

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK

**ADDRESSING ACQUISITION OF VERBAL COMMUNICATION
SKILLS BY EMPLOYEES IN STATE CORPORATIONS IN KENYA:
A CASE STUDY OF SPORTS KENYA.**

BY

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**A research project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in Sociology
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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been submitted for a degree course in this or any other university.

Signed

Date

Agnes Kupa

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

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DEDICATION

To my family, your continuous support in the duration of this course has not been taken for granted. To my husband whose contribution was immense. My children that patience they portrayed was quite encouraging.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DG:	Director General
VC:	Verbal Communication
SK:	Sports Kenya
Comm.:	Communication
SC:	State Corporation

ABSTRACT

This study focused on acquisition of verbal communication skill at the work place. The study was addressing how the employer can transfer this skill to the employees. The organization being studied was a state corporation in the sports industry known as Sports Kenya. Sports Kenya is a state corporation mandated by the government of Kenya to identify talent and train the talent for national and international competition and also to manage the sporting facilities such as Moi International Sports Centre and Nyayo National Stadium. The skill targeted was verbal communication skills preferred in the promoting of the culture and operations of Sports Kenya. This study was carried out as a cross sectional survey. The target population was 173 and the sample size was 86 that was about fifty percent of the population. Systematic random sampling was the sampling procedure used. The employees were divided into three categorized that was management, supervisors and junior staff. All staff were assigned numbers. Small pieces were then given numbers according to number employees in a category. The pieces of paper were then picked at random up to the required number of samples. The data was collected by use of a questionnaire and key Informant schedule. The questionnaire was distributed by pick and drop system to the samples identified. The key informant schedule was given to specially picked samples. These samples were selected subjectively which was informed by their statuers in the organization. They were the decision makers of the organization. They were ten in number. The decision makers were the heads of department, management staff, union leaders and opinion leaders amongst junior staff. The data in the questionnaire and key informant schedule were guided by the objectives these were, the challenges faced when employees acquire VC skills, employees' views towards the tasks used when disseminating information to staff whether it would be preferable in training VC skills and the attitude of the employees towards VC skills and employees perception towards attainment of VC skills. The study revealed that the employees are rarely attended trainings and were not inducted in VC skills posing a challenge in acquisition of the skills. Employees have a positive attitude towards acquisition of VC skills. The employees agree that the tasks identified by the organization could also be used to transfer this skill to employees. The recommendations in this study were to ensure that employees were inducted in organizations inclined VC skills. Disseminating of this skill to employees would be accommodated by the employees because of their positive attitude and improved performance.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Back ground information

There had been occasional nods to the importance of personal qualities in education and the workplace (Willingham & Breland, 1982), but these were rare. The situation only began changing in the 1990s, when psychology began to coalesce around a five-factor model of personality (Goldberg, 1990). This led to rapid acceptance and expansion of the notion that personality mattered, and studies began contributing to an accumulating knowledge base about its importance.

By the middle of the millennium decade, researchers were able to link wide areas of human endeavor and outcomes to personality (Roberts, Kuncel, Shiner, Caspi, & Goldberg, 2007): Personality measures were shown to predict mortality, divorce, occupational attainment, health behaviors, drug use, alcoholism, managerial success, leadership effectiveness, procrastination, creativity, job performance, absenteeism, team performance, and job satisfaction to name just a few. The meta-analytic-based list of predictive relationships and their magnitude rivaled and in some cases exceeded similar analyses made a decade earlier for predictions based on cognitive ability (e.g., Gottfredson, 1997).

Research on the non-cognitive predictors of workplace performance clearly addresses issues related to ongoing structural changes to the economy. Labor markets are different than in decades past, due in part to “industrial and corporate restructuring, declines in unionization, technological change, and globalization” (Kirsch et al., 2007,) These changes favor workers who possess a different set of skills than were required under the old economic structure, and several of the most important of these skills can be characterized as non cognitive.

These skills were recently identified in an influential report put out by The Conference Board, Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and Society for Human Resource Management, and Corporate Voices for Working Families (Casner-Lotto & Barrington,

2006). The Conference Board (Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006) identified skills that are becoming increasingly important to work place success. Non cognitive skills such as work ethic, communication skills and teamwork were listed as among the most important personal skills for success in the workplace in the 21st century, these non cognitive skills were rated more important than skills traditionally taught and assessed by high schools and colleges. In short, the business community is explicitly stating that classic cognitive skills are not enough for workplace success and that non cognitive skills are important as well.

1.1 Skills

Skill (techne in Greek) is used to denote expertise developed in the course of training and experience. It includes not only trade and craft skills acquired by apprenticeship, but high-grade performance in many fields, such as professional practice, the arts, games, and athletics. (Gregory, 1987, p715) The common factor in all these types of skills is that the performer has to match the demands of a task. Skill consists of choosing and implementing the most efficient strategies.

Peter Drucker (1993) argued that a skill could not be explained in words, it could only be demonstrated. Thus, the only way to learn a skill was through apprenticeship and experience.

1.1.1 Social Skills / Verbal Communication

Social Skills are the interaction of one person with another. It includes the perception of needs and desires of others, and of one's effect upon others (Gregory, 1987, p716). This is quite similar to emotional intelligence and social pressure.

What is verbal communication? Verbal communication refers to the use of sounds and language to relay a message. It serves as a vehicle for expressing desires, ideas and concepts and is vital to the processes of learning and teaching. In combination with non verbal forms of communication, verbal communication acts as the primary tool for expression between two or more people.

According to Bakhtin, it is the utterance. As a social event, the utterance entails, first of all, active interaction between the speaker and the listener (the speaker's activity entails and pre-supposes the activity of the listener). Bakhtin writes : When I construct my utterance, I try to actively determine it the possible answer of the listener and, on the other hand, I try to anticipate it. This anticipated answer, in turn, has an effect on my utterance (I parry the objection that I anticipate, resort to all kinds of hedges, etc.).When I speak, I also consider the perceptive context in which the person I am addressing perceives my speech, the extent to which he is informed about the situation his views and convictions, his prejudices (from our point of view), his sympathies and antipathies after all, all this will affect his response of active understanding of my utterance. My consideration of these things also determines my selection of utterance genre, compositional devices, and finally, the selection of linguistic means, that is, the utterance. (Bakhtin, 1953/1979, p. 276; see also 1935/1975, p. 95).

Every specific utterance is a link in the chain of verbal communication in a definite sphere the utterance occupies some definite position in this sphere of communication, on a particular issue, in a particular transaction, and so on. It is not possible to define one's own position without relating it to other positions. For this reason each utterance is full of responses of different types to other utterances in the given sphere of communication. (Bakhtin, 1953/1979, p. 271)

1.1.2 Skill Gaps

The required performance minus the present performance equals the skill or performance gap. A skill gap analysis compares the performers' skills with the skills required for the job in order to identify future performance improvement opportunities

Development of skills to enhance performance in the work place has progressed in number of ways. As it has been brought out by Deborah Alpert Sleight (1993), she sites that, On-the-job training, sometimes called direct instruction (or sit-by-me training in England; King, 1964, p. xvii), is the earliest kind of training. This is face to face training .It then progressed to Apprenticeships which according to Steinmetz (1976), as tools

became more complex, and the required knowledge and skills to use them became more specialized the craftsmen who had the specialized skills and tools for a particular trade conducted the training . It wasn't until the Industrial Revolution that training changed much from on-the-job and apprenticeships. The old-style apprentice system was inadequate” (Steinmetz, 1976, pp. 1-6). Classrooms by that time had become the customary places of education, and were simply recreated in the factories. This form of training focused on the practical and operating of the various machines.

Dr Shikha Seetha , in the book ,“Need of Developing Soft Skills’ Argues that technical and job-related skills are a must, but they are not sufficient when it comes to progressing up the ladder. Soft skills play a very important role in this vigorous commercial epoch. Today there is a huge mass of qualified job seekers existing in the society and the competition within them for job acquisition and job sustainability is becoming tougher. To get an edge over the competitors they are left with no other choice but to add worth to their hard skills with soft skills to exhibit their true potential. If one has got advanced soft skills then definitely he will be able to establish themselves as distinct amongst other job seekers.

Todd Smith (Feb 2011) states that Soft skills include your ability to listen well, communicate effectively, be positive, handle conflict, accept responsibility, show respect, build trust, work well with others, manage time effectively, accept criticism, work under pressure, be likable, and demonstrate good manners.

Todd Smith (Feb 2011) states that hard skills are specific, trainable abilities necessary to carry out the professional or technical requirements of a job or occupation. Hard skills would include knowledge, machine operation, computer procedures, safety standards, financial systems, technical analysis, and sales administration. Unlike soft skills, hard skills are typically easy to observe, quantify, and measure.

