

**An Assessment of Employee Communication Strategies used to Communicate
to an Expansive Workforce in Public Universities: The Case of the University
of Nairobi**

BY:

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the Award of Master of Arts Degree in Communication Studies, School of
Journalism University of Nairobi.**

NOVEMBER, 2013.

DECLARATION

I, **Grace Koli Matolo**, do hereby declare that this research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my adorable parents Florence Mwikali and Jackson Matolo who have supported me tremendously during this process financially and morally. May God bless you in his own ways. I also dedicate it to my son Emmanuel who at one point missed out on his mum as I did my studies.

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Table of Contents

DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Tables	vi
List of Figures	ix
Abstract	x
List of Acronyms and Abbreviations	xi
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Background Information	1
1.1 Problem Statement	4
1.2 General Objectives	5
1.3 Specific Objectives	5
1.4 Research Questions	5
1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study	6
1.6 Rationale and Justification of the Study	6
1.7 Definition of Key Terms	8
CHAPTER TWO	10
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORATICAL FRAMEWORK.....	10
2.0 Role of Communication in Dissemination of Knowledge	10
2.1 Communication in Organizations	11
2.2 Employee Communication.....	13
2.3 Towards a Standard Communication Policy and Strategy in Kenya.....	17
2.4 Ministry of East African Community Communication Policy and Strategy	17
2.5 MEAC’s Internal Audiences.....	18
2.6 Key Principles of MEAC’s Internal Communications Framework.....	18
2.7 Employee Information Needs	19
2.8 Employee Communication Needs.....	20
2.9 Utilization of Communication Strategies.....	21
2.10 Mediated Communication.....	23
2.11 Types of Communication Lines.....	23
2.11.1 Vertical Communication	23
2.11.1.1 Upward Communication.....	23
2.11.1.2 Downward Communication.....	24
2.11.2 Horizontal Communication	24
2.11.3 The Grapevine	24
2.11.4 Interpersonal Communication	24
2.12 Evaluating the State of Employee Communication	25
2.13 Barriers of Effectiveness of Communication Strategies	25
2.14 Theoretical Framework	27
2.14.1 Systems Theory	27
2.15 The Main Elements in the Communication Process	28
CHAPTER THREE	29

METHODOLOGY	29
3.0 Introduction.....	29
3.1 The Research Site	29
3.2 Research Design.....	30
3.3 Target Population.....	30
3.4 Sample Design and Sampling Procedure.....	30
3.5 Data Collection Methods	31
3.6 Data Analysis	31
CHAPTER FOUR.....	32
DATA ANALYSIS.....	32
4.0 Introduction.....	32
4.1 Questionnaire Findings	32
4.1.1 Demographics Results.....	32
4.2 Further Findings.....	36
CHAPTER FIVE	61
SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	61
5.0 Introduction.....	61
5.1 Summary of the Findings.....	61
5.2 Communication Strategies used in the University.....	62
5.3 Employee Communication Needs in terms of Channel Preference.....	63
5.4 Employee Communication Barriers in the University.....	64
5.5 Conclusion	65
5.6 Recommendations of the Study	67
References.....	69
APPENDIX 1: INTRODUCTORY LETTER	71
APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EMPLOYEES	72

List of Tables

Table 4.1: What is your position.....	32
Table 4.2: What is your level of education.....	33
Table 4.3: What is your age bracket.....	34
Table 4.4: What is your gender.....	35
Table 4.5: How many years have you worked for the university.....	35
Table 4.6: Which means of communication do you consider most effective between you and your immediate manager.....	36
Table 4.7: Which means of communication does your immediate manager use to communicate to you.....	37
Table 4.8: Which channel of communication does your immediate manager use to communicate to you.....	38
Table 4.9: Which channel of communication do you use to communicate to your immediate boss.....	38
Table 4.10: From whom do you receive most work related communication.....	39
Table 4.11: How often do you communicate with your immediate boss.....	42
Table 4.12: Which channel of communication does your manager use during planning.....	43
Table 4.13: Which channel of communication does your manager use during coordination.....	44
Table 4.14: Which channel of communication does your manager use during directing.....	45
Table 4.15: Which channel of communication does your manager use during controlling.....	45
Table 4.16: Rank importance of memos when managers uses to communicate to you.....	46
Table 4.17: Rank importance of fax when managers uses to communicate to you.....	46
Table 4.18: Rank importance of telephone when managers uses to communicate to you.....	47

Table 4.19: Rank importance of email when managers uses to communicate to you.....	47
Table 4.20: Rank importance of meetings/conferences when managers uses to communicate to you.....	48
Table 4.21: The most preferred channel of communication in planning.....	48
Table 4.22: The most preferred channel of communication in coordination.....	49
Table 4.23: Which channel is the best in generating feedback.....	49
Table 4.24: Which communication channel the university adopts to effectively communicate to you.....	50
Table 4.25: To what extend does cultural diversity affect communication.....	50
Table 4.26: To what extend does language barrier affect communication.....	51
Table 4.27: To what extend does lack of feedback affect communication.....	52
Table 4.28: To what extend does broken telephone lines affect communication.....	52
Table 4.29: To what extend does delay of critical information affect communication.....	53
Table 4.30: To what extend does irregularity in communication affect communication.....	53
Table 4.31: To what extend does channel selection affect communication.....	54
Table 4.32: To what extend does unclear messages affect communication.....	54
Table 4.33: The following channels have been put in place in addressing cultural diversity.....	55
Table 4.34: The following channels have been put in place in addressing lack of feedback.....	55
Table 4.35: The following channels have been put in place in addressing delay of critical information.....	56
Table 4.36: The following channels have been put in place in addressing irregularity in communication.....	56
Table 4.37: The following channels have been put in place in addressing channel selection.....	57

Table 4.38: The following channels have been put in place in addressing unclear messages.....	57
Table 4.39: How do you rank memos in reducing distortion in communication.....	59
Table 4.40: How do you rank email in reducing distortion in communication.....	59
Table 4.41: How do you rank meetings, workshops and conferences in reducing distortion in communication.....	60

List of Figures

Figure 4.1: What is your position	33
Figure 4.2: What is your education level	34
Figure 4.3: What is your gender.....	35
Figure 4.4: How many years have you worked in the university.....	36
Figure 4.5: Means of communication you consider effective between you and your immediate manager.....	37
Figure 4.6: Which channel of communication does your immediate manager use to communicate to you.....	38
Figure 4.7: Which channel of communication do you use to communicate to your immediate boss.....	39
Figure 4.8: From whom do you receive most work related communication.....	40
Figure 4.9: Which channels of communication do you use with colleagues.....	41
Figure 4.10: How often do you communicate with your immediate boss.....	42
Figure 4.11: Which channel of communication does your manager use during planning.....	43
Figure 4.12: Which channel of communication does your manager use during coordination.....	44
Figure 4.13: Effect of cultural diversity on communication.....	51
Figure 4.14: Channels put in place to address channel selection barrier.....	58
Figure 4.15: Channel put in place to address unclear messages barrier.....	58
Figure 4.16: Ranking of meetings, workshops and conferences in reducing distortion of information.....	60

Abstract

This study undertook to assess employee communication strategies used to address an expansive workforce in public universities using the University of Nairobi as a case of reference. The research findings reflected various communication strategies used in public universities, how the universities have addressed identified employee communication barriers and to what extent employee communication channels used meet employee communication needs. Information was collected using purposive random sampling where questionnaires were randomly distributed to reach all levels of employees in the university. This generated qualitative data which was analyzed using SPSS, pie charts, tables and bar graphs where used to present data.

The study established that most university members of staff are educated at least up to secondary school with a majority having a college diploma thus a conclusion that they can digest information disseminated through various employee communication channels in the university. Face to face communication was widely used and embraced by immediate bosses and employees respectively in the university affirming what many scholars have said that face to face communication is very important in employee communication. The research also noted that there was need to address language as a barrier of communication as it affected communication to a great extent. Higher institutions of learning should put in place communication channels which generate feedback as lack of it affects communication to a very large extend. Educational institutions are yet to fully embrace advances in employee communication technology like websites, social networks and teleconferencing among others which can propel employee communication to a whole new level. More research needs to be done to bring insight if the current employee communication strategies in higher institutions of learning have effect on the institutions' achievement of their goals and missions of disseminating knowledge to a developing society.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ISO: International Standards Organization

UON: University of Nairobi

CHE: Commission for Higher Education

HR: Human resources

PR: Public Relation

MEAC: Ministry of East Africa Community

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background Information

This study investigated employee communication in higher institutions of learning, with a view to identify the communication strategies used in these institutions and employees take about these. The study established if the employee communication strategies have been utilized to fulfill employee communication needs in our universities. Critical observations and recommendations were made about the proper way to handle employee communication for any institution that wants to propel itself ahead or towards achievement of its goals and missions.

Communication has been the most powerful instrument from millions of years. It is a method which assists in conveying or expressing thoughts or ideas from one person to another. According to Edelman (2006), Universities should communicate to their employees through two-way communication, by giving them opportunity for growth, involving them in policy formulation, recognition of efforts, compensation, giving benefits and creating a good working environment for their employees. Any organization that respects employees as raw material that makes them money will put in place the most effective communication strategies to ensure that employees understand their policies for achievement of their goals. They should also keep in mind the fact that employees are implementers and the executors of all policies in the organization. Many organizations have a clear employee disciplinary framework, but they lack a coordinated communication policy. The Ministry of East Africa Community (MEAC) has come up with a communication policy document which has been recommended by the Commission of Higher Education (CHE), for adoption by universities to align themselves for the achievement of

vision 2030. Employee communication is conducted by the administration thus making communication biased as they put the communication needs of the university before those of the employees. An unpublished study conducted by the researcher during her course work on the state of public relations in higher institutions of learning revealed that, public relations departments in most of our universities have ambiguous roles and most of the employee communication is conducted by management.

Employee communication is about internal communication to internal publics. It is the role of the public relations department in an organization. Internal communication has become a hot ticket in public relations, and any good management has realized that a satisfied and enthusiastic employee is an extremely effective and credible public relations advertisement (Fraser 1987). Fraser puts it that the first step in promoting positive image to the external publics is achieved in good internal communication.

The most effective way to communicate to the employees is directly and in person from immediate supervisors and local managers. In large organizations reaching each employee directly or face to face is very difficult hence the need for a balance between communicating to people at different levels in the organization and reaching everybody in the organization (Stuart, S. 1988). This calls for the adoption of various media of communication to help carry out the messages across the organization. While face to face communication allows for clarification of misunderstood messages instantly, mediated communication allows for less feedback. Thus the communicator should be informed on the right channel to use to deliver messages to employees to maximize on the required effectiveness of the message.

Effective employee communication should harmonize the needs and interests of the staff with those of the organization. As Fraser (1987) puts it, employees for instance want to find out what

direction the organization is headed, why is it headed that way and what is their personal role in that direction (how is it going to affect their livelihood). Employees' desire is to contribute to policy formulation though they know the end decisions lies with the management. As Bailey et al (1998) puts it, the employees should be told first, the good news along with the bad, the information should be timely and of importance to them and from the media they trust. Effective communication programs can raise the morale of the employees as they understand the circumstances of the company. This in turn is likely to increase their support to the company goals. The effects of poor employee communication are poor employee morale with repercussions ranging from disengaged employees, low employee productivity. Other business indicators which show ineffective employee communication include increased employee turnover, absenteeism, dissatisfied customers from poor customer service, high product-defects rates, lack of focus on business objectives, stifled innovation among others (Edelman, 2006). Employee communication is influenced by factors/barriers at point of the communicator, receiver and channels of communication.

Kenya has a number of public universities and constituent colleges located in various areas in the republic. These are; University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Moi University, Maseno University, Egerton University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Western University college, Kenya Polytechnic University College and Mombasa Polytechnic University College among others. The core function of universities is research and teaching which calls for effective communication strategies and organizational structures that harmonize their functions with their stakeholders. The future success of universities depends on their capability and willingness to adapt to the dictates of the new information age society and meet the needs of more demanding stakeholders (Kamande, 2003). There is need to court the

commitment of employees for the university to achieve its goals and mission. This poses a demand to ensuring effective employee communication in our universities (Mungai, 1979). This is also propelled by the need to meet the ISO certification standards.

1.1 Problem Statement

Despite the fact that universities have been expanding at a very fast rate, the capacity to keep in touch with all its stakeholders in terms of communication has not been as fast. There have been policy gaps and clear cut ignorance on the part of most University administrators to move at the same pace to expand communication channels beyond the original levels. This research sought to study what employee communication strategies they have put in place to ease their employees from the challenge of the increasing demand on higher education.

As Fraser (1985), puts it the first step in promoting a positive corporate image is achieving in good employee communication. According to Guetzkow (1965), in today's society the success of any organization depends critically on how it is viewed by the key stakeholders. There is an imperative to provide high quality higher education, which coincides with the need to reduce unit costs and increase productivity. The delivery of these three outputs results in considerable demands being made on staff and places great stress on the need to ensure employee commitment. Organizations are explicitly or implicitly seeking employee commitment through a number of human resource and quality initiatives. One of these means is through employee communication (Thornhill et al. 1996).

