FORMS OF COMMUNICATION IN SCHOOLS: A STUDY OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NAIROBI COUNTY

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted for the award of any degree in any other institution.

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This project has been submitted for review with our approval as University Supervisor.

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DR. W. KIAI

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family members; Brothers Ben and David. To my sister-in-law Rose. These three were my inspiration throughout my Postgraduate studies and for them I continuously thank God.

My utmost thank you to my children Cyndy, Ian and Dorah for their continuous faith in me and for giving me peace of my mind as I continued with my studies.

Thank you mum Jane Mkalama for being there for me always, your prayers and encouragement have been a blessing to me. To my Late Dad, Anakleti Mkalama for bringing me up and instilling in me the virtues of hard work, humility, resilience and discipline. I eternally owe my today to you two.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

KSSHA   Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association

KSSSC   Kenya Secondary Schools Students Council

MOE   Ministry of Education

ROK   Republic of Kenya

UNICEF   United Nations Children Education Fund

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess forms of communication in Nairobi secondary schools. Two step flow of information theory and organizational information theory were used to explain the relationship between the study variables. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: to determine the forms of communication used in secondary schools in Nairobi County, to establish the communication tools used in secondary schools in Nairobi County and to assess the communication roles of students' council in secondary schools in Nairobi County. The study was carried out in public secondary schools in Nairobi County. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The target population was members of the students' council, teachers and deputy principals. A total of 130 respondents (constituting 10 deputy principals, 40 teachers and 80 members of the students' council) were targeted by the study out of which 118 responded (constituting 8 deputy principals, 36 teachers and 74 members of the students' council) giving a response rate of 91%. Questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers and members of the students' council while interview schedules were used to collect data from deputy principals. Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis technique were used to analyze the data. Quantitative data collected was analyzed, presented and interpreted using both descriptive statistics while thematic analysis techniques was used to analyze qualitative data. The study found that the following forms of communication are used in schools: school parliaments or barazas, assembly hall announcements, members of the students' council and reporting to relevant authorities. Communication tools used in secondary schools in Nairobi County include: notice boards, suggestion boxes and end of year reports, school calendars, minutes, internal memos, students' notice boards and message box. The study also found that one of the roles of the members of the students' council is to communicate the students' needs to the relevant authorities. Some of the needs communicated include: complaints on quantity of food given to students, missing of lessons by some teachers, absenteeism, harsh punishment, list of areas students want to be improved in the school, changes in the school routine and welfare of the members of the students' council. It was finally found that members of the students council participate in decision making in schools in the following ways: students welfare, students discipline, coming up with school rules and regulations, type of punishment to breakers of school rules and regulations, type of diet, school half term dates, educational trips, student welfare and student leaders training.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Communication is derived from the Latin word 'communicare' which means 'to put in common' and 'to share'. It is the sharing of ideas, facts, thoughts and feelings for easy coexistence. The goals of a secondary school as an educational organization hinges on effective communication among the various operating personnel. The basic function of education itself relies almost entirely on communication. It helps build relationships and facilitates achievement of goals. The need for effective communication strategies cannot be overemphasized. Everyone participates in communication on a daily basis. Communication is about people speaking and listening.

Goldhaber (1990) define organizational communication as the sending and receiving of messages among interrelated individuals within a particular environment or setting to achieve individual and common goals. Individuals in organizations transmit messages through face-to face, written, and mediated channels. Organizational communication largely focuses on building relationships, or repeated interpersonal interactions, with internal organizational members and interested external publics.

Organizational communication study shows that organizations rely on effective communication and efficient communication skills from their members. A number of surveys (Davis & Miller, 1996; Holter & Kopka, 2001; Verespej, 1998) identify effective oral and written communication as the most sought after skills by those who run organizations. The U.S. Department of Labor reported communication competency as the most vital skill necessary for the 21st century workforce to achieve organizational success (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1992). The Public Forum Institute (2001) maintained that employees need to be skilled in public presentation, listening, and interpersonal communication to flourish in an organization.

The researcher's involvement within the school setting and profession over two decades has encouraged a desire to perform a study of internal communication process. As a matter of fact, it is known that successful schools are the natural outcome of successful policies dependent on effective communications. La Plant (1979) expressed the idea that ideal communication produces lasting outcomes affecting all corners of the educational process.

Communication as an indispensable aspect of administration is simply the sharing of information between two or more individuals or group to reach a common understanding for organizational success. Ekwue (2008) agrees that without effective communication in schools, teachers and students will not know what duties they are expected to perform. Under such circumstances, they might be forced to act in certain ways which may be counter-productive. But with open communication, a unique school culture may then develop with the interplay of the various managerial practices.

In organization, it is through communication that attitudes, feelings, insights and facts to others are transmitted. Lin (2010) stated that communication involves at least two persons, the communicator and the communicatee or the sender and receiver. The communicator with a purpose in mind sends out a message in the form of symbol and signs, through a channel or a medium to the communicatee. This message evokes a thought process or impression in the communicatee who in turns makes a response if this response of the communication is deemed effective. Like other elements of the administrative process, communication is by itself a process and has the identifiable elements of the communicator, the message, the medium, the channel, the communicatee and the effect. According to Mass, Weldy and Icenogle (1997) good communication and participation within organization are one of the prerequisites of effective relations in administration. Communication in this sense, means keeping others informed of what is happening, with regard to policies programs, plans and problems of organization and will be made aware of what is happening in different areas and units as well as make suggestions for possible improvement (Leung, 2005).

In addition, effective communication enables individuals to know their duties and carry them out promptly. It reduces drastically the occurrence of misunderstanding and promotes cordial relationship between the school and community and improves inter-personal relations among staff and students in the school (Obiocha, 1981). In school, where effective communication patterns are adopted by the entrepreneurial managers, works are done properly. The principal who works cooperatively with the members of staff, students and the members of the community, harmony and productivity will be maximized.

In line with the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 and in fulfillment of the core mandate as per the provisions of the Education Act, 2012; schools have the critical role and responsibility of providing quality and holistic secondary education for the students. The Kenya Secondary School Student Council (KSSSC)- an umbrella body for the Kenya Student Council was conceived against the background of finding a solution to students indiscipline in the schools. Following the ban on corporal punishment in 2001(RoK, 2001), The Ministry Of Education (MOE), United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) and the Kenya Secondary Schools Head Association (KSSHA) mooted the student council concept where an autonomous team of student council leaders would be expected to replace the prefects in ensuring social control in the schools (KSSHA/UNICEF, 2010). This study therefore sought to assess the forms of communication in secondary schools in Nairobi County.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In spite of the policies and various session papers on education that the Government has set up to ensure quality education, learning institutions have still been plagued with cases of student unrests and indiscipline. Nasibi (2003) adds that the Kenyan educator must appreciate the fact that in the last two decades there have been societal changes precipitated by effect of techno-scientific developments. These changes call for corresponding changes in communication flow from the traditional bureaucratic to the modern participatory. Despite these changes, managers cling to the outmoded traditions.

According to Rajani (2006) in Kenyan Schools there is virtually no space for students to organize or speak about their concerns. As a result of this state of affairs, secondary school students have resorted to violence as a means of getting their views across to the authorities. Solutions have been articulated, but the broader issue of effective communication flow has not been adequately addressed. Against this backdrop, the study sought to assess the forms of communication used in secondary schools in Nairobi County.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1. To determine the forms of communication used in secondary schools in Nairobi County
2. To establish the communication tools used in secondary schools in Nairobi County
3. To assess the students council body as a form of communication in secondary schools in Nairobi County

1.4 Research questions

1. What are the forms of communication used in secondary schools in Nairobi County?
2. What are the communication tools used in secondary schools in Nairobi County?
3. What are the communication roles of members of the student councils in secondary schools in Nairobi County?

1.5 Justification and significance of the study

Over the last few years there have been increased calls for greater inclusion and participation of students in secondary schools. The Ministry Of Education has attempted to put in place structures for inclusion and most prominent being the formation of Kenya Secondary Schools Student Council (KSSSC) formed in 2009 with a view of making an improvement in secondary schools governance. However despite the laudable move by the government not much research has been conducted to assess the forms of communication. This study therefore sought to fill the knowledge gap between theory and practice on the forms of internal communication in secondary schools.

1.6 Scope of the study

In assessing the communication forms in secondary schools in Nairobi County, this study focused on the various communication forms and tools used in communicating the student needs. The study also assessed the student council body as a form of communication in schools.