It is therefore crucial to have the learning institutions pay a key role in training of employees on the soft skills such as effective verbal communication skills. Employers

should also have programs that develop employees' soft skills. The role of soft skill training in schools and colleges cannot be ignored. Irrespective of the target group or the institution where it is imparted, soft skills training programs aim to improve a whole range of skills, like assertiveness, negotiation skills, communication skills and the skill to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships. Soft skills are perceived as those capabilities that are inherent in an individual. These competencies exist in every individual to a particular level. But if these skills are not used or if the individual who adorns these skills is unaware of it, then that individual will never be able to utilize his / her inherent skills. The aim of any soft skills training program is to remove these blocks or the barriers that prevent the individual from utilizing his/ her skills. Soft skills training will make the individual aware of his / her hidden capabilities and to refine it for the overall development and success of the individual. Everyone can get benefit from the soft skills training irrespective of the skills they have inherited.

1.2 Problem statement

Peter Drucker, defines knowledge worker individuals as, "high level employees who apply theoretical and analytical knowledge, acquired through formal education to develop new products or services." Knowledge workers are those who acquire, manipulate, interpret and apply information in order to perform multidisciplinary, complex and unpredictable work. They analyze information in order to and apply expertise in a variety of areas to solve problems ,generate ideas or create new products and services .The ability to solve problems and be creative are some of the key soft skills required in any work environment regardless of an individual's discipline.

Concerning the importance of including soft skills in colleges, Thacker and Yost (2002) noted that students require training to be effective team members. Employers often come across that "business graduates lack good team leadership skills". Similarly, according to Knell and et.al. (2007) employers are continually asking for a work force rich in creativity, communication skills and cultural understanding. Poor soft skills like communication skills create a negative impression with employers during the recruitment

phase and may exclude a graduate with good technical skills from being selected for employment (Pauw et al, 2006).

Dr Shikha Seetha (2013) in his article, “Necessity Of Soft Skills Training For Students And Professionals” states that, Today lack of competence in soft skill is marked as one of the reasons of poor rate of employability of technical graduates. Though it is true that soft skill need to be inculcated at a very young age at home but the role of soft skill training in schools and colleges cannot be ignored. Irrespective of the target group or the institution where it is imparted, soft skills training programs aims to improve a whole range of skills, like assertiveness, negotiation skills, communication skills and the skill to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships.

According to the literature presented it is evident that promotion of soft skills in any individual would go long way in improving performance and making one marketable in the current labour market.

This literature clearly depicts the importance of being in possession of soft skill such as verbal communication skills .For a potential employee it guarantees higher chances of being selected and retained in the labour market.

This study aimed at addressing verbal communication skills in the work environment. All employees join the institution with some knowledge on how to express themselves that would be captured as general knowledge in VC skills .Once this employees join the institution they are expected to express themselves in a particular way . The speech should be in line with the culture and practices of the institution in this case the vocabulary used in the Sports industry is not known to all employees. Therefore these skills are to enable the employees carry out their daily operations skill fully . These verbal communication skills are unknown to the employees. It is therefore the responsibility of the employer to disseminate this skill to the employees .The problem addressed is that the employees are not so skilled in sports industry vocabulary how best can this skill be disseminated to the employees to bridge the gap . The study will

therefore highlight the challenges faced during the acquisition of this skill, whether the standard tasks used by the employer to transfer skills to employees would be useful to the employees to transfer effective VC skills . The study was also to highlight the attitude of the employees towards VC skills and its perceived relevance.

1.3 Research Questions

- I. What are the challenges faced by employees in Sports Kenya during acquisition verbal communication skills?
- II. What tasks should be addressed when imparting verbal communication skills to the employees?
- III. How does the attitude of the employee affect the acquisition of verbal communication skill in the work place?
- IV. What is the perceived relevance of verbal communication skills by employees in Sports Kenya ?

1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 Main Objective

The main objective of the study was to determine ways in which the employees can effectively acquire and utilize verbal communication skills for optimum performance in Kenyan State corporations.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are:

- I. To identify challenges faced by employees during the acquisition of verbal communication skills in Sports Kenya.
- II. To identify tasks to be carried out when imparting verbal communication skills to employees in Sports Kenya.
- III. To examine the role of attitudes in acquisition of verbal communication skills by Sports Kenya employees.

IV. To assess the effect of perceived relevance of acquisition of verbal communication in the workplace.

1.5 Justification of the Study

The findings of this study informed the audience on the importance of enhancing soft skills such as verbal communication skills amongst employees for overall performance in the state corporations.

The findings identified the challenges faced by employees as they acquire VC skills in the organization. This is bound to prompt Sports Kenya to encourage training of staff in VC skills and interacting verbally to improve this skill.

The study has added to the body of knowledge on how best the employers can develop employees on the preferred verbal communication skills within the organizations culture and practices. The academicians and scholars will use the findings of this study as a source for future reference.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

Scope: Sports Kenya has its assigned mandate and functions within the Kenya government for this organization to achieve its mandate the employees are expected to possess skills that will promote their ability to perform effectively. One key aspect was effective communication which was in line with the organization's culture and practices. The employer was therefore expected to inform the employees on the best verbal communication skills that would enable them achievement the organization's goals. The study found ways of addressing acquisition of VC in Sports Kenya by the employees. This study also addressed the attitude of the employees towards acquisition of preferred VC skills and the challenges faced during the acquisition of this skill. The study also highlighted the tasks that were usually used by the employer to disseminate skills to employees. The study therefore established employees' view towards these tasks and whether they would be effective to transfer preferred verbal communications skills to them.

Limitations: The population of the employees is vast this is because they are in two different facilities which were Moi International Sports centre Kasarani and Nyayo National Stadium. Capturing all their views was a challenge. The researcher had to wait a longer period to get feedback or get the questionnaires back. Procuring of the incentives or channeling funds to pay the employees was a challenge due to the limited resources. Stationary required and access to resource material.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This paper reviews the relevant literature on acquisition and enhancement of soft skills focusing on verbal communication skills in the work place .This part highlights the contributions made by various scholars on soft skills specifically the verbal communication skills acquisition in learning institutions and employment institutions. This paper addresses the relationship between the cognitive skills and non cognitive skills. Common descriptions of this skills include project management , presentation ,interpersonal people ,communications ,creativity ,problem solving Skills ,flexibility for team work and individual work (Ziegler ,2007) .

Certain sociological theories have also addressed the process of learning of the verbal communication skills. These theories create a link between the inherent human traits and use of training to enhancement human traits. There is evidence that high cognitive test scores are likely to result not only from high cognitive skills (hard skills) but also from high motivation and adequate personality traits (soft skills).

2.1 Literature review

A literature review is a description of the literature relevant to a particular field or topic.

2.1.1 Types of soft skills

Soft skills are the non-technical skills that are often not given due consideration while managing Projects. Soft skills, often described as an art (Belzer, 2004), is concerned with managing and working with people, ensuring customer satisfaction with the intention of retaining them and creating a conducive environment for the employees to deliver high quality products within budget and on time and exceeding stakeholders expectations.

According to Heikkila, 2002), one has to see beyond technical capabilities and recognize the value of business focused skills in order to successfully oversee and manage a department.

2.1.2 Communication skills

Communication skills refer to the ability to convey ideas easily and clearly in order to ensure that the team moves towards a common goal (Belzer, 2004). Effective communication is a very important soft skill required by software project managers. According to Belzer (2004), “project managers must have the ability to convey complex ideas easily, clearly articulate what must be accomplished, keep the team moving towards a common goal, foster an environment that allows team members to communicate openly and honestly, admit their own mistakes without losing respect, negotiate, listen and facilitate”. Particularly, within the ambit of the IT domain, these aspects are minimized in favor of technology (Newstrom& Davis, 2001).

2.1.3 Team building

Team building involves the setting up of a team with an appropriate mix of skills to ensure the successful completion of a project. Conflicting behavior between team members should be detected as early as possible. Different types of teams are necessary: inter-disciplinary teams, informal teams, autonomous teams, and others, during the various phases of a project. The collection of individual skills working towards a common goal constitutes a powerful force (Phillips, 2002). The effect is that “The whole is greater than the sum of the parts”, as Gray & Larson (2000) rightly pointed out.

2.1.4 Flexibility and creativity

Flexibility and creativity can be promoted through the understanding of the personality of individual members, and acceptance of individual preferences (Santrock, 2000).

2.1.5 Leadership

According to Dobbins and Pettman (1997), leadership is the ability to motivate people to work towards achieving common goals, to make ordinary people display extraordinary

performance. In short, leadership has been related to a person's skills, abilities and degree of influence to get people moving in a direction, making decisions and doing things that they would normally not have embarked on. Recent work performed in the domain of leadership highlights the importance of emotional intelligence as one of the basic requirements of the modern leader (Goleman, 1997). The behavior of human beings is influenced by emotions since the dawn of time. Many theorists have emphasized the importance of emotions and how to deal with emotional employees and it is nowadays widely accepted that the management of emotions, particularly anger, can assist in stress management. Goleman (1998b) argues that stress can be considered as the most damaging and costly illness in most organizations.

2.1.6 Organizational effectiveness

To organize is the management function that focuses on arranging and allocating work, authority and resources among an organization's members so that plans may be successfully carried out (University of Mauritius, 2004). Effective organizations are learning organizations. A learning organization takes an institutional permanence, and acceptable modes of behavior become self evident to its members.

2.1.7 Stress management

Stress refers to pressure, tension or worry resulting from problems (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 1999). When stress becomes excessive, it can cause harm to oneself or to the immediate surroundings. Beyond a certain level, it can cause distress. Mental problems like poor memory and concentration, negative thoughts, confusion and loss of sense of humor. Stress sufferers can lose up to 50% of their aptitude to perform their jobs (Chapman, 2001). Maintaining a good level of stress as early as possible and ensuring that it does not turn into distress can help to improve the progress of the project.

2.1.8 Time management

The soft skills side of time management refers to the ability of one to plan, delegate, organize, direct, and control. These attributes can be improved through experience. A list

of obstacles preventing effective time management has to be prepared (a so-called list of time wasters) and ways to eliminate these time wasters should be established and applied.

2.1.9 Change management

Any alteration should be identified and evaluated before committing changes (Proehl, 2001). One important change management issue is dealing with user resistance. Both users and team members have to be informed as early as possible. People's concerns need to be taken into consideration and actions to dispel their fears have to be taken as expeditiously as possible (Proehl, 2001).

2.1.10 Trustworthiness

This is the value given to the belief that one can rely on the goodness, strength and ability of someone else (Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary, 1999). Trust is the basic requirement

2.1.11 Conflict management

Conflicts are serious disagreements that emerge during work. They may arise due to disagreements over priorities, allocation of resources, quality of work (Gray & Larson, 2000) or other reasons. According to Gray & Larson (2000), the following strategies can be employed to manage it: Mediation of conflict, Arbitration of conflict, Control of conflict, Accepting conflict Or Elimination of conflict.

2.2 Soft Skills In Developed Countries

According to the American Society of Training and Development's (ASTD) State of the Industry 2011 report (Green & McGill, 2011), U.S. employers spent \$171.5 billion on employee learning and development in 2010. More than 27.6% of the learning content they provided went to teaching soft skills, including interpersonal (7.49%), customer service (7.35%), and management and supervisory skills (12.83%). Analyst firms, such as Bersin & Associates, that follow corporate training and development trends have found similar results showing that organizations tend to spend at least 20-25% of their training budgets on soft skills initiatives.

Cognitive skills identified by America's Perfect Storm(Kirsch et al., 2007), Murnane and Levy(1996) stated that it is equally important for the 21st century workforce to possess noncognitive skills (they refer to these as soft skills), such as teamwork and communication skills. Workforce research that assesses these skills and creates interventions designed to improve them can provide an essential complement to research on numeracy and literacy skills to create a better equipped workforce.

2.3 General over view of soft skills in Kenya

Gowland Mwangi, (2010) (et:al) publication on Problems of education in 21st Century : Kenya's Jua-Kali sector offers an alternative to formal employment. Though one needs technical and soft skills to work effectively, the latter are critical for successful entrepreneurship and unless Jua-Kali operators are trained in soft skills, they cannot function effectively. A trainer requires knowledge of what they need, lack and extent of deficiency. This is because in the jua kali sector the artisans utilize the various soft skills such as verbal communication skills to practice their trade. One very essential soft skill in jua kali sector is verbal communication skills.

A cross-sectional survey design involving 230 randomly selected operators was used to provide this information. Soft skills' mean acquisition was 55% at primary, 61% at secondary and 71% at tertiary level and was independent of gender; 90% of the operators lacked but required all 18 soft skills. Male dominated jobs requiring higher capital and more physical strength while females dominated jobs requiring lower capital and less physical strength and also the food sector; The sector accommodated people of all ages, majority being self-employed; on-the-job training was inadequate; and teaching soft skills within curricula was the best training modality. The researchers recommended mainstreaming formal provision of soft skills; training using the best modality and encouraging more people to join the sector.

At a two-day conference in Nairobi held in August 16th 2013 which over 60 educators, policymakers, employers and trainers gathered to identify the skills required for work in the 21st century economies of Africa and Asia, and to explore innovative models of

delivering these soft skills to youth of secondary school age as part of R4D's Innovative Secondary Education for Skills Enhancement (ISESE) project. Notably, the conference drew the participation of Kenya's Director of Vocational and Education Training – OwateWambayi, and Kenya telecommunications giant Safaricom, represented by Peter Njioka, head of Safaricom's learning and Development team.

Dylan Busa of Mindset Teach South Africa said, "Formal systems of education can sometimes stifle creativity and entrepreneurialism, key skills required in the job market. We need to take a hard look at what the youth are being taught in schools."

Peter Njioka said "The competitive business environment means that employers tell educators, trainers and policymakers the kind of employees and skills needed in the job market. Theory may be important, but at Safaricom we place a premium on skills like innovation, communication skills and creative thinking - that is what drives our brand." he said.

Dylan Busa (et'al) noted that in the ISESE Africa skills development that employers are as concerned about soft skills such as communication and problem-solving, as they are about analytical or job-specific skills. In the informal sector, these skills are even more crucial, as such workers need to be able to work along the entire length of the value chain. However, curricula tend not to specify these skills; where they are included, instructors often lack appropriate teaching methods and tools and may not be aware of what employers are seeking.

Kenya has also identifies this soft skills as life skills. The Standard newspaper, (January 11 2015) Article by Robert Ngunjiri clearly depicts what the Jubilee government is doing to reduce that number of unemployed youth. The Kenyan government discovered that majority of the Kenyan youth are not empowered economically due to the deficiency in life skills.

Therefore a programme under the umbrella of Kenya Private Sector Alliance, aims to offer work experience and internship to the youth to boost their chances of getting employment. One of the main skills taught is verbal communication.

2.4 Employers views on imparting of soft skills to employees

Employers concerns are mirrored through numerous communication studies (Artemeva, 2008; Dunbar, Brooks & Miller, 2006; Schnell 2006; Jin Xiao, 2006; Morreale, Osborn & Pearson, 2002; Grapsas & Ilic, 2001; Pinelli, Barclay & Kennedy, 1995) which resonate the need for prospective graduates to be technically competent, i.e. equipped with (hard skill) and professional (soft skill) competency to be marketable and competitive in the industry professional or “soft” skills include process skills, social skills or generic skills. (ETD 555 ©Conference for Industry and Education Collaboration American Society for Engineering Education February 4-6, 2009 Orlando, Florida 2).

Furthermore, with the advent of globalization the communication with international partners across the borderless professional global village and community,” (Patin ,2005:49) As indicated by Patil (2005) , global skills include knowledge of foreign language proficiency ,cultural development background ,international business concepts and international technical issues .Moreover ,Norback and Hardin (2005) point out that workplace demands and challenges increase rapidly with time and globalization .

Employers argument is the need for graduates to be equipped with work place communication skills as specified by Amare and Brammer (2005) which mention employers’ frustrations toward prospective engineers in adequate writing skills for the job .Employers complain that , ‘many prospective engineering employees fail to know how to write on the job ,despite exposure to professional writing courses.’(2005:188) .Prospective engineers not only have to technically proficient but more importantly be able to communicate their ideas both written and verbally (Miller C.R ,Larsen , J. and Gaitens ,J.,1996) .

2.5 Addressing Challenges of imparting soft skills to employees.

According to Jobberman Insider (December 3, 2013) Technical skills no longer dominate the workplace. Today, customer service, negotiation, interpersonal communication, and other “soft skills” are at least as important. In many cases, they’re more important than the “hard” or technical skills. But many employees don’t know where to start when it comes to learning them. It’s not like there are education courses teaching this stuff, right, which is the lingering question among most employers. Below are Jobberman’s proposals on how to tackle challenges faced during the impacting of soft skills.

2.5.1 Motivate Them To Learn

Some companies provide online computer training videos and they go a long way to simplify the process of learning new soft skills. Online soft skills courses can also be much less expensive than live training. Plus, they can be more effective since employees can move at their own pace, review materials at their leisure, and break up lessons according to their unique learning style. Online tutorials also give instant feedback about progress through integrated learning management systems which replaces live group training with one-to-one training.

2.5.2 Helping Them by Example

Soft skills such as verbal communication skills are a little abstract. For example, how do you show objective examples of conflict resolution? The ideas and communication principles you teach only translate to reality when you practice them. So, help employees understand these ideas through examples. You might set up scenarios to teach employees about conflict resolution. Show how body language affects the confrontation. Show how voice inflection, choice of words, vocal cadence, and other subtiles affect how a person might respond to a confrontation.

You can also use definitions, suggested steps, and even illustrations or video to demonstrate how to use these new soft skills. Keep in mind that you’re trying to alter ingrained behaviors; so many examples are going to be necessary. Repetition is key, and the employee will only really “get it” when he sees a flood of examples.

2.5.3 Encourage Practice

Practice makes perfect. Encouraging employees to practice what they learn compels them to internalize the examples you give to them and adopt them into their own behavior. It's one thing to watch an example. It's another thing to actually do it yourself.

Keep your content and message clear, simple, and concise. Build on the learner's prior knowledge, and address any and all misconceptions as they arise. Control the employees' course flow, and purposefully introduce "friction" or "road bumps" to foul them up.

2.5.4 How to Assess Effectiveness

Rather than developing a repetitive pattern of "example-practice-assess," try to mix things up a bit to cut off the employees' expectations. This keeps them on their toes and motivated. It also keeps them engaged. They can't shut off their minds and just coast through the material. Test the employees' knowledge periodically and unpredictably throughout the training. Design feedback so that it stresses tradeoffs rather than forcing "right" and "wrong" alternatives.

Sometimes, in real-world scenarios, it's not always clear what the right or wrong answer is. Cost-benefit analysis allows employees to think in terms of profit and loss, which will ultimately help them and the company in the long-term.

2.6 Relationship between soft skills and formal education.

Christopher Bush in his article (2012) "The Case of Soft Skills Training," states that there's a common misconception that capabilities like interpersonal communications, leadership, or coping with change are innate and can't be taught or learned. There's also a tendency in many organizations to avoid what's hard to measure. It's easier to see an immediate, tangible result from training someone to use a new software program or master a new technical skill than it is to track the benefits of teaching someone to be a better leader.

Bush, further states that despite the research and recognition that good soft skills have received, formal education has been slow to respond. For most of the past decade, business executives have been sounding the alarm about how unprepared university graduates are for the workforce, despite solid educations. Engineers, nurses, and MBAs frequently come out of school with excellent technical and quantitative skills, for example, but an underdeveloped ability to build teams, negotiate with colleagues, or lead projects.

The era of globalization in the 21st century and the increasing mobility of engineering professionals around the world has placed a tremendous impact on the employers demands of prospective graduates or technical students seeking to be employed in the future workplace (Patil, 2005). Engineers of the 21st century are not only required to possess technical knowledge but be equipped with the relevant soft skills for effective workplace communication purposes (2005: 50). In fact, Nguyen (1998) fittingly reverberates that “an ideal engineer is expected to possess a diversity of skills and attributes, balanced with technical competency and non-technical competency” (1998: 65).

In the workplace, companies and the military have historically focused selection testing almost exclusively on cognitive abilities, in part because a literature in industrial organizational psychology attested to its preeminent importance in identifying workers most likely to succeed in training and on the job (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). A generation was taught that other variables, such as personality, were unrelated to workforce outcomes or to just about anything else.

The economists Samuel Bowles, Herbert Gintis, and Melissa Osborne showed that cognitive skills accounted for only 20 percent of the educational attainment effects on labor market outcomes i.e., more schooling leads to higher employment and wages. Here the interpretation was that schooling develops non-cognitive as well as cognitive skills, and these non-cognitive skills drive workplace success (Levin, 2012)

2.7 Theoretical Frame work

Meanwhile, new conceptions about human capital theory began appearing in the economics literature. Human capital is a worker's set of skills, broadly defined, that enhance productivity. They can be cognitive skills, abilities, knowledge, dispositions, attitudes, interests, etc. These attributes come from innate ability, education (e.g., years in school, quality of schooling), training, medical care, and/or parenting, or in other ways.

2.7.1 Social Learning Theory

The best model for Soft Skills Training should be based on a learning theory which encompasses the situation of classroom and theme of skills development. Such a theory is Bandura's Social Learning Theory which states that people learn from one another, via observation, imitation, and modeling. "Most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action." (Bandura). Social learning theory explains human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences.

(Bandura, 1977a).Social Learning Theory had two profound influences on the development of life skills and social skills programs. One was the necessity of providing children with methods or skills for coping with internal aspects of their social lives, including stress reduction, self-control, and decision-making. Most life and social skills programs address these skills. The second was that, to be effective, life and social skills programs need to replicate the natural processes by which children learn behavior. Thus, most life and social skills programs include observation, role-play, and peer education components in addition to plain instruction. This can be well addressed in this study .Where the soft skills required in the work place can be learnt through coaching and apprentice. Where employees see and replicate.

Therefore the work environment the employees can learn the appropriate verbal communication skills by listening to their mentors or the coaches at hand. This can be enhanced having the employees watch videos of public speakers address various cadres of staff within an organization. Corrections are then done as the training goes on

2.7.2 Multiple Intelligences Theory: Including Emotional Intelligence

Howard Gardner published “Frames of Mind” in 1993, challenging the prevailing view of human intelligence as an uncomplicated set of cognitive and symbol-using capacities, acknowledging primarily only verbal/linguistic and mathematical/ logical abilities. Gardner proposed the existence of eight human intelligences that take into account the wide variety of human thinking. Capacities. These include linguistic, logical/mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, naturalist, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences.

Gardner 1993: This theory postulates that all human beings are born with the eight intelligences, but they are developed to a different degree in each person and that in developing skills or solving problems, individuals use their intelligences in different ways. The theory of multiple intelligences has important implications for educational systems, and for incorporating a life skills approach to promotion and prevention.

Recognizing other intelligences, beyond the traditional verbal and mathematical skills, implies that teachers should teach to this broader range of skills. Secondly, a variety of classroom instruction methods are needed to engage the different learning styles of the students. This implies the use of participatory, active learning methods that stimulate the use of musical, spatial, naturalist and other intelligences, and allows children and young people to engage different intelligences simultaneously. With the knowledge that the employees also possess the multiple intelligence it is therefore believed that the active and participatory training will be effective in acquisition of the various soft skills.

2.7.3 Constructivist Psychology Theory

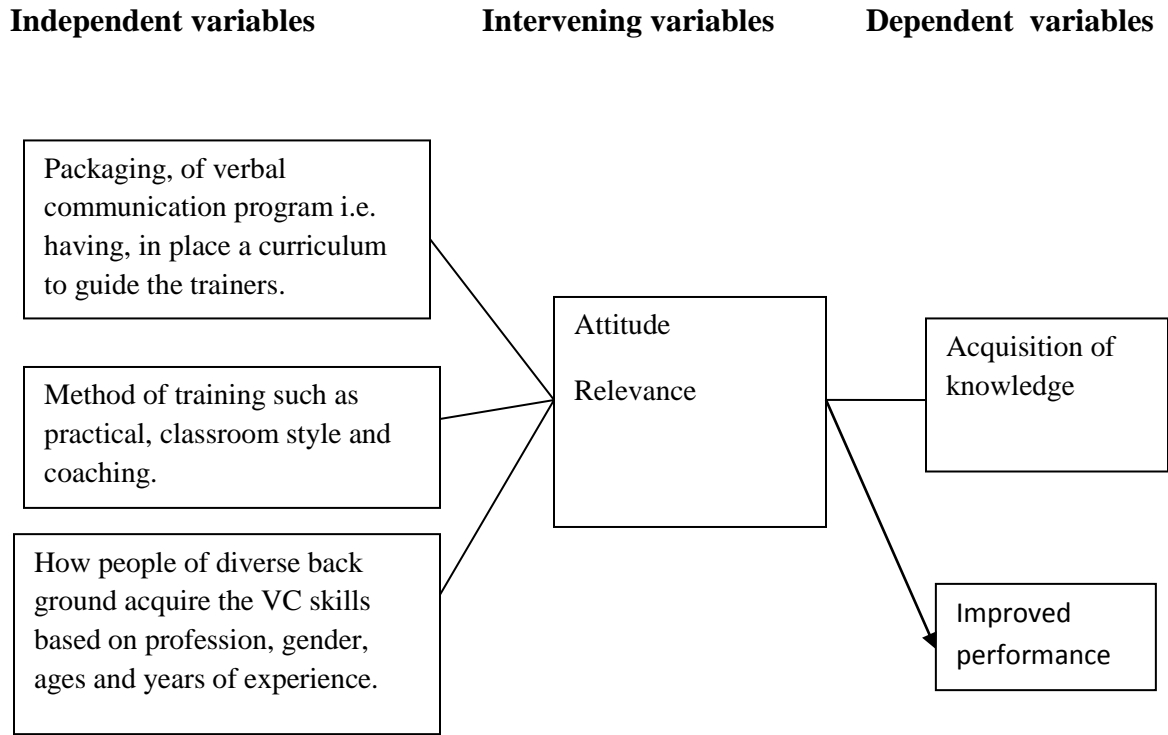
The core of constructivist psychology is that individual development, including higher mental function, is rooted in social sources. A child's cognitive development is thought to be a collaborative process, developed through interactions with other people and with the environment. Thus, the individual is not the center of knowledge making but rather gets his or her learning and understanding through social interaction. Educators and psychologists Piaget and Vygotsky suggest that a key mechanism for child development is the cognitive conflict that is created through social interaction; a contradiction between a child's existing understanding and a child's experiences with others, especially peers slightly older or more knowledgeable, causes him or her to question current beliefs and seek new levels of understanding. Vygotsky in particular argues that "Learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and with his peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.90)

As the employees interact with one another their learning awakens. They notice the favorable traits as their fellow colleagues verbally communicate with them. The employees will learn the acceptable and official terms in a work environment.

2.8 Conceptual frame work

According to Skinner, the dependant variable involved in learning is a change in behavior because that's the only thing that is directly observable. More specifically it is the frequency with which a specific behavior occurs that is the dependent variable. Obviously Skinner would not award anything like "style points" to a behavior because of the qualitative dimension to this. Rather he would specifically define and describe a behavior then count the frequency with which it occurs following some event. The main independent variable involved in learning for Skinner is whether that learning is reinforced. More specifically, Skinner would say that the independent verbal influencing learning is the consequence of the behavior.

Figure 1: Conceptual frame work



2.9 Conclusion

Given both the tremendous importance of verbal communication skills training at the workplace success and the substantial investment that training and development departments are already making, surprisingly few organizations approach these trainings in a systematic way. A comprehensive, ongoing these skills training curriculum that's goal-focused, uses correct pedagogical approaches, and incorporates long-term outcomes tracking is very rare. Most organizations simply take a “if you build it, the learner will come” approach, offering a catalog of various classroom based or online courses as part of their overall training offerings.

Works of different scholars as stated in this chapter clearly depict the importance of training and acquiring of these skills. This is because it enables one to understand and perform their tasks better at the work place. With knowledge on importance of soft skills acquisition the question raised is the manner in which these skills are passed on from one individual to another. To ensure that the verbal communication skills are training to employees is effective the employer should factor in the industry and formulate training formula for the employees.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter covers the methodology that the researcher used in the study. The methodology included the research design, the target population, the sample design, data collection instruments and also the data analysis techniques.

3.1 Site Description or study area

The site to be studied was one state corporation in Nairobi County. This was Sports Kenya. Sports Kenya is a State corporation in the Sports, culture and the Arts ministry established by an Act of Parliament in 2013. The head office was situated in Moi International Sports Centre in Kasarani .The core mandate of SK is to develop sports program, managing the sporting facilities and promotion of sports in Kenya and internationally.

Verbal communication skills were considered essential soft skill in Sports Kenya because it was key in the running of various functions and events which have both local and international clients who patronize these facilities on daily basis.

3.2 Research design

Burns and Grove (2003:195) define a research design as “a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings”.Parahoo (1997:142) describes a research design as “a plan that describes how, when and where data are to be collected and analyzed”. Polit et al (2001:167) define a research design as “the researcher’s overall for answering the research question or testing the Research hypothesis”.

This study was carried out as a cross sectional survey. Cooper & Schindler (2003) recommended this design for studies carried out at once and representing the same variables at that particular time .Cross sectional survey design could also be termed as

descriptive research design that often takes a sample from a population and collects data from respondents using a structured questionnaire.

3.3 Unit of Analysis and units of observation.

In this research, unit of observation were the employees of the selected organization.

3.4 Target Population

The target population was the entire group a the study was interested in. The target population was the group that the researcher wished to draw conclusions from.

In this research the targeted population were the employees of Sports Kenya. Sports Kenya had a total number of 173 employees. The target population was made up of both permanent and contracted staff .These employees were in the following categories: management, supervisors and junior staff.

3.5 Sample Size and sampling procedure

3.5.1 Sample size

Sample size determination was the act of choosing the number of observations or replicated to include in a statistical sample. The total number of sample targets was fifty percent (50%) of the total population this was because the target population was considerably small. The actual number of sample size was as stated below.

A sample size of 80 respondents was derived as follows:

Table 3.1: Distribution of sample size according to categories of staff

Employees categories	Total number of staff	Percentage of target population. Total/173*100	Sample distribution (50%)
Management staff	22	12.7	11
Supervisors	10	5.8	5
Junior staff	141	81.5	70
Total	173	100	86

3.5.2 Sampling procedure

Sampling procedures was developed to ensure that a sample adequately represented the target population. In this sampling the ideal procedure to use was systematic random sampling.

The researcher had three different categories of staff. The lists were as follows: management staff, supervisors and junior staff. All names in each list were numbered starting from number one to the final number total of all names. Each category had its pieces of paper numbered to represent all members of staff in the category . The researcher made small pieces of paper totaling to the number of each category. The researcher then randomly picked the required number of pieces of paper to represent staff in a particular category. This is shown in Table 1 above.

3.5.2.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling. Here the units sampled are based on the judgment of the researcher .In this study the researcher used this kind of sampling to pick on the samples used in qualitative data. This comprised of the decision makers such as the Chief executive officers, senior managers, training managers and supervisors. The data was collected from the decision makers by use of a key informant schedule.

3.6 Methods of Data collection

Data was collected through qualitative and quantitative methods. This research utilized both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected from the sample size selected. The secondary data was drawn from respective websites ,annual status report ,articles touching on skills gap .The questionnaire was deemed appropriate as to capture the independent views of each respondent .The questionnaire was administered using the pick and drop method .

3.6.1 Collection of quantitative Data

Quantitative approach was better because the cost implications were lower, it was standardized so comparisons were easily made and the size of the effect was minimal. A quantitative approach however was limited in its capacity for the investigation and explanation of similarities and unexpected differences. This research factored in quantitative type of questions to be able to bring out the standard aspect of the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire.

3.6.2 Collection of qualitative data

Qualitative approaches aim to address the 'how' and 'why' of a program and used unstructured methods of data collection to fully explore the topic. Qualitative questions are open-ended. Qualitative data collection captured the actual view of the respondent. The instrument to be used to collect this data was the key informant schedule. This information was collected from the decision makers in the organization. These were the Director General, senior managers, the supervisors and the union leaders. These were the people considered as key informants.

3.7 Ethical considerations

This study ensured that the respondents were not deceived for the purpose of the study. Consent was received from the university and the Sports Kenya. The respondents' identity was protected meaning no names were to be printed on the questionnaire. The respondents were not bribed to respond by giving gifts. The results were not used to paint a negative picture about the respondents or the institution.

3.8. Data Analysis

Data was analyzed based on the interpretations of the responses from the questionnaires and implications as the respondents' accounts from the interview process. The data was analyzed by use of the studies and established percentage of distribution. Qualitative data were analyzed to obtain results that were supplements or complement results of quantitative analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter present data analysis, finding and discussions of the study in line with the research questions and objectives.

In this study the researcher obtained the opinions of the informants through personal interview and by use of a questionnaire based on the likert scale method. The researcher used the questionnaire as a guide to measure the level of importance of certain factors to the respondents ranging from 5(Strongly agreed),4 (Agree), 3 (Neutral),2(disagree) to 1 (Strongly disagree). The researcher also used the probing technique to guide the respondents to provide additional information and this was guided by the Key Informant Schedule. The key Informant Schedule was used to interview the decision makers in the organization. The researcher main aim in using the Key Informant Schedule was to open up the response which was not guided as in the questionnaire.

Data collected was analyzed using the frequency distribution methodology and content analysis .The raw data was tabulated and an average rate was computed for scores on all the factors. The average rate was compared to the research objectives, It was then vetted for consistency, validity and reliability after which the outcome was recorded and summarized. The mean score was computed by multiplying the number of respondents in each weight by the weight. The computation was applied to each response per statement. The total for all the weights per statement was done then divided by the total number of respondents i.e. (n).

4.1.1. Response Rate

The respondents constituted 80 respondents staff drawn from one state corporation that was Sports Kenya. Ten respondents were identified to take part in the Key Informant Schedule this was based on the fact that they were the likely key decision makers. The response rate was 93 percent and non response rate was 7 percent, this response rate was considered good and the data collected was considerably reliable.

Table 4.1: Analysis of distribution of questionnaire

Number of questionnaires distributed	86
Number of questionnaire not returned	6
Number of questionnaire returned	80
Number of questionnaire analyzed	80

Table 4.1 above gave an analysis of the total number of questionnaires distributed based on the targeted respondents from the selected State Corporation .The table also indicated the number of questionnaires not returned and revealed that of the returned questionnaires and all the eighty, were processed. Table 4.1 gave a figurative analysis of the questionnaires and discussions.

4.2 Social and Demographic Characteristics

The introductory level of the questionnaire featured the social make up of the respondents. The areas highlighted were gender, age, education, and years of service in the institution of the respondents. Below see the data.

4.2.1 Gender

Gender is the male to female composition of the respondents. Table 4.2 illustrates the composition which 56.3 percent of the respondents were male while 43.7 percent of the respondents were female therefore male respondents were more than the female respondents in this study. This can also project that the men were more than women in the organization.

Table 4.2: Distribution of respondents by Gender.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	45	56.3
Female	35	43.7
Total	80	100.0

4.2.2. Age

In this study the data on age of the respondents was analyzed in groups . The groups were tabulated between 18 years to 56 years and above at intervals of about 10 years. This was to realize how many respondents were found in each group. Table 4.3 illustrates the distribution as follows: About thirty one percent of the respondents were between age 25 – 35 while 50 percent of the respondents were between age 36 to 45. Close to eighteen percent of the respondents were between age 46 and 55. The analysis clearly depicted that the highest number of respondents were between the age of 36 and 45 years of age .The views in this study were more inclined towards employees of this age group. They were considered techno savvy and also the future leaders of the institutions. It was therefore prudent for them to learn from the older employees to facilitate smooth succession. Therefore despite them being techno savvy they were required to communicate verbally with their senior to acquire more information in the running of the operations.

Table 4.3: Distribution of respondents by Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-24 yrs		
25-35 yrs	25	31.3
36-45 yrs	40	50.0
46-55 yrs	15	18.7
Total	80	100.0

4.2.3 Education

In this study the composition of respondents' was according to highest level of education as illustrated in table 4.4 below .About seventeen percent of the respondent had attained certificate while close to 41 percent of the respondents had a diploma. Thirty five percent of the respondents had degree while nearly 6 percent of the respondents had postgraduate qualifications. Over forty percent of the respondents had a diploma as their highest level of education. These were respondents who could read and write and would be in a position to understand training in verbal communication skills. They were also be able to grasp the concept if the training is conducted in English language this was because

English was the language used in training institutions in Kenya. All the respondents had undergone post primary training therefore their level of understanding was above average.

Table 4.4: Distribution of respondents by education

Education	Frequency	Percentage
Certificate	14	17.5
Diploma	33	41.3
Degree	28	35.0
Master	5	6.2
Total	80	100.0

4.2.4 Current positions held by the respondents.

The respondents in this study were employees of Sports Kenya therefore fell in various categories. Table 4.5 below illustrates the composition of the respondents according to categories within the institution. Thirteen percent of the respondents were in management while 7 percent of the respondents were in supervisory level. Eighty percent of the respondents were junior staff. Communication has to take place amongst this employees and verbal communication is key in interaction .This employees were bound to accept acquisition of VC skills because it would improve their interaction resulting to good performance.

Table 4.5: Distribution of respondents by current positions

Current positions	Frequency	Percentage
Management	11	13.7
Supervisor	5	6.3
Junior staff	64	80.0
Total	80	100.0

4.2.5 Years of service

Years of service of the respondents was analyzed in groups. This was between 1 to 15 years at intervals of 5 years. According to table 4.6 about 25 percent of the respondents had served for between 11 to 15 years while close to 56 percent of the respondents had served for between 6 to 10 years. Approximately eighteen percent of the respondents

had served for 5 years and below. Over fifty five percent of respondents had served in Sports Kenya for between 6 to 10 years. This was good ground for passing information or expertise from the longest serving employees to the relatively new employees. The ideal form of passing this information was verbally especially when conducting on the job training, coaching and mentorship.

Table 4.6: Distribution of respondents by years worked in Sports Kenya

Years worked	Frequency	Percentage
11- 15 years	20	25.0
6-10 years	45	56.3
5 years and below	15	18.7
Total	80	100.0

4.3 Challenges faced by the employees during acquisition VC skills.

A state corporation such as Sports Kenya was an institution where the employees are expected to interact with one another. This could be done through various forms of communication one being verbal communication. This was a skill that could be acquired by an individual through observation or imitation and in classroom set up as cited by Bandura , (1977) in the Social Learning Theory. Table 4.7 below illustrated respondents' views on challenges faced by employees during acquisition of verbal communication skills.

Table 4.7: Response on challenges faced by employees to acquire VC skills.

Statement	Strength of response in percentage					Total		Mean
	SD	D	N	SA	A	%	N	
Briefed on VC techniques during induction	20.0	26.2	32.5	12.5	9.9	100	80	2.6
Employees are trained on verbal communication skills	32.5	46.2	21.3	0.0	0.0	100	80	1.8
Employees attend trainings	27.5	50.0	10.0	3.7	8.8	100	80	1.9
Presence of skilled personnel to train staff on good VC skills	11.3	30.0	25.0	20.0	13.7	100	80	3.4
Employees are encouraged to express themselves verbally	14.3	24.7	37.7	15.6	7.7	100	77	2.8
VC is the most commonly used form of communication	7.5	12.5	27.5	27.5	25.0	100	80	3.5

Verbal communication skills were vital in the operations of an organization. Challenges could be faced by employees during the process of acquisition of these skills. During induction 20 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed while about twenty six percent disagreed that they were inducted on VC skills. A lower percentage of about eight percent strongly agreed that they were inducted on VC skills as seen in table 4.7. Approximately 40 percent of the respondents disagreed while about twenty two percent of the respondents agreed that they were inducted in VC skills. This portrayed that a higher percentage of the respondents were not inducted in VC skills. Induction was the starting point of acquisition of knowledge on VC skills and if most of the employees were not exposed to it at this point their ability to engage with other employees verbally would be affected. Minimal exposure to VC skills during induction posed a challenge in acquisition of the skill.

Training was one of the preferred forms of passing knowledge from one individual to another. The findings showed that the respondents disagreed to attending trainings. Fifty percent of the respondents disagreed and about twenty seven percent strongly disagreed while 8.8 percent strongly agreed and 3.7 percent agreed as seen in table 4.7. Over 70 percent of the respondents agreed that they do not attend training this clearly portrayed a picture of employees who had not attend trainings. Thirty two percent of the respondents strongly

disagreed on having being trained on VC skills and 46.2 percent disagreed. This findings informed the researcher that majority of the employees were not attending training which meant that they also were not trained in VC skills. Actually no respondent had agreed to having been trained in VC skills meaning not training the employees on VC skills resulted to uninformed employees in these skills. The employer had therefore not created an ideal environment to enable acquisition of VC skills within Sports Kenya.

Training of staff could be done by fellow colleagues this was because these were the people they interact with on daily basis. About eleven percent of the respondents strongly disagreed that the skilled personnel were available and 30 percent disagreed while 22 percent of the respondents agreed and 13.7 strongly agreed that skilled personnel were present as seen in table 4.7. Over 40 percent of the respondents disagreed to the fact that skilled personnel were available. It was therefore a scenario of unavailable personnel and no forum to pass the knowledge to other employees'. This resulted to curtailed means of transferring this knowledge resulting to challenges in acquisition of the skills.

Employees interact with one another within the work environment. Twenty five percent of the respondents strongly agreed and 27.5 percent agreed that VC was commonly used in the institution while 7.5 percent strongly disagreed and 12.5 percent disagreed as seen in table 4.7. Therefore over 50 percent of the respondents agreed that VC was commonly used in this institution. Therefore one could conclude that if these employees were exposed to training in this field their response to the training would be positive being that they interacted verbally in most scenarios and had experienced the benefits of Verbal communication. Whereas there was another twist in that majority of the respondents disagreed that the employees are encouraged to express themselves verbally. About fourteen percent strongly disagreed and approximately twenty four percent strongly disagreed while 15.6 percent agreed and 7.7 percent agreed that employees were encouraged to express themselves verbally. This could also mean that other forms of communication were used on official communication which interrupted the learning process of VC skills.

The key informants informed the study on the issue of training by stating that training on particularly VC skills was not conducted this was because it was never incorporated in the training curriculum of the organization. What was mainly captured that came close to VC skills was customer care where that employee had to interact with the client and in most cases it is verbally. The informants also stated that induction for new employees was conducted by use of a standard template. This template did not factor in verbal communication which affected the acquisition of VC skills.

The challenges highlighted by the respondents that they experienced during imparting of VC skills to employees were language barrier, level of education and the technology, disability, and varied interpretations. The most common area highlighted by respondents was Language barrier. Education level was considered as a challenge because ones education level interfered with ones interpretation of issues. The respondents identified language barrier as a challenge because not all employees could express themselves well with a certain languages such as English and Kiswahili. Technology was considered a challenge by the respondents because most of the techno savvy employees preferred communication through the technology such as emails which was to hamper imparting of VC skills. Respondents identified disability as a challenge because not all could hear and talk therefore imparting VC skill to this group of employees was a challenge.

The respondents agreed that to counter this challenges training was essential to all employees. Various forms or styles could be used to ensure the disabled were covered. This could be done by use of sign language and creating an environment where all employees were exposed to verbal communication.

4.4 Tasks addressed when imparting VC skills to employees

Tasks were the duties to be performed when imparting the verbal communication skills. Steps that were to be taken by the trainers, the preparations that were to be carried out by the institution and the trainer before engaging the learner. The tasks to be used were guided by goals of the training.

Table 4.8: Analysis of tasks addressed when imparting VC skills to employees

statement	Strength of response in percentage					Total		Mean
	(1) SD	(2) D	(3) N	(4) A	(5) SA	%	n	
Training curriculum should cover VC	0.0	8.7	12.5	36.3	42.5	100	80	4.1
All employees should be trained in effective VC	1.3	3.7	18.7	46.3	30.0	100	80	4.0
Trainer should establish what the learner knows about VC	0.0	12.5	5.0	32.5	50.0	100	80	4.2
Trainer should factor in employee's profession	6.3	15.0	30.0	31.2	17.5	100	80	3.4
Trainers of trainers should attend refresher courses in VC skills	0.0	11.3	15.0	23.7	50.0	100	80	4.1

Tasks are the various steps that were taken to achieve a certain goal. This study was to get views of the respondents on various tasks performed when imparting VC skills to the employees.

In table 4.8 above curriculum was one key aspect. The finding showed that 42.5 percent strongly agreed and 36.3 percent agreed that training of VC skills should be included in the training curriculum while 12.5 percent were neutral and 8.7 percent disagreed. A higher percent of the respondents agreed. This was because by including the VC skills training in the curriculum the organization was recognizing that VC skills were important in daily operations. The organization also wanted to ensure that the training was carried out being that time has been set aside for it.

In table 4.8 approximately forty six percent agreed and 30 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that employees should be trained in verbal communication skills. Less than four percent of the respondents disagreed with this aspect. This was an indication that the respondents championed training of staff in VC skills. They also agreed that the

trainer should get to know what the learner knows about VC skills before starting the training this was to inform the trainer on where to start from when conducting the training. This was agreed upon by over 80 percent of the respondents. About 13 percent of the respondents disagreed with being informed on what the learner knew before engaging them in training.

In table 4.8 it indicated that about 45 percent of the respondents agreed that profession should be factored during training while less than twenty five percent of the respondents disagreed that profession should be factored. Thirty percent were indifferent this was because they most likely do not see the essence of factoring in ones profession during VC skill training. Profession was a key aspect to every employee and these professions varied. In some professions verbal communication was used throughout such as in customer care while in others such as research scientist where verbal communication was minimal therefore when engaging employees in VC skills training these aspects should be considered as seen from the response rating.

Training should be conducted and the respondents agreed to it as seen in table 4.7 .response. The trainers should also undergo refresher training as supported by over 70 percent of the respondents as seen in table 4.8 . This was to keep them abreast with any new information in VC skills which they would transfer to the employees. The trainers of trainers were employees of Sports Kenya therefore training them meant adding value to VC skills training within the organization.

An estimate of fifty four percent of the respondents preferred practical lessons as the best form of training VC skills while 51 percent preferred audio video. Two percent of the respondents preferred classroom style while 16 percent of the respondents preferred lecture style of training. Over fifty percent of respondents preferred practical lessons because it offered immediate feedback and the learner could also relate to the illustrations therefore resulting to faster learning and embracing of the technique.

The key informants agreed that training needs analysis were carried out annually in the organization to guide the management in getting to know areas to focus on during training though verbal communication skills was never highlighted. They believed that this happened because employees had not seen it as an area that they could be trained on. Therefore training needs analysis as a task should capture the deficiencies in Verbal communication skills. They also agreed that the trainers of trainers that was the employees expected to trained could be picked from the present employees and they would have to be trained in this skill in order to pass the knowledge to other employees.

4.5 Role of attitude in acquisition of VC acquisition

The attitude of any learner towards a subject was very crucial. It would in most cases contribute on whether the learner would absorb the content taught or not and the speed of absorption would also be affected .Table 4,8 showed the analysis of the data collected from employees on role of attitude in acquisition of VC skills , This statement enabled the researcher find out respondents’ attitude towards acquisition of VC skills.

Table 4.9 :Response on role of attitude in VC acquisition.

Statement	Strength of response in percentage					Total		Mean
	(1) SD	(2) D	(3) N	(4) A	(5) SA	%	N	
Knowledge in VC has enable me work better with fellow employees	8.7	13.7	6.3	51.3	20.0	100	80	3.6
Knowledge in VC has enabled better comm with junior staff	0.0	10.0	5.0	41.3	43.7	100	80	4.2
Knowledge in VC has enabled better comm with senior staff	2.5	11.3	7.5	31.2	47.5	100	80	4.1
Knowledge in VC is essential to all people regardless of ones profession	1.3	8.7	3.7	43.8	42.5	100	80	4.2

The attitude of employees on knowledge in verbal communication skills in the work place was positive. The researcher wanted to find out the respondents attitude towards one possession of knowledge in VC skills. Over seventy percent of the respondents

agreed that the knowledge they had in VC skills had enabled them relate better with the fellow employees whether in senior position or junior position. Less than 15 percent of the respondents disagreed with this. The response rate clearly depicted that the respondents believed that their knowledge in VC skill had influenced their interaction with each other positively therefore knowledge in VC skill was integral in the organization's operations and employees relationship.

The key informants also agreed to this fact and they go further by stating the Knowledge in VC skills helped an employee be able to express themselves, state their problems and proposal and enhance harmony in the work place. By interacting verbally an employee could get to know how to relate to employees of a different age group, gender and profession

Acquisition of VC skills could be through various forms such as when interacting with fellow employees or when being trained. Certain factors could affect the acquisition of these skills such as age, education background and profession of an employee. About forty percent of the respondents agreed that age influenced acquisition of knowledge while 45 percent agreed that education influences another 40 percent of the respondents agreed that profession influences acquisition of verbal communication skill. Over 40 percent of the respondents agreed that Age, education and ones professional background would influence acquisition of verbal communication skills. These were factors that should therefore be considered when drafting the training curriculum, stating duration of training and training techniques to be used to pass the information.

The respondents highlighted profession as a factor that would influence ones acquisition of VC skills because of the frequency one is expected to express themselves verbally as they performed their duties. This informed ones willingness to learn the VC skills .The respondents' highlighted education because it influences ones level of understanding. An employee who had undergone post primary education was bound to grasp the concept faster which is the case with the group of respondents in this study whereas those who did not attend primary education would have difficulty understanding the training .

Age affected acquisition of VC skills because of influence of technology and aligning oneself to technology. Older people would prefer verbal communication to other forms of communication as compared to younger who were techno savvy. The younger would rather use technology than interact verbally. The scenario depicted in this study in terms of age of the respondents was that majority of the responds are between age 35- 45 years. This could go both ways in that they could accept verbal communication way of interacting or embrace the technology because of its efficiency.

The key informants were also in agreement that VC was vital in the work place. The key informants further stated that communicating verbally was easier and friendlier. It could be used either by young or old in the organization comfortably. Feedback when employees were interacting verbally was usually immediate promoting efficiency in the work place.

4.6 Effects of perceived relevance on acquisition of VC skill.

Employees in an organization perceive relevance of VC skills in the work place in various ways. Some employees believe that acquisition of VC skills was inborn while others believe that it could improve their work out put .Employees also had varied views on VC contributed to harmonious interaction. According to Vygotsky and Piaget (1978) in constructivist psychology theory stated that learning awaked a variety of internal development processes that only operated when a child interacted with people and the environment. This showed that acquisition of the VC skills by employees would improve their overall well being in the work place.

Table 4.10: Response on effects of perceived relevance on VC acquisition

Statement	Strength of response in percentage					Total		Mean
	(1) SD	(2) D	(3) N	(4) A	(5) SA	%	n	
The organization has set time to train employees on effective VC	13.9	26.7	32.9	18.9	7.8	100	79	2.8
Knowledge in VC will improve output in field of work	1.3	8.7	6.3	43.7	40.0	100	80	4.1
VC are inherent (inborn)	29.9	56.9	11.4	2.6	0.0	100	79	1.9
Management understand that effective VC is an asset to organization	15.0	18.7	42.5	16.3	7.5	100	80	2.8
Knowledge in VC encourages harmonious interaction	0.0	10.0	11.2	31.3	47.5	100	80	4.2

Perceived relevance could clearly be depicted by the action taken in the organization to recognize that Verbal Communication skill was relevant to an employee. According to table 4.10 the response rate showed that over 40 percent of the respondents disagreed that time had been set aside to train employees in effective VC skills. Only 7.8 percent strongly agreed that time was set aside while 18.9 percent also agreed. About 32 percent of the respondents were non committal on this issue. The response clearly depicted that time had not been set aside to train employees on verbal communication as portrayed by over 40 percent of the respondents then it clearly showed that the organization did not really consider VC skill as a concern area that required training.

Approximately eighty percent of the respondents agreed that Knowledge in VC skills would improve their output. This was in line with the response in table 4.9 where respondents stated that their knowledge had improved relationship amongst employees in the institution. Therefore by VC skill improving relationship amongst employees the performance was also bound to be improved positively.

It can be argued that verbal communication was inherent though from the response a higher percent of the respondents disagree with this issue. It showed that about 80 percent of the respondents disagreed that VC skill is inherent only about 32 percent of the respondents agreed that it was inherent. This indicated that the respondents understood

that any individual can be trained and taught on effective VC skills and with time the individual would be able to communicate effectively verbally.

Verbal communication was relevant as agreed upon by the respondents .The key informants also agreed to the relevance they stated that this kind of communication could be used during negotiations, serving both internal and external clients, meetings, interaction amongst staff and when giving instructions.

The key informants supported training of employees on these skills this was because they believed that people were born with the ability to express themselves though the environment in which they were in also influenced their command in VC skills. It was therefore advisable to train the employees in VC skills in the work place because it would be aligned to the organization's culture and the work ethic.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

This study focused on Verbal communication skills acquisition process and challenges faced in Sports Kenya .The institution provided insight into challenges faced during VC skills acquisition ,tasks involved in imparting this skill , the perceived relevance if this skill and attitude of staff towards VC skills .

5.1.1 Challenges faced by employees and employer during the imparting of verbal communication in the work place

The challenges witnessed by the researcher through the response of the respondents were quite a number. This was because most of the employees were not briefed on VC skills during induction, no trainings on VC skills conducted and yet employees were encouraged to express themselves verbally. The training curriculum did not capture training in verbal communication skills.

5.1.2 Tasks addressed when imparting verbal communication skills to employees:

The tasks to be carried out by the institution when informing the staff of verbal communication skills was by conducting trainings to all staff to ensure that VC skills was included in the trainings program .Training all employees on effective VC skills was championed by the respondents . The respondents agreed that the best approach when training was to start from the unknown to the known by the trainer. The trainer should get to know what the learner knows before commencing the training. Key aspects such as profession, age and education should be considered when choosing the trainings techniques. Should the organization use its staff to train other staff members then the trainers should always be taken for refresher courses .The trainers of trainers could be the employees identified as coaches and mentors. Most of them were in the best position to know the strengths and weaknesses of the various employees.

5.1.3 The role of attitude towards verbal communication acquisition in the work place

The respondents in the Sports Kenya agreed that the relationship amongst employees at the work place had been enhanced because they posed verbal communication skills. The respondents also agreed that communication skills were important to all employees regardless of their professional back ground. The respondents also agreed that verbal communication had enable them work better.

5.1.4 Effects, of perceived relevance of verbal communication in the work place

The respondents perceived that the knowledge in effective verbal communication would enhance performance and interaction amongst employees. They also agreed that management understood that effective verbal communication skill was an asset to the company .The respondents agree that VC skills could be trained to individuals and with the knowledge of VC encourages harmonious interaction amongst staff. The respondents considered VC skills as relevant and could be conveniently used in meetings, negotiations when giving instructions and exchanging ideas by staff.

5.2 Conclusion

Verbal communication skill was a very important skill in the work environment. This was regardless of an employee's age, education back ground, profession and gender .VC skill was considered a soft skill that many institutions did not train their graduates on as depicted in the literature review. Evidence, from this research showed that it was a key skill which should be enhanced this is because it contributes to the overall output of an employee.

5.3 Recommendations

This research carried out on soft skills specifically verbal communication skills clearly showed that the respondents understood that VC skills were important in an organization. The key recommendation for this study was that the institution should enhance the training curriculum by including VC skills in the program. During induction the officer's in charge should also brief the new employees on the preferred VC skills in the

organizations. That would be in line with the organization's culture. Verbal communication should also be enhanced when employees are interacting with one another. The employer should also conduct training needs analysis on VC skills.

Identification of result oriented tasks is crucial in any training exercise therefore the tasks to be carried out should be clearly highlighted before training is commenced. The management of this organization should ensure that the curriculum incorporates training in effective verbal communication skills. Training needs analysis should be carried out whereby the gaps will be identified. The trainers will then use the gaps to draft a training program. The trainers should ensure that the learners are on the same page before the training starts. This should be a regular exercise.

The employees' attitude was also key. An employee with a negative attitude towards VC skill will not see the need to acquire this skill. The employer should create an environment that celebrates verbal communication. This can be done by ensuring that certain issues were addressed verbally such as staff meeting and staff grievances staff should always be given audience to express themselves.

The perception of the employees can be influenced by the employer recognizing employees who are exceptional in relating verbally with others. The culture of the organization should also support this form of communication. The management were the ones who should embrace Verbal communication skills and once this was seen by other staff then perception towards VC skills amongst employees is bound to be influenced.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE ON VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN THE WORK PLACE

PART I: Personal information

Please indicate by ticking the appropriate response to each of the following.

1. What is your gender?

Male	
Female	

2. In which age bracket can you be categorized?

18 – 24 years	
25 – 35 years	
36 – 45 years	

46 – 55 years	
56+ years	

3. Your highest level of education.

Certificate	
Diploma	
Degree	

Masters	
Others(specify)	

4. Current Position

	Senior Manager	
	Middle Manager	

	Supervisor	
	Others	

5. How long have you been working with this organization?

a.	5 years and below	
b.	6 – 10 years	
c.	11 – 15 years	
d.	Above 16 years	

PART II: Pick (by ticking)

6. Pick the verbal communication skill that you can comfortably use during your official communication in the office.

i)	Face to face	
ii)	Telephone conversation	
iii)	Voice mail	
iv)	Oral presentation	

6b. Why:.....

PART III: Challenges are faced by the employee and employer during imparting of verbal communication in the work place.

Please indicate (tick) on your level of agreement with the statements in the table below.

Use: 1strongly disagree; 2 Disagree; 3 Neutral, 4 Agree; 5 strongly agree

	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I was briefed on official verbal communication technique during my induction in sports stadia.					
8.	Employees are taken through training on verbal communications skills in sports Kenya.					
9	The employees and employer attend trainings.					
10	Sports Kenya has skilled personnel who can train other employees on good verbal communication skills.					
11	The employer encourages employees to express themselves verbally when addressing issues that are work related.					
12	Verbal communication is the most commonly used form of communication in Sports Kenya .					

13. List two challenges of imparting verbal communication skills to the employees?.....

13 b Why do you consider them as challenges?.....

14. What can the employer do to counter this challenges?.....

14b Why do you think the above mentioned proposal will help in handling the challenges?

PART IV: Tasks addressed when imparting verbal communication skills to employees.

Please indicate (tick) on your level of agreement with the statements in the table below.

Use: **1**strongly disagree; **2** Disagree; **3** Neutral, **4** Agree; **5** strongly agree

	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
15.	The training curriculum should cover verbal communication skills.					
16	Employees of all levels should be trained on how to effectively communicate verbally.					

17.	The trainer should first establish what the learner understands about verbal communication.					
18.	The trainer should factor in the employee's profession when training					
19.	Trainers of trainers in any organization should attend refreshers courses on verbal communication skills.					

20. Tick at least 2 most preferred training techniques in training of verbal Communication skills to employees.

	Method of learning	TICK
a	Practical lessons (real life experiences)	
b	Audio video	
c	Classroom (teacher /student)	
d	Lecture	

20b State reasons why you prefer the two styles of learning.

.....

PART V: The role of attitude towards verbal communication acquisition in the work place.

Use: 1strongly disagree; 2 Disagree; 3 Neutral, 4 Agree; 5 strongly agree

	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Knowledge of verbal communication has enabled me to work better with my work mates in the office.					
22.	My knowledge of verbal communication has enable better relationship between me that the junior staff.					
23.	My knowledge of verbal communication has enable better relationship between me that the senior staff.					
24.	Knowledge of verbal communication is essential to all people regardless of their profession.					

25. Tick two things that would influence acquisition of verbal communication skills in the work place

	Factors	Tick
A	Age	
B	Level of education	
C	Profession (customer care ,technician , accountant , secretary)	
D	Gender (male / female)	

25b Why do you think they would influence.....

26. Do you think that verbal communication skills are necessary in any organizations' operations?

.....

26b Why.....

PART VI: Effects of perceived relevance of verbal communication in the work place.

Please indicate (tick) your level of agreement with the statements in the table below;

Use: 1strongly disagree;2 Disagree; 3 Neutral, 4 Agree; 5 strongly agree

	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
27.	My organization has set up time to train new employees on effective verbal communication skills.					
28.	Knowledge in effective verbal communications will improve output in my field of work					
29.	Verbal communication skills are inborn (inherent) it cannot be learnt.					
30.	The management understands that effective verbal communication skills are an asset to the company.					
31.	Knowledge of Verbal communication skills encourages harmoniously interaction in the work place amongst employees.					

32. Give two reasons why verbal communication is considered relevant or irrelevant in the work place

.....
.....
.....

32b List two scenarios where by verbal communication would be considered the best form of communication in the work place.

.....
.....
.....
.....

APPENDIX II: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Do you have a training policy in this organization?.....
2. Do you have a standard induction template for all new employees
.....
3. Does the training program cover development of staff verbal communication skills
.....
.....
4. Do you conduct training needs analysis before you draw the training program for the year?.....
.....
5. a. Did the terms of reference reveal any deficiencies in verbal communication skill among employees?
b. List at least four deficiencies identified from the report
.....
.....
.....
.....
6. Do you think knowledge of verbal communication skills is key in an employee's performance (if yes or no) state why
.....
.....
.....
7. Are mentors and supervision trained on skills of how to carry out verbal communication skills training to new members of staff?

a. If yes: How often are these trainings conducted? and why

.....
.....
.....
.....

b. If No : What could be the reason for not conducting the trainings.....

.....
.....
.....