Public universities in Kenya are geared towards acquiring and maintaining the ISO accredit ions. To acquire the ISO standards our universities need to court the commitment of their employee by recognizing the role of their public relations department in spear heading employee communication. Creation of channels of communication in universities has been identified as

one of the key elements in streamlining governance and education in Africa. (Kilemi, M. 2003, April, 4).

1.2 General Objectives

The purpose of the study was to establish if the employee communication strategies used in higher institutions have been able to address their expansive work force. This study specifically looked at University of Nairobi.

1.3 Specific Objectives

- i.** To identify the various communication strategies used in the university of Nairobi since its inception.
- ii.** To establish how the University of Nairobi has addressed employee communication barriers.
- iii.** To investigate whether the University of Nairobi has been able to meet its employee communication needs.
- iv.** To establish what is the preferred communication strategy by the employees.

1.4 Research Questions

- i.** What channels and employee communication strategies are currently being used in public universities?
- ii.** What hindrances does the University of Nairobi face when communicating to its employees?
- iii.** What are the employee communication needs in the University of Nairobi?
- iv.** What are the preferred communication strategies in the University of Nairobi?

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The research has focused on the state of employee communication in public universities in Kenya, specifically the University of Nairobi. The target audience has been the administration and employees to get a good picture of the state of employee communication from the perspective of the communicator and the receiver.

The study was limited to the issue that is being investigated that is the utilization of employee communication strategies in public universities and specifically University of Nairobi. Due to constraints of time and resources the study focused on four campuses which were used to generalize the findings.

1.6 Rationale and Justification of the Study

Provision of quality higher education is seen as an institutional imperative in the twenty first century. This coincides with the need to reduce unit costs and increase productivity. The delivery of these three outputs results in considerable demands being made on staff and places great stress on the need to ensure employee commitment. Organizations are explicitly or implicitly seeking employee commitment through a number of human resource and quality initiatives (Thornhill et al. 1996). One of these means is through employee communication. The universities are growing as they merge with government colleges which are being elevated to universities and also the increased demand for higher education. This has meant that their employee numbers are growing thus the need to diversify the mode of communication. These calls for improvement and reinvention of the communication strategies to ensure employees are informed. The study evaluated the existing employee communication strategies in higher institutions of learning and identified gaps within them and made appropriate recommendations on the improvement that could be done on them to ensure that the employees are committed.

According to Cutlip (1985), universities are viewed as among organizations which have the worst employee communication. They are seen as treating their employees with contempt. Management of employee strikes in public universities in Kenya has been based on a conventional top-down approach which further undermines the greatly needed quality of human and social capital that is responsible for implementing the university mandate towards sustainable development. Negotiations during strikes are done between union officials and administration. Successful institutions according to Fraser S, (1989) incorporate and allow participation of all their staff in decision making. By establishing the employees' communication needs the study acted as a reminder to management in both public and the private sector of the important role employees play in their institutions hence the need to treat them with respect and appreciation. This study has helped in the reinvention of the position of employee communication in the growth, development and success of any organization.

The study will look at employee communication strategies and channels in public universities in Kenya. The study has established which communication channels and strategies employees prefer to be communicated with. This has brought to light the importance of doing communication audit to understand employees' communication needs and where they prefer to receive information from. It has also brought forth the importance of the public relation department carrying out employee communication because it is the only department which is seen as neutral towards an organization and its stakeholders. This in turn will be key to ensuring quality provision of services in our universities and propel them to the maintenance of the ISO accreditation on quality assurance standards.

The study has benefitted both public and private organizations by giving them more insights on ways of administering employee communication for the realization of an institutions goals and

objectives. While the number of employees in public universities has increased over the decades and technological advancement has hit the third world, employee communication strategies have remained the same or if they have changed they have not fully embraced the available communication technologies and strategies for effective communication to their employees. A research by Bernard, N. (2006) identified a gap in lack of research on institutional communication on higher institutions of learning. The study has recommended ways of addressing barriers in employee communication.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

Public universities: In this research project, it refers to higher institutions of learning which are state corporations and are funded by the government. They are established under an Act of Parliament to provide university education in the country and funded by the government.

Staff: A person appointed to provide teaching, research or administrative duties at the university.

Corporate image: A collective image that represents an organization usually identified through color branding, uniformity and slogans.

Communication: In this study, it is a conscious attempt by one individual or group to change the attitude, belief or behavior or another individual or group of individuals through the transmission of some message.

Public relations: In the study, it is what concerns an organizations relationship with others in the society.

Employee communication: In this study, it is what concerns the conveyance of information within an organization.

Communication strategies: In this study, these are the general maneuvers taken by management for managing the interaction between an organization and its employees.

Effective communication: In this paper, it is the satisfactory employee relations built on a climate of trust.

Internal publics: In this study, it is both the supervisors and the supervised in an organization.

Stakeholder: in this study it any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organizations purpose and objectives.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Role of Communication in Dissemination of Knowledge

Kenya has six public universities and constituent colleges located in various areas in the republic. These are; University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Moi University, Maseno University, Egerton University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Western University college, Kenya Polytechnic University College and Mombasa Polytechnic University College. The core function of universities is research and teaching which calls for effective communication strategies and organizational structures that harmonize their functions with their stakeholders. The future success of universities depends on their capability and willingness to adapt to the dictates of the new information age society and meet the needs of the even more demanding stakeholders (Kamande, 2003). As the new information age ushers unimaginable communication possibilities it also brings new barriers to the communication process. Some employees are able to adapt to the new technological advances with ease while others are slow to adopt to change. This poses a demand to the communicator in ensuring effective communication in our universities. Since the early researches on communication largely concentrated on the effects messages on individual, there is need to find out what are the barriers to effective communication in organizations (Mungai, 1979).

Our universities as Edelman (2006), puts it, should communicate to their employees through two-way communication, by giving them opportunity for growth, involving them in policy formulation, recognition of efforts, compensation, giving benefits and creating a good working environment for their employees. Public universities in Kenya have manifested indicators of

ineffective communication as their employees are constantly striking or threatening to strike, while students complain of lecturers missing classes as they moonlight in other universities and brain drain to better pay abroad. Also there is minimum ground breaking research and innovation from our universities. While public universities and other organizations have a clear employee disciplinary framework, they lack a coordinated communication policy. The research will check the worth University of Nairobi has accorded its employees as its raw material that makes them money as reflected by putting in place the most effective communication strategies to ensure that employees understand their policies for achievement of their goals. Employees are implementers and the executors of all policies in an organization thus any institution is expected to put them first if it is to achieve its goals and missions.

Communication and the dissemination of knowledge trickles down from admission of a student on the first day in college to acquiring a student identity card in time to visit the library to find the latest editions of text books have been put in shelves thus giving the student an opportunity to acquire up-to date information on a subject and transferring that knowledge towards the development of the country. Once there is a communication miss up along this line the results will affect the whole country considering the fact that the same communication problem is transferable to every graduate in the same institution.

2.1 Communication in Organizations

Communication is seen as the thread that holds the interdependent parts of an organization together. If communication was somehow removed from an organization or industry it would collapse; when communication stops, organized activity ceases to exist and individual, uncoordinated activity returns (Hicks, 1967). One should note that communication is not only an essential ingredient in internal functioning of an organization but is also vital in the

organization's information exchange with its stakeholders. According to Guetzkow (1965), the communication system serves as the vehicle by which organizations are embedded in their environments. In today's society the future of any organization depends critically on how it is viewed by the key stakeholders such as shareholders and investors, consumers and customers, employees and the members of the community. For stakeholders the operations of the organization can affect them but they can equally affect the organization, its performance and operations.

Large organizations are made of interacting units that coordinate their efforts to produce products, serve clients and maintain organizational structure (Robert H. 2001). Like other organizations universities are comprised of various stakeholders who rely on communication for coordination to achieve their mission, goal and objectives. These stakeholders who include students, employees, the public, government and others require relevant information to enable them to discharge their roles effectively. Creation of channels of communication in universities has been identified as one of the key elements in streamlining governance and education in Africa. (Kilemi Mwiria, Daily Nation, 4th April 2003).

Lack of communication in an organization can have disastrous results leading to decrease in performance, productivity, problems with safety and morale and regulatory statutory violations. According to Cornelissen J. (2004) the perspective of stakeholder communication in organizations has established the view that every organization is depended upon a number of stake holding constituents instead of just a rather select group of financial investors or customers alone.

Persons and groups with legitimate interest in the organization should be recognized and accounted for, they should be considered, addressed, and accommodated to boost an

organizations performance and secure continued acceptance of its operations. This is so to ensure that the organization is found legitimate by both its market and non-markets. The dynamics of stakeholder relationships should never be undermined. Therefore, the communication strategies which an organization adopts should be geared towards building good stakeholder relations.

According to Robert H. (2001), some managers claim that communication is not important and it does not contribute to the bottom line, but there is no organization that does not communicate because tasks within the organization have to be done and the organization has to deal with the outside environment. Poor communication is not symptomatic but is manifested in other areas of an organization. Companies make huge losses due to poor public image. Striking employees can make their customers boycott buying their products, the price of their shares go down, nobody wants to do business with them and many other chain of problems. Any stakeholder can bring any company crippling to its knees. An organization should communicate clearly to its stakeholders to make sure they are informed about the direction the company is going. As Baileys et al (1998), puts it for an organization to build a trusting relationship with its stakeholders it should speak with one voice. This is achieved by keeping all the employees informed and allowing them to participate in organizational decision making.

2.2 Employee Communication

Employees of any organization are key stakeholder because they are involved first hand in the operation of the organization. According to Bailey et al (1998), the first public to any organization are its employees. Employees are the first to be affected by any event in the organization. An organization should prioritize communicating to their employees because they are the ambassadors of the organizations. According to Fraser Seitel (1987), the first step in promoting positive external image is achieved in good internal communication. At base every

employee is a public relations spokesman for the organization. A happy employee will have something good to say about their organization and this rolls down to all the stakeholders of the organization. An employee can influence the reputation of the organization by communicating positive or negative messages to the other people both inside and outside the organization. Hence it is crucial to keep all employees informed to nurture a positive reputation for the organization. Bailey adds that successful organizations meld the interests of the employees and increase cooperation between the employee and management. The employees need to be involved in the decision making although the last decision lies with the management. As the founder of general motors puts it, cars can be gauged by horsepower, while some organization can be gauged by mind power. If only the CEO make all decisions, the organization has one mind power, if only the management makes all decisions there can be only about 100-500 mind power, but when all employees and key stakeholders are allowed to make suggestions an organization can have a very high mind power. Each employee has a need to be communicated to and to know what direction their organization is headed and how taking such a direction is going to affect them.

In large organizations with many employees communicating to each directly or face to face is very difficult. This is because one cannot reach them all at once. This calls for any communicator in an organization to tailor their communication and use the proper channels of communication to reach their employees. There is need for a balance between communicating to people at different levels in the organization and reaching everybody in the organization (Stuart S 1988). Employees in every organization are diverse in rank, occupation, age, etc; a manager has different communication needs from a subordinate in the same organization, so will a recently recruited employee against an almost retiring employee. A survey in 1986 to measure the attitude of employees toward communication from their organization showed that downward

communication was less favored by majority of the employees while many agreed that candid communication between management and employees is critical. Fraser (1987) adds that, internal communication must be continuous to reinforce management interests in its employees. The goal of any employee communication must be credibility. It must show appreciation, truthfulness and benefits to the employees. The above sentiments bring forward issues that influence how employees will receive and process information used during implementations of policies, this range from the medium of communication, time of communication, the source, the content and motivation. While management dictates a lot to the employees it listens less to what employees have to say (Cutlip 1985). Instead management has put distance in space and hierarchy between them and their junior members of staff. This gap keeps on growing and has adverse effect on subsequent future communication. The junior staff has little morale as belonging to the lower ranks from management. This view puts the employee on the defense to future communications from the management, because they view the management as not valuing them as having the potential to contribute to the growth and development of the organization. Employees are not consulted by the management during the formulation of policy yet they are expected to execute the policies effectively. This brings management to be viewed as too dictatorial by the employees as it fails to get feedback from the employees. Distance is a communication barrier which creates no room for consultation by management to employees which results in poor employee communication. Many a management has not put in place working feedback channels to get views from their employees. It ends up selling the managements view downward to employees and fails to give an equivalent upward flow of employee viewpoints (Cutlip pg 326 1985). All employees want their contributions to the organization recognized. Employees do not have to book appointments to see their superiors. Institution according to the father of public

relations Fraser Seitel should establish open door policy between the management and all ranks of employees in their institutions. Effective employee communication is used to serve its purpose in an institution as a link to a two way communication between employees and management.

As Kenya pushes for the millennium development goal it needs an educated man power in all aspects of development. As society looks up for universities to lead the way in development, public universities must manage their communication portfolio to ensure that they communicate effectively to their employees, because they are key to the growth of any institution.

The response to employee communication is shown by constant review and overhaul of procedures, policies and actions (Cutlip pg 326 1985). The Commission for Higher Education (CHE) which has the mandate over higher education in the country does not influence the management of public institutions hence there is no overall communication policy for universities in the country. Thus each university designs its own communication policy. This allows room for involvement of institutional interest in the formulation of the communication policy hence it might lack the overall accommodation of everyone's interests.

While employees in institutions have over the time expressed their grievances to their management, procedures and policies have remained the same over the years. While the number of employees in public universities has increased over the decades and technological advancement has hit the third world, employee communication strategies have remained the same or if they have changed they have not fully embraced the available technology for effective communication to their employees. This is a clear indicator of ineffective employee communication, which calls for an evaluation of the barriers that bring ineffective employee communication.

Organizational and employee communication scholars agree that good internal communication is vital as an underpinning to the success of an organization, by improving employee performance, making information more manageable, providing feedback to the managers, improving participation and team spirit, and as preparation for crisis management (Harrison 2000). Skinner et al (2001) says that, the better employees are informed about policies and programs, the better they will perform their tasks. There is need to employ the best communication strategies and channels which are preferred by the employee and give them room to send feedback to management.

2.3 Towards a Standard Communication Policy and Strategy in Kenya

Higher education institutions the world over are facing new challenges which require reforms in their management and governance styles. The rise of new stakeholders, internal factors, together with globalization and the rapid pace at which new knowledge is created and utilized are among the recent developments which challenge higher education institutions. While they have responded rather slowly in the past, to changing circumstances, there is now an urgent need for them to adjust rapidly in order to fulfill their missions and the needs of other stakeholders (Jowi, 2003).

2.4 Ministry of East African Community Communication Policy and Strategy

The Ministry sought to establish the necessary minimum communication standards and policy guidelines for the entirety of the public sector in a collective effort to truly transform Kenya into a modern, efficient and a truly competitive nation as required by the vision 2030 policy blueprint. Public universities and other public organizations are all expected to incorporate this communication strategy and policy in their strategic plans to ensure they are in line with vision 2030. It must be emphasized that communication is not simply about using the mass-media but

also about deploying other formal and informal channels of communication including interpersonal channels to enhance acceptance and mutual understanding by a diverse cross-section of stakeholders. Research shows that employees prefer direct/ face to face communication from their immediate supervisors (Saitel.F.1987).

2.5 MEAC's Internal Audiences

This policy document has identified the importance of knowing your target audience when drafting a communication strategy. The paper insists that the first top ministerial management tier requires to be always kept abreast of all matters. The paper further insists that the main channel of communication here is to ensure frequent briefing documents and internal meetings and consultations to ensure there is effective coordination of organizational activities. This allows for prompt provision of relevant information and data.

2.6 Key Principles of MEAC's Internal Communications Framework

As recommended by CHE public universities are expected to adopt the following key principles which are incorporated in the MEAC's internal communication framework:

- Timely and clear communication to staff;
- Circular and all-rounded communication process with an emphasis on consultations, sensible debate and feedback;
- Encourage closer links and understanding between management and its staff through regular face to face briefings, sessions and meetings;
- Encourage and foster a team spirit by ensuring that all strategic staff receives a copy of the wider organizational strategic plan; all organizational documents as well as the communications policy and strategy;

- Organize management briefing meetings once every week in order to plan or review plans for the week ahead and to report progress on ongoing activities;
- Ensure full staff meetings with other implementers at least once every month to report and review progress;
- Celebrate major accomplishments so that all employees are reenergized and empowered with a new sense of direction and fulfillment forged;
- Ensure wide spread availability of information through notices, e-mail communication; newsletter, web-site and all other channels for purposes of general information;
- Publish a bi-annual Newsletter;
- Provide proper orientation to all new/ incoming staff;
- Publish materials including books (where necessary), reports and various IEC materials of interest to the organization and its various stakeholders.

2.7 Employee Information Needs

The MEAC communication policy highlighted the following employee information needs required internally include:

- Main calendar activities, preferably by each department;
- Work plans and monitoring/progress reports relating to key activities;
- Highlights of main achievements and main challenges to the organization's main operational activities;
- Events announcement and launch of reports;
- Management statements on different subjects relating to EAC progress and developments.

The MEAC communication policy document recommends that, for an organization to be in a position to meet its employees' information needs, it should then move on to strengthen its internal communication by putting in place the structures for more systematic external engagements, including a website. Appropriate staff must also be appointed to the communication department, taking into account the different professional needs within the department. Specific focus and attention must then gradually shift to non-media oriented audiences so as to bring them on board through public/face to face interactions and meetings. In the longer term the focus should be more and more on the institutionalization and sustainability of the various communication efforts.

2.8 Employee Communication Needs

A communication survey conducted by Kodak in the 1990s unveiled the following sentiments from their employee on the importance of one on one communication;

- Employees prefer direct interaction with their supervisors. This interaction increases understanding and reinforce the leadership responsibility of supervisors.
- The employees were skeptical and lacked confidence in their managers. This indicated a pressing need to build their credibility both as messengers of the company information and leaders guiding the direction of change.
- Two thirds of the production, technical and clerical employees relied on outside sources like local news reports for company information. The leading sources for professional employees were the supervisors and the company newspaper.
- The communication roll out of major benefit reductions in the fall of 1994 was an important test of the face to face approach. Kodak used direct management conversations to reach all U.S employees with this news.

Post roll out surveys of nearly 3000 employees showed 84 percent felt the meetings were good way to communicate this information, and 74 percent understood why the changes were being made.

2.9 Utilization of Communication Strategies

According to Fraser Seitel (1987) communication strategies are tools used to disseminate information. In employee communication they include; newsletters, television, meetings, letters, email, memos etc. Much depends on the nature of the organization, its kind and range of personnel and the location of work places. Devising the right communication strategy is about choices of message, content and the media channel. Placing the employee and stakeholders at the center of communication has become crucial as it holds the key to the success of an organization. When communication strategies are working well all information received from your company by stakeholders is relevant to them and consistent over time. That means brand and reputation remains strong. An organization should align its communication vision with, but distinct from the organization's overall mission. The goals and the outcomes of communication should be well defined, measurable and help guide a defined plan of action. Audiences and key decision makers or individuals with influence on the issue should be identified. The messages that are developed should be specific clear, persuasive, reflect audience values and include a solution or course of action. There should be identification of credible messengers who are available for the cause. Choose communication outlets/mechanisms which are available and accessible by target audience. The communicator should identify and factor in risks and variables which can affect communications success. Development of communication materials that are attractive, accessible and varied formats for maximum exposure and visibility. Building of valuable partnerships with both stakeholders who will help align with and carry the message. Message carriers should be

trained in key messages to ensure consistency in delivery. The messages are disseminated to audiences through multiple outlets regularly and sustainably. Activities and outcomes should be regularly monitored and evaluated for purposes of accountability and continuous improvement.

Management should understand and support communication as an integral part of organizational viability and success. There should be resources earmarked for communication. Communication should be integrated throughout the organization projects and strategies. All members of staff all levels in an organization should be informed and given a chance to participate communication efforts, (Coffman J. 2004).

An employee according to Baileys et al (1998) has different communication needs throughout their work experience. At the start a new employee needs orientation sessions, tours or kits of information. While the same employee gets well acquainted with the organization he/she they need information on the job working conditions. This can be through employee publications, bulletin boards, feedback systems, training, meetings, and morale boosters, survey of attitudes, complaint sessions, and teleconferencing. Employees also need to be rewarded and recognized through, award programs, implementation of participation in civic affairs, staging of political science or economic education events, old timers parties, open houses, wage increases or bonuses, promotions, annual reports etc. Employees also need information about layoffs, communication in a strike, boycott problems, news about benefits for retirees, a retiree publication or exit interviews.

Employee communication is mediated or face to face/interpersonal.

2.10 Mediated Communication

The uses and gratification theory posits that people use certain media to gratify/fulfill their needs. Employees in any organization have developed certain habitual use of certain media to receive information. The organizational communicator should try much as possible to use the communication medium that is preferred by the employees. This according to Robert Heath (2000) will increase the probability that needed information will be available to the employees as they expose themselves to their preferred media: there is an increased chance to find needed information. For instance, if an employee gets information from email, the probability to check their mail now and then is very high, hence if their employer posts most of the organizations communication to the employees mail there is a very high chance for the employee to receive the information. There is also a high credibility given to the preferred media. An organization should conduct a communication audit to establish their employee preferred media of communication.

2.11 Types of Communication Lines

2.11.1 Vertical Communication

This is between people of different levels of seniority in the organization, with directions upwards and downwards.

2.11.1.1 Upward Communication

This is mostly from people at the immediate level upward to supervisory and management level. It takes forms like reports, informal discussions, suggestions, suggestion schemes, poll and ballots, grievance procedure.

2.11.1.2 Downward Communication

It takes forms like; memos, letters, notices, newsletters, training and induction documents, company handbooks, health and safety policy documents, full meetings, appraisals, selection, disciplinary interviews.

2.11.2 Horizontal Communication

This is communication between people of the same status in an organization. It takes forms such as memos, letters, reports, coordinating committees, group conferences and departmental heads meetings; informal communication (in canteens, social clubs, annual parties/dinners etc).

2.11.3 The Grapevine

This is a way of communication in which unofficial information is spread by people talking to each other in the works canteen, on the way to work and at tea breaks.

2.11.4 Interpersonal Communication

A research by Cameron and McCollum (1993) found that employees preferred direct interpersonal communication over mediated communication when obtaining information. The source employees prefer to receive information from is their immediate or front line managers. It is said that front line managers are trusted and therefore more believable. Information is passed from manager to immediate supervisions through cascading meetings. Resources are provided and line managers are trained on relaying information to their direct reports, in cascading meetings supervisors are given in depth, advance notice to meaningful information to share with employees. These meetings also bring experts to immediately answer questions. Two way communications is also recommended by J. Gruning (1984) because it allows for feedback which is used to modify organizational goals, strategies and policies. Employees' feedback can be used

to improve communication up, down and across the organization, thus strengthening the relationship between the organization and its relevant internal publics.

2.12 Evaluating the State of Employee Communication

According to J. Coffman (2004) employee communication or communication within an organization can be evaluated using a communication audit. This is systematic assessment of an organization's capacity for or performance of essential communication practices. This is important for an organization because it gives a snap-shot of an organization's communication capacity or performance and it also point out areas in which the organization can improve on to strengthen its performance.

The first step is to identify the communication strategies in an organization and gauge them against performance levels. The communication strategies are gauged in a scale of 1-5 with the higher levels being used to represent high levels of an organizations commitment to employee communication.

Establishing the state of employee communication is important for an organization's progress towards more strategic and effective communication practices (J. Coffman 2004).

2.13 Barriers of Effectiveness of Communication Strategies

An organization might have the best communication strategies but if they ignore the barriers to effective communication their efforts might be futile. According to Pradip Kumar (1993), communication barriers interrupt communication reducing the potentialities of messages which influences the audience reaction to communication. Barriers to effective communication can be physical, cultural and psychological. These barriers cloud the perceptions of the supposed receivers of any communication.

Physical barriers are through channel and semantic noise. This comes through distortion in the medium or message through language barrier or grammatical errors.

Cultural and psychological barriers are within the receiver of the message. These are in a person's frame of reference. This is related to a person's ego, beliefs and values. People form their frame of reference from the part of the receiver beliefs and values of the group they belong to, if its family, job, social etc. A new experience is referred to the stored experience for interpretation. A message that challenges these beliefs and values may be rejected, distorted or misinterpreted. This tendency on the part of the receiver obstructs communication in case the receiver and the sender do not have a common frame of reference.

Psychological barriers can also be presented through empathy or a common area of experience. Schramm puts it as the ability of an individual to project them in the role of another. It is deep understanding of other people, identifying with their thought, feeling their pain, sharing their joy. Empathy is directly proportional to extend of communication effectiveness. To increase the effectiveness of communication the source must try to encode the message in a way that the receiver understands so that the receiver can properly decode the message.

Unjust assumption is also related to psychological barriers to communication. Assumption by the sender on the understanding capabilities of the receiver causes frustrations to the receiver. This leads to aversion of the communication by the receiver. Psychological barriers also bring about resistance to change and selectivity of the receiver.

2.14 Theoretical Framework

2.14.1 Systems Theory

The systems theory was established by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy (Little John 1999 pg41) and originated from the two world wars. It emphasizes the importance of equilibrium/ balance and interdependence that construct society. It explains how and why people form groups, each of which is a system as well as part of a larger system. Society is regarded as an integral whole and various subsystems work together to keep the whole in balance. The systems primary function is to maintain itself, therefore the interaction of the systems (mechanical, organic and social) and the environment defines the systems. The mechanical, organic and social systems provide employee communications with valuable insights.

A systems approach to organizational communication expands the basic model of sender and receiver to feature communication networks which explain how systems adopt to their environment. This theory is useful to employee communication because it gives a way to think about relationships. It captures the notion of parts and wholes, allowing us to look at structure and provide insight into how the parts are related.