The study limited itself to sampling procedures of the public secondary schools within the county, i.e. the school management, the teachers and members of the student council.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

Effective communication – Efficient relaying information within the school through the stakeholders to get a point across

Student's council – These are student leaders in given specific responsibilities aimed at ensuring effective and efficient management of the school

Management of schools – The organization and coordination of the activities of a school in conjunction with other stakeholders in order to achieve the defined objectives

Decision making – Refers to a thought process of selecting a logical choice from the available options

Participation - Refers to the involvement of different categories of people in the management of the school. These may include: students, teachers, parents and board of management.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents relevant literature on: forms and tools of communication in schools, the roles of the student council and the theoretical framework.

2.2 Forms and Tools of Communication in Schools

Schools are also hierarchical organizations. The board of education is usually placed at the top of the hierarchy, followed by the superintendent, the principals and the teachers. In terms of responsibility, students are responsible to teachers; principals are responsible to superintendents, and superintendents are responsible to the board of education. Structurally, there is a series of superordinate-subordinate relationships within schools. Functionally, this hierarchy of relationships (principal to teacher, teacher to student, and soon) is the basis for allocating and integrating roles, personnel, and facilities to achieve school goals.

Communication has usually six main elements: senders, channels, receivers, change as a result of communication, barriers, and feedback (Can, 1992).Communication process should be effective to reach organizational goals and the quality of communication is an essential element (Young & Post, 1993).Accurate communication takes places only if the meaning that the sender intended to transmit is the same as what is understood and interpreted by the receiver (Gutenberg &Richman, 1969).

The two essential elements of organizational communication model are communication networks and channels. Those networks can be one way, two-way or multi-way in a simple to more complicated structures. An interpersonal communication network refers to a pattern over time of communication flows between individuals. In organizational hierarchy, there are four communication channels: vertical, upward and downward, horizontal, and diagonal (Eren, 1991). Organizational communication enables superiors and subordinates to act mutually in the direction of organizational goals in hierarchy. Communication channels and networks are essential in management process as well

(Knootz, & Weihrich, 1988). Decision-making is based on accurate communication in an organization and is a process of verbal and non-verbal communication forms, usually from superiors and subordinates (Sexton, 1970). Organizational communication is essential in planning process to form organizational goals and reach those goals (Knootz, & Weihrich, 1988).

According to McQuail (2005), defines communication as the process of sharing ideas information, and messages with others in a particular time and place. Communication includes writing, talking, as well as non – verbal ones, visual and electronic communication; Communication is a vital part of personal life, business, education and any other situation whose people encounter each other. The author further notes that communication takes place in time, and it matters when it takes place in time and it matters when it occurs and how long it takes. It is produced in a given location and reflects features of that context. Such communication serves to define a place for its inhabitants and to establish an identity. Different tools are used to disseminate information within learning institutions. Among these tools are face-to-face presentations, handouts, textbooks, telephone, fax, audio, video, email and web pages (McQuail, 2005).

2.3 The Roles of Students Councils

The prefect system gives a good opportunity for student participation in school management. The school principal should thus ensure that there is a functional prefect system that acts as a link between the school administration and the students. Otieno (2001) says that many schools rely on teachers to appoint prefects with little or no student participation. He says that the time has come for more democracy in line with changes all over the world. Thus, students who should be allowed to participate in choosing their prefects should identify a credible prefect system.

Okumbe (2001) agrees with Otieno's views about the appointment of prefects. He explains that in the appointment of prefects, it is more appropriate to allow them to hold democratic elections which enable the management to acquire prefects or student leaders who will help the organization meet its objectives. However, he is quick to caution that the election of student leaders should be guided by the overall organizational effort.

After the appointment of student leaders, Okumbe (2001) argues that it is of paramount importance that such leaders be thoroughly inducted by the management on their roles and the boundaries within which they should operate.

School councils are accepted as contributing significantly to higher achievement (Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore, 1995). Hannam (2001:5) showed that some schools in England which encourage significantly more student participation than others have better GCSE results. He states that contrary to popular belief, more democratic schools do not suffer in exams (due to distraction from them), on the contrary 'it appears that some students who might otherwise give up on school learning develop a renewed sense of purpose in an environment that raises their self-esteem through the sharing of trust, responsibility and participation in decision making'. Smyth's (1999) comparative study of schools in Ireland indicates that students tend to do better academically and are less likely to drop out when they are more integrated into the school.

Monahan (1999:7) argues students are at the heart of the learning endeavor. The student needs to be appropriately involved in all aspects of the learning environment as many areas impinge on effective learning, e.g. curriculum development, code of behavior, exam policy etc. Titman (1995) found that where students did have a real rather than a tokenistic say in the planning and developing of the school environment, their attitudes towards school and themselves as effective learners significantly improved. Alderson (2000) found that in her sample of 45 secondary schools in England, half had student councils. These divided equally into schools where most students perceived the councils as 'making the school a better place' and those where they did not. Overall student attitudes to school and themselves as learners were most positive in the schools with effective councils and lowest in those with ineffective councils - lower than in schools with no student council at all. Damico and Damico (1993) found that in the USA schools which were more students participative, inter-racial friendships were far more common than in authoritarian schools.

2.3.1 Role of Students Council in communicating Students needs to the Administration

Regular, effective communication is the key to success for any Student Council. This does not happen by itself and it is a good idea to develop ways of keeping the school community informed of and involved in the various activities planned by the Student Council. Some examples include: producing a student newsletter; providing updates to the Board of Management, Principal, staff and Parents' Association on the Student Council's activities and plans; keeping a student notice-board in the school where information on the Council's activities is posted; announcing upcoming events at assembly/roll call and providing an end of year report to the Board of Management.

Ozigi (1971) says that the prefect system, serves as one of the communication channels between the pupils and the school administration. He points out that the prefect system is one of the most effective ways of involving pupils directly in the administration. Thus, the procedures of communication are a two-way flow of information from top to bottom and bottom-up involving prefects. This goes in line with Max Weber's Theory of Bureaucracy.

In the top-down instruction, authority rests in the highest office (school Principal) which ensures that information flows from the principal's office down through the various levels of hierarchy (teachers and prefects) to the students. Thus, the principals set the pace and standards for school management, while the prefects implement the programs. In the bottom-up communication or feedback mechanism, there is a relay of feedback on all aspects of administration through the various levels up the hierarchy (prefects and teachers) from students. This ensures a complete link between the staff and students as well as enabling the principal to obtain information for evaluation of managerial objectives.

The school rules and regulations bind the various ranks of the hierarchy of authority and ensure order. These rules and regulations are formal and must be adhered to. The prefects are used to enforce them among students. This is coordinated and maintained by the school administration. The school administration would thus emphasize the adherence to

the discipline code (formal school rules and regulations) and the laid-down procedures of communication.

Within the formal set-up of school rules and regulations, a school is supposed to have a Prefects Handbook, which is a set of rules to guide the conduct of prefects while carrying out their roles to ensure harmony and smooth communication between the school administration and students. However, if such rules and regulations were absent or not adhered to, then the prefects would find carrying out their roles difficult. Furthermore, if there was a breakdown in communication between the various organs of the school, then the functioning of the prefect body would also be jeopardized. For instance, this may lead to disciplinary problems in schools. More often than not, communication from prefects to other students is intended to inform and persuade them in order to produce results. Inability to disseminate information correctly would cause misinformation, confusion and frustration, which would lead to poor implementation of instructions.

Prefects need to be effective listeners. This is because they receive information from teachers and students. Effective listening involves concentration and understanding in order to get a mental grasp of the facts clearly. Carlos (1993) gives the following suggestions for effective communication: the message must be clear; it must be straight forward and logical. It must be complete and must provide all needed information. It must be concise, brief and correct and must avoid exaggerations, generalizations or conclusions.

The Student Council represents all students in the school. It is very important that students receive regular information on the plans and activities of the Student Council and that as many students as possible participate in events organized by the Council. Each member of the Council has a special responsibility to the class or year group which elected him/her, and should ensure that their views are brought to the attention of the Council and that they remain fully informed of the Council's activities.

Procedures should be put in place to ensure that all students are fully informed about Council activities. One way of ensuring this would be to provide for regular face to face

meetings between individual members of the Student Council and the classes they represent. The Council could also carry out a survey of student views in suggestion boxes on particular issues, or on the role of the Council itself.

2.3.2 Students' Council and decision making in Schools

Student participation in decision making refers to the work of student representative bodies - such as school councils, student parliaments commonly known as the Student Barazas and the prefectorial body. It is also a term used to encompass all aspects of school life and decision-making where students may make a contribution, informally through individual negotiation as well as formally through purposely-created structures and mechanisms. Student participation also refers to participation of students in collective decision-making at school or class level and to dialogue between students and other decision-makers, not only consultation or a survey among students. Student participation in decision making in schools is often viewed as problematic to school administrators, parents and society at large. This is often due to the fact that students are viewed as minors, immature and lacking in the expertise and technical knowledge that is needed in the running of a school. Thus student participation in decision making is often confined to issues concerned with student welfare and not in core governance issues (International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 2011).

Principals of schools have for a long time considered themselves as custodians of critical organization elements, decision-making, organizational structure, information and personnel. However, as Lunenberg (1992) puts it, with empowerment, these critical elements are more likely to become collegial decision-making, consultative framework, shared information and increased group processes. The rationale for school empowerment as process used to facilitate student-centered decisions based on the proposition that decisions should be made at the lowest possible level.

Sergiovanni (1995) states that principals who involve prefects in decision- making on matters concerning their welfare face fewer problems as compared to those who do not. Baker (2000) states that student's involvement in decision- making, helps to develop their leadership skills and ability to plan. In the long run, such students can come up with ideas

that might help the smooth running of the school. Sergiovanni (1995) also states that involving students in decision-making creates a sense of ownership to the students. The students feel that the school is part of them and therefore do everything possible to boost and maintain the reputation of the school.

The extent of student involvement in decision making is debatable with often conflicting viewpoints propagated by differing stakeholders depending on their background and world view. Basically there are three viewpoints that guide the extent of student involvement in decision making. The first is that students must remain passive and receive instructions from parents and teachers (Sithole, 1998). This view will mean that policies must be designed by adults and students are to follow them to the letter. The second viewpoint suggests that students can participate but only to a certain degree (Magadla, 2007). In support of this view, Huddleston (2007) suggests that there is a tendency among some teachers and school leaders to define the issues which affect students quite narrowly. Student consultation and decision-making is often limited to aspects of school life that affect students only and which have no immediate relevance to other stakeholders, e.g., playgrounds, toilets and lockers.

Aggrawal (2004) adds that while student representatives may not participate in matters relating to the conduct of examinations, evaluation of student performance, appointment of teachers and other secret matters, their participation should be ensured in all other academic and administrative decisions taken by these bodies. Though this view appears to support student participation in decision making, it however confines student involvement in decision making to specific areas of school life. Defining the limits of student participation in this way is however not only likely to give students the impression that the school's commitment is tokenistic and therefore not to be taken seriously, but it also severely limits the possibilities for experiential learning (about the nature of schooling and the education system as well as in different forms of public decision-making) (Huddleston, 2007).

The notion is authoritarian and paternalistic, rather than democratic. It not only assumes that school students have a legitimate interest only in student-specific issues, but it also assumes that students have no right to decide for themselves the issues in which they

want or do not want to be involved. For this reason many commentators have suggested that opportunities for student participation should go beyond specifically student-related issues and extend to wider aspects of school life, as well as to society beyond the school. Effective involvement, it has been said, would go beyond student comment on aspects of their lives which are seen as safe or without significant impact on the work of adults in the school, embedded at classroom level, at institutional level and at the interface between local, national and international communities (Fielding *et al,* 2003). There are very few aspects of school life and decision-making in which, principle at least, school students cannot be meaningfully involved – depending upon their age and experience hence the need to examine the third level of student involvement in decision making.

The third viewpoint suggests that students should fully participate in decision making (Magadla, 2007). This view is supported by Njozela (1998) who points out that principals and other stakeholders should not underestimate the contributions of students especially if they are given the opportunity to develop their skills and their level of maturity. In their support, Huddleston (2007) feels that students should be involved in all areas of school life. He adds that the range of activities that make up the work of a school can be categorized in a number of different ways, but, however it is categorized, one should expect students to have opportunities for involvement in each major area – in particular in a school's: ethos and climate – including rules, rewards and sanctions, curriculum, teaching and learning, management and development planning.

Involvement in curriculum and teaching and learning methods is frequently recognized as being one of the least explored areas of student participation. Hannan (2003) points out that for one thing, school curricula and evaluation criteria are often prescribed in detail by state or regional authorities, apparently leaving little room for involvement by teachers or students. However, in reality, the curriculum as experienced in the classroom and the learning methods employed present a range of different opportunities for student involvement–from decisions about the nature of assignments and projects, for instance, to assessment strategies and marking. This applies equally to the topics chosen by students for discussion in class and or school councils. The most effective school councils do not exclude anything from being discussed, apart from matters of personal confidentiality. If

rigid limits are imposed on councils at the outset, students are unlikely to develop any enthusiasm for them (Huddleston, 2007). Hord *et al* (1999) further adds that student consultation relating to curriculum and examination reform is mandatory.

The morale of students in all activities is boosted when they are involved in decision-making. The principal of Kamama Secondary School in Eastern Province in an interview with the Standard Newspaper of 7th June 2005 says: For students in a school to be disciplined, students, teachers and parents should be involved in decision-making. He says that at his school, students are consulted when decisions are made. He cites a case where before the school bought a school bus the views of the students were sought. He says the students were unanimous that the idea was good and thus the school went ahead and bought the bus. He concedes that involving students in such matters makes them feel responsible.

Wanjiru (1999) carried out a study on students' democratic participation in decision-making process in Nairobi Province. She used a cross-sectional survey design to gather data from a sample of students and teachers. The study used a questionnaire for students and focused group discussion with teachers. She found out that participatory management needs to be evolved, developed and adopted in schools.

Shikami (2006) in a paper on evaluation of prefecture in school management and education in Kenya aimed at identifying the major constraints to school management that must be addressed in order to develop democratic structures for the proper administration of school programs. He also sought to examine the role of prefects in influencing high discipline, which finds itself at a crossroads since the ban of corporal punishment in Kenyan schools. To gather information, he carried out an analysis of reported cases of unrest in the media. Shikami recommended that there was need to carry out an empirical research on prefects and the school management. However he did not carry out an empirical research on the same. Thus, this study carried out an empirical research to find out the real role of student council and communication areas in which they are involved in governance of public secondary schools in Nairobi County.

Munyao (2003), in his study of the challenges posed by adolescents to the management of secondary schools in Machakos district, found that school administrators were often under pressure in handling students. The study recommended that the administrators undergo regular in-service training on human development to understand better the adolescent behavioral trends in schools. The study concentrated only on the challenges posed to the school administrators (principals) without putting into consideration the role of prefects in governance of secondary schools, an aspect that was considered in this study with reference to public secondary in Nairobi County.

Wang'eri (1986) carried out a study of discipline problems affecting schools in Thika .The objective of the study was to find out the cause of indiscipline among students in secondary schools in Thika. The sample consisted of three principals of the three secondary schools in Thika. The study found out that indiscipline incidents of violence that included the burning of school property, beating up of prefects and other students were rampant in schools. The researcher only dealt with three principals of the three secondary schools where incidences of indiscipline in schools occurred. The sample did not include prefects and teachers. The study found out that student beat prefects. It did not seek to find out how students, through their prefects, were involved in school governance.

2.4 Organizational Information Theory

Organizational Information Theory is a theory about the complexity of information management within an organization builds upon general systems theory and phenomenology, and based on the work of Karl Weick. The theory addresses how organizations reduce equivocality, or uncertainty through a process of information collection, management and use. Two broad themes of this theory are "enactment" and "loose coupling" (Taylor and Elizabeth, 2000).

A key component of Weick's theory is the information afforded by the organization's environment, including the culture within the organizational environment, which can impact the behaviors and interpretation of behaviors of those within the organization. Thus, creation of organizational knowledge is impacted by each person's personal schema as well as the backdrop of the organization's objectives (Nonaka, 1994).

The organization must sift through the available information to filter out the valuable from the extraneous. Additionally, the organization must both interpret the information and coordinate that information to "make it meaningful for the members of the organization and its goals"(West and Turner, 2004). In order to construct meaning from these messages in their environment, the organization must reduce equivocality and commit to an interpretation of the message.

According to Weick, organizations experience continuous change and are ever-adapting, as opposed to a change followed by a period of stagnancy (Weick and Quinn, 1999). Building off of Orlikowski's idea that the changes that take place are not necessarily planned, but rather inevitably occur over time, Organizational Information Theory explains how organizations use information found within the environment to interpret and adjust to change (Orlikowski, 1996). In the event that the information available in the information environment is highly equivocal, the organization engages in a series of cycles that serve as a means to reduce uncertainty about the message. A highly equivocal message might require several iterations of the behavior cycles. An inverse relationship exists between the number of rules established by the organization to reduce equivocality and the number of cycles necessary to reduce equivocality. Similarly, the more cycles used, the less equivocality remains.

Enactment – Weick (1979) emphasizes the role of action, or enactment in change within an organization. Through a combination of individuals with existing data and external knowledge, and through iterative process of trial and error, ideas are refined until they become actualized (Nonaka, 1994). Enactment also plays a key role in the ides of sense making, the process by which people give meaning to experience. Essentially, the action helps to define the meaning, making those within the organization's environment responsible for the environment itself (Weick, 1979).

Selection - Upon analyzing the information the organization possesses, the selection stage includes evaluation of outstanding information necessary to further reduce equivocality. The organization must decide the best method for obtaining the remaining information (West and Turner, 1979). Generally, the decision-makers of the organization play a key role in this stage.

Retention - The final stage occurs when the organization sifts through the information it has compiled in attempts to adapt to change, and determines which information is beneficial and worth utilizing again. Inefficient, superfluous and otherwise unnecessary information that do not contribute to the completion of the project or reduction of equivocality will most likely not be retained for future application of similar project

This theory focuses on the process of communication instead of the role of individual actors. It examines the complexities of information processing in lieu of trying to understand people within a group or organization. Additionally, this theory closely examines the act of organizing, rather than organizations themselves. Weick defines organizing as, "the resolving of equivocality in an enacted environment by means of interlocked behaviors embedded in conditionally related process" and that, "human beings organize primarily to help them reduce the information uncertainty in their lives" (Scott, 2003: 98).

2.5 The two step flow of information theory

A two-step flow of information theory is based on a 1940s study on social influence that states that media effects are indirectly established through the personal influence of opinion leaders. In a school setting communication that is two way is enhanced by availability of communication channels that enhances feedback. The majority of people, the students in this case receive much of their information and are influenced by the media secondhand, through the personal influence of opinion leaders, the student councils members. The Multistep Flow Model says that most people form their opinions based on opinion leaders that influence the media. Opinion leaders are those initially exposed to a specific media content in this case student council members in a school setting, and who interpret it based on their own opinion. They then begin to infiltrate these opinions through the other student who become "opinion followers" (Baran, 2011). These "opinion leaders" gain their influence through more elite media as opposed to mainstream mass media (Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955). In this process, social influence is created and adjusted by the ideals and opinions of each specific "elite media" group, and by these media group's opposing ideals and opinions and in combination with popular mass media sources.

Therefore, the leading influence in these opinions is primarily a social persuasion, ideas flow from mass media to opinion leaders, and from them to a wider population and that is the general student population. Based on the two-step flow hypothesis, the term "personal influence" came to illustrate the process intervening between the media's direct message and the audience's reaction to that message. Opinion leaders tend to be similar to those they influence—based on personality, interests, demographics, or socio-economic factors. These leaders tend to influence others to change their attitudes and behaviors. The two-step theory defined the ability to predict how media messages influence audience behavior and explains why certain media campaigns do not alter audiences' attitudes. This hypothesis provided a basis for the multi-step flow theory of mass communication. This theory asserts that information from the media moves in two distinct stages. First, individuals (opinion leaders) who pay close attention to the mass media and its messages receive the information. Opinion leaders pass on their own interpretations in addition to the actual media content. The term 'personal influence' was coined to refer to the process intervening between the media's direct message and the audience's ultimate reaction to that message. Opinion leaders are quite influential in getting people to change their attitudes and behaviors and are quite similar to those they influence.

Conceptual Model
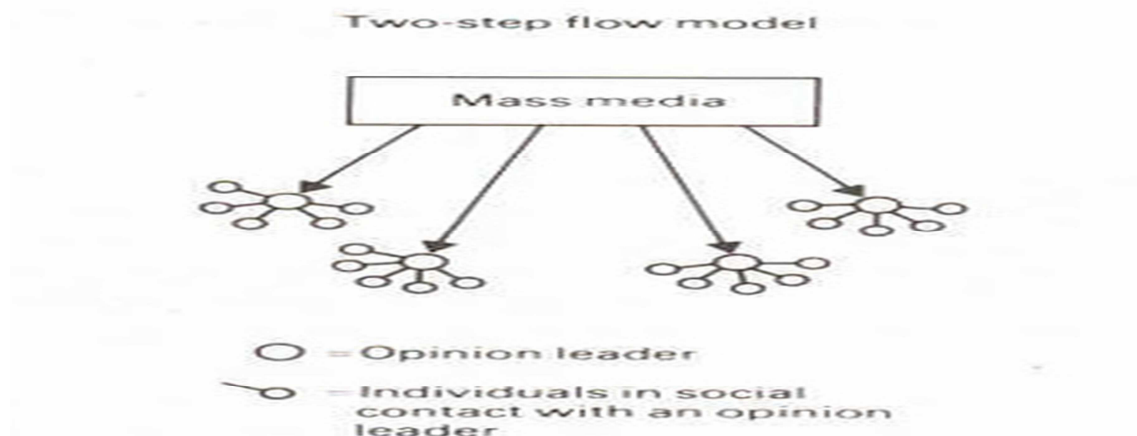
Source: Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955)

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on research methodology which includes research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedures, research instruments, instruments reliability, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques.

3.2 Area of the Study

Nairobi County is located in Nairobi province and constitutes 8 Sub-counties (Makadara, Kamukunji, Starehe, Lang'ata, Dagoretti, Westlands, Kasarani and Embakasi). The County has a total of 65 public secondary schools. Nairobi County was chosen as it has large schools with majority having more than three streams. This presents a communication challenge which is key for the smooth running of the schools.

3.3 Research design

The research employed the use of descriptive survey design. The design is concerned with conditions or relationship that prevails where the researcher does not manipulate the variables but reports the way things are (Best &khan, 2003). The researcher chose the design as it enables gathering of data on a large number of respondents on their behavior, attitudes and opinions. The design allowed the respondents to communicate their interpretive views attitudes and opinions on the forms of communication used in secondary schools.

3.4 Target Population

Target population is defined as the whole population which a researcher wishes to generalize the results of the research study on (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

The population for this study was secondary schools in Nairobi County. The accessible target population was members of the students' council, teachers and deputy principals. The population is selected on the basis that they interact with the students on a daily basis and due to the fact that they form the basis of communication and transfer of information within and outside the school.

3.5 The sample size and sampling procedure

Sampling means selecting a given number of subjects from a defined population as representative of that population. Any statements made about the sample should also be true of the population (Orodho, 2002).

Purposive sampling technique was used to select the deputy principals while simple random sampling technique was used to sample members of the students' council and teachers. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample deputy principals because they are the school managers while simple random sampling technique was appropriate for teachers and members of the students' council as it gave them equal chances to be sampled for the study. A total of 10 schools (constituting 5 boys schools and 5 girls schools) be randomly sampled for the study. A total of 130 respondents (constituting 10 deputy principals, 40 teachers and 80 members of the students' council) were targeted by the study. Sampling was done as presented in Table 3.1**.**

Table 3.1: Sample Size

Target population	Sample per school	Total
Deputy principals	1	10
Teachers	4	40
Members of the students' Council	8	80
Total	13	130

3.6 Research instruments

Questionnaires and interview schedules were used as instruments for data collection. Questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers and members of the students' council while interview schedules were used to collect data from deputy principals. Questionnaires contained both open ended and closed ended questions. The instrument was divided into different sections where each section contained items addressing specific study objectives. The interview schedules was constructed based on the predetermined research questions.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher collected a letter from University of Nairobi allowing her to go to the field. The researcher then identified and administered the instruments personally to the respondents who were given ample time to respond to the questions. This was to ensure achievement of a good return ratio and give the respondents a chance to seek clarification on items which might prove difficult to answer. The researcher also sought the consent of the respondents to participate in the study before administering the instruments.

3.8 Data analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques were used to analyze the data. Quantitative data was collected through questionnaires while qualitative data was collected through interviews. Quantitative data collected was analyzed, presented and interpreted using both descriptive statistics while thematic analysis techniques was used to analyze qualitative data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study. A total of 130 respondents (constituting 10 deputy principals, 40 teachers and 80 members of the students' council) were targeted by the study out of which 118 responded (constituting 8 deputy principals, 36 teachers and 74 members of the students' council) giving a response rate of 91%. The findings were presented as per the study objectives in the following sub-sections.

4.2 General information of the Respondents

This section presents general information of the respondents such as: gender, age, form leadership position and teaching experience.

4.2.1 Respondents' distribution by gender

To establish the distribution of the respondents by gender, respondents were asked to indicate their gender. The findings of the study revealed that 66% of the members of the students' council were male while 34% of the respondents were female. The study also found that 67% of the teachers interviewed were male while 33%were female. It is clear from the findings that most of the respondents interviewed were male. Findings are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Respondents' distribution by gender

	Teachers		Students	
Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Male	24	67	49	66
Female	12	33	25	34
Total	**36**	**100**	**74**	**100**

4.2.2 Respondents' distribution by age

On the distribution of the respondents by age, that 57 % of the respondents were aged 17 years, 19 % of the respondents were at 18 years. The study also shows that 11 % of the respondents were aged 16 years and that 8 % of the respondents were 15 years old and finally, the study revealed that 5 % of the respondents were aged at 19 years. The study shows that majority of the respondents were aged 17 years. The findings are as presented in figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Respondents' distribution by age
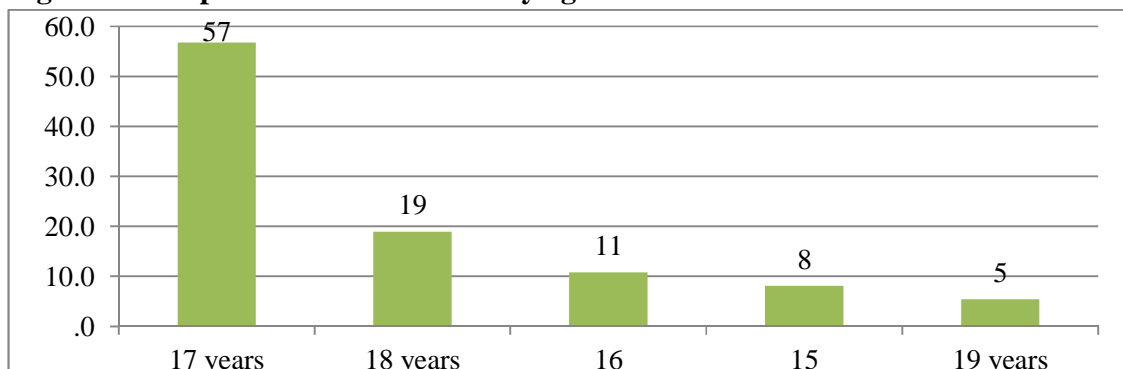
4.2.3 Respondents' distribution by forms

On the distribution of the respondents by form, the study found that 39 % of the respondents were in form three, 28 % of the respondents were in form two, 23% of the respondents were in form one and 10% were in form four. These findings are presented in figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2 Respondents' distribution by forms
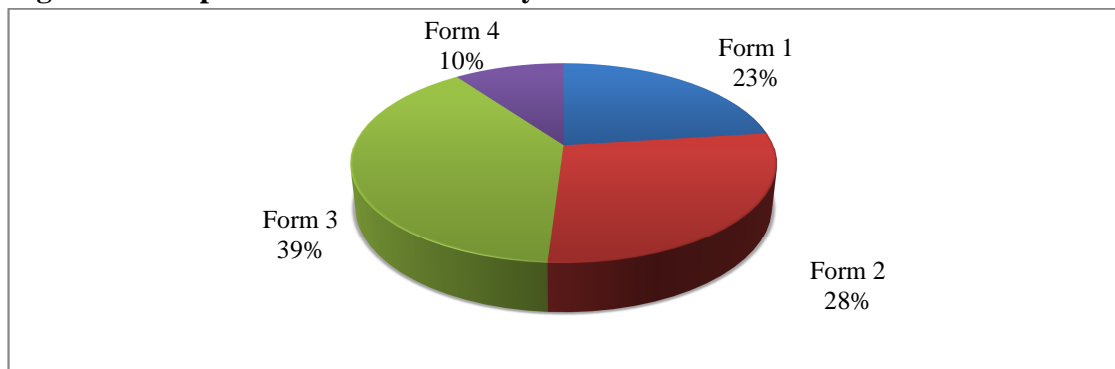
4.2.4 Leadership positions of the respondents

In order to determine the leadership positions of the respondents, the researcher asked the respondents to indicate their positions. The findings of the study revealed that 17.6% of the respondents interviewed were dorm captains. The study reveals a variety of ranks of the respondents. These findings are presented in table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Leadership positions of the respondents

Position	Frequency	Percent
Academic council secretary	3	4.1
Environment Health and sanitation secretary	5	6.8
Assistant secretary	3	4.1
Vice president	5	6.8
Sports and games secretary	3	4.1
Secretary for dining	3	4.1
Clubs and society secretary	3	4.1
Laboratory prefect	3	4.1
Chairperson	3	4.1
Student welfare	3	4.1
Medical captain	3	4.1
Dorm captain	13	17.6
Club and environment captain	3	4.1
Assistant school captain	3	4.1
Assistant class prefect	6	8.1
Student's council class representatives	2	2.7
Class prefect	2	2.7
Discipline captain	2	2.7
House captain	2	2.7
Y.C.S captain	2	2.7
Member of student council	2	2.7

4.2.5 Distribution of Teachers by teaching experience

On the distribution of teachers by experience, the study found that 36.1% of the respondents had taught for a period less than 5 years. The study found that 25% of teachers interviewed had taught for a period between 6-10 years, 16.7% had taught for a period between 16-20 years while 11.1% had taught for a period between 11-15 years and above 20 years. The findings are presented in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3 Distribution of Teachers by teaching experience
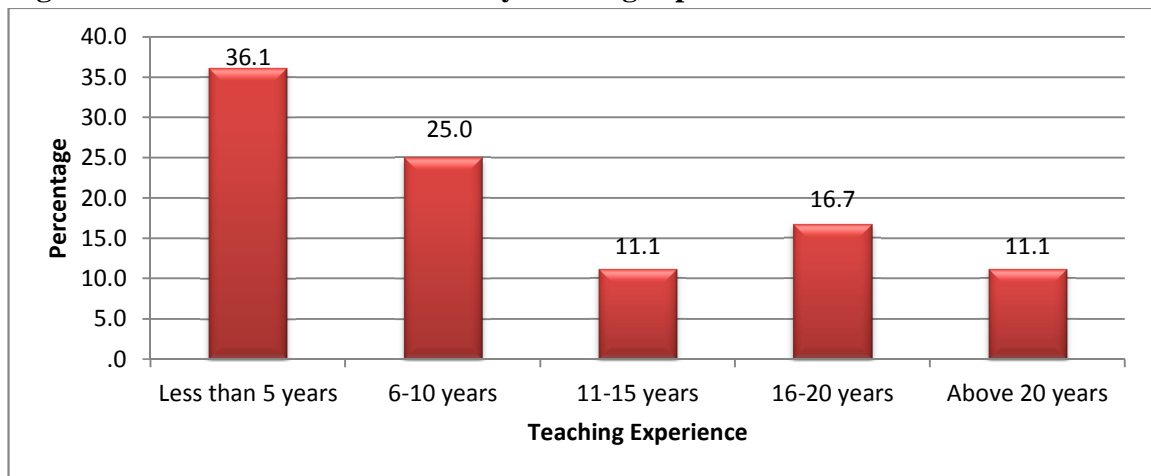
4.3 Forms of communication used in secondary schools in Nairobi County

4.3.1 Extent of use of different forms of communication in schools

To establish the extent to which various forms of communication are used in schools, members of the students' council were asked to indicate the extent to which different forms of communication are used in their schools. The study found that school parliaments or barazas is used to a large extent as indicated by 36.5%. It was also found that other students were used to a large extent as indicated by 32.4%, assembly hall announcements are used to a very large extent as indicated by 33.8%, members of the student council to a large extent as indicated by 44.6% and reporting to the relevant authorities in the school was used to a large extent as indicated by 24.3%. The findings of the study were as presented in table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Extent of use of different forms of communication in schools

Communication channel	Very large extent		Large extent		Neutral extent		Small extent		No extent at all		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
School parliaments, barazas	8	10.8	27	36.5	18	24.3	13	17.6	8	10.8	74	100
Other students	19	25.7	24	32.4	18	24.3	10	13.5	3	4.1	74	100
Assembly hall announcements	25	33.8	22	29.7	15	20.3	9	12.2	3	4.1	74	100
Members of the student council	16	21.6	33	44.6	19	25.7	6	8.1	0	0	74	100
Reporting to the relevant authorities in the school	8	10.8	18	24.3	15	20.3	25	33.8	8	10.8	74	100

Student respondents were further asked to mention the forms of communication used in the schools. The following were mentioned: direct communication to the people in authority, use of the respective form secretaries, by reporting the issue to the teachers concerned, through direct consultation with the departments, passing information in person, oral communication, members of the students' council, fellow students, student meetings, meetings with various groups, deputy principals, delegation, protests, reporting to the departmental heads, through class teacher, discussion with fellow student council members, through the head of the student council, through senior prefects and leaders in the school, through academics captain and by holding meetings with relevant authorities and discussing on the way forward.

In interviews with deputy principals on other forms of communication used in schools, the following were mentioned: announcements at the parades, students' representatives, students visiting the administration privately, filling some statutory forms, sending

representatives to the administration, class meetings and school assemblies during reading of the school news.

4.4 Communication tools used in secondary schools in Nairobi County

4.4.1 Extent of use of different communication tools in schools

To establish the extent to which various communication tools are used in schools, members of the students' council were asked to indicate the extent to which different communication tools are used in their schools. The study found that notice boards are used to a large extent in communication as indicated by 45 %. The study also found that suggestion boxes were used to a small extent as indicated by 33.8%, end of year reports were used to a small extent as indication by 32.4% and that websites are not used in communication as indicated by 67.6%.These findings are in line with the findings by McQuail (2005) who found that different tools are used to disseminate information within learning institutions. Among these tools are face-to-face presentations, handouts, textbooks, telephone, fax, audio, video, email and web pages. The findings of the study were as presented in table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Extent of use of different communication tools in schools

Communication tool	Very large extent		Large extent		Neutral extent		Small extent		No extent at all		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Notice boards	16	21.6	33	44.6	19	25.7	6	8.1			74	100
Suggestion boxes	6	8.1	5	6.8	17	23.0	24	32.4	22	29.7	74	100
End of year reports	8	10.8	18	24.3	15	20.3	25	33.8	8	10.8	74	100
Websites	11	14.9	3	4.1	5	6.8	5	6.8	50	67.6	74	100

Other communication tools used in school include: school calendars, minutes, internal memos, students' notice boards and message box.

4.5 Communication Roles of members of the students' council in secondary schools

4.5.1 Communication of Students' needs of the students to the relevant authority

Members of the students' council were asked to indicate whether they communicate students to the relevant authority in the school. The study found that all the respondents (100%) indicated communicate the students' needs to the relevant authority in the school.

Asked to mention some of the needs they communicate, the following were mentioned: improvement on the diet offered by the school, examination format, need to set appropriate measures to stop theft in the school, disrespect among students, dependency among the students, minimization of duration for lunch break, keeping clean the dining hall, time management, inadequate quantities of food, cheating in exams, noise making in classes, poor hygienic standards, poor academic performance, better equipment in both academic and sporting activities, renovation and upgrading of the library, restocking of the school's sports house, change in subject teachers who are not performing, inadequate water supply, poor dormitory conditions, number of examinations taken to be increased, improvement of the conditions of the washrooms and the toilets, provision of adequate cleaning materials, matters arising from the student body and some of the relevant student suggestions.

In interviews with deputy principals on the needs communicated by the members of the students council, the following were mentioned: complaints on quantity of food given to students, missing of lessons by some teachers, absenteeism, harsh punishment, list of areas students want to be improved in the school, changes in the school routine and welfare of the members of the students' council.

4.5.2 Response by the relevant Authority on the Communicated needs

On the response by the relevant authorities on the communicated needs, the study found that 93% of the students respondents indicated that the authorities respond to the communicated needs of the respondents while 7 % of the respondents indicated that the authority do not respond to the communicated needs of the students. The findings of the study are presented in figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4 Response by the relevant Authority on the Communicated needs
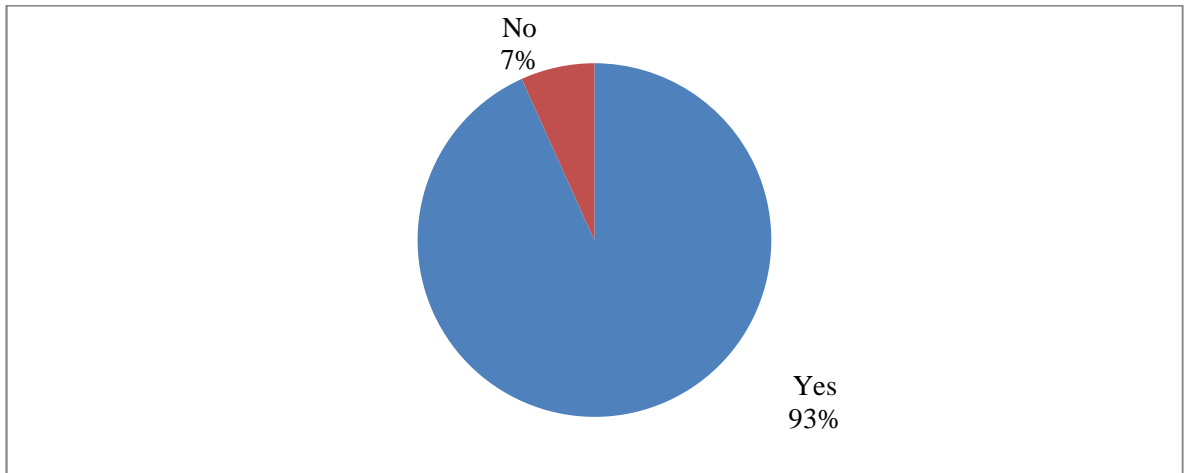
4.5.3 Rate of response by the Authorities to the communicated needs of the students

In establishing the rate of response of the authorities to the communicated needs of the students, student respondents were asked to indicate the rate of response given different responses. From the study, the findings reveal that 68 % of the respondents indicate that the authorities often respond to the needs. The study also found that 15 % of the respondents indicated that the authorities responded to the needs very often, 9% indicated that the authority rarely respond to the communicated needs rarely and 8 % of the respondents indicate that the authorities did not respond at all to the communicated needs of the students. The findings are presented in figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5 Rate of response by the Authorities to the communicated needs of the students
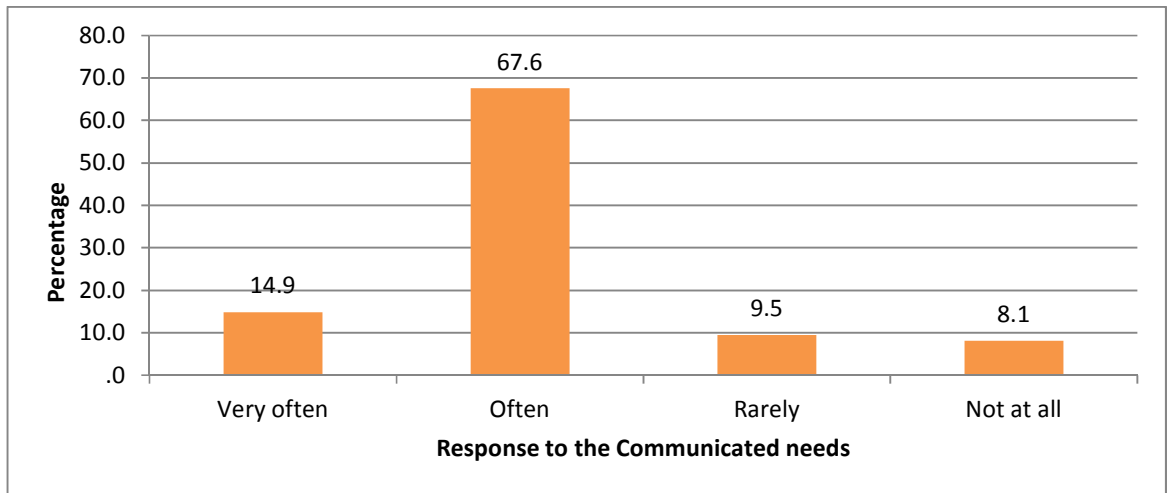
4.5.4 Effectiveness of the forms of communication used to address students' needs in the school

To establish the effectiveness of the communication channels used, teachers' respondents were asked to indicate the level of effectiveness of the communication channels. The findings of the study reveal that 47.2% indicated that they were effective. The study also found 30 % of the respondents were neutral, 16.7% indicated that they were very effective while 5.6% indicated that communication channels were less effective. This view is supported by Njozela (1998) who points out that principals and other stakeholders should not underestimate the contributions of students especially if they are given the opportunity to develop their skills and their level of maturity. In their support, Huddleston (2007) feels that students should be involved in all areas of school life. He adds that the range of activities that make up the work of a school can be categorized in a number of different ways, but, however it is categorized, one should expect students to have opportunities for involvement in each major area – in particular in a school's: ethos and climate – including rules, rewards and sanctions, curriculum, teaching and learning, management and development planning. These findings were presented in figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6 Effectiveness of the communication channels used to address students' needs in the school
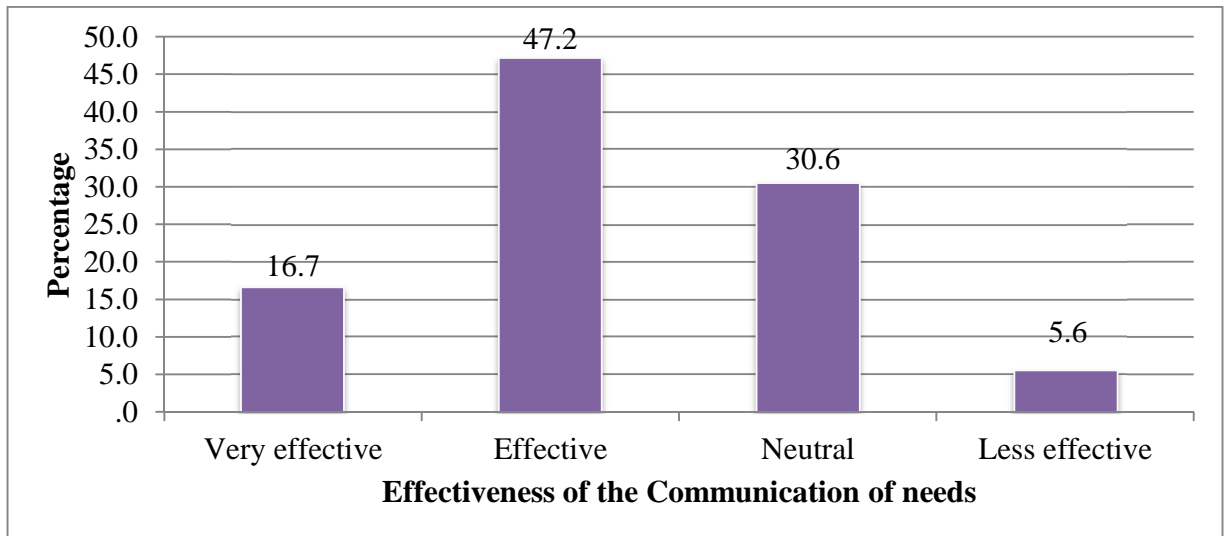
In interviews with the deputy principals on the effectiveness of communication channels, they mentioned that the channels were generally effective. Those who mentioned that the channels were not effective explained that:

> "Some of the members of the students council fear reporting some of the students needs as some are very sensitive and can result into strikes if not honoured"

4.5.5 Participation in decision making in the school as members of the students council

On the participation of the members of the students council in decision making, the study found that all the students in the council (100%), participate in decision making.

On extent of contribution by members of the students' council in different areas of decision making, the study found they contributed on students welfare to large extent as indicated by 39.3%. The study also found that 35.1% indicated that they contributed to discipline to a large extent and 29.7% indicated that they contributed to student performance to a very large extent. These findings are in line with the findings by Sergiovanni (1995) who found that principals who involve prefects in decision- making on matters concerning their welfare face fewer problems as compared to those who do not.

Baker (2000) also found that student's involvement in decision- making helps to develop their leadership skills and ability to plan. In the long run, such students can come up with ideas that might help the smooth running of the school. Sergiovanni (1995) further found that involving students in decision-making creates a sense of ownership to the students. The students feel that the school is part of them and therefore do everything possible to boost and maintain the reputation of the school. The findings are as presented in table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Extent of contribution to decision making in school

Areas of decision making	Very large extent		Large extent		Neutral extent		Small extent		No extent at all		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Students welfare	25	33.8	29	39.2	14	18.9	0	0.0	6	8.1	74	100
Discipline	20	27	26	35.1	15	20.3	11	14.9	2	2.7	74	100
Students' performance	23	31.1	22	29.7	15	20.3	14	18.9	0	0.0	74	100

Other areas of contribution include: environment tidiness, self-awareness, life skills, sporting activities, clubs, dinning setup, opening and closing dates and on the challenges facing the students in various perspectives.

Asked to mention how they make their contribution to the areas mentioned, they explained that: they provide advice to the affected students, listening to students' complaints and then forwarding them to the relevant authorities, helping in making choices during meetings, ensures discipline prevails by guiding and showing good example to the fellow students, help in academic improvement by assisting those who come to me for help in various subjects, by forwarding suggestions and proposals to the administration for consideration, as part of the prefect body they act by giving a good

example which should influence the fellow students on mode of behavior and conduct, ensuring that all students are satisfied, encouraging them to utilize their time appropriately and advising students not to be involved in risky forbidden activities.

In interviews with the deputy principals on the areas of participation by members of the students council in decision making, the following areas were mentioned: coming up with school rules and regulations, type of punishment to breakers of school rules and regulations, type of diet, school half term dates, educational trips, student welfare and student leaders training. Aggrawal (2004) adds that while student representatives may not participate in matters relating to the conduct of examinations, evaluation of student performance, appointment of teachers and other secret matters, their participation should be ensured in all other academic and administrative decisions taken by these bodies. Though this view appears to support student participation in decision making, it however confines student involvement in decision making to specific areas of school life.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to assess the forms of communication in secondary schools in Nairobi County. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: to determine the forms of communication used in secondary schools in Nairobi County, to establish the communication tools used in secondary schools in Nairobi County and to assess the communication roles of students' council in secondary schools in Nairobi County.

5.2 Summary

On the forms of communication used in schools, the study found that school parliaments or barazas is used to a large extent as indicated by 36.5%. It was also found that other students were used to a large extent as indicated by 32.4%, assembly hall announcements are used to a very large extent as indicated by 33.8%, members of the student council to a large extent as indicated by 44.6% and reporting to the relevant authorities in the school was used to a large extent as indicated by 24.3%. other forms of communication used included: direct communication to the people in authority, use of the respective form secretaries, by reporting the issue to the teachers concerned, through direct consultation with the departments, passing information in person, oral communication, members of the students' council, fellow students, student meetings, meetings with various groups, deputy principals, delegation, protests, reporting to the departmental heads, through class teacher, discussion with fellow student council members, through the head of the student council, through senior prefects and leaders in the school, through academics captain and by holding meetings with relevant authorities and discussing on the way forward.

Regarding the communication tools used, the study found that notice boards are used to a large extent in communication as indicated by 45%. The study also found that suggestion boxes were used to a small extent as indicated by 33.8%, end of year reports were used to a small extent as indication by 32.4% and that websites are not used in communication as

indicated by 67.6 %. Other communication tools used included: school calendars, minutes, internal memos, students' notice boards and message box.

On the communication roles of the members of the students council, the study that all the respondents (100%) indicated communicate the students' needs to the relevant authority in the school. Some of the students needs communicated included: improvement on the diet offered by the school, examination format, need to set appropriate measures to stop theft in the school, disrespect among students, dependency among the students, time management, inadequate quantities of food, cheating in exams, noise making in classes, poor hygienic standards, poor academic performance, better equipment in both academic and sporting activities, renovation and upgrading of the library, restocking of the school's sports house, change in subject teachers who are not performing, inadequate water supply, poor dormitory conditions, number of examinations taken to be increased, improvement of the conditions of the washrooms and the toilets, provision of adequate cleaning materials, matters arising from the student body and some of the relevant student suggestions. The needs are communicated through direct communication to the people in authority, use of the respective form secretaries, by reporting the issue to the teachers concerned, through direct consultation with the departments, through class teacher, discussion with fellow student council members, through the head of the student council, through senior prefects and leaders in the school, through academics captain and by holding meetings with relevant authorities and discussing on the way forward. On the effectiveness of the channels of communication, the study found that 47.2% indicated that they were effective. The study also found 30 % of the respondents were neutral, 16.7% indicated that they were very effective while 5.6% indicated that communication channels were less effective.

The study finally found that all the students in the council (100%) participate in decision making in schools. This was evidenced by the fact that members of the students' council contribute to students' welfare to large extent as indicated by 39.3%, students discipline to a large extent as indicated by 5.1% % and student performance to a very large extent as indicated by 29.7%.

Other areas of contribution include: environment tidiness, self-awareness, life skills, sporting activities, clubs, dinning setup, opening and closing dates and on the challenges facing the students in various perspectives. The students were found to make their contribution in decision making through: provision of advice to the affected students, listening to students' complaints and then forwarding them to the relevant authorities, helping in making choices during meetings, ensures discipline prevails by guiding and showing good example to the fellow students, help in academic improvement by assisting those who come to me for help in various subjects, by forwarding suggestions and proposals to the administration for consideration, as part of the prefect body they act by giving a good example which should influence the fellow students on mode of behavior and conduct, ensuring that all students are satisfied, encouraging them to utilize their time appropriately and advising students not to be involved in risky forbidden activities.

5.3 Conclusions

From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the following forms of communication are used in schools: school parliaments or barazas, assembly hall announcements, members of the students' council and reporting to relevant authorities.

The study also concludes that the communication tools used in secondary schools in Nairobi County include: notice boards, suggestion boxes and end of year reports. Other communication tools used include: school calendars, minutes, internal memos, students' notice boards and message box.

The study further concludes that one of the roles of the members of the students' council is to communicate the students' needs to the relevant authorities and therefore they are a form of communication in secondary schools. Some of the needs communicated include: complaints on quantity of food given to students, missing of lessons by some teachers, absenteeism, harsh punishment, list of areas students want to be improved in the school, changes in the school routine and welfare of the members of the students' council.

The study finally concludes that members of the students council in the schools studied participate in decision making in their schools. They participate in the decision making in the following areas: students welfare, students discipline, coming up with school rules

and regulations, type of punishment to breakers of school rules and regulations, type of diet, school half term dates, educational trips, student welfare and student leaders training.

5.4 Recommendations

The following were the recommendations of the study:

Schools should put in place the communication tools require for passing of information between different stakeholders. This will facilitate the passing of information thus helping in the management of the schools.

Schools should organize for forums for information sharing. These forums will enhance the roles of the members' students of the students' council as different views will be shared and how different cases within the schools especially those pertaining to sharing of information crucial to the management of the schools

More training should be organized for the members of the students' council especially on investigation and communication of the students needs to the respective authorities. These training will improve the communication skills among the members of the students' council especially on reporting students' needs.

Finally, on the decision making, the study recommended that the management of the schools should always include the views of the members of the students' council in the making of decision on issues affecting the schools. This will help in giving more crucial information thus promoting informed decision making.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Respondent,

RE: REQUEST FOR DATA

Am a masters of Arts in Communication Studies Student at The University of Nairobi. Am carrying out a research on: **Forms of communication in Secondary Schools in Nairobi County**. You are therefore chosen to participate in this study by providing the information in the attached questionnaire. This information will be used purely for academic purposes and your name will not be mentioned anywhere,

Your cooperation will be highly appreciated

Yours Sincerely

_____

Angela Apondi Mkalama

Student Researcher

University of Nairobi

APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRES FOR MEMBERS OF THE STUDENTS COUNCIL

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

1. Name of the School
   (Optional)_____

2. Gender: Male   [ ]   Female   [ ]

3. Age (In years):

   _____

4. Form: Form 1   [ ]   Form 2   [ ]   Form 3   [ ]   Form 4
      [ ]

5. Leadership position in
   school?_____

SECTION B: FORMS OF COMMUNICATION USED IN SCHOOLS

6. The following are some of the forms of communication used in school. Please indicate the extent to which each is used in your school.

1- Very large extent 2-Large extent   3- Neutral

4- Small extent   5- No extent at all

School parliaments, barazas					
Other students					
Assembly hall announcement					
Members of the student council					
Reporting to the relevant authorities in the school					

7. What are other forms of communication used in your school?_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION C: COMMUNICATION TOOLS USED IN SCHOOLS

8. The following are some of the communication tools used in school. Please indicate the extent to which each is used in your school.

2- Very large extent 2-Large extent   3- Neutral

4- Small extent   5- No extent at all

Communication tool	1	2	3	4	5
Notice- boards					
Suggestion boxes					
End of year reports					
Websites					

9. What are other tools through which you as a members of the students council pass information to the relevant authorities in school?_____

_____

_____

_____

COMMUNICATION ROLES OF MEMBERS THE STUDENTS COUNCIL

10.   Do you normally communicate the needs of the students to the relevant authorities in your school?   Yes   No

If yes, what are some of the needs you communicate?

_____

_____

_____

11.   How do you communicate the above mentioned needs to the relevant authorities in the school?

_____

_____

_____

_____

12.   Do the authorities respond to the communicated needs of the students?

Yes   [ ]   No   [ ]   If yes, how often?   Very often   [ ]   Often
        [ ]   Rarely [ ]   Not at all   [ ]

13.   How would you rate the effectiveness of the communication channels you use to address students' needs in your school?

Very effective   [ ]   Effective   [ ]

Neutral   [ ]   Less effective   [ ]   Not effective at all   [ ]

14.   Do you participate in decision making in your school as a member of the students council?

        Yes   [ ]   No   [ ]

15. The following are some of the areas of decision making in schools. Please indicate the extent to which you contribute to each?

1- Very large extent 2-Large extent   3- Neutral

4- Small extent   5- No extent at all

Areas of decision making	1	2	3	4	5
Students welfare					
Discipline					
Students' performance					

16. Any other area of decision making?_____

_____

_____

_____

17. How do you make your contribution to the above mentioned areas of decision making?

_____

_____

_____

_____

18. What would you recommend to be done to improve on the effectiveness of communication in secondary schools in Nairobi County?

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX III: QUESTIONNAIRES FOR TEACHERS

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

1. Gender: Male   [ ]   Female   [ ]

2. Teaching experience in years: Less than 5 year   [ ]   6-10 Years[ ]

    11-15 years   [ ]   16-20 years [ ]   Above 20 years   [ ]

COMMUNICATION TOOLS USED BY MEMBERS OF THE STUDENTS' COUNCILS

3. The following are some of the communication tools used in school. Please indicate the extent to which each is used in your school?

3- Very large extent   2-Large extent   3- Neutral

4- Small extent   5- No extent at all

Communication tool	1	2	3	4	5
Notice- boards					
School parliaments, barazas					
Other students					
Assembly hall announcement					
Suggestion boxes					
End of year reports					
Websites					

What are other ways/tools through which members of the students council pass information to the relevant authorities in school?_____

_____

_____

_____

ROLE OF MEMBERS THE STUDENTS COUNCIL IN COMMUNICATING THE STUDENT NEEDS TO THE RESPECTIVE AUTHORITIES

Do you normally receive communication on the needs of the students in your school?

Yes   [ ]   No   [ ]

If yes, what are some of the needs communicated to you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How are the above mentioned needs communicated to you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you respond to the communicated needs of the students?

Yes   [ ]   No   [ ]

If yes, how often?

Very often   [ ]   Often [ ]   Rarely [ ]   Not at all   [ ]

How would you rate the effectiveness of the communication channels you use to address students' needs in your school?

Very effective   [ ]   Effective   [ ]

Neutral   [ ]   Less effective   [ ]   Not effective at all   [ ]

COMMUNICATION ROLE OF MEMBERS OF STUDENTS COUNCIL IN DECISION MAKING IN SCHOOLS

Do members of the students' council participate in decision making in your school?

Yes   [ ]   No   [ ]

The following are some of the areas of decision making in schools. Please indicate the extent to which members of the students council in your school contribute to each?

2- Very large extent   2-Large extent   3- Neutral

4- Small extent   5- No extent at all

Areas of decision making	1	2	3	4	5
Students welfare					
Discipline					
Students' performance					

What other areas of decision making do members of the students council participate in your

school?_____

_____

_____

_____

How do they make their contribution to the above mentioned areas of decision making?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What would you recommend to be done to improve on the effectiveness of communication in secondary schools in Nairobi

County?_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX IV: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

1. For how long have you served in the position of deputy principal in your current school?_____

2. What are ways/tools through which members of the students' council pass information to the relevant authorities in school?_____

_____

_____

3. Do members of the students' council communicate students needs to the relevant authorities in your school? Yes   [ ]   No   [ ]

   If yes, what needs do they communicate?_____

_____

_____

_____

   How do they communicate the above mentioned needs?_____

_____

_____

_____

   Do the authorities respond to the communicated needs of the students?

   Yes   [ ]   No   [ ]

   If yes, how often?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

   How effective are the communication channels used by members of the students council to communicate the needs of the students in your school?_____

_____

_____

4. Do members of the students' council participate in decision making in your school?

   Yes   [ ]   No   [ ]

   If yes, which areas of decision making do they participate in and how?_____

   _____
   _____
   _____

5 What would you recommend to be done to improve on the effectiveness of communication in secondary schools in Nairobi County?_____

   _____
   _____
   _____