HEADTEACHERS' COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NYANDO DISTRICT, KENYA

BY

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for any degree in any other university.

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                                         30TH. NOV. 2005

This research project has been presented for examination with my approval as university supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my loving husband Mathews, A. Awino for his love, support

and advice during the time of study.

To my parents Rev. Jactone, O. Agolla and Mrs Pamela Odhiambo for their unending

love, support and encouragement.

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to determine whether head teachers communication strategies affect performance in public secondary schools in Nyando District. The researcher sought to find out the methods of communication used by headteachers in the district, those methods preferred by students and whether a relationship exists between communication and performance.

Descriptive survey was used in the study that targeted 30 public secondary schools. 30 headteachers, 150 teachers and 270 students participated in the study. Questionnaires were used as the main data collection instrument.

The analysis of data revealed the following:

1. That the category of school with reference to composition of learners does not affect the way headteacher's communication.

2. School assemblies, staff meetings, communication through head of department are the most preferred methods while least preference is given to facial expression and school magazines.

3. The relationship between academic performance and communication is directly proportional.

4. Students who perform better are those who are effectively communicated to by their headteachers.

5. The teachers stated that staff meetings, written memos, staff reports, consultations and holding staff meetings for both students and teachers are the most effective communication methods.

6. There are certain conditions which reduce effective communication in school situations and these are: Distortion, language barriers, absenteeism on the part of the recipients and the senders and both parties should strive to eliminate these barriers.

7. An all inclusive method of communication that incorporates both headteachers, teachers and students' representatives make communication faster and efficient.

8. Students preferred face to face communication, being addressed to in the assemblies, open forums and perfects body.

The study further gave recommendations that will help in improving communication in secondary schools and these are:

1. Computer education and training should be intensified in secondary school to enable easy access of information.

2. More training for headteachers should be initiated by the government through K.E.S.I. and M.O.E.S.T. for efficient management of schools.

3. Headteachers should improve their school's networking systems example telephones, notice boards and suggestions boxes in these schools where they don't exist.

4. Head teachers should identify a communication method that is inclusive and accessible to all members of school community to enhance efficiency.

5. The entire school community should strive to eliminate those conditions that reduce effective communication among them.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B.ED.	:	Bachelor of Education
B.O.G	:	Board of Governors
D.E.O.	:	District Education Officer
Dip. EDU	:	Diploma in Education
K.A.C.E.	:	Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education
K.C.S.E.	:	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
K.E.S.I.	:	Kenya Education Staff Institute.
K.I.E.	:	Kenya Institute of Education
M.ED.	:	Master of Education
M.O.E.S.T.	:	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
S.P.S.S.	:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
T.S.C	:	Teachers Service Commission
T T.C	:	Teachers Training College
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational Social and Cultural Organisation

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Background to the Study

Communication is an everyday process in all fields and between all people. It is an important tool of relating to different people. Hicks and Gullet (1975) have broadly stated that communication necessitates co-existence of people in the world. They further say that through communication, people share knowledge and combine efforts and this enables them to develop and expand their store of knowledge, technology and culture. Communication serves as a linking process by which parts of a system are tied together.

The importance of communication to human life cannot be overemphasised, for without communication, no society can exist, no social structure can form or endure, since communication is the fundamental social process permeating all aspects of social life. Michael (1992) in his study on Development and Communication explains that without communication no organised action is possible. Social systems can only form and endure if the participating persons are linked to each other by communication.

The survival of any organisation depends on effective communication. Effective communication is therefore a prerequisite for a school to achieve its objectives. Without effective communication among the school administrators, teachers and students, disharmony and poor working environment may result. Luthans (1989) in

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his studies has pointed out that organisation ineffectiveness arises partly out of the difficulty in the exchange of information between the members at various. Some managers believe that poor communication wastes more time and money than any other organisational problem, as communication has such a vital influence on the success of any organisation.

A headteacher in any given school is responsible for the day to day running of a school and its success in academic performance. The responsibility of motivating the staff and improving the academic performance and general standards within the school, lies solely on him or her. When they perform their duties well, the academic performance is likely to improve, (Muyiera, 2002).

Doobs (1961) states that the communicator (head teacher) must be located with respect to his position in the communication network. He may initiate a communication, act as an intermediary between a communicator and audience or at first function as an audience and later retransmit the communication he or she has received.

A head teacher is charged with monitoring communication. He or she stays informed about who is communicating with whom and about what in regard to the school setup. The head teacher monitors communication networks both formal and informal that operates in school and community to ascertain message distortion of one kind or another. He or she also seeks facts, perception and ideas from other people. He needs to encourage accurate and full communication throughout the school organisation.

Secondary education caters for primary school leavers in the 14 – 17 year age group. Performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations which marks the termination of the four year secondary cycle is used for selection into university and training in middle level colleges and professions such as primary teaching, vocational and technical career, (Republic of Kenya; National Action Plan on Education For All 2003 – 2015). Education in Kenya is concerned with equipping the youth with relevant knowledge; skills and expertise to enable them play effective and productive roles in the life of the nation. The Ministry of Education attempts to achieve this goal by promoting quality education in secondary schools by for example providing teachers, reviewing curriculum and other learning materials and organising regular supervision of schools, (Ayoo, 2000). Good performance by students in secondary schools is therefore an indicator that the above goal has been achieved.

The form and way of communication used in a given school will affect the way people interact, and it will have an impact on the general atmosphere of the school, which in turn will affect the general quality of instruction that students receive, (Muyiera, 2002). Communication directs the behaviour of people in an organisation. The headteacher therefore through appropriate communication pattern, should be able to realign and modify the attitude of teachers, students and the whole school community towards achievement of set targets in a school.

The management process that a headteacher is involved in, basically revolve around communication. Effective communication as one of the aspects of management plays a paramount role towards the success of any organisation, school or institution. Any

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communication barrier therefore may interfere with the accomplishment of the set objectives of a school. It is on this basis therefore, that this study sought to examine the effects of headteachers' communication strategies on academic performance in public secondary schools in Nyando District.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Education system in Kenya has experienced frequent management problems that have been linked to communication, (Republic of Kenya; Ministry of Education 2001). In the year 2001, the government formed a task force to look into causes of unrests in schools and suggest recommendations. This followed numerous cases of riots and other student disturbances in schools. The task force established among other issues, that many schools lacked clear channels of communication between the headteachers and other stakeholders. The taskforce further established that there were lack of proper channels of communication between parents, teachers, headteachers and students. The students thus lacked freedom to express themselves, developed mistrust and therefore resorted to riot and disruptive behaviour as a means of expressing themselves, (Republic of Kenya; Ministry of Education 2001: 26). Moreover, when schools fail to communicate the purposes and values of education, to the community, students' progress is not known to parents. This may affect performance especially in situations that the parents can correct.

Good performance by students is one of the many returns of heavy investment in secondary education. However, students' performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination in Nyando District has not been very impressive. The latest results of 2004 indicated no public school from the district appearing in

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the national ranking of the top 100 best schools in the country. In the provincial category, only two (2) schools appeared among the top 100 best provincial schools in the country. In the district category, only one (1) schools from Nyando district appeared among the best 100 district school, (Daily Nation, March 1st 2005). Table 1 shows the mean score of the district in the past years.

Table1: Mean Score of the District from 2001 to 2004

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004
Mean Score	5.6541	5.4103	5.626	6.024

Source: District Education Office, Nyando District.

The 100th district school had a mean score of 6.0948 (Daily Nation, March. 1st 2005). The years between 2001 – 2003 saw a declining performance standard as compared to 2004, which registered a positive deviation of +0.3895 in the mean performance index out of the possible 12 points. However, grading on a twelve-point scale, the latest performance indicates a mean grade of C and bearing in mind that most courses require an overall minimum grade of C+ and above, then the performance in the District is still below average.

Poor performance therefore means that many students' chances of joining institutions of higher learning are undermined, thus hindering opportunities for job placement and therefore reducing their active participation in national development. Many students who go through public secondary schools in Nyando District are therefore not able to compete successfully for national opportunities in institutions of higher learning or in middle level institutions.

Whereas many other factors contribute to poor performance in examinations, it is important to examine whether headteachers' communication strategies also affect performance. This study therefore sought to examine whether headteachers' communication strategies affect academic performance. It also sought to establish the modes of communication preferred by both students and teachers in Nyando District.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of headteachers' communication strategies on academic performance. The study attempted to find out the methods of communication used by the headteachers in communicating to teachers and students in schools. It also sought to determine prevailing conditions in the school which reduce effectiveness in communication. It further sought to determine the roles of head teachers in enhancing effective communication.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The following are the main objectives of the study:

1. To establish the effects of effective communication on academic performance.

2. To establish whether the category of schools affect the headteachers' communication strategy.

3. To find out views of headteachers on their role in enhancing communication in public secondary schools in Nyando District.

4. To establish the modes of communication preferred by students in Nyando District.

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5. To determine the prevailing conditions which reduce effective communication between the headteachers and the rest of the school community.