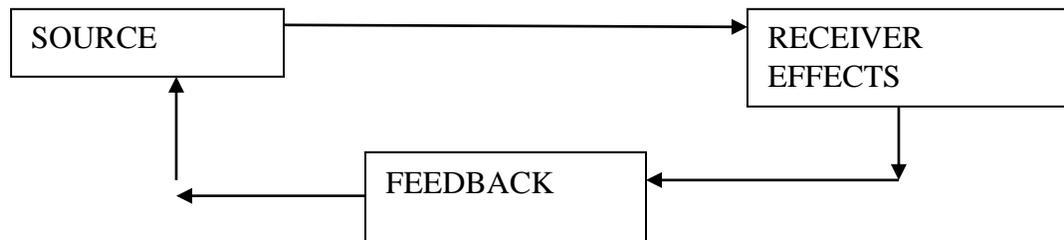
The systems theory is important to employee communications because it brings perspectives on the relationship of the organization and its internal publics. It also serves as a heuristic tool in assisting the employee communication function to conceptualize the complex nature of organizational interdependencies. It helps in understanding the framework of organizational decision making processes.

The theory also brings to the fore the stakeholders in an organization and how decision making at any point in the organization can influence them. The theory also identifies the position of

employee communication in an organization and its roles and responsibilities for the complete functioning of the whole system/organization.

2.15 The Main Elements in the Communication Process

The main elements in a communication process are the source, channel, receiver, message, noise, feedback and effects (Berlo, 1960).



The system in which communication takes place

Adopted from (Rogers and Rogers, 1976, Pg. 11)

From a mechanical point of view human communication is viewed as a transmission process through which a message travels across space (a channel) from one point to another. Thus the locus of communication is the channel which links all the communication elements. Communication concepts are linked together in a chain like relationship where a source affects a message-sending process, which in turn impacts on message clarity, which subsequently shapes message reception. Organizational communication is almost mechanistic since it focuses on the channels that allow communication to flow among employees.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Nachmias and Nachmias (1996) perceive methodology as a process: “Given that criteria for empirical objectivity and the methods of verification are the products of the mind, (in contrast to the belief that the truth is an absolute given), the term intersubjectivity is more appropriate than objectivity to describe the process. Intersubjectivity, which involves sharing of observations and factual observations among scientists, is indispensable because logical reasoning alone does not guarantee empirical objectivity.

For knowledge and scientific methodology to be intersubjective they have to be communicable. Methodology facilitates communication between researchers who want to share or have shared a common experience. Methodology defines the rules of the game and sets the standards to be followed in scientific research and analysis because it involves a system of explicit rules and procedures. The rules of methodology are explicit, public and accessible thus they provide a framework for replication and constructive criticism.

This chapter has discussed the research design, the sampling procedures, the data collection instruments, methods of data presentation and analysis and the operational definitions.

3.1 The Research Site

The research was carried out at the University of Nairobi and various campuses.

3.2 Research Design

The research took a case study design because of its ability to provide detailed information about the unit of study. Employee communication which is under organizational communication like in other countries has not received a lot of focus in Kenya and this was among the pioneer studies in organizational communication higher institutions of learning. The research was born from the need to understand how employee communication could be utilized to influence an organizations achievement of its goals and objectives.

3.3 Target Population

The University of Nairobi has six main colleges which are located within Nairobi area. The target population was the public relations department, the teaching staff and the junior non-teaching staff at the university. This population was purposively selected based on their level of communication involvement in the institution.

3.4 Sample Design and Sampling Procedure

The study was expected to reach out to 200 respondents from the University of Nairobi through a percentage ratio of each of the institutions population. To cover for time constrain and still favored by similarity in character traits of the respondents, purposive sampling was used to get respondents. The employees were reached through the various departments within the institutions. All disciplines, age brackets, academic levels as well as gender were represented. The sample was representative of employees in the University of Nairobi.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

Printed questionnaires were hand delivered and left with the respondents for a day for them to answer the questions. A pre- testing of the questionnaire was conducted from a total of thirty respondents from the identified population chosen randomly from the various campuses. Their views were incorporated into the final questionnaire and treated as a representative of the potential sample.

3.6 Data Analysis

The collected data was expressed in terms of frequencies, percentages, means and averages. Quantitative data arising out of the opinions and satisfaction questions was expressed in percentages, indicating choice and satisfaction levels. The data was also quantitatively analyzed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS version 20). The data was coded as frequencies as per the category of the respondents against the variables and analyzed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results obtained after the survey was conducted among employees working in various departments in the University Of Nairobi to ‘**assess employee communication strategies used to communicate to an expansive workforce in public universities. The case study of the University of Nairobi**’. Questionnaires were randomly distributed to employees in various Government Offices. After collecting the filled questionnaires, they were coded; a Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to analyze data and to generate descriptive statistics like frequency tables, pie charts and bar charts.

4.1 Questionnaire Findings

4.1.1 Demographics Results

Table 4.1

	Frequency	Percent
None Teaching Staff	27	67.5
Teaching Staff	13	32.5
Total	40	100.0

The table above indicated that 67.5 per cent of those sampled in the study were None Teaching Staff while 32.5 per cent were Teaching Staff.

Figure 4.1

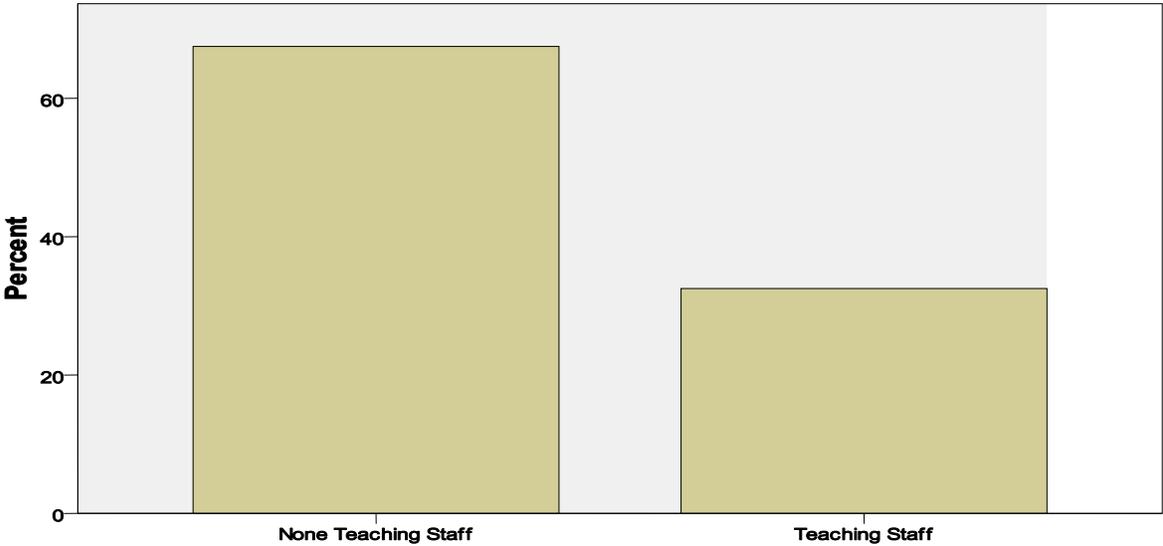


Table 4.2

	Frequency	Percent
Postgraduate	17	42.5
Secondary	3	7.5
Tertiary	12	30.0
Undergraduate	8	20.0
Total	40	100.0

Figure 4.2

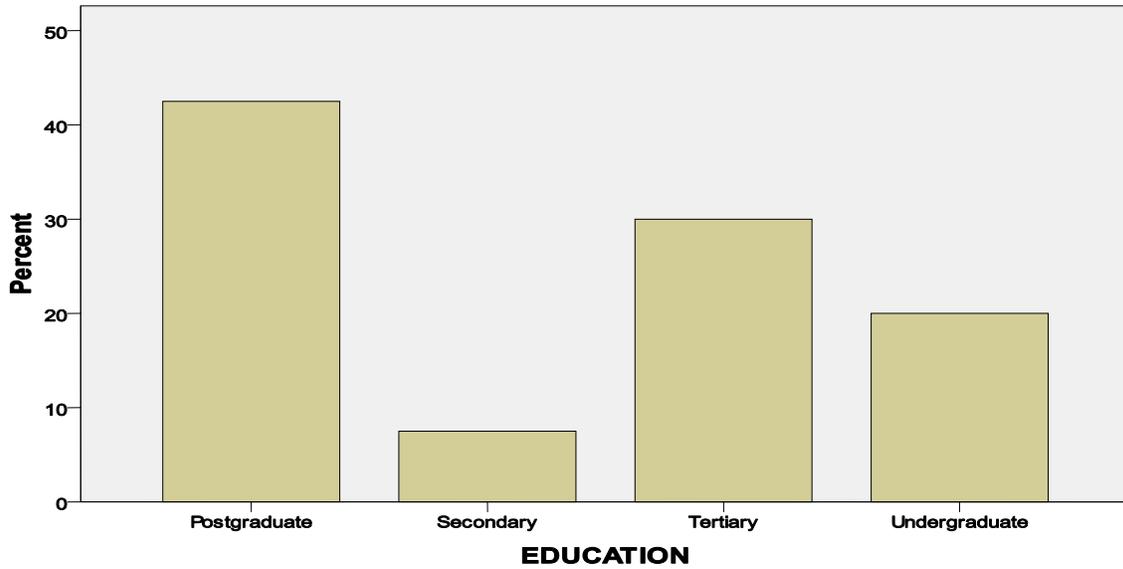


Table 4.3

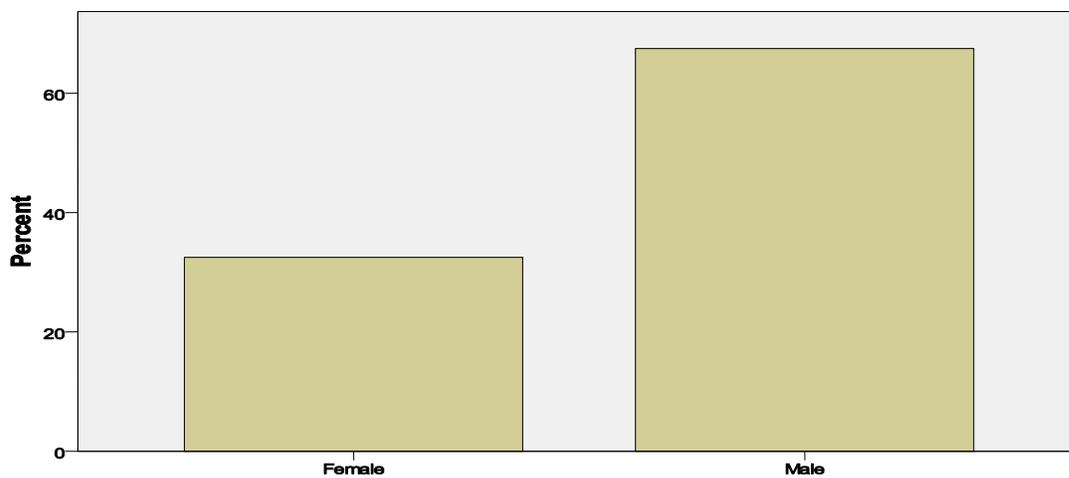
	Frequency	Percent
26-35 Years	13	32.5
36-45 Years	17	42.5
46-55 Years	5	12.5
56-65 Years	5	12.5
Total	40	100.0

Tables above show that 32.5 % of the respondents were between the ages of 26-35 years, 42.5% were between the age of 36-45 years, those who had attained the ages between 46-55 years and 56-65 years each accounted for 12.5% of the total respondents.

Table 4.4

	Frequency	Percent
Female	13	32.5
Male	27	67.5
Total	40	100.0

Figure 4.3:

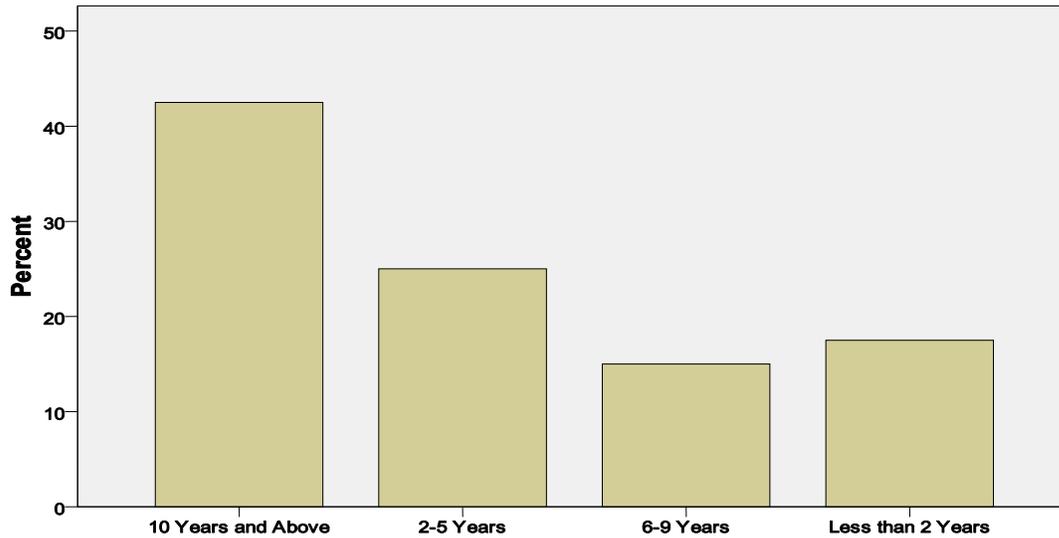


The table above shows that 32.5 per cent of the respondents were Female while 67.5 per cent were Male.

Table 4.5

	Frequency	Percent
10 Years and Above	17	42.5
2-5 Years	10	25.0
6-9 Years	6	15.0
Less than 2 Years	7	17.5
Total	40	100.0

Figure 4.4



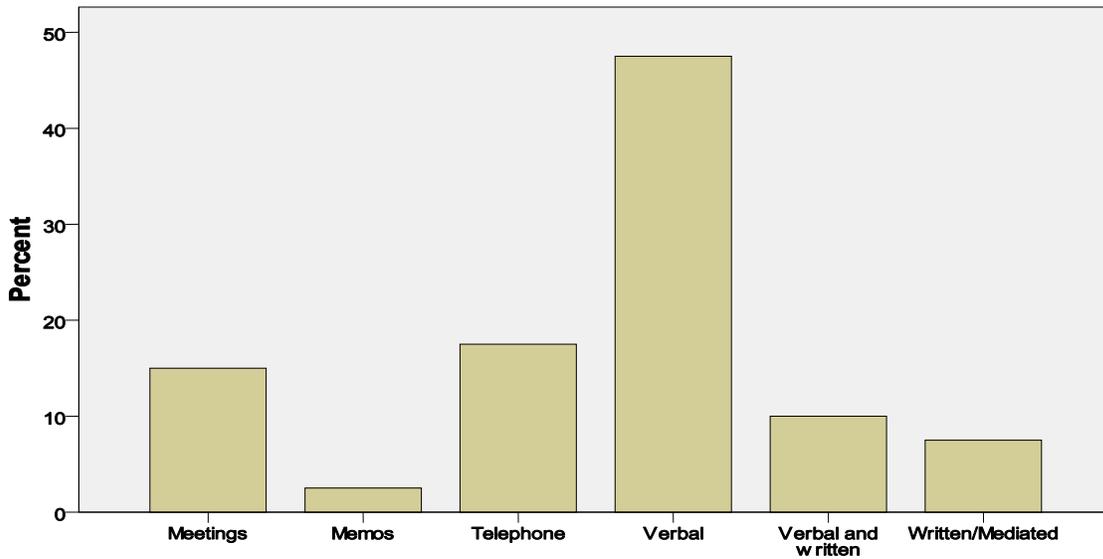
In the table above 42.5 per cent of the respondents had served the University between 10 years above, 25 per cent of them had served between 25 between 2-5 years, 17.5 per cent of the respondents had served the University less than 2 years closely followed by those whose age bracket of 6-9 years.

4.2 Further Findings

Table 4.6

	Frequency	Percent
Meetings	6	15.0
Memos	1	2.5
Telephone	7	17.5
Verbal	19	47.5
Verbal and written	4	10.0
Written/Mediated	3	7.5
Total	40	100.0

Figure 4.5



In the table above, 25 per cent of respondents reported that they consider memos to be the least effective means of communication between the respondents and their immediate managers, 10 per cent felt verbal and written as the most effective, 7.5 recommended written/mediated, 17.5 per cent considered telephone as the most effective while 15.0 per cent considered meetings being the best. Verbal as a means of communication had the highest approval with 47.5 per cent.

Table 4.7

	Frequency	Percent
Both Written and Verbal	23	57.5
Meetings	1	2.5
Memos	5	12.5
Verbal	6	15.0
Written/Mediated	5	12.5
Total	40	100.0

Table 4.8

	Frequency	Percent
Email	7	17.5
Meetings	8	20.0
Memos	16	40.0
Telephone/Mobile	9	22.5
Total	40	100.0

Figure 4.6

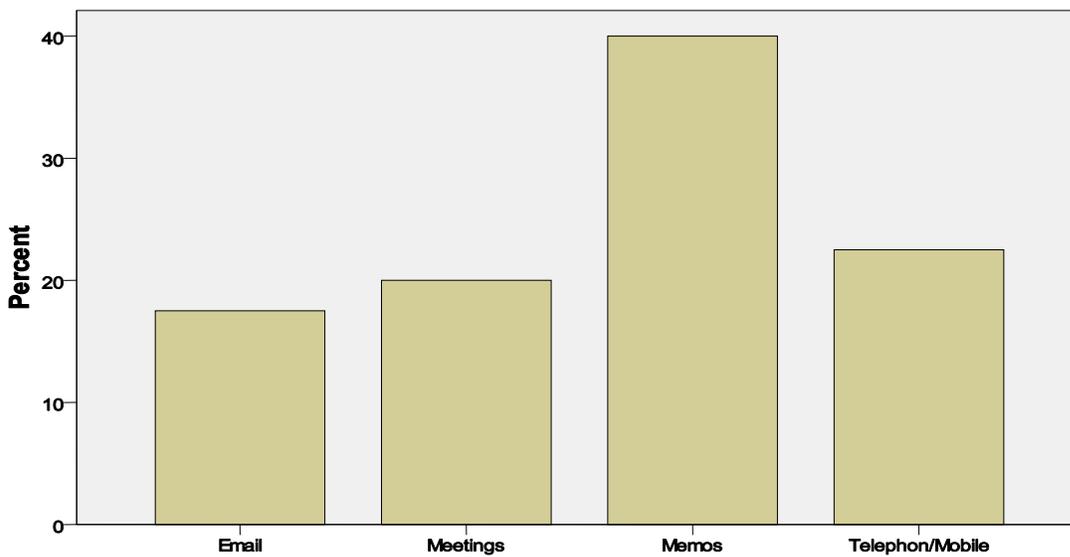


Table 4.9:

	Frequency	Percent
Email	5	12.5
Meetings	12	30.0
Memos	7	17.5
Messaging	2	5.0
Telephone/Mobile	14	35.0
Total	40	100.0

When asked the channel of communication the respondents use to communicate to their immediate Boss, the following responses were obtained: 5 per cent of them reported that Messaging, 12.5 per cent reported that they use Email, 30 per cent of them reported that they use Meetings while 35 per cent reported that telephone/mobile was the channel they use.

Figure 4.7

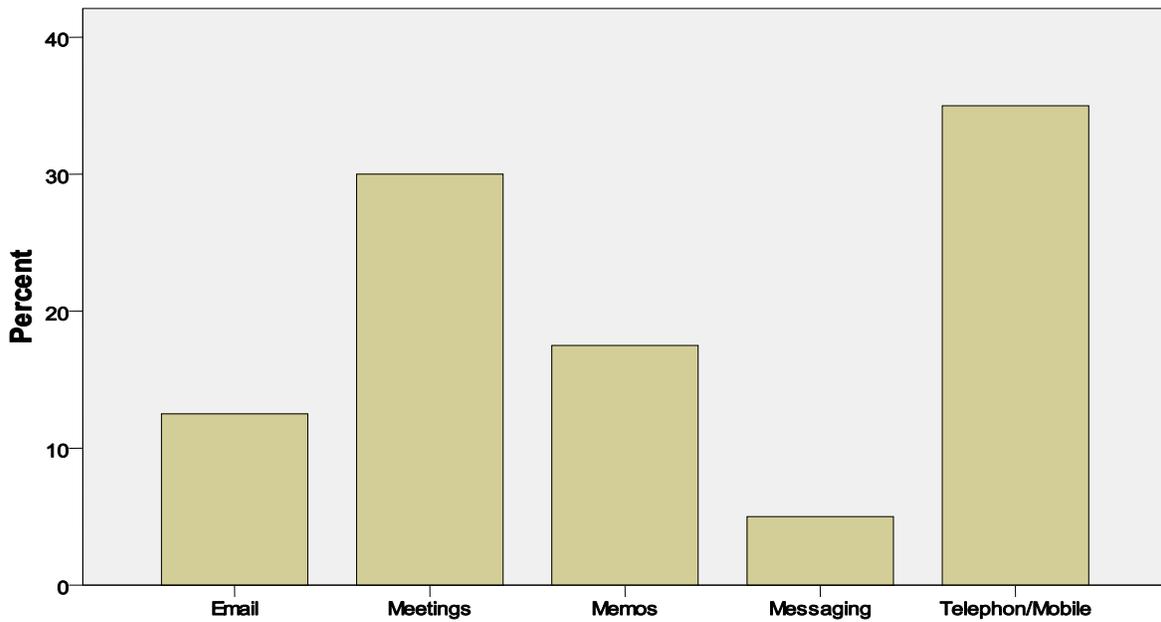
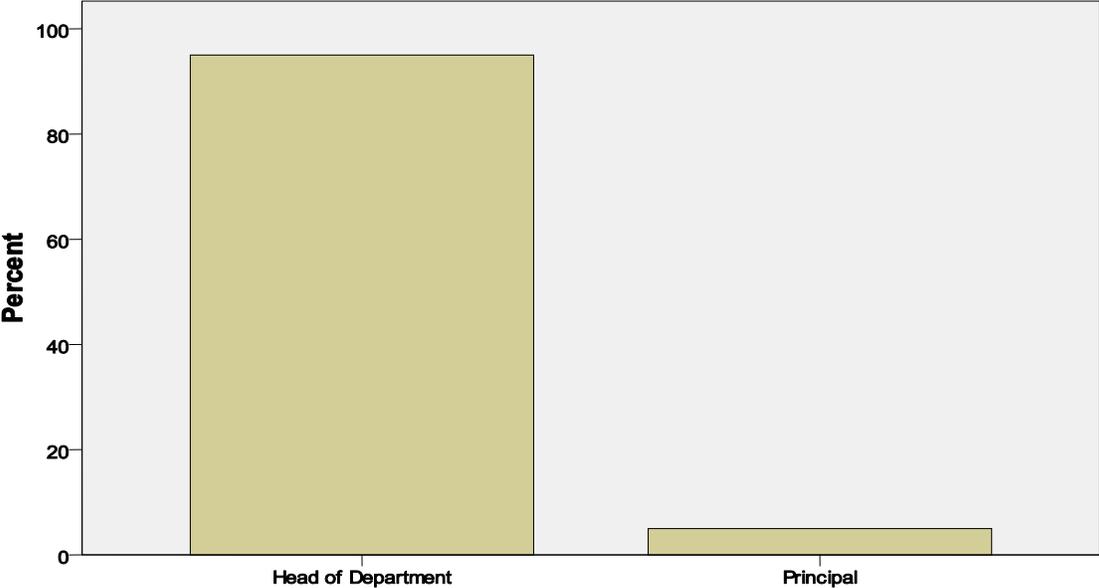


Table 4.10

	Frequency	Percent
Head of Department	38	95.0
School Director	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

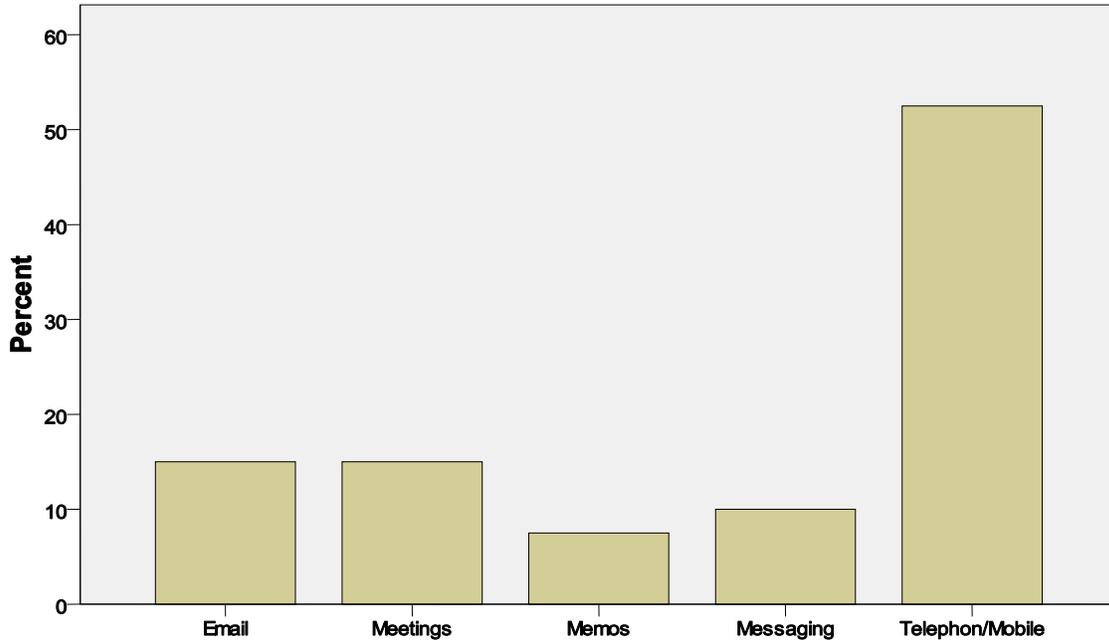
Figure 4.8:



When asked from whom employees received most work related communication, 95.0 per cent reported that Head of Department give directives while 5.0 percent reported that they receive

work related information from the director.

Figure 4.9



When asked which channel of communication employees use to communicate with their colleagues, the following responses were obtained: for those reported that email and meetings was their main channels each had 15%. Those who reported that they use Memos to communicate to their colleagues accounted for 7.5 per cent; Messaging had 10.0 per cent of respondents. Those who use Telephones/Mobile had their highest number of respondents with 52.5%.

Table 4.11:

	Frequency	Percent
Daily	23	57.5
Monthly	1	2.5
Weekly	11	27.5
When need arises	5	12.5
Total	40	100.0

The study attempted to establish how often employees communicate with their Bosses on matters pertaining to work and the following responses were obtained;57.5% of the respondents reported that it is daily,27.5 % reported that it is weekly,12.5% reported that they communicate only when need arises while the remaining 2.5% reported that they communicate monthly.

Figure 4.10

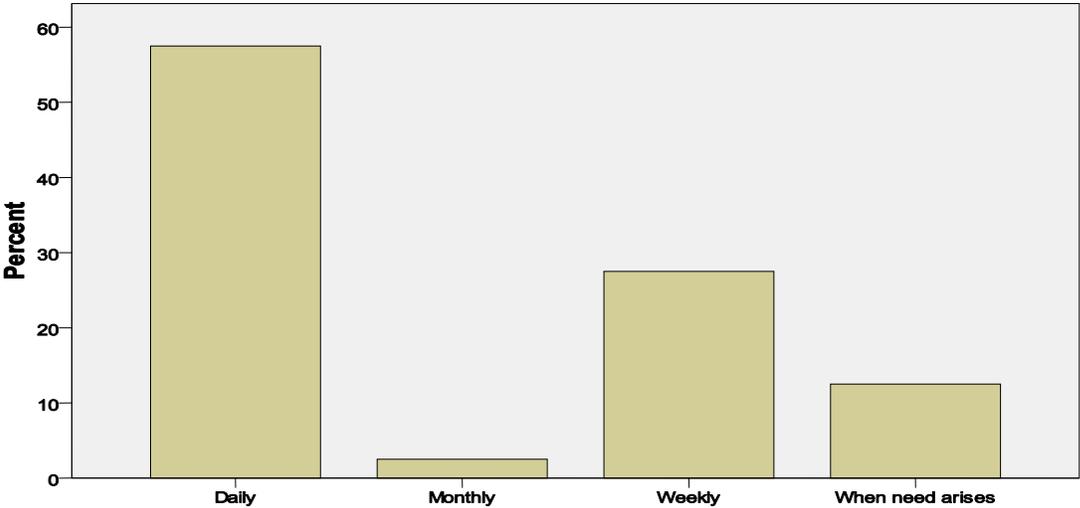


Table 4.12

	Frequency	Percent
Email	3	7.5
Face to Face Meetings	25	62.5
Memos	11	27.5
Notice Boards	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

The table above shows that 2.5% of the respondents, 7.5% reported that the manager uses Email, 27.5% said that the manger uses Memos while the remaining 62.5% were for Face to Face Meetings.

Figure 4.11

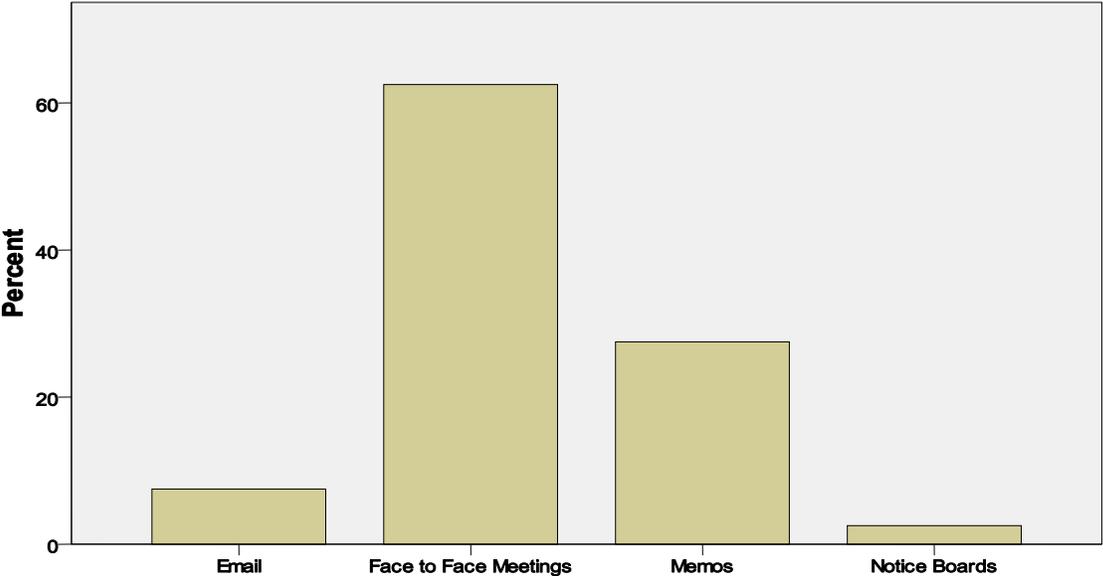
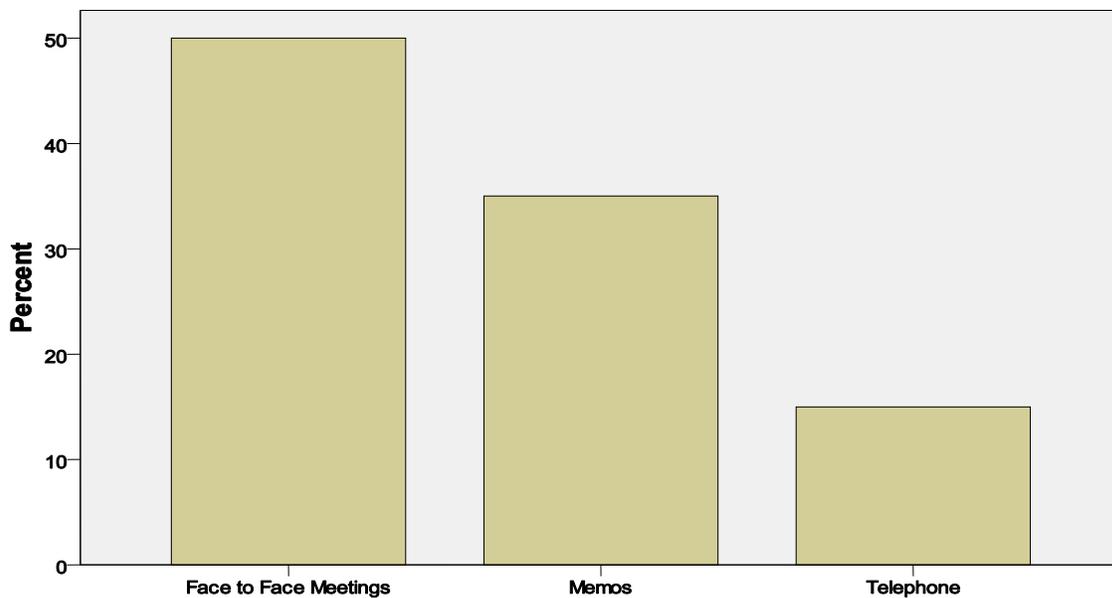


Table 4.13

	Frequency	Percent
Face to Face Meetings	20	50.0
Memos	14	35.0
Telephone	6	15.0
Total	40	100.0

Figure 4.12



The table above shows 50 per cent of respondents reported that the manager uses face to face meetings while coordinating, followed by 35 per cent of the respondents who reported that Memos are used while 15 per cent reported that the manager uses Telephone.

Table 4.14:

	Frequency	Percent
Email	4	10.0
Face to Face Meetings	17	42.5
Memos	9	22.5
Telephone	10	25.0
Total	40	100.0

The table above shows that 10 per cent of the respondents reported that the manager uses Email to communicate during directing, 42.5% reported that the manager uses Face to Face Meetings, 22.5% reported the manager uses Memos while 25 per cent of them reported that the manager uses Telephone.

Table 4.15:

	Frequency	Percent
Email	3	7.5
Face to Face Meetings	14	35.0
Instant Messaging	4	10.0
Memos	12	30.0
Telephone	7	17.5
Total	40	100.0

The study sought to know which channel of communication the manager uses during controlling, the following respondents were obtained; 7.5 % feel that email is widely used by the manager, followed by those who feel that Instant Messaging with 10%, 30% were of the view that the manager uses Memos while 35 % feel that Face to Face meetings were majorly used by the manager. 17.5% of the respondents feel that Telephones were mainly used by the manager during controlling.

Respondents were asked to rank memos when the manager uses to communicate to employees and the following responses were obtained; 10 per cent of them indicated memo use as More important, 12.5 per cent indicated Memos as Least Important, 17.5 per cent reported the use of Memo in communicating to Employees as Important, 20 per cent reported that the use of Memos as a channel of communication being ‘Less Important’, while 40 per cent indicated the use of Memo as ‘Most Important’

Table 4.16:

	Frequency	Percent
Important	7	17.5
Least Important	5	12.5
Less Important	8	20.0
More Important	4	10.0
Most Important	16	40.0
Total	40	100.0

Table 4.17:

	Frequency	Percent
Important	6	15.0
Least Important	18	45.0
Less Important	4	10.0
More Important	5	12.5
Most Important	7	17.5
Total	40	100.0

The study sought to know how the employees rank the use of fax as a channel of communication by Manager and the following results were obtained: 12.5 per cent indicated that they use of fax is ‘More Important’, 15 per cent of the respondents indicated that use of fax is ‘Important’, 17.5

per cent indicated that the use of fax is ‘Most Important’. Least Important had 45 per cent of the respondents.

Table 4.18:

	Frequency	Percent
Important	7	17.5
Least Important	5	12.5
Less Important	5	12.5
More Important	10	25.0
Most Important	13	32.5
Total	40	100.0

The table above shows that Least Important and Less Important each had 12.5 per cent of the respondents, 17.5 per cent of the respondents indicated that the use of Telephone is Important, 25 per cent of the respondents indicated that the use of Telephone is More Important, while the remaining 32.5 per cent of the respondents reported that it is Most important to use Telephone to communicate to employees of the University.

Table 4.19

	Frequency	Percent
Important	11	27.5
Least Important	4	10.0
Less Important	4	10.0
More Important	11	27.5
Most Important	10	25.0
Total	40	100.0

Respondents were asked to rank the use of Email in communicating by Manager and the following responses were obtained; those who felt that the use of Email is Less Important and Least Important each had 10 per cent of the respondents. Those who felt that the use of Email is

“More Important” and “Important” each had 27.5 per cent while the remaining 25 per cent felt that the use of Email is “Most Important”.

Table 4.20:

	Frequency	Percent
Important	6	15.0
Least Important	2	5.0
Less Important	5	12.5
More Important	10	25.0
Most Important	17	42.5
Total	40	100.0

The table above shows that 15% of the respondents feel that the use of conferences /Meetings were important, 5% feel that it is Least Important,12.5% were Less Important,25% feel that it is More Important,42.5% feel that the use of Meetings/Conferences Most Important

Table 4.21:

	Frequency	Percent
Email	2	5.0
Face to Face Meetings	31	77.5
Instant Messaging	1	2.5
Memos	4	10.0
Telephone	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

The table above shows that when asked the most preferred channel of communication in planning, the following results were obtained; those who prefer Email and Telephone each had 5% of the respondents , Instant Messaging had a preference of 2.5%,77.5% prefer Face to Face Meetings,10.0% prefer Memos,

Table 4.22:

	Frequency	Percent
Email	9	22.5
Face to Face Meetings	16	40.0
Instant Messaging	1	2.5
Memos	9	22.5
Notice Boards	2	5.0
Telephone	3	7.5
Total	40	100.0

When asked if the most preferred channel of communication in Coordination; 22.5% prefer Email,40% prefer Face to Face Meetings,2.5% prefer Instant Messaging,22.5% prefer Memos,5% prefer Notice Boards, while the remaining 7.5% prefer Telephone.

Table 4.23:

	Frequency	Percent
Email	10	25.0
Meetings	14	35.0
Memos	2	5.0
Suggestion Boxes	1	2.5
Telephone	13	32.5
Total	40	100.0

When asked their channel of communication when generating feedback, 2.5 per cent were for suggestion box, 5 per cent preferred Memos, 25 per cent reported that they prefer Email, 32.5 per cent of them preferred Telephone while the remaining 35 per cent were of the opinion that Meetings were their best choice when generating feedback.

Table 4.24:

	Frequency	Percent
Emailing	13	32.5
Meetings, Workshops and Conferences	19	47.5
Telephone	8	20.0
Total	40	100.0

The respondents were asked which channel of communication that is the most effective the University should use to communicate to employees and the following responses were obtained; 20 per cent preferred Telephone, 32.5 per cent preferred Emailing and the remaining 47.5 per cent preferred Meetings, Workshops and Conferences

Table 4.25:

	Frequency	Percent
to a large extent	5	12.5
to a moderate extent	14	35.0
to a small extent	10	25.0
to a very large extent	4	10.0
to a very small extent	7	17.5
Total	40	100.0

The table above shows that 12.5% believes that cultural diversity has affected communication to a large extent, 35% believes that cultural diversity has affected communication in the University to a moderate extent, 25% reported that cultural diversity has affected communication to a small extent, 10% indicated that cultural diversity has affected communication to a very large extent, 17.5% indicated that cultural diversity has affected communication process to a very small extent

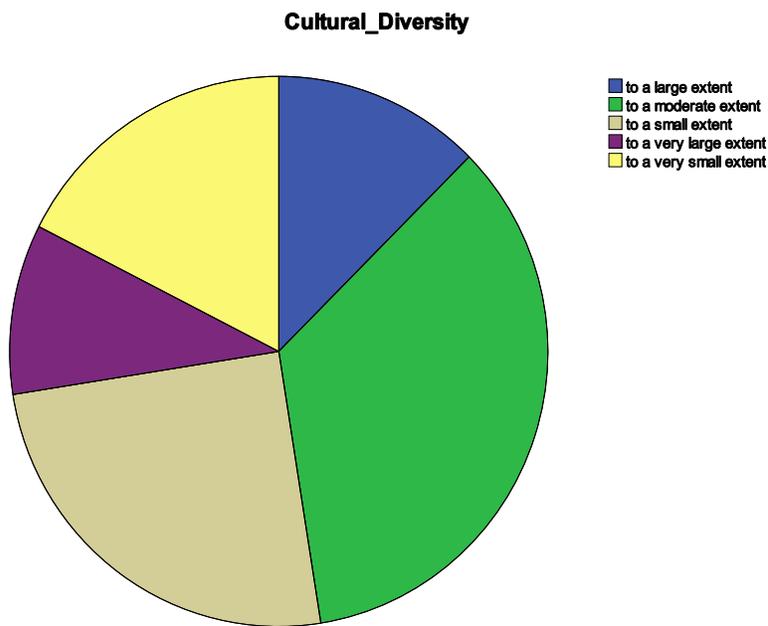


Figure 4.13

Table 4.26

	Frequency	Percent
to a large extent	13	32.5
to a moderate extent	8	20.0
to a small extent	9	22.5
to a very large extent	6	15.0
to a very small extent	4	10.0
Total	40	100.0

It was reported that by 32.5% of the respondents that Language barrier affects communication to a large extent, 20.0% indicated that language barrier affects communication in the University to a moderate extent, 22.5% reported that language barrier affects communication in the University to a small extent.15% indicated that Language barrier affects communication to a very large extent while 10% believe that it affects to a very small extent.

Table 4.27

	Frequency	Percent
to a large extent	10	25.0
to a moderate extent	12	30.0
to a small extent	6	15.0
to a very large extent	12	30.0
Total	40	100.0

It was reported that 25% of the respondents believe lack of feedback affects communication to a large extent, 30% of the respondents believe that lack of feedback affects communication to a moderate extent as well as “to a very large extent”, 15% of the respondents believe that lack of feedback affects communication to a small extent.

Table 4.28:

	Frequency	Percent
to a large extent	8	20.0
to a moderate extent	13	32.5
to a small extent	4	10.0
to a very large extent	15	37.5
Total	40	100.0

The table above shows that 20% believes that broken telephone lines affects communication to a large extent, 32.5% feel that broken telephone lines affects communication to a moderate extent, 10% think that broken telephone lines affect communication to a small extent while 37.5% think that broken telephone lines affects communication to a very large extent.

Table 4.29

	Frequency	Percent
to a large extent	10	25.0
to a moderate extent	11	27.5
to a small extent	2	5.0
to a very large extent	17	42.5
Total	40	100.0

The table above shows that 25% of the respondents believe that critical information affects communication to a large extent closely followed by those who believe that critical information affects communication to a moderate extent at 27.5%. 5% of the re respondents feel that critical information affects communication to a small extent whole 42.5% indicated that it affects communication to a very large extent.

Table 4.30

	Frequency	Percent
to a large extent	8	20.0
to a moderate extent	11	27.5
to a small extent	1	2.5
to a very large extent	20	50.0
Total	40	100.0

When asked to what extent irregularity affects communication, 20% of the respondent reported that to a large extent ,27.5% indicated that it affects it to a moderate extent,2.5% believe that irregularity in communication affects it to a small extent while 50% believes that irregularity affects communication to a very large extent

Table 4.31:

	Frequency	Percent
to a large extent	12	30.0
to a moderate extent	9	22.5
to a small extent	1	2.5
to a very large extent	18	45.0
Total	40	100.0

The table above shows that 30% of the respondents believe that channel selection affects communication to a large extent 22.5% indicated that channel selection affects communication to a moderate extent, 2.5% indicated that channel selection affects communication to a small extent while 45% believed that channel selection affects communication to a very large extent

Table 4.32

	Frequency	Percent
to a large extent	9	22.5
to a moderate extent	7	17.5
to a small extent	1	2.5
to a very large extent	23	57.5
Total	40	100.0

In the table above, 22.5% indicated that unclear messages affect communication to a large extent, 17.5% believed that unclear messages affect communication to a moderate extent, 2.5% believes that unclear messages affect communication to a small extent while 57.5% believed that unclear messages affect communication to a very large extent.

Table 4.33:

	Frequency	Percent
Emailing	6	15.0
Meetings/Conferences	13	32.5
Memos	8	20.0
Suggestion Boxes	10	25.0
Telephone	3	7.5
Total	40	100.0

The table above indicates that 15% of the respondents indicate that Emailing is used in addressing cultural diversity, 32.5% indicate that Meetings/Conferences are used in addressing cultural diversity, 25% indicate that Suggestion Boxes are used in addressing cultural diversity, 20% indicated that the University uses Memos in addressing cultural diversity while Telephone has been chosen by 7.5%.

Table 4.34:

	Frequency	Percent
Emailing	5	12.5
Meetings/Conferences	12	30.0
Memos	12	30.0
Suggestion Boxes	3	7.5
Telephone	8	20.0
Total	40	100.0

When asked which channel the University uses to address lack of feedback, 7.5% indicated that the University uses Suggestion Boxes, 12.5% indicated that the University uses Emailing, while those who use Meetings/Conferences and Memos each accounted for 30.0%. The remaining 20% reported that the University uses Telephone to address the issue of lack of feedback.

Table 4.35:

	Frequency	Percent
Emailing	21	52.5
Meetings/Conferences	4	10.0
Memos	7	17.5
Suggestion Boxes	1	2.5
Telephone	7	17.5
Total	40	100.0

The study sought to know the channels that have been put in place to address the delay of critical information and the following results were obtained; 2.5 per cent reported that Suggestion Boxes, Telephone and Memos each had 17.5 per cent of the respondents those who reported that Meetings/Conferences had 10.0 per cent while 52.5 per cent reported Emailing.

Table 4.36:

	Frequency	Percent
Emailing	16	40.0
Meetings/Conferences	11	27.5
Notice Boards	4	10.0
Suggestion Boxes	6	15.0
Telephone	3	7.5
Total	40	100.0

The table above shows that 7.5% of the respondents reported that Telephone, 10.0% of the respondents reported that Notice boards have been used, those who reported that Suggestion Boxes were used were 15%.27.5% indicated that Meetings/Conferences were used to address irregularity in communication while 40% indicated Emailing.

Table 4.37:

	Frequency	Percent
Emailing	12	30.0
Meetings/Conferences	17	42.5
Memos	4	10.0
Suggestion Boxes	5	12.5
Telephone	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

The table above shows that 5% of those sampled in the study reported that the university has used Telephone in addressing Channel selection, 10.0% indicated that Memos were used, 12.5% reported that Suggestion Boxes were used followed by 30% who indicated that Emailing was used in addressing Channel Selection. 42.5% of the respondents indicated that the University uses Meetings/Conferences were their main channel of Selection

Table 4.38:

	Frequency	Percent
Emailing	10	25.0
Meetings/Conferences	13	32.5
Memos	2	5.0
Notice Boards	1	2.5
Suggestion Boxes	10	25.0
Telephone	4	10.0
Total	40	100.0

The table above indicates that 25% of the respondents indicated that Emails as well as those who indicated Suggestion Boxes, 2.5% of them reported that Notice Boards are used, 5% reported that Memos, 10% indicated that the channel used by the university is Telephone while 32.5% indicated Meetings/Conferences

Channel_Selection1

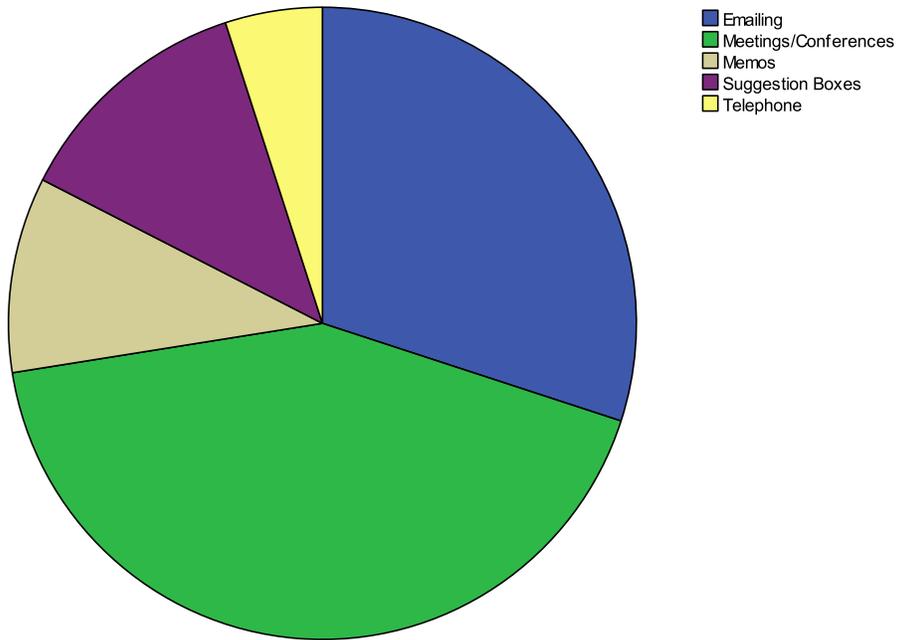


Figure 4.14

Unclear_Messages1

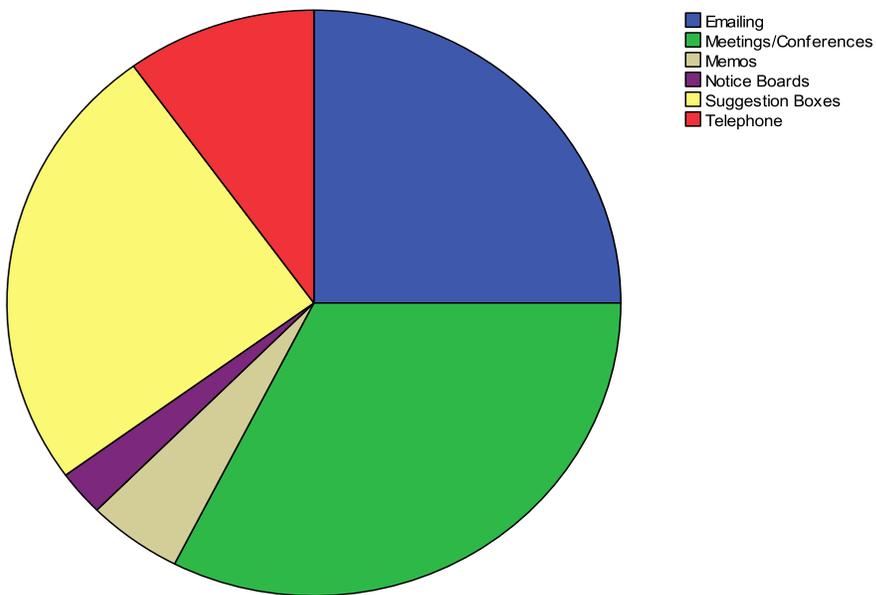


Figure 4.15

Table 4.39:

	Frequency	Percent
Important	9	22.5
Least Important	1	2.5
Less Important	6	15.0
More Important	7	17.5
Most Important	17	42.5
Total	40	100.0

When asked to rank in terms of reduction in communication distortion, the table below shows that 2.5% of them ranked Memos as Least Important, 15% indicated that Memos are Less Important, 17.5% felt that the use of Memos is More Important, 22.5% ranked Memos as Important while the remaining 42.5% ranked Memos as Most Important

Table 4.40:

	Frequency	Percent
Important	7	17.5
Less Important	6	15.0
More Important	12	30.0
Most Important	15	37.5
Total	40	100.0

The table above shows that the respondents who ranked the use of Email as Important were 17.5%, 15% of the respondents ranked the use of Email as Less Important, 30% ranked Email as More Important and 37.5% ranked Email as Most Important

Table 4.41:

	Frequency	Percent
Important	8	20.0
More Important	7	17.5
Most Important	25	62.5
Total	40	100.0

The table above shows that 20% ranked Meetings, Workshops and Conferences as Important, 17.5% ranked the use of Meetings, Workshops and Conferences as More Important while the remaining 62.5% ranked the use of Meetings, Workshops and Conferences as Most Important.

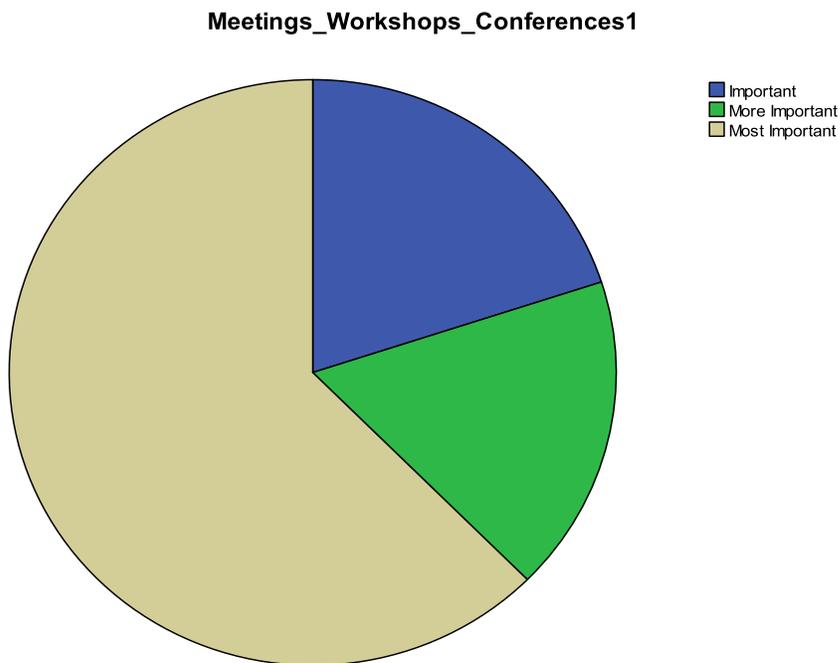


Figure 4.16:

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The chapter is a summary of the findings of the study and conclusion gathered from the analysis. Finding from the analysis are summarized with a view of answering the stated objectives

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The study indicated that most of the respondents were non-teaching while a few of the respondents to the study were teaching staff. The study was conducted at the University of Nairobi and the study attempted to understand how the university has been using communication channels to reach its employees.

The findings of the study reveal that that 42.5 per cent of the respondents had attained a post graduate level of education ,followed by 32.0 per cent who had attained a tertiary level of education, 20 per cent of the respondents had achieved an Undergraduate level of education while the remaining 7.5 per cent had a Secondary level of education. It appears that the University values educational level for one to have higher chances of being employed. This can be proved by the fact that majority of respondents were none teaching at 62.5 per cent yet those with post graduate level of education still leads at 42.5 per cent .

The study also discovered that majority of those employees were aged between 36-45 years while those whose age were between 46-65 years were least represented in the study. The study further revealed that that 32.5 per cent of the respondents were Female while 67.5 per cent were Male. This implies that the University management is yet to achieve the third rule gender rule.

The study revealed that majority of the respondents had served the University for more than 10 years.

5.2 Communication Strategies used in the University

When asked the appropriate means of communication between employees with their immediate manager, majority prefer verbal as the most effective, while memos were least preferred. The study attempted to understand the means of communication the managers use to communicate to their subjects and majority indicated that Both Written and Verbal were mainly used.

The study noted that most of the managers used memos to communicate to those under them. 40 per cent of the respondents indicated that their managers use Memos to communicate to them, 22.5 per cent indicated that their managers use mobile/telephones to communicate to their subjects. This was closely followed by 20 per cent of the respondents who reported that their managers most often use meetings as a way of communicating with them. It was observed in the study that 35 per cent of the respondents use telephone/mobile to communicate to their bosses, this was closely followed by 30 per cent indicating that they often communicate to their bosses when meetings are held. 17.5 per cent use memos to communicate to their bosses while 12.5 per cent often use email as a way of communicating to their bosses as 5 per cent use messaging to reach their bosses.

It was observed that majority of respondents reported that they use face to face meetings as a channel of communication when planning followed by memos. 50 per cent of the respondents further reported that their immediate managers use face to face meetings to communicate while coordinating. When coordinating, telephone was reported as the least used as a communication tool when planning. Face to face meetings was still widely used by managers during directing by 42.5 per cent. During controlling, face to face still led the pack by 35 per cent followed by 30 per

cent who indicated that the management usually uses memos to communicate during directing. When organizing 60 per cent reported that the manager uses face to face meetings to organize. Face to face was identified by 60 per cent of the respondents as the most widely used channel of communication when identifying problems. During rewarding, the manager uses face to face meetings and this was followed by the use of memos. Use of memos has been identified as the most widely used form of communication during job termination closely followed by face to face meetings. During disciplinary action, memos were identified as the main channel of communication followed by face to face meetings. Face to face meetings was still the main channel of communication during complains followed by memos.

5.3 Employee Communication Needs in terms of Channel Preference

The study noted that most employees ranked the use of memos as most important when communication with the manager. The study noted that majority of employees rank the use of fax as least important. When asked to rank the use of telephone in communicating employees, majority of the respondents noted that the use of this channel is more important. The use

The use of Notice Boards to communicate to employees of the university received nearly equal per cent age of the respondents since this choice was almost well distributed. The use instant messaging had the highest supporters who thought that it is most important of instant messaging had 32.5 per cent of respondents. The use of calendar of events to communicate to employees was viewed by majority as most important. 42.5 per cent of the employees felt that the use of it was noted that the most preferred channel of communication in planning was face to face as chosen by 77.5 per cent. In coordination, still Face to Face meetings were majority of employees preferred channel of communication. In directing still face to face meetings was preferred by majority of the employees sampled. In controlling face to face was still the most preferred

channel of communication. Face to face meetings was still the favorite of majority when organizing, rewarding, when handling complains, generating feedback.

The employees suggested the most effective way of communicating to employees the University should adopt is Face to face.

5.4 Employee Communication Barriers in the University

It was observed that cultural diversity has affected communication to a moderate extent as well as age difference. Still professional diversity barrier has affected communication in the University to a moderate extent. Employee emotions also affect communication in the University to a moderate extent.

It was observed that language barrier affects the communication to a large extent while gender disparity affected the communication in the University to a moderate extent. Broken telephone lines have affected the communication in the University to a very large extent delay of critical information has affected the University communication to a very large extent. Irregularity in communication has affected the university operation to a very large extent as well as unclear messages

Of the channels that were put in place by the University management, meetings and conferences were mainly used. To address language barrier, majority of the respondents reported that memos were widely used followed by meetings and conferences. To address gender disparity meetings were widely used while in addressing distance barrier mails were mainly used followed by telephone.

To address lack of feedback both telephone and meeting/conferences were widely used. To address broken telephone lines, e mailing was widely used. Emailing was still the main channel

of communication used to address delay of critical information. It was observed that emailing was used in addressing irregularity in communication.

5.5 Conclusion

In the study, it was observed that the University management most often uses, Memos, telephones mails, to a great extent to communicate to its employees. The conclusion of the study indicates that communication within the University is poor as there are no specific channels the University management uses to communicate to its employees.

The study attempted to understand if University objectives and performance expectations are communicated clearly to the employees. The study found that there is poor communication as the best channels of communication from managers to junior staff are poorly utilized. The study found out that the use of emails is rarely used. This has been attributed due to the fact that majority of those sampled are still computer illiterate and therefore do not have access to their e mails. Majority of the respondents indicated that meetings are widely used and since meetings have to be planned, it appears that for urgent information to reach the target, some delays have to be experienced thereby hindering the smooth flow of information.

The study found out that majority of employees still feel that verbal a channel of communication between their managers is most effective yet there are other forms of communication like the use of email, telephone which very few employees feel are effective. It shows that University has not adopted a proper channel of communication in which all employees who would want to be updated would go to. The study attempts to understand show junior employees are able to access their seniors so to catalyze the performance

In the study it was found that the University uses meetings, memos, notice boards, emails, Verbal and written, meetings, mobile, telephone, Instant messaging, Written/Mediated to

communicate to its employees. Comparing the channel of Communication their immediate Managers use to Communicate to employees and the responses obtained, majority of the responds indicated the their bosses use email while when they were asked which channel of communication the employees prefer to use while communicating to their mangers, majority of them preferred using telephone to reach their bosses.

The University faces some hindrances while communicating to its employees, among them are; cultural diversity, professional diversity barrier, age difference, employee emotions, language barrier, gender disparity barrier, distance barrier, lack of feedback, broken telephone lines, delay of critical information, irregularity in communication, unclear messages which have affected the operations at the University to a great extent.

The study noted that there is no openness and honesty in the operations of the University given the fact that so many barriers still challenge the communication strategies the University use.

The employees needs to have easy access to their seniors where sharing of ideas with those people who implement the University policies explain the challenges they face on the ground with their seniors. The employees also need to associate with their colleagues from other departments so as share and discuss the challenges they face. The employees in the University do not have direct access to their managers as supported by the fact most of communication is done through the use of memos. This is not an open door policy

The study noted that no proper tools have been put in place to efficiently facilitate communication in the University. For instance many people still are not aware the University intranet where some guidelines and other information are available.

The University rarely gratifies those employees who perform better in delivery service there by demoralizing the employees. Rewarding departments or faculties or Schools that perform better

than others may make those that do dismal work start competing with those whose performance are ranked high.

Feedback mechanisms are still being poorly used as most of the employees still fear of being victimized. The study further noted that there were very few team building forums where employees share, talk in a work free environment. This makes employees feel valued since they are entertained where both the employees and their managers enjoy, discuss issues away from work.

Managers need to have access to training and coaching to first understand the communication expectations the organization has of them and to improve skills when necessary. Training can be one-on-one, in classroom settings and increasingly online or through webinars where wide range of training materials and information is available at little--and sometimes at no--cost.

In general, there has been poor communication structure employed by the University to communicate effectively with the employees.

5.6 Recommendations

The study recommends that proper communication structure should be put in place; frequently asked questions should be encouraged where similar questions are asked now and then to generate feedback from the employees.

The study recommends that there needs for training and coaching of both the managers and employees so that proper and efficient communication channel may be employed at the right time. Trainings can be at class or in the form of seminars where employees freely ask questions

The study recommends that the University should encourage scholarship of its employees so as to enhance or improve professional skills/morale/reward.

The study recommends that the use of suggestion boxes be encouraged and proper action to be encouraged. If there are compliments, the appraised employees are rewarded while the less performing employees to be given proper training.

The managers should have an open door policy where managers freely meet their employees and are ready to discuss issues without fear. This can also help members to brainstorm ideas which are likely to improve the service delivery.

The university should encourage every staff member to have basic knowledge on computer, be computer literate where some important information can be obtained. This will further help the employees receive information through e mail.

The university should be able to reward the best performing departments in the University.

The university should provide proper communication tools;

Years ago face-to-face communication was the only option for organizations. Today many options exist ranging from face-to-face, which is still the most effective form of communication, to telephone, to email to online forums and social media. Organizations should ensure that managers and employees are aware of the tools available to them and how to use them effectively.

There is need for further research to establish the effectiveness of various employee communication strategies in line with meeting higher institutions of learning goals and visions.

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APPENDIX 1: INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Dear respondents,

My name is Grace Koli Matolo, a Master of Arts Student in Communication Studies at the University of Nairobi. I am currently carrying out a research on “THE ASSESSMENT OF EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES USED TO COMMUNICATE TO AN EXPANSIVE WORKFORCE IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES; THE CASE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI.” You are kindly requested to spare a few minutes and complete the following questionnaire as soon as possible. The purpose of the questionnaire is to find out what employee communication strategies have been utilized to address the expansive workforce in public universities.

The information will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be anonymous. Participation in this study is voluntary. Data obtained will be analyzed to provide a basis for academic reports and conclusions towards my research project as required by the University of Nairobi.

Thank you.

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EMPLOYEES

1. What is your position? Non-teaching staff Teaching staff

2. What is your level of education? Secondary Tertiary

3. Age bracket: Less than 25 26-35 36-45 46-55
56-65 Over 65

4. What is your Gender? Male Female

5. What is your Marital status? Single Married
Divorced Widowed Others

6. For how long have you worked for the University of Nairobi? Less than 2yrs
2-5 yrs 6-9 yrs 10 yrs and above

7. From whom do you receive most of the work related communication? What channel do they use most of the time?

8. Which means of communication do you consider effective for communication between you and your immediate manager? Written/mediated
Verbal
Both written/mediated and verbal

9. Which channels of communication does your immediate manager use to communicate to you? Memos Email Notice-board
Telephone/ Mobile Messaging Fax

Meetings Name any other

10. Which channels of communication do you use to communicate to your immediate boss?

Memos Email Notice board Telephone/Mobile

Messaging Fax Meetings Name any other

11. Which channels of communication do you use to communicate with colleagues at your job level? Memos Email Notice board

Telephone/Mobile

Messaging Fax Meetings Name any other

12. How often does your immediate boss communicate to you? Daily

Weekly

Monthly Name other

13. Which channel of communication does your manager use to communicate to you during the following events?

Communication purpose/ event	channel of communication channel used						
	Notice board	Telephone	Email	Memos	Instant messaging	Fax	Face to face meetings
Planning							
Coordination							
Directing							
Controlling							
Organizing							
Problem identification							
Rewarding							
Job termination							

Disciplinary action							
Complains							

14. In order of importance, which channel of communication mentioned do you prefer your manager using to communicate with you? (place a rank where 1= most important to 6= least important)

Communication channel	Rank (1,2,3,4,5, and 6)
Memos	
Fax	
Telephone	
Notice boards	
Instant messaging	
Email	
Calendar of events.	
Meetings/ conferences	

15. For each of the following communication purposes, tick the most preferred channