**

The internet had the least score as a channel for accessing educational information. Most of the respondents scored 0 to 2, thus making the internet the least preferred channel for accessing educational materials. Key informant interviews with school heads showed that most schools in the district did not have access to internet facilities. Additionally, even in cases where internet facilities were available at local centers, most teachers were either least interested or did not know how to use the internet as a source of information. See table 4.7

*Table 4.7: The Internet*

| <b>Ranking</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 0              | 30               | 48.4              |
| 1              | 12               | 19.4              |
| 2              | 5                | 8.1               |
| 3              | 4                | 6.5               |
| 4              | 5                | 8.1               |
| 5              | 5                | 8.1               |
| Total          | 61               | 100.0             |

### **1.1.8. Seminars and workshops**

Teachers' seminars and workshops were fairly ranked as channels for accessing relevant educational materials. Key informant interviews with subject heads of departments showed that a fair number of workshops and seminars take place in the district on various educational issues of interest and relevance to teachers. See table 4.8

*Table 4.8: Seminars and workshops*

| <b>Ranking</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1              | 8                | 12.9              |
| 2              | 10               | 16.1              |
| 3              | 17               | 27.4              |
| 4              | 15               | 24.2              |
| 5              | 11               | 17.7              |
| Total          | 61               | 100               |

### **1.1.9. Other channels**

The other channels for accessing educational materials identified by the teachers included the district educational resource centre and mobile libraries. However, the results showed that such channels are not very popular with teachers.

## **1.2. The Channels used by the ministry of education**

Regarding how the ministry of education communicated with teachers in the field, a majority of the responses pointed to circulars and

letters, school principles and head teachers, the media, seminars and the inspectorate. Most of the responses however showed that the ministry of education mostly communicated with teachers through circulars and letters.

Key informant interviews with school heads also suggested that the ministry of education's preferred channel of communication were circulars and letters, which most teachers found impersonal and sometimes imposing.

### **1.3. Efficiency of channels used by the ministry of education**

Regarding the degree of efficiency of the channels of information used by the ministry of education, survey results indicated that slightly less than half the respondents indicating that they found them to be efficient. Opinion here was split with an almost similar proportion of respondents saying that they found them not efficient.

Those who found ministry information channels not efficient pointed out reasons including, inaccessibility, accessibility, timeliness, efficiency, inefficiency, dependency, poor communication and delays. Delays of information were sighted as the biggest problem with ministry of education information channels.

On the other hand, those who found ministry channels being efficient pointed efficiency as the greatest consideration. See tables 4.9 and 4.1.0



*Table 4.9: Efficiency of channels used by the ministry of education*

| <b>Response</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes             | 30               | 48.4              |
| No              | 27               | 43.5              |
| I don't know    | 3                | 4.8               |
| Total           | 60               | 100               |

*Table 4.10: Reasons for responses in 4.9*

| <b>Factors identified</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Inaccessibility           | 4                | 6.5               |
| Accessibility             | 3                | 4.8               |
| Time                      | 3                | 4.8               |
| Efficiency                | 9                | 14.5              |
| Inefficiency              | 3                | 4.8               |
| Dependency                | 1                | 1.6               |
| Poor communication        | 4                | 6.5               |
| Good communication        | 2                | 3.2               |
| Delays                    | 15               | 24.2              |
| Missing                   | 18               | 71.0              |
| Total                     | 62               | 100               |

#### **1.4. Recommended channels of communication**

Asked to recommend other suitable channels most respondents suggested the internet as a possible channel that the ministry could also utilize. Other suggested channels included seminars and workshops, field officers and inspectors, circulars and newsletters and the media. See table 4.11

*Table 4.11: Suggested channels*

| <i>Suggested channels</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Seminars and workshops    | 6                | 9.7               |
| Field officers/Inspectors | 6                | 9.7               |
| Internet                  | 21               | 33.9              |
| Circulars and newsletters | 9                | 14.5              |
| Media                     | 6                | 9.7               |
| Missing                   | 14               | 22.6              |
| Total                     | 62               | 100               |

## **1.5. Factors that influence channel preferences**

### **1.1.1. Personal factors**

#### **Mood and attitude towards a channel**

Survey results showed that most respondents were fairly influenced by their moods at any one time in their choice of channels. Over sixty percent of the respondents scored 2 to 5 on a scale that measuring the degree to which mood as a personality factor influenced their choice of information channels. See table 4.12

*Table 4.12: Mood as a factor influencing channel preferences*

| <b>Scale</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|--------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 0            | 11               | 17.7              |
| 1            | 8                | 12.9              |
| 2            | 13               | 21.0              |
| 3            | 14               | 22.6              |
| 4            | 13               | 21.0              |
| 5            | 3                | 4.8               |
| Total        | 62               | 100               |

### **1.1.2. Personal career goals**

An overwhelming number of respondents identified personal career goals as a major factor in their choice of information channels for accessing educational materials. Over eighty percent of the respondents scored 3 to 5 on a scale 0 to 5. See table 4.13

*Table 4.13: Personal Career goals*

| <b>Scale</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|--------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 0            | 1.6              | 1.6               |
| 1            | 6.5              | 6.5               |
| 2            | 4.8              | 4.8               |
| 3            | 21.0             | 21.0              |
| 4            | 24.2             | 24.2              |
| 5            | 41.9             | 41.9              |
| Total        | 62               | 100.0             |

### **1.1.3. Influence of colleagues**

The influence of colleagues as a factor influencing channel preferences was rated fairly. The implication noted here is that personal factors hold are mainly the key to determining which channels will receive attention. See table 4.14

*Table 4.14: Influence of colleagues and friends*

| <b>Scale</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|--------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 0            | 3                | 4.8               |
| 1            | 8                | 12.9              |
| 2            | 11               | 17.7              |
| 3            | 19               | 30.6              |
| 4            | 14               | 22.6              |
| 5            | 3                | 4.8               |
| Missing      | 4                | 6.5               |
| Total        | 62               | 100.0             |

## **1.6. Environmental/structural factors that influence your choice for a channel**

### **1.1.1. Whether media is visual/audio**

Survey results showed that, visual media, in this case television was the most preferred. Audio media, in this case radio scored less than any other media type.

*Table 15: Visual/audio as influencing factors*

| <b>Visual/audio</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Visual              | 28               | 45.2              |
| Audio               | 3                | 4.8               |
| Missing             | 31               | 50.0              |
| Total               | 62               | 100.0             |

### **1.1.2. Access as a factor**

The internet was identified as the least accessible channel by most of the respondents. Newspapers were identified as the most accessible, with only five percent of the respondents saying they did not have ready access to them. Key informant interviews with school principles indicated that most schools in the district did not have access to the internet.

It was further revealed that internet facilities could only be found in Eldoret and Iten towns, which are the nearest urban centres. Most teachers however, it was pointed out do not have the time to travel to these centres as often as they would wish to get to use the internet. Respondents indicated that radio and television were quite accessible, with only five to six respondents saying they could not access them. See table

*Table 4.16: Accessibility (degree of difficult in accessing channel)*

| <b>Type of channel</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Internet               | 8                | 12.9              |
| Magazines              | 7                | 11.3              |
| Radio                  | 6                | 9.7               |
| Newspapers             | 5                | 8.1               |
| No response            | 26               | 41.9              |
| Total                  | 62               | 100.0             |

### **1.1.3. Availability of channel/media type in schools**

In comparison to other types of mediums, newspapers were the most available. Interviews with head teachers revealed that most schools were regular subscribers of daily newspapers which would then be made available through school libraries for teachers and students. In the very remote schools, newspapers were the most common channel for receiving news on educational issues as well as other general issues like politics since in such areas even television and radio reception is poor. See table 4.17

*Table 4.17: Degree of availability of channel/media type in school*

| <b>Channel type</b>  | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Newspapers/bulletins | 17               | 27.4              |
| Mobile phones        | 1                | 1.6               |
| Periodicals          | 3                | 4.8               |
| Television           | 7                | 11.3              |
| No response          | 34               | 45.2              |
| Total                | 62               | 100.0             |

#### **1.1.4. Ability to apply technology**

Regarding ability to apply technology as an inhibiting factor, the internet was identified as the only channel that was difficult to use in this respect. Indeed, interviews with school principles and school heads of departments had revealed that most teachers did not have good computer skills to enable them use the internet. Some head teachers indicated that they had in recent times send a section of the teaching staff out on short training course so as to develop capacity in the use of modern communication technologies like the internet. On the whole, survey results showed that twenty-five percent of respondents could not use computers.

### **1.1.5. Affordability of channel/media type**

Radio and newspapers were identified by most respondents as the most affordable channels for accessing education materials. The internet was identified as the most expensive channel. See table 4.18

*Table 4.18: Degree of affordability of channel*

| Channel type | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Television   | 9         | 14.5       |
| Internet     | 20        | 32.3       |
| Newspapers   | 5         | 8.1        |
| Radio        | 2         | 3.2        |
| Missing      | 26        | 40.8       |
| Total        | 62        | 100.0      |

### **1.1.6. Active audience perspective**

To measure the degree to which teachers in Keiyo district exhibit active information seeking behavior, respondents were asked whether they subscribed to any specialized magazines and news bulletins related to their profession. Survey results showed that over half the number of respondents did not subscribe to any specialized publications or news bulletins related to their profession. However a sizeable group did subscribe to some publications, which are listed elsewhere in this report. See table 4.19



*Table 4.19: Subscription to specialized magazines/bulletins*

| Response    | frequency | Percentage |
|-------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes         | 17        | 27.4       |
| No          | 44        | 71.0       |
| No response | 1         | 1.6        |
| Total       | 62        | 100.0      |

The small fraction that subscribes to specialized magazines identified the following publications.

- Today in Africa
- Business magazine
- Teachers image
- Parents magazine
- Education and training magazine

Asked whether they made reference to the weekly Career and education pull out in the East African Standard, a majority of respondents indicated that they did indeed read it and that they found it useful. See tables 2.9 and 3.0

*Table 4.20: Career and Education weekly magazine*

| <b>Response</b> | <b>frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes             | 39               | 62.9              |
| No              | 23               | 37.1              |
| Total           | 62               | 100.0             |

*Table 4.21: If Career and Education weekly is useful*

| <b>Response</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes             | 44               | 71.0              |
| No              | 9                | 14.5              |
| No              | 9                | 14.5              |
| response        |                  |                   |
| Total           | 62               | 100.0             |

### **1.1.7. Visits to the local teachers' resource centre**

Over half the number respondents indicated that they did not visit the local teachers' resource centre located in Iten Town. Most head teachers indicated during some of the key informant interviews that the centre was not properly equipped; however, be as it may they still felt that teachers were not using the centre effectively. Heads of departments indicated that they have occasionally used the centre to access valuable educational materials for their departments. See table 4.22

*Table 4.22: Visits to the local resource centre*

| <b>Response</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes             | 23               | 37.1              |
| No              | 39               | 62.9              |
| Total           | 62               | 100.0             |

Slightly, less than half the respondents thought the local resource centre was a useful information for accessing educational related

information. The reason for this partly lies in the fact that high school teachers in Keiyo do not actively search for information beyond what is readily available in their immediate environment at school.

However, the other structural reasons were mentioned during the various key informant interviews with heads of departments and heads of schools. Many decried the state of the resource centre, but also blamed teachers whom they described as being passive information seekers. See table 4.23.

*Table 4.23: Whether the local resource centre is useful*

| <i>Response</i>    | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>percentage</i> |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Yes</i>         | <i>29</i>        | <i>46.8</i>       |
| <i>No</i>          | <i>24</i>        | <i>38.7</i>       |
| <i>No response</i> | <i>9</i>         | <i>14.5</i>       |
| <i>Total</i>       | <i>62</i>        | <i>100.0</i>      |

### **1.1.8. Whether information from the ministry of education is enough for teachers needs**

Over half the respondents were sure that information was not enough for their needs. Indeed, just about ten percent thought that information from the ministry satisfied their professional needs. See table 4.24

*Table 4.24: Whether information from the ministry of education is enough*

| <b>Response</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes             | 10               | 16.1              |
| No              | 52               | 83.9              |
| Total           | 62               | 100.0             |

This result reflected the dire lack of consistent information transmission from the Ministry of Education to teachers in the field hence compounding the feeling of alienation alluded to earlier. This further explains why Ministry of Education information channels are not favored by teachers since they do not provide complete and consistent information to meet their needs.

## **Chapter Five**

### **5.1. Summary and Conclusion**

The results of this study show that high school teachers in Keiyo district access educational materials and other information related to their careers and professional work using a host of information channels. The range of channels identified includes radio, newspapers, television, magazines, workshops and seminars.

However the study also showed that teachers actively decide from which information channels they will get such information. Individual decisions regarding suitable channels are mainly influenced by personal information needs, as well as various structural factors from within their environment. Some of the personality factors that influence choice of channels include, individual attitudes and perceptions towards a given media channel, as well as personal career and professional goals.

The findings also show that teachers in Keiyo district are an active audience who discriminate among available functional alternatives. This means that they prefer certain media channels over others for very specific personal individual reasons. Newspapers and the radio were for instance the most preferred channels. The element of cost in the case of newspapers did not seem to hinder teachers' access to them. Katz et al 1973 observed that the manner in which we use newspapers, the gratifications often sought from them, is in some

measure dependant on the users' level of education, age and economic status. The results of this study confirm this position.

This study has also shown that personal considerations such as one's career aspirations are important in their choice of information channels that is most suited to their needs. High school teachers in Keiyo district were influenced to choose certain channels for accessing information because of personal career or other professionally related motivations. The results further showed that teachers subscribed to various professional magazines as a way of furthering their career and professional goals, hence confirming the active perspective put forth in the uses and gratifications approach.

The channels of communication used by the Ministry of Education were lowly rated by the teachers. This clearly showed that there is a disconnect between teachers in the field and their parent ministry. Most of the respondents indicated that the channels used by the ministry to communicate with teachers in the field were ineffective. They said that it took a long time for information from the ministry to reach them. They thus preferred to access information through more reliable channels like radio and newspapers. In addition, the results confirmed that information channels that are slow and inefficient are not suitable at all for gratifying teachers' daily information needs.

Given the ineffectiveness associated with the Ministry of Education channels, teachers made suggestions for channels that suit their needs. Their decisions were mainly influenced by personal as well as social-structural factors. The active audience perspective puts premium on the fact that audience will determine which channels, what information should get to them.

From the foregoing, one can conclude that media audiences, what ever there location, are not passive as had been claimed by the big effects theorists of the nineteen twenties. The strong influence of personality factors like mood and attitude helps disapprove this notion that suggested among other things that media audiences were homogenous and by extension, they were bound to attend to the same media channels without objections or exercising the privilege of choice in regard to what suited their needs and circumstances.

The results also suggest that high school teachers in Keiyo district exercise a degree of choice and preference in regard to the channels of information that they ultimately attend to in search of information relevant to their profession.

The fact that high school teachers in Keiyo district can discriminate among available media channels, and even suggest what channels they would prefer the ministry of education to use in communicating with them, lends weight to the key assumption, that teachers make media channel choices from available functional alternatives for accessing educational materials and information, and that those

choices are influenced by certain personal as well as environmental factors

Additionally, it makes sense to conclude that media use motives are guided by psychosocial motivations, resulting in the selection of a preferred medium or channel among functional alternatives. The plethora of personality factors that this study focused on provide evidence to prove that audiences are guided in their choice of media channels by certain psychosocial motivations. These motivations may directly relate to personality factors like mood, the influence of friends and colleagues as well as personal aspirations.

Although high school teachers in Keiyo district do not often subscribe to special educational magazines and bulletins related to their career and professional work, it is however clear from the findings of this study that they are an active audience that proactively searches for information. Indeed, the results prove that teachers in Keiyo district exhibit active information seeking behaviour, in line with the active audience perspective as suggested in the uses and gratifications theory of communication research.

The results of this study also put credence to Katz and Lazarsfeld's assertion that audiences are not only active, but also heterogeneous. Different members of society possess different character traits, live in different cultures, adhere to different values and therefore are bound to make varied choices and be affected differently by mass media.



The results of this study also lead us to ponder over the fact that there is a strong part that people play in the flow of information in any given communication process. Individual high school teachers in Keiyo district have a pretty good idea what channels of information serve them better. Like the involved audience that they are, they proactively make suggestions of preferred channels through which the ministry of education should communicate with them.

Additionally, teachers in Keiyo district point out the problems and shortcomings of the various channels of information currently being used by the ministry. They know that those channels are slow, inefficient and unprofessional, hence their suggestions on alternatives. The uses and gratifications approach recognises the centrality of members of the audience in a communication act. This proactive approach by high school teachers in Keiyo district can be seen in the same light.

Given the fact that teachers are officially recognised as the end point for translating educational policy into practice, it is important that such recognition is informed by their views especially in regard to how information is transmitted to them. The results of this study suggest that the time for such kind of thinking in the ministry of education has come.

The ministry's primary audience (teachers) know what they want, and how they want it. It is time that policy especially on information dissemination started incorporating views of teachers from different parts of the country regarding how information should be

communicated to them. If teachers have to function optimally as the movers of policy on the ground, a strategy that seeks to bring them into the mass communication decision making process at the ministry level has to be developed.

The study also proves that there are certain key structural or environmental factors such as the ease with which a channel can be accessed, availability and cost which inhibit use of certain channels of information thus ultimately influencing the choice that audiences can make regarding what channels to attend to.

Such structural factors include accessibility, ease of use and the cost element involved. The internet for instance was the least preferred channel for accessing educational materials. From the views picked through key informant interviews with heads of schools, internet use is not a very popular phenomenon among high teachers in Keiyo district. The fact that many of them do not possess computer skills incapacitates their ability to use the net as a channel for accessing relevant career and professional information.

Availability and access were also important considerations. Although a few may possess the skills to use the internet, its availability especially in the very remote areas of Keiyo limits the choices that can be made in this regard. The newspaper and radio were thus the most preferred media channels because they are available.

A lot was mentioned regarding information channels adopted by the ministry of education. Most teachers indicated that channels used by the ministry were not adequate given the fact that information takes a

long time to reach the end user on the ground. High school teachers in Keiyo district thus put premium on the speed with which a certain channels can deliver information to the end user. Radio and newspapers were in this regard seen as the better options.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The results of this study are instructive especially to the country's Ministry of Education. Teachers are the primary implementers of educational policies in the country. However, despite this central role, there seems to be an information gap between them and the parent ministry. This obviously has implications on how well policies are implemented. The suggestion is that the ministry of education should be more sensitive to the channels of communication that are more suited to the needs and circumstances of teachers in the country.

Additionally, Ministry policies regarding what suitable communication frameworks for reaching teachers in the field should be sensitive to audience needs. The results of this study show that audiences have ultimate control over what channels they will attend to. The Ministry should therefore change and adapt to this reality. It is clear that given the centrality of audiences in the communication process, an institution cannot develop a communication strategy that works efficiently as to address the needs of the target audience if some of these considerations have not been taken into account.

It is not prudent to assume that media audiences are inactive and therefore will accept any channels of communication that the sender decides to use. On the contrary, as indicated by the results of this

study, it is clear that there is a role that people play in the communication process. Thus for communication to be successful, this role has to be acknowledged. The Ministry of Education should as a matter of priority should begin to rethink the manner in which it communicates with teachers.

National initiatives regarding the development of the countries educational sector should also address the question of how teachers access information relevant to their work. So far it would seem that this question has not been given due attention by policy makers in the Ministry of Education.

A uses and gratifications approach to understanding the choices and preferences that teachers make in regard to media channels is critical in helping us understand why there is very little communication between the Ministry of Education and its primary target audience, the teachers. The instructive point here is that effective communication is closely linked to audience consumption processes. If information is supposed to bring about change, it must however be acknowledged that the effects process starts with an active selector of media channels and content based on felt needs for surveillance and other special interests.

# **Appendix One**

## **Factors That Influence Channel Preferences For Accessing Educational Materials Among High School Teachers In Keiyo District**

### **Questionnaire for High School teachers**

#### **Bio-data**

District-----

School.....

1. Name of respondent-----  
-----
2. Gender  
i) Male  
ii) Female
3. Age\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Channel preferences for educational materials**

1. Rank the following channels on a scale of 0 to 5, to indicate degree of preference for each. 5 denotes highest level of preference- Tick against a number for each

1. Radio            0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2. Newspapers        0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
3. Ministry of education circulars and bulletins        0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
4. Television    0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
5. Colleagues 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

6. Magazines and other specialized publications 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

7. Internet 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

8. Seminars and workshops 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

2. Are there any other channels not included above that you use in accessing education materials? If yes, please state them.

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3. How does the ministry of education communicate with teachers in the field?

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4. Are the channels used by the ministry of education are efficient in relaying in information to teachers in the field?

1. Yes
2. No
3. I don't know

5. Give reasons for your answer in 3 above.

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**5. In your view, what other channels would you recommend for the ministry?**

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**Factors that influence channel preferences**

***Personal factors:***

7. What Personal factors influence your choice for a channel? Rank the following factors on a scale of 0 to 5. The highest limit represents most influence.

- 1. Attitude (whether you Like/dislike)      0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- 2. Your moods      0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- 3. Your career goals      0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- 4. The influence from colleagues and friends      0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- 5. What other personal factors influence your choice for a channel?

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**Other factors**

9. Which of the following environmental/structural factors influence your choice for a channel? Tick on the factor and give an example of the channel you may be referring to.

| <b>Factor</b>                 | <b>Channel</b> |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Whether media is visual/audio |                |
| Accessibility of channel      |                |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Availability of channel/media type in your school/locality |  |
| Ability to apply technology e.g. internet use              |  |
| Affordability of channel/media type                        |  |

**Active Audience- Information seeking behavior**

10. Do you subscribe to any specialized magazines and bulletins on education related issues?

- d. Yes
- e. No

11. If yes, which magazines do you subscribe to?

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12. Do you read the weekly Career and Education pullout in the East African Standard?

- d. Yes
- e. No

13. Do you find it useful?

- a. Yes
- b. No

14. Do you visit the local teachers' educational resource center for the latest information on education trends in the country?

- a. Yes
- b. No



15. Is the local teachers' resource center a useful information resource for you?

- a. Yes
- b. No

16. Is the information you receive from the ministry of education through bulletins and circulars enough for your needs?

- a. Yes
- b. No

## **Appendix Two**

### **Key Informant Interview Guide**

***Interviews with Heads of schools, Subject heads of departments and local education officers***

1. Do teachers in your school actively search for information relating to their career and professional development?
2. What channels of educational materials are available within the school for use by teachers in accessing extra materials for their work?
3. What in your view are some of the factors that prevent teachers from using certain types of information channels?

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