6. To find out the modes of communication preferred by headteachers in schools in Nyando District

1.4. Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the effects of effective communication on academic performance?

2. Does the Category of school affect the way a headteacher communicates?

3. What are the views of headteachers on their role in communication in schools in Nyando District?

4. Which modes of communication do students in Nyando District Prefer?

5. What are the prevailing conditions which hinder effective flow of information between the headteachers and the rest of the school community?

6. What are the modes of communication preferred by head teachers in schools in Nyando District?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The findings of this research will be beneficial to the headteachers for it makes suggestions for improvement in communicating effectively in the schools. The headteachers will also be made aware of the effects of communication on academic performance. The content of the findings will also be a source of information for students, teachers in colleges and universities.

The Kenya Education Staff Institute (K.E.S.I.) will use this information to identify the areas, which need to be addressed when offering in-service courses to headteachers. The knowledge gained will be useful in promoting good relationship between headteachers, teachers and students through appropriate communication.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

The students from public secondary schools in Nyando District, whose poor performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination between the years 2001 – 2004 inspired this research, were not available for the study. These students would have been the ideal subjects for this study. Therefore, students in form two and three who had not sat the KCSE exams were involved as respondents of this study.

1.7. Delimitations of the Study

The study was limited to the headteachers, teachers and students in public secondary schools in Nyando District. It did not include private secondary schools in the district since communication in these schools may be dependent upon other factors.

1.8. Basic Assumptions of the Study

This study was based on the following assumptions:

1. That communication barrier exists among headteachers, students, non-teaching staff, parents and other interested parties in secondary schools this affect performance.

2. Head teachers are aware of their roles as communicators and managers of schools.

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1.9. Definition of Significant Terms

Coding: Refers to packaging the information

Communication Strategies: Refers to the forms or modes of passing information from the source to the receiver. The mode can either be verbal, non-verbal or written.

Communication: The exchange of information and meaning between two or more parties.

Decoding: Interpreting the message.

Effective Communication: Refers to a process by which a message is passed from the source to the receiver and it reaches the way the source intended it to reach.

Headteacher: Refers to a school manager or executive male or female in charge of running of the school.

Public Schools: Is a school registered as government owned where upon teachers are employed by the government.

Filters: Refers to different ways of interpreting a message.

Performance: Refers to the student academic level of achievement in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination. It is graded on a twelve-point scale from the lowest E to the Highest A.

Mixed Schools: A school that enrols both male and female students.

1.10. Organisation of the Study

This study was organised in five chapters. Chapter One comprised the introduction, background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives

of the study, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study, basic assumptions and definition of significant terms.

Chapter Two dealt with review of related literature under the following topics: Importance and role of effective communications in an organisation, elements of communication, dimensions of communication, categories of communication, forms of communication, barriers of effective communication, improving communication and the conceptual framework.

Chapter Three examined research methodology under the following topics: Research design, target population, instrument validity and reliability, data collection procedure and data analysis techniques.

Chapter Four covered data analysis and interpretation. This was done after data collection. Chapter Five dealt with the summary, conclusions and recommendations derived from the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter dealt with; background information on communication, importance and role of communication, elements and dimensions of communication, barriers to effective communication, ways of improving communication conceptual framework and Related studies.

2.0. Background Information on Communication

The term communication etymologically comes from the Latin word 'Communism' that means Common (Knezerich, 1975). If facilitates sameness in the attitude and purpose among the parties involved. Effective communication is the information flow resulting in a shared meaning and a common understanding for both the information sender and receiver. Danziger (1976) in his study notes that there is a speaker, listener and referent. However, the process entails the transmission on non-verbal cues about the world and between the parties involved.

The concept communication is a broad term and it has been defined, analysed and used differently by different scholars. These scholars have looked at communication as it relates to lives of human beings. Others have analysed it as it appears within social organisations while others have looked at it as it exists within different social organisations.

Okumbe (1998) defines communication as 'the exchange of information and the transmission of meaning'. Ayot and Patel (1992) define communication as an

attempt to establish commonness with somebody. They further say that in communication, there must be a source, channel and a receiver.

Mwankwo (1973) defines communication as an interaction between a minimum of two symbolic systems (persons or groups). Robbins (1988) views communication as the transference and understanding of meaning. Interaction between individuals and groups can only occur through effective communication between them. Communication is therefore a process whereby one party transmits messages to the other who interprets or internalises it and as (Dubrin, 1975) suggests, the process facilitates influence of one party over the other.

UNESCO (1991) has defined communication as a dynamic process by which someone who has a purpose to accomplish tries to get others to be involved in doing something for achieving that purpose. In the implementation of educational programmes, effective communication among the players in the sector is an important requirement.

2.1. Importance and Role of Effective Communication

According to Downs, C. (1977) communication serves four major roles. First is the informative role. The role of communication here is to provide information to the members in the organisation. This information enables them to do their work for example headteachers need information for effective decision-making and implementation of programmes. Communication enables the management to make itself understood clearly throughout the organisation or institution. The students can understand the management or administration and the policies of the organisation

clearly. Without communication no instructions or information can be given or received hence there could be no contact between administrators, students and subordinates.

These informative roles can be achieved through regular meetings where different sections and departments report their progress and share their problems. These can also be achieved through organisational reports which are used to pass a long information that is necessary for accomplishment of tasks.

Secondly, is the command and regulative role. These comprises a whole network of manuals, policies, orders, instruction and directions. All these comprise the guideline by which the entire organisation is run. By its nature, the organisation usually tells people what to do and rules out all other alternatives. Through effective communication, every member in the administration and the subordinates will receive precise and accurate information to ensure that every person in the organisation knows exactly what he or she is expected to do, when, where, for what and for who to whom they are responsible. It is the means by which management exercises control of the system. This function lingers on management ability to coordinate all the activities of the organisation and this ability depends on how well management executes control, Downs, 1977: 22.

The content of command and regulative role is essentially work oriented. This role is important because it means that there must be elaborate communication system because employees at every level of communication needs to know what is expected of them and what restriction is placed on their freedom.

The third role is persuasion. This persuasive role operates throughout the organisation especially where people find it necessary to build their case for their ideas and behaviour. It supplements the command and regulative role. Much of what happens in organisations is due to persuasion and not commands. Many managers prefer to try and persuade their employees to do certain things and it will result to command as a last resort. Research has shown that voluntary compliance breeds less resentment than the use of authority. Two-way effective communication helps to promote understanding between the administration and the members in the organisation (students) and in turn help to reduce disputes.

Lastly, the other role of communication is integrative. This refers to activities designed by management to cause employees identity with organisation and to make them feel that they are vital part of organisation. These can be achieved through:

1. Formal channels of organisation: Example newsletters and videos to explain the position the organisation, progress report or a visit by top management. It makes one become part and parcel of the organisation.

2. Through upward channel of communications: It is important because it enables managers to get good ideas from workers, so workers feel important when consulted. It gives employees a greater sense of participation.

3. Integration can also be done through informal communication because social relation among employees if they are guided, can perform the integrative function well. Some organisations hold picnic for family members, Christmas parties, games, tea break meetings among others.

Okumbe (1998) further outlines the roles of communication in organisation. Firstly, communication directs the behaviour of the people in the organisation. Secondly, it also helps in providing the drive among workers to productivity and greater satisfaction. Thirdly, communication is also seen as facilitating release of emotions. It provides a release for the emotional expression of feelings and fulfilment of social needs. Lastly communication is seen as facilitating decision-making. It provides the decision makers access to information, which helps them reach conclusions.

2.2. Elements of Communication

The message is the first element in the communication process. This consists of the contents of communication. It is an idea people wish to share. It is verbal or non-verbal cue which are conveyed. Secondly, the message is transmitted through a channel or a medium. This is the means of carrying the message once it is encoded by the source. For example a message can be sent through letters, telephone or verbally. The third element is the source or sender. The source determines what type of message is to be sent and the best way to send it. The source could be a student, teacher or a head teacher

The fourth element is the receiver or the destination to which the message is directed. It is at this stage that the message is decoded. This is the process that the recipient goes through to make sense of the message they receive. Finally, there has to be a feedback, which is any response a receiver makes to a message. These elements build up into the process of communication that can be summarised in the Figure 1.

Figure 1: Process of Communication

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┌──────────┐    ┌──────────┐    ┌──────────┐    ┌──────────┐    ┌──────────┐
│ Source or│──▶ │ Encoding │──▶ │ Channel  │──▶ │ Decoding │──▶ │ Receiver │
│ sender   │    │          │    │          │    │          │    │          │
└──────────┘    └──────────┘    └──────────┘    └──────────┘    └──────────┘
     ▲                                                                │
     │          ┌──────────┐                                          │
     │          │ Feedback │                                          │
     └──────────│          │──────────────────────────────────────────┘
                └──────────┘
```
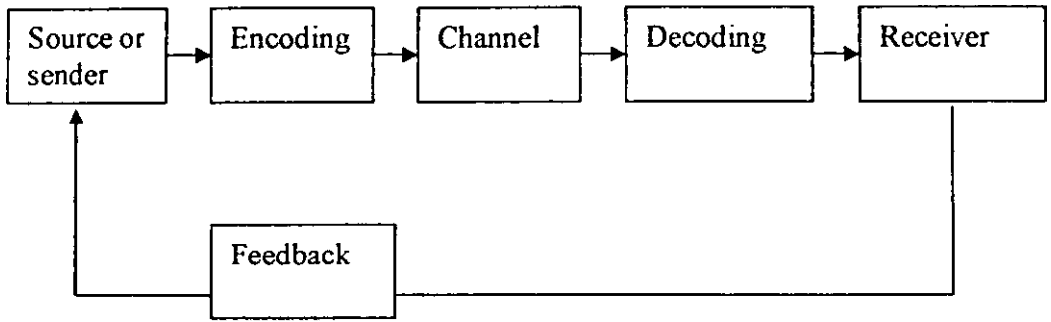
Key

⟶   Message

Adopted from: Robbins (1988: 99)

2.3. Dimensions of Communication

Downs (1977) discusses the seven dimensions of communication as follows:

1. **Communication is a Process:** This emphasises the fact that communication is dynamic interaction; forever changing and that each communication encounter is potentially unique and therefore each communication situation is expected to be different since there are many variables which interact at different times.

   A competent communicator is therefore a good strategist who takes into account as many relevant factors as possible. He/she is also a tactician who can adopt readily when he/she encounters problems. Communication is the glue that binds an organisation together and enables tasks to be performed efficiently and effectively and helps to establish a common goal. Communication is a joined process since both parties contribute to the interaction. Success of the

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communication encounter depends on the parties' engagement in the process and neither of the parties has exclusive control of the other.

2. **Each Communicator performs several different communicative functions:** It is not always the case that the source is always the sender and the receiver always the recipient. The vice-versa can be true. A headteacher can therefore accept a student's idea because the information he or she has may be exactly what the headteacher requires.

3. **Communication is Purposive:** The role a person plays in a given communication encounter depends partly on his/her purpose that is both the sender and receiver have a reason for interacting for example the purpose for the headteacher (sender) may be to persuade, inform, encourage, entertain or reprimand. The receiver (student) listens if he/she wants what the sender is offering or if the relationship is advantageous to him. Communication breakdown can therefore be purposive if a party is not likely to benefit and therefore communication process has to be planned for to avoid the breakdowns.

4. **Feedback is essential:** Feedback helps to ascertain whether the message has been received and interpreted as we hoped or not. It facilitates the process of correction through incorporation of information about effects received. Feedback consists of non-verbal and verbal modes of communication. Sometimes, feedback can be misleading resulting to wastage of resources. A headteacher needs to inquire whether his/her communication has produced the intended results, and the desired effects.

5. **Each person is a unique communication filter:** Each person focuses on some aspects of a message or event and neglects the others, meaning that; each one of us selects from the environment what we wish to give attention to. The selected stimuli are filtered through a mental screen which is made up of among others: Individual past experiences, language facility of the receiver, habits of thinking of the receiver, priorities of the sender and attitudes of the audience.

6. **The message sent is not necessarily the message received:** Both the sender and the receiver have different filters and since therefore the nature of the message differ, they must differentiate between the message sent and the meaning attached to it. The message consists of manipulating linguistic code made of identifiable groups of words and symbols used in accordance with specific rules. Meanings exist in the head of the receiver and learnt through experiences that persons undergo. This therefore means that meanings are not shared and one cannot assume that the meaning is the same for all. The receiver must associate the message with what he knows about organisation and his/her role in that organisation. The receiver should pay attention to the context in which communication is used.

7. **Channel influences:** There are personal channels and impersonal channels depending on the message one you want to send across. At any given moment, each communicator has many messages vying for his attention and therefore it is important for him to devise strategies to be used to beat the competition.

2.4. Categories of Communication

Communication can be differentiated in many ways:

(a) Interpersonal communication.

(b) Organisational communication.

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is that exchange between a sender and a receiver (Gordon, 1981). This communication promotes the interaction between different persons in the organisation. It has basic elements such as the sender, message, channel and receiver. Research has shown that trust and expectation values and status do affect interpersonal communication.

In a school through interpersonal communication, the teachers, students, non-teaching staff and administration interact with each other and make requests, extend support and secure desired ends. Types of interpersonal communication in a school include oral written and non-verbal communication. Oral communication consists of messages which are spoken Non-verbal communication is also referred to as non-word human response.

Organisational Communication

Organisational communication is that process which creates effective relationship among the various levels within an organisation and with other organisations. Such a relationship usually focus on exchanges of resources and exchanges of information. Organisational communication also refers to that communication which takes place

among groups of people in the organisation (Okumbe, 1998). Three patterns are mainly identified with organisational rules and practice and these are:

1. Downward communication.

2. Upward communication.

3. Horizontal communication.

Downward Communication refers to the transfer of message from those in higher positions to those below. A combination of oral and written media will be used in disseminating information so as to achieve downward communication. Further, an effective feedback mechanism enhances the success of using downward communication.

Headteachers use it to give specific task directives about job instructions procedures and performance. Downward communication if excessively practiced may imply dictatorship and authoritarianism and create a low morale and poor performance among teachers, pupils and other employees in the school.

Upward communication emanates from those in lower positions, but directed to those in higher hierarchy (Robins, 1987). It helps in receiving feedback from the juniors. It is also called vertical communication as it involves giving information and reports between various components of the organisation.

Horizontal communication provides means by which managers on the same level of an organisation coordinate their activities without referring all matters to their superiors. Massie, (1964) in his studies noted that one writer had called this level a

'gang' plank which means that many matters can be handled on the same level of an organisation, thereby speeding action while at the same time relieving superiors of unnecessary problems. The task for a head teacher is to identify to all individuals and groups of the need for upward and lateral communication and to develop feasible methods for transmitting this kind of communication.

Organisational communication is of two modes:

(a) Official symbolism.

(b) The grapevine.

Official symbolism is the patterned communication that is accepted as appropriate for an organisation or the customary language that is prescribed for interaction for those with greater or lesser authority. Manner and way of dressing is also symbolic for it shows authority and status of that person. Official symbolism can also be discussed in line with formal communication. It is defined as communication that occurs through the established organisations hierarchy of authority. It includes the chain, wheel 'Y' circle and all-channel.

The chain represents a five-level hierarchy where communication cannot move laterally only upward and downward. In a formal organisation, this type of network would be found in direct-line authority with no deviations. 'Y' communication represents a situation where two superiors give direction to one office that relays it to those below him/her. It is slow and ineffective.

Wheel network represents a situation where there exists one supervisor with several subordinates below his position. It doesn't allow interaction between the subordinates. The senior officer disseminates all the required information to each junior officer. It is quick and accurate although it leads to domination of the source. The circle allows members to interact only with adjoining members. For example a teachers interacting among themselves. It is slow and noisy. All-channel network allow each member to interact freely with others in the organisation. For example prefects interacting with students, teachers interacting with students, head teachers interacting with students, teachers and non-teaching staff. This is the fastest network and promotes higher human relation in an organisation.

The grapevine can be discussed in line with informal communication network. Grapevine flourishes where a degree of secrecy is exposed in organisations. Rumours are circulated and various bits of information are put together in a bid to try and understand the environment. The grapevine is intensified when formal channels of communication are limited and when information is scarce. It arises to add the human interest to the impersonal information sources.

Robins (1988) says that up to 75 percent of information passed through grapevine is accurate. Grapevine information almost travels quickly because most of it is carried over the phone or face to face conversation. The grapevine cannot be destroyed. Therefore it should receive conscious attention. Okumbe (1998) concludes that rumours and gossip which are all aspects of grapevine can be minimised if the administrators eliminate ambiguity in the organisational communication.

2.5. Forms of Communication

Oral Communication

This is the use of spoken words in face to face expression (Campbell, et al, 1983). It is faster and allows the use of gestures. A verbal message can be conveyed and a response received in a minimal amount of time. School announcements in the assembly or at the parade fall into this category of communication. A teacher says something to the whole school and expects that each student will adhere to the announcement (Mbiti, 1974). It's serious limitations are that it is less permanent and more prone to distortion (Robbins, 1988). The more people a message must pass through, the greater the potential distortion.

The second disadvantage is that nobody can be held responsible for the message. This form of communication is limited to words such as 'hear' they say... and no one seems responsible for the message and it should thus be limited to direct announcements. Official communication if verbal, should be followed by a letter confirming that particular verbal communication, for example a verbal discussion from the D.E.O. to the headteacher (Mbiti, 1974).

Written Communication

Include memos, letters, organisational periodicals, notices placed on bulletin boards or any other device that is transmitted via written words or symbols. It is more permanent, tangible and verifiable. It is argued that they are likely to be more logical, clear and thought out than oral communication. However, a major disadvantage is that they are time consuming and lack an inbuilt feedback mechanism (Robbins, 1988). Circulars from the Ministry of Education also comprise the written form.

They should be distributed through the District Education officers and through the headteachers. The headteacher ensures that the members of staff get to read and understand the message as the message is directed to them.

The relay type of communication is an important form of communication in the school set-up. This is a method where there is an intermediate agent(s) through whom messages must travel before reaching the recipients. It is also called a relay method because messages are handed from one person to another for onward transmission to the recipient.

The relay method of communication is necessary in any complex organisation such as the Ministry of Education. Policies and decisions made from the top offices must be communicated from the Director down to the classroom teacher. Such decisions are important for the progress and the day-to-day operation of the educational system. They must therefore be communicated properly and on time to all those concerned (Mbiti, 1974: 41).

Some of the disadvantages of the relay system are that the messages may be delayed on the way or may get distorted, or the message may be diluted or filtered by the agents depending on whether he/she likes the message or not, or in other instances, a message may be trapped, an agent may decide to 'sit on a message' if he/she does not like the message to reach another person.

Other means of categorising communication can be through verbal and non-verbal means. Verbal communication is basically oral. Non-verbal communication is the non-word human responses such as gestures, facial expressions and the perceived

characteristics of the environment through which the human verbal and non-verbal messages are transmitted.

According to Blake and Haroldsen (1975) it is the transfer of meaning involving the absence of symbolic sounds. It has been described as the 'silent language' non-verbal communication include, body language (Kinesics), paralanguage that is voice qualify, proxemics, which is the use and perception of physical space, Olfaction which is eye movement and the use of artefacts such as dresses or cosmetics. The kind of communication is enhanced by actions such as the dresses of the sender, time or season, space and physical appearance of the persons involved.

2.6. Barriers to Effective Communication

These communication barriers directly retard the success of planning and running of the school. They retard the performance of everyone involved in the management of the school.

Distortion

These arise due to noise in transmission in addition to inadequacy of words used in carrying precise ideas. Noise includes both physical, or audible or inaudible noise for example presence of a silent third party (Gordon, 1981). Distortion also occurs when the sender decides to use difficult or complex words to the receiver especially when the receiver is not in the same discipline as the sender. The sender can also decide to use ambiguous statements or confusing sentence patterns that may not be understood by the receiver.

Effect of Emotion

Sometimes when people are insecure, worried and fearful, what they hear or see seem threatening than when they are at peace with the world. When people are angry or depressed, they reject out of hand what must be otherwise a good idea for example, our gloom despair will discolour what we see or hear, or our elation makes us not to see problems or hear criticisms. In such instances, we are most prone to disregard our rational and objective thinking processes and substitute emotional judgement.

Lack of Feedback

Feedback is the acknowledgement by the receiver that the message was received. Lack of feedback itself makes the communication process incomplete and less interpersonal (Robbins 1988).

Filtering

This is a situation where a sender manipulates information so that it will be seen more favourably by the receiver. The major determinant of filtering is the number of levels in an organisational structure. The more vertical levels in the organisational hierarchy, the more opportunities there are for filtering.

Choice of Words

The choice of words in which the message is encoded influences the quality of communication. Okumbe (1998) notes that language of communication is influenced by age, educational and cultural background of both the sender and the receiver. He further notes that since the school has members from different backgrounds, this may have a bearing on the communication pattern.

Selective Perception

Selective perception is another barrier to effective communication because the receiver in the communication process sees and hears things in a selective way based on his needs, motivation, experiences, background and other personal characteristics. The receiver also projects his interests and expectation into communication as he decodes them.

Massie (1964) has classified communication problems in three basic groups namely:

1. **Technical problem:** These relate to how accurately the symbols have been transmitted. When the message is clear, less information is needed to put in across.

2. **Semantic Problems:** This refers to the extent to which the symbols convey the desired meaning. The sender should be concerned that the receiver can establish meaning as intended.

3. **Effectiveness:** Refers to the extent to which the message affects the conduct of the recipient.

2.7. Ways of Improving Communication

Owiro (1999) suggests two basic skills for improving effective communication:

Sending Skills

When sending information, one should try to eliminate communication gaps by using appropriate and direct language, providing clear and complete information, attempting to avoid physical interference and use of face to face communication.

Active Listening

This helps to avoid distortion when there is two-way exchange of information. The key is willingness and ability to listen to the whole message and respond appropriately to the content and intent of the message.

Arnold and Fieldman (1986) have made critical conclusions regarding promotion of effective communication in the organisation. Effectiveness in the flow of information can be achieved through four main ways. First is through the exception principle. According to this, it is only communication regarding deviations from orders, plans and policies should be relayed on routine basis. Secondly managers should postpone handling low priority issues be they meetings, appointments, reports, mails or phones must be put on hold or rescheduled as urgent ones are handled first. Thirdly, the administrators should deliver messages to their juniors at a time that they need it. Finally, the bosses must reduce being isolated from their subordinates. He or she must get out of their offices and visit the workers at their shop floors.

Making communication effective can also be achieved by increasing redundancy and repetition. The headteacher must use multiple channels that reinforce each other. At the same time, they should have repetition of information within the same message to show emphasis.

Kent (1989) acknowledges that communication remains the most important way in which we can make useful contact with our colleagues in the school. According to him, the following factors should be considered by principals in order to attain effectiveness. Firstly, the principal should try to get time and talk with each teacher informally almost daily. Secondly, the leader should not discuss the workers behind

their backs. Thirdly, the principal should try to be available at the common rooms to enable the workers to approach him/her. He/she should vacate this place for a reasonable time to unable the junior members relax. Fourthly, matters which are confidential in nature, must not be relayed haphazardly. The administrator should operate open door policy that allows teachers to share their ideas with the management.

Campbell et al (1983) states four main points that ought to be considered in the determination of communication effectiveness. Firstly, through content analysis the form and substance of the message can be analysed to determine if the communication is what the source intended it to be. Secondly a direct pragmatic evaluation can be undertaken to establish if the purpose of or communication was met. Thirdly, the impact of communication can be analysed by finding out the feelings generated by the recipients. Finally, the cost effectiveness can also be analysed. This involves assessing the cost of various methods used to deliver the message and the corresponding results of each.

The following points provided by Fulmer (1983) provide the best summary for achieving successful communication:

1. The message must be straight forward and logical. Including many ideas in the same sentence can lead to lack of clarity; clarity of words is important because there are many words with similar meanings.

2. The whole message ought to be complete.

3. One should be brief and to the point.

4. The message must be concrete. Abstraction must be avoided for they waste time.

5. The message must be correct. The speaker must avoid unfounded generalisations and exaggerations.

Mbiti (1974) discussed the rules governing effective communication as follows:

Firstly, the language used must bear the same meaning for both sender and recipient. When we speak the same language often, the likelihood of being ambiguous is inevitable, sometimes. This leads to misunderstanding, confusion or distortion of the message. The sender should use words and signs which are familiar to the receiver. Both the receiver and sender should avoid technical terms, ambiguous words and colloquial phrases.

Mbiti (1974) gave useful rule in official communications as:

"Be simple and straightforward in your language. Make sure that the words used are acceptable to the other person. Always choose your words carefully before you speak."

Secondly, communicate well ahead of time. When you know the date for a certain event, it is important to inform all those people who are going to be involved ahead of time. This gives them enough time to get ready for the event. Last minute communication causes a lot of embarrassment. Staff meetings, called by headteachers, or parents' day or even school's sports day should be communicated early to the teachers, parents and the school community at large to allow for adequate preparations.

Thirdly, consult and consider everyone involved in the event. In an event a group of people are involved, it is important to consult and to inform everyone about his respective duty or role well in advance. For example, in a sports day, there are officials, owners or sports fields, first aid team and many others. All these people need to be asked to assist and their consent received before any information of sports is released. This reduces confusion and avoids frustration of the whole programme.

Fourthly, do not release any official message prematurely. Before releasing official message, it is important to make sure it is the right time to release the message. For example, examination results are some of the official matters which can cause embarrassment if they leak out before the right term. Premature information can cause embarrassment and frustration to those directly involved. Lastly, wait for the receiver's response before taking action. Communication is not complete before the receiver responds to the sender's request.

2.8. Related Studies

There are various studies that have been carried out on communication. Wanga (1987) in his paper submitted for Bureau of Educational Research Seminar, observed that that poor communication accounts for 30 percent of strikes in schools. It causes a considerable amount of misunderstanding between people n the school. It has a drastic effect on performance as it leads to confusion, mistakes, wastages and accidents. Employees thus become frustrated and the morale drops leading to poor performance.

Communication has also been regarded as an essential component in the decision making process. The works of O'Reilly (1982) has shown that provision of good information enhances decision-making. He further notes that one of the hindrances in making good decision is lack of the needed information.

A research by Castruita (1982) on the training needs of secondary school principals in California found that competence of the headteachers in open staff communication together with other areas are very important for school administration. Robbins (1988) has established that the wheel type of communication network is less effective, since there exists one supervisor with several subordinates below his position, but it doesn't allow interaction between the subordinates. The 'circle' type gives higher morale. The 'Y' communication network has been found be lower satisfaction of junior employees. 'All channel' network promotes human relations in the organisation and is more effective and fast solving complex problems. Further, the 'circle' and 'all channel' are more effective and fast-solving complex problems. The 'Y' communication network has been found to lower satisfaction of junior employees.

O'Relly and Pondy (1979) established that interpersonal communication is affected by four main factors:

1. Sender's trust of the receiver.

2. Receiver's influence over the sender.

3. Sender's mobility.

4. Aspirations and norms and group sanctions to which senders or receiver belong.

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These factors will determine the openness, amount and type of information relayed between different parties.

Asugo, (2002) studied the factors that influence secondary school headteachers' communication strategies is school administration in Nyando District. The researcher established that factors such as age, gender, academic qualifications and training of head teachers does not in any way affect the way head teachers communicate. The researcher also established that in schools where headteachers communicate effectively, students' performance is higher. The researcher did not however use students as respondents in his research.

Muyera (2002) studied communication strategies used by headtechers and their effects on academic performance in Cherangani Division of Trans Nzoia District. The researcher established that effective communication has a positive relationship to performance in the division.

2.9. Conceptual Framework

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

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                 ┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
            ┌────┤   Headteacher' Communication Strategy │
            │    └──────────────────────────────────────┘
            │         │              │              │
            │         ▼              ▼              ▼
            │  ┌───────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐
            │  │ Teachers  │ │ Non-teaching │ │ Schools Community│
            │  │           │ │ staff        │ │                  │
            │  └───────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────────┘
            │         \          │          /
            │          ▼         ▼         ▼
            │       ┌─────────────────────────┐
            │       │       Students          │
            │       └─────────────────────────┘
            │                    │
            │                    ▼
            │       ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
            └──────▶│ Students' performance in KCSE    │
                    └─────────────────────────────────┘
```
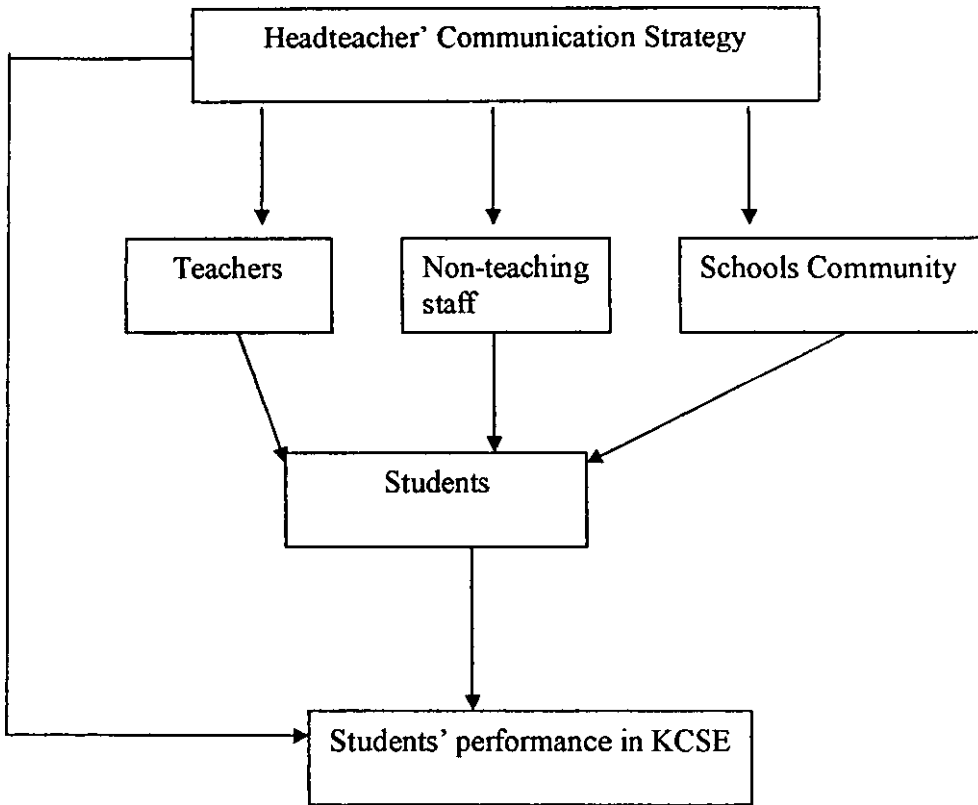
A school as a social structure has the fundamental function of providing students with education. The headteacher is charged with responsibility of running all the activities of the school. His/her ability to communicate issues related to the running of the school contributes to achievement of the schools' academic goals. The headteacher's communication strategies affect the entire school system that include students, teachers, non-teaching staff and the school community which comprises parents, sponsors, the parents teachers' association, the Board of Governors and the school neighbourhood. The interaction among these individuals affects the performance of students in the KCSE examinations.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter dealt with methods applied in carrying out the study. It coverd the research design, target population, sample and sampling techniques, research instruments, instrument validity and reliability, data collection and data analysis techniques.

3.0. Research Design

Research design can be defined as the method the researcher wants to use in executing his or her research. It is the roadmap of the researcher's investigation, the procedure the investigator wants to adopt to solve the identified problem (Anene, 1998: 71).

The design adopted for this study was descriptive survey. Typically, survey gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of determining the relationship that exists between specific events or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared, (Louis and Marion, 1980: 94). Data was collected from members of a sample for the purpose of estimating one or more population parameters.

3.1. Target Population

This refers to all members of a real or hypothetical set of people, events, or objects to which we wish to generalise results of the research (Borg and Gall, 1989). It is also referred to as the universe. The target population for the study consisted of

headteachers, teachers and students within the 51 secondary schools in the District at the time of the research.

There are a total of 584 teachers in the District as at the time of study, of whom 433 are males and 151 are females. This was exclusive of the number of headteachers. Out of 48 headteachers, 11 were females while 37 were males (District Education Office, Nyando, 2004). This information is summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Population of Teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Nyando District

Teachers' gender	Number	Percentage
Male teachers	470	74.37
Female teachers	162	25.63
Total	**632**	**100.0**

Table 3: School Type

School type	Number	Percentage
Mixed (boys and girls)	38	79.17
Boys	3	6.25
Girls	7	14.48
Total	**48**	**100.0**

Table 4: Population of Headteachers by Gender

Category	Number	Percentage
Males	37	77.08
Females	11	22.92
Total	**48**	**100.0**

Source: Republic of Kenya Statistics Section (2004)

3.2. Sample and Sampling Procedures

According to Anene (1998) population or the universe is the group, which the researcher is interested in gaining information upon which generalisations and conclusions can be drawn subsequently. A sample is a subset of the population the researcher wants to study. Sampling is taking any portion of a population or universe as representative of that population or universe.

Three schools were left out as they had not sat for examinations of the past 3 years. The sample size for the study was taken as 30 schools. Simple random sampling was used to select the schools.

The schools' names and categories were obtained from the Nyando District Education Office. Other important details such as the number of male and female teachers were also established from this office. Simple random sampling was used to select 42 public schools. This was done by writing down the name of each school on a piece of paper. The paper was then folded and put in a box that contained the category of schools. When the process was complete, a school was randomly

selected by picking a paper. The name of the school was noted down and the paper returned. The papers were thoroughly mixed after each process of packing a school. This process was repeated until the required number was selected from each group.

The sample size for teachers and students was also determined. Out of the total 632 teachers and headteacher, a sample of 230 was selected for the study. This sample size was derived from a table developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). To obtain a rounded figure, each school had 1 headteacher and 5 class teachers randomly selected.

The form 2 and 3 students were chosen. The total number of form 2 and 3 obtained at 4, 800 at the time of study. The sample size is obtained as 357. 36 students were involved in the pilot study, while 321 students were involved in the main study with each school having at least 9 students to a rounded figure.

3.3. Research Instruments

The data for this study was collected using three sets of questionnaires. The headteachers' questionnaire was divided into three parts. Part A had seven items on personal details of the headteacher. Part B had five items on school information. Part C contained eleven items on headteachers' communication strategies. The teachers' questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part A contained five items on the teacher's personal data. Part B contained seven items consisting structured questions on headteachers' communication strategies. Open-ended questions were also asked thereafter. The students' questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part A consisted of four items of students' personal details. Part B contained three items on headteachers' communication strategies together with two open-ended questions.

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3.4. Instrument Reliability

Reliability refers to the internal consistency or stability of a measuring device over time (Lokesh, 1984). It is expressed as a coefficient. The reliability r tells the researcher the magnitude and direction of relation. It varies from 1.00 to 0.00 showing negative association and from 0.00 to 1.00 showing positive association. A reliability of 0 shows no relation while that of +1 or -1 shows perfect positive and negative reliability respectively. The researcher established a reliability of 0.72 which is deemed significant.

3.5. Instrument Validity

According to Borg and Gall (1989) validity is the degree to which a test measures what it purports to measure. There are several types of validity. For this study content validity was applied. This type of validity shows whether the test items represent the content that the test is designed to measure. By applying content validity, the researcher ensured that the test covers all areas to be examined.

To achieve this, the pre-test instrument was evaluated by a university lecturer in the Department of Educational Administration and Planning. Five schools were selected for the purpose of piloting. 36 students were involved in the pilot study. Responses from the respondents were also examined and any ambiguity in the questions in terms accuracy or contradiction noted.

3.6. Data Collection Procedures

The researcher applied for a permit from the Ministry of Education. Subsequent clearance to carry the work in the District was got from the District commissioner

and District Education Officer in Nyando District. A visit to the participating schools was made, and the questionnaires delivered to the school by the researcher. In each school, the headteacher's permission was sought before selecting the respondents.

A time of collecting the questionnaires after completion was agreed upon with the respondents. The respondents were asked not to disclose their names or those of their schools and were assured that their responses were to be held with confidentiality.

3.9. Data Analysis Techniques

The responses were coded by assigning codes of responses for each item. Responses were then categorised into themes based on research questions. Categories like demographic information, the modes of communication used in schools, the role of communication in organisation were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages (average) some of the coded items were analysed with the aid of the statistical package for social sciences programme (S.P.S.S.) computer software for windows. The data out put was explained using the descriptive statistics in percentages, frequencies tables. Finally, conclusions and recommendations were made.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presentd the findings of the study. The researcher used secondary school headteachers, class teachers and students in Forms Two and Three in Nyando District to collect the required data for the study. The collected data was coded and fed into the computer and analysed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) programme.

The main issues discussed included the following: Questionnaires return-rate, demographic information of the respondents and the schools and responses to the research questions.

4.0. Questionnaire Return Rate for Respondents

The study involved 30 (thirty) public secondary schools in Nyando District. Three sets of questionnaires were used as the instruments for the study. Firstly, headteachers, secondly teachers and lastly the students.

Out of the 30 questionnaires administered to headteachers in randomly selected schools, only 24 questionnaires were returned. This represents eighty (80) percent return rate and did not therefore affect the findings of the study. Out of 150 questionnaires administered to class teachers, only 110, were returned. This represents 73.3 percent and was accepted but with caution. The questionnaire return rate for students was 85 percent after a total of 229 questionnaires were returned, over a possible 270 administered.

4.1. Demographic Information for Respondents

The headteachers and teachers were requested to give information about their gender, age, academic qualification and professional experiences. This information would enable the researcher acquire more information from these respondents.

Table 5: Distribution of Headteachers and Teachers by Gender

Head teachers			Teachers		
Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	20	83.3	Male	76	69.1
Female	4	16.7	Female	34	30.9
Total	24	100.0	Total	110	100.0

Table 5 implies that males dominate the entire school organisation both in leadership and staff proportion with the headteachers obtaining 83.3 percent while the class teachers obtaining 69.1 percent respectively. Female headteachers and class teachers have obtained 16.7 percent and 30.9 percent respectively. This could be attributed to stiff competition that exists between the male and female teachers and headteachers.

Table 6: Distribution of Headteachers and Teachers by Age

Head teachers			Teachers		
Age in Years	Frequency	Percentage	Age in Years	Frequency	Percentage
41 and below	13	54.2	46 yrs & above	6	5.5
41 – 45	6	25.0	36 – 45	29	26.4
46 – 50	4	16.7	25 – 30	69	62.7
51 – 55	1	4.2	Under 25	6	5.5
Total	24	100. 00		110	100. 00

54.2 percent of headteachers in the district range between the ages of 41 years and below, while only 4.2 percent ranges between the 51 to 55 age bracket. With regard to teachers, the highest percentage in terms of age falls between 25 to 30 years. 26.4% represents those between 36 – 45 years. It can therefore be deduced that both head teachers and teachers are capable of handling school matters.

Table 7: Distribution of Headteachers and Teachers by Academic Qualifications

Head teachers			Teachers		
Academic Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage	Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelors' degree	20	83.3	Bachelors Degree	83	75.5
Masters' degree	3	12.5	Masters Degree	3	2.7
Diploma holders	1	4.2	Diploma Holders	16	14.5
Total	24	100. 0	Total	110	100.0

Table 7 shows that most headteachers and teachers are bachelors' degree holders, constituting 83.3 percent and 75.5 percent respectively. Those with master's degree are few and constitute 12.5 percent for headteachers category and 2.7 percent for teachers. There is only 1 diploma holder in the headteachers' category and 16 diploma holders in the teachers' category. The teachers who have attained the least qualification possible account for 7.3 percent. It is therefore right to conclude that both headteachers and teachers in the district are professionally trained and their responses are treated as acceptable. However, further training for efficient management is called for.

Table 8: Distribution of Headteachers and Teachers' Teaching Experience

Head teachers			Teachers		
Experience	Frequency	Percentage	Experience	Frequency	Percentage
5 yrs & below	-	-	5 yrs & below	39	35.5
6 – 10	-	-	6 – 10	29	26.4
11 – 15 years	13	54.2	11 – 15 years	20	18.2
16 – 20 years	7	29.2	16 – 20 years	16	14.5
Over 20 years	4	16.7	Over 20 yrs	6	5.5
Total	24	100. 0	Total	110	100. 0

Table 8 indicates that 54.2 percent of head teachers have served for a period ranging between 11 to 15 years, 29.2 percent have served between 16 to 20 years while 16.6 percent have served for over 20 years. This means that the headteachers can positively rate themselves in terms of the adequacy of the communication strategies they use.

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Table 8 also indicates that 35.5 percent of teachers have experiences below 5 years and this could be attributed to new staffing. 26.4 percent ranges between the category of 6 to 10 years. Those who have served for over 20 years constitute the lowest percentage of 5.5 and this may be due to retirement.

With regards to marital status, 95.8 percent of the headteachers are married and only 4.2 percent are single. None is widowed or divorced. 73.6 percent of the teachers are married, those single are 25.5 percent while the widowed only account for 0.9 percent. This information is summarised in Table 9.

Table 9: Distribution of Headteachers and Teachers by Marital Status

Head teachers			Teachers		
M/Status	Frequency	Percentage	M/Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	1	4.2	Single	28	25.5
Married	23	95.8	Married	81	73.6
Widowed	-	-	Widowed	1	0.9
Total	42	100.0	Total	110	100. 0

The headteachers were also asked to indicate their leadership positions before being appointed to the headteachers' position. 91.7 percent indicated that they were deputy headteachers while 8.3 percent indicated that they were class teachers. This implies that appointment to headteachers positions, follows a particular order in hierarchy.

Form 2 and 3 students were selected for the study. These students also provided information related to their ages, form and gender.

Table 10: Distribution of Students by Gender and Form

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Form	Frequency	Percentage
Male	125	54.6	Two	78	34.1
Female	104	45.4	Three	151	65.9
Total	**229**	**100. 0**	**Total**	**229**	**100.0**

Out of the total respondents, 54.6 percent were males, while 45.4 percent were female. Form Three constituted a larger number of respondents as opposed to Form Two students. With regard to gender balance, male students are more than their female counterparts and this could be due to factors such as early marriages or lack of school fees due to poverty.

In terms of their ages, most students range between the ages of 16, 17 and 18 years representing, 25.3 percent, 26.2 percent and 22.7 percent respectively. This indicates that their ages tallies with their levels of education.

Table 11: School Category by Composition of Learners

School Category	Frequency	Percentage
Boys only	2	8.3
Mixed School	18	75.0
Girls Only	4	16.7
Total	24	100. 0

75 percent of the schools that responded are mixed schools, 16.7 percent are girls' schools while 8.3 percent are boys' schools. Mixed schools therefore seem to

·ominate schools in Nyando District due to reasons such as low schools fees and
distance to home area.

Table 12: **Number of Teachers and Students and Students per School**

	N	Minimum	Maximum
Number of students in school	24	65	815
Number of teachers employed by TSC	24	4	38
Number of teachers employed by B.O.G.	24	0	8

N = Total number of schools

The distribution of students and teachers in each school is basically equitable and
manageable.

In order to achieve the stated objectives of this study, the researcher set out six
research questions. This section answers those research questions.

4.2. Does the Category of school affect the way a head teacher communicates?

Headteachers were asked to state whether the category of school affect the way they
communicate. Teachers too were asked to state whether the category of school
affected the way their headteachers communicated. Table 13 summarises the
findings.

Table 13: Effect of School Category on Communication

Headteachers			Teachers		
School Category	Frequency	Percentage	School Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	8	33.3	Yes	26	23.6
No	15	62.5	No	81	73.6
Missing link	1	4.2	Missing link	3	2.7
Total	42	100.0	Total	110	100.0

From Table 13, 73.6 percent of the teachers indicated that the category of the school does not in any way affect the way their headteacher communicates to the students, while 23.6 percent stated that it does affect. 62.5 percent of the headteachers also stated that the category of school does not affect the way they communicate Some of the explanations given on how category of school affect performance are firstly, that some ideas are for specific gender and secondly that girl students tend to shy off and they therefore need a person of the same gender to speak to them. It is therefore right to conclude that the category of school does not affect the way a headteacher communicates.

4.3. What are the views of headteachers on their roles in communication in schools in Nyando District?

The headteachers were asked to state in their opinion, what they thought was their role in enhancing effective communication in school. some of the responses given are summarised in Table 14.

Table 14: Role of Headteachers in Enhancing Effective Communication

Role	Percentage
1 Create free atmosphere among teachers, support staff and students.	22.2
2. A facilitator and moderator of what is passed on.	18.6
3 Encourage communication for effective implementation of schools policies and programmes.	14.8
4. Designing means of communication that is highly accessible to recipients.	11.1
5. Being critical in articulating school policies.	11.1
6. Confirming and ensuring that the aim of communication is realised.	7.4
7. Ensure timely and effective dissemination of information.	7.4
8. Delegation of duties and supervision.	7.4
Total	**100.0**

Table 14 shows that among other roles the head teachers are charged with responsibility of creating free atmosphere that encourages communication among teachers, support staff and students. He or she is also charged with designing means of communication that is accessible to the whole school community.

Besides being asked to state their views on their roles in enhancing effective communication, the headteachers were also asked to state the structures they have put in place to encourage free flow of information between the head teachers and the teachers, students, and non teaching staff. Some of the responses given are: Meetings and consultations, use of deputy or heads of departments, encouraging teachers to open up, effective delegation and sharing meals together.

Teachers too gave their responses on the structures put in place to encourage free flow of information between them and their head teachers. Some of the responses from the teachers include: Staff meetings, use of notice boards, open door policy where teachers communicate freely, communication through heads of departments and regular briefings. The responses given by teachers emphasise what has already been stated by the headteachers.

The structures put in place to encourage flow of information between the head teachers and the students are: Use of prefects body, morning, assemblies (class assemblies), where students are given daily briefings, open door policy where students interact with teachers and head teacher and use of notice board. Structures in place between head teachers and non teaching staff are, meetings with sectional heads, through deputy headteachers and direct observation.

4.4. Which modes of communication do students in Nyando District prefer?

Students were asked to list in order of the communication strategies they thought were effective. Their responses are summarised in Table 15.

Table 15: Modes of Communication Preferred by Students in Nyando District

Mode/Method of Communication	Percentage
1. Face to face/person to person	19.2
2. Addressing students in assembly	12.4
3. holding open forums for discussion	12.4
4. Using prefects body	11.3
5. Using letters	11.3
6. Using notice board	9.2
7. Rewards and incentives	8.2
8. Facial expression	5.2
9. physical punishment	3.6
10. School magazine	3.3
11. Telephone	1.8
12. Guidance and Counselling	0.8
13. suggestion box	0.8
Total	**100. 0**

Table 15 shows that most students prefered face to face talk, holding open forums and being addressed in the assembly. This is because the interaction between the students and head teachers using these methods is much closer as opposed to the use of letters and notice boards. Least preference was given to suggestion boxes and guidance and counselling.

4.5. What are the effects of effective communication on academic performance?

The head teachers were asked to state the effects of effective communication on performance. 34.10 percent stated that effective communication promotes academic performance. 29.50 percent stated that effective communication ensures confusion and misunderstanding that exist in the schools area avoided. 15.90 percents of the respondents said that effective communication enhances team work and team spirit among members of staff and students.11.40 percent said that it encourages peace and openness among teachers. 6.80 percent said that grape vine and gossip are avoided while 2.30 percent said that it enables feedback to be obtained. Table 16 summarises their findings.

Table 16 Effects of effective communication on academic performance

Effects	percentage
Objectives are achieved / promotes academic performance	34.10
Confusions and misunderstandings avoided	29.50
Enhances team work and team spirit	15.90
Encourages peace and openness among teachers	11.40
Avoids grapevine / gossip	6.80
Enables attainment of feedback	2.30
Total	100.00

The head teachers teachers and students were further asked to explain if there was any relationship between academic performance and communication. 65.4 percent of headteachers stated that effective communication, promotes academic performance, 26.9 percent stated that communication and performance are closely related, while 3.8 percent stated that effective communication enhances effective learning and teaching. However, 3.8 percent of the headteachers thought that there is no relationship between performance and communication. Table 17 summarises the head teachers findings.

Table 17: Relationship between communication and Academic Performance According to Head teachers

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Promotes academic performance	17	65.40
Closely related	7	27.00
Enhance effective learning and teaching	1	3.80
No relationship	1	3.80
Total	26	100.00

98.2 percent of teachers thought that the two variables performance and communication strategies are directly proportional while 1.8 percent stated that it leads to achievement of goals. The students were also asked whether there was a relationship between the way their headteachers communicated to them and how they performed in class. Table 18 presents the data.

4.6. What are the prevailing conditions which hinder effective flow of information between the headteachers and the rest of the school community?

Teachers were asked to provide information on the conditions that would reduce effectiveness in communication between headteachers and members of staff, headteachers and students and headteachers and non-teaching staff. Between the headteachers and the members of staff, some of the responses given are: Lack of time for regular meetings, excessive authority of headteachers, misunderstanding and lack of trust, absenteeism on either side and favouritism by some headteachers.

Communication between headteachers and the students is hindered by the following factors as presented by the teachers: Students' excessive fear for headteachers, language barrier between the students and headteachers, lack of notice board/suggestion boxes and many students hence difficulty in passing information.

Some of the conditions hindering effective communication between headteachers and non-teaching staff are: Language barrier, lack of time, fear for headteacher and favouritism. These conditions basically reduce effective communication and the entire school community should strive to reduce them.

4.7. What are the modes of communication preferred by headteachers in schools in Nyando District?

Headteachers were requested to rank ten communication strategies in order of effectiveness according to them. Table 16 summarises their responses.

55

Table 19: Rank of Communication Strategies

Communication Strategy	Rank	Percentage
1 Communication during school assembly	1	47.8
2 Holding staff meetings	2	56.5
3 Communicating through heads of department	3	30.4
4 Holding open forums	4	26.1
5 Using school prefect body	5	43.5
6. Using notice boards	6	30.4
7. Using students' reports.	7	30.4
8. Using rewards and incentives	8	21.7
9. Encouraging members to pass information among themselves	9	30.4
10. Facial expression and body movements	10	41.7

It can be deduced from the table that headteachers prefer the following methods:

1.   Communication during assembly.

2.   Staff meetings.

3.   Communication through heads of departments.

4.   Holding open forums.

The methods of communication that the headteachers give the least preference are:

1.   Encouraging members to pass into among themselves.

2.   Facial expression and body movements.

Teachers were also given 5 communication strategies and asked to rate the frequency with which their headteachers used the communication strategies. Staff meetings were often used with 78.0 percent rating. Letters (memos) and phones are rarely used while facial expression and body movements are never used.

Students too were asked to rate their headteachers communication strategy in terms of how often, rarely or never, they use a certain communication method. The communication strategies used often are: Addressing the school in the assembly, the notice board, the prefect body and person to person talk with students.

The communication strategies rarely used are:

1. The open forums.

2. Administering physical punishment.

3. Rewards and incentives.

The communications never used are:

1. School magazine.

2. Facial expression.

It has therefore been established that school magazine and facial expression are the least preferred communication methods by the headteachers. Addressing the school in the assembly, the prefects' body, the notice board and person to person talk are the most preferred methods.

Teachers were also asked to rank in order the 5 communication strategies they thought effective is used by their headteachers. Some of the strategies given are staff meetings, written memos, staff reports, consultations and holding meetings for students and teachers.

It can therefore be concluded that communication is of paramount importance to the running to the school and that effective communication affect performance positively.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presented the summary of the study. It examined the research findings, conclusion, recommendations and made suggestions for further studies.

5.0. Summary of the Study

This study aimed at determining the effect of headteachers communication strategies on academic performance in public secondary schools in Nyando District. It attempted to find out the methods of communication used by headteachers, on teachers and students. It further sought to find out the prevailing conditions that reduce effective communication in schools and whether the category of schools affects headteachers communication method.

Literature review was carried out under different headings such as background information to communication, importance and role of effective communication categories and forms of communication and ways of improving communication. This was later summarised by a conceptual framework that portrayed the headteacher as the 'link pin' to all activities in the school thus enhancing good performance for students.

Descriptive survey was chosen as a research design for the study. Three sets of questionnaires were used to gather the required information. Firstly, for headteachers', secondly for teachers and thirdly for the students. The return rate for the questionnaires were 80 percent, 73.3 percent and 85 percent respectively.

Analysis of the data was done using the statistics package for social sciences programmes (SPSS). The analysed data was presented in tables and percentages

5.1. Research Findings

The study came out with the following research findings:

1. The relationship between academic performance and communication strategies is directly proportional; effective communication leads to good performance and vice versa.

2. The category of school with regards to composition of learners does not affect the way headteachers communicate.

3. Headteachers preferred communicating during assemblies, staff meetings, through heads of department and through open forums.

4. Communication strategies that are given least preference are facial expressions and school magazines.

5. The students stated that in cases where their headteachers communicated with them, they tended to improve their performance in class.

6. The conditions which reduce effective communication ranges from distortion of information, language barriers, to absenteeism on the part of both the speakers and the recipients.

7. An all inclusive method of communication that incorporates the headteacher, teachers and students representatives makes communication faster and efficient.

8 Most students preferred face to face communication being addressed in the assemblies, open forums and using the prefect body. They however seemed not to prefer suggestion boxes and guidance and counselling.

9 Head teachers have a role of creating a conducive atmosphere for communication among teachers, students and members of staff.

5.2. Conclusion

This research was carried out to determine headteachers communication strategies and their effects on academic performance. Head teachers should display good organisational skills in both oral and written communication. They should recognise what information is appropriate to be spoken and which is to be written. They should have the ability to use a variety of group process skills in interacting with parents members of staff and students. The entire school community should strive to eliminate the conditions that reduce effective communication among them.

5.3. Recommendations

The study made the following recommendations:

1. Computer education should be intensified in secondary schools to enable easy access to information.

2. The government should initiate more training for headteachers and teachers through KESI and MOEST to enable efficient management of schools.

3 Most headteachers should strive to improve their schools by including those communication channels that are unavailable example the notice boards and suggestion boxes as evident in some schools.

4 The entire school community should strive to eliminate those conditions that reduce effective communication in their schools.

5. Head teachers should identify a communication method that is inclusive and accessible to all members of the school community.

5.4. Suggestions for Further Studies

The study recommended further research to be carried out in the following areas:

1. A study similar to this one can be replicated on a larger population but with teachers as the centre of focus.

2. Research on the factors affecting KCSE performance in the district should be carried out since communication alone does not affect performance.

3. Interviews should be used as data collection instrument in addition to questionnaires.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO THE RESPONDENTS

Achieng Florence Odhiambo,

Department of Educational Administration and Planning,

University of Nairobi.

P.O. Box 30197,

Nairobi.

15th May, 2005.

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Thank you for accepting to take part in this research as a respondent. Kindly respond to all items in the questionnaire. The information you provide will be used for the purpose of the research only and therefore your identity will be treated with strict confidence.

Yours sincerely,

ACHIENG FLORENCE

APPENDIX TWO

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEADTEACHERS

This questionnaire is designed to gather information about yourself and your school. The study is important in finding out the effects of headteachers communication strategies on academic performance. Your co-operation will be helpful to make the task possible. The information given in this questionnaire will be treated with strict confidence.

Part 1: Personal Data

Please indicate the correct option by ticking [√] against your option.

1. Indicate your sex (gender)

   Male...................................☐

   Female................................☐

2. What is your age bracket?

   41 years and below................☐

   41 to 45 years.......................☐

   46 to 50 years.......................☐

   51 to 55 years.......................☐

   56 years and above................☐

3. What is your highest academic qualification?

   Bachelor's Degree.................☐

   Masters' Degree ....☐

   Diploma Certificate...............☐

   KACE/KCSE........................☐

   PhD...................................☐

   Any other (Specify)...

4 What is your professional experience?

5 years and below................................☐

6 to 10 years.....................................☐

11 to 15 years...................................☐

16 to 20 years...................................☐

Over 20 years...................................☐

5. What is your marital status?

Single...☐

Married..☐

Widowed...☐

Divorced..☐

Separated...☐

6. Indicate your leadership experience before appointment as a headteacher.

Deputy headteacher................................☐

Head of Department................................☐

Class teacher.....................................☐

7. What is your present status?

Principal III.....................................☐

Principal II......................................☐

Principal I.......................................☐

Senior principal..................................☐

Any other (Specify)..

Part B: School Information

8. Indicate the category of your school by ticking [√] one of the groups below

Provincial .... ☐

District .... ☐

9. What is the composition of learners in your school?

Boys only .... ☐

Both boys and girls .... ☐

Girls only .... ☐

10. Indicate the number of pupils in your school ....

11. Indicate the number teachers in your school.

T.S.C. employed ....

B.O.G. employed ....

12. Indicate the number of non-teaching staff in your school ....

Part C

13. Kindly rank in order of preference the (10) ten communication strategies that enhance effectiveness in your role as a communicator by indicating the rank number in space [   ] provided on each side of the communication strategy. Rank [1] indicates the most effective, rank [2], the second most effective, while rank [10] indicates the least important.

   (i)   Communicating to the school during assemblies .... ☐

   (ii)   Communication through heads of department .... ☐

   (iii) Holding staff meetings where teachers speak freely .... ☐

   (iv)   Holding open forums where people in the school
          are free to discuss their problems .... ☐

   (v)   Use of the school prefect body .... ☐

   (vi)   Use of facial expression and body movement .... ☐

(vii) Encouraging members to pass information
among themselves.. ☐

(viii) Using the notice board to pass information................. ☐

(ix) Using students' report to pass information .... ☐

(x) Using rewards and incentives.............................. ☐

14. In your opinion, what is the role of a headteacher in enhancing effective

communication in a school?..

....

15. What are some of the effects of effective communication in a school ....

....

....

16. What problems do you encounter with communication in the process of carrying

out your duty as a communicator...

....

17. What structures have you put in place to encourage free flow of information

between your office and:

Teachers...

....

Students...

....

Non-teaching staff...

....

18. How do you get informed of any problems in the school...............................

19. (a) Does the category (i.e. boys, girls or mixed school) of your school affect your way of communicating to students?

Yes .... ☐

No .... ☐

(b) If yes to (a) above please explain ....

....

20. How would you rate the academic performance of your school

Above average .... ☐

Average .... ☐

Below average .... ☐

21. Enter you school mean score for the last 4 years.

2004 ....

2003 ....

2002 ....

2001 ....

22. Give your reasons to explain the performance of your school in KCSE ....

....

23. What is the relationship between communication strategies used in your school and academic performance ....

....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX THREE

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

This questionnaire is designed to gather information about yourself and your headteacher. The information you give will be treated with strict confidentiality and will only be used for the purpose of research. Thus you are kindly requested not to indicate your name or that of your school.

Part A: Personal Data

Please indicate the appropriate option by a tick [√]. Kindly respond to all items.

1. Indicate your sex (gender)

   Male...☐

   Female..☐

2. What is your age bracket?

   Under 25 years..................................☐

   25 to 35 years...................................☐

   36 to 45 years...................................☐

   46 and above years ....☐

3. What is your highest academic qualification?

   PhD...☐

   Masters..☐

   Bachelors ....☐

   Diploma...☐

   KACE/KCSE....................................☐

   Any other (Specify)..

   ....

   ....

4. What is your professional experience in years

   5 years and below............................ ☐

   6 to 10 years................................ ☐

   11 to 15 years............................... ☐

   16 to 20 years.............................. ☐

   Over 20 years.............................. ☐

5. Indicate your marital Status

   Single................................... ☐

   Divorced.............................. ☐

   Widowed.............................. ☐

   Married.............................. ☐

   Separated............................ ☐

Part B:

6. Below is a list of communication means used in a school by headteachers.
Indicate by ticking [√] the option that applies to the communication strategy
frequently used by the headteacher on the teachers.

Means of Communication	Often	Rarely	Never
Holding staff meetings			
Using written memos			
Using phones			
Using facial expression and body movement			
Using staff reports			
Use of messengers (secretary)			

7. What are the ways put in place by your headteachers which promote free flow of
information between the staff and the headteacher...

....

....

8. What are the prevailing conditions in the school which reduces effective
communication between headteachers and:

Students...

....

Teachers..

....

Non-teaching staff..

....

9. (a) Does the school category (i.e. boys, girls or mixed school) affect the way your headteacher communicates?

Yes .... ☐

No .... ☐

(b) If yes to (a) above please explain ....

....

....

10. In your opinion, what is the relationship between effective communication and academic performance ....

....

11. Give your suggestions on how you think communication can be made more effective in secondary schools ....

....

12. List in order of performance at least FIVE communication strategies that you think are effectively used by headteachers.

(i) ....

(ii) ....

(iii) ....

(iv) ....

(v) ....

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING

APPENDIX FOUR

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

The information you provide will be treated with strict confidence and will be used only for the purpose of the research. Therefore do not indicate your name or that of your school.

Part A: Personal Data

1. Indicate your sex (gender)

   Male..☐

   Female..☐

2. What is your age in years...

3. In which form are you?...

4. Indicate by ticking the category of your school.

   Girls only ....☐

   Boys only......................................☐

   Mixed schools (both girls and boys)........☐

Part B: School Information

5 Below is a list of oral written and non-verbal communication means used in a school by headteachers. Indicate by ticking [✓] the option that applies to the communication strategy frequently used by the headteachers on the students.

Means of Communication	Often	Rarely	Never
Person to person talk with a pupils			
Addressing school in the assembly			
Holding open forums for the discussions			
Using letters to pass information			
Using the school magazine			
Using the notice board to pass information			
Using the prefect body			
Facial expressions			
Administering physical punishment			
Giving rewards and incentives			

6. (a) Is there any relationship between the way your headteacher communicates to you and the way you perform in class?

Yes .... ☐

No .... ☐

(b) If yes to (a) above, please explain...

....

....

7. List atleast FIVE methods of communication in the order of their effectiveness according to you.

(i) ....

(ii) ....

(iii) ....

(iv) ....

(v) ....

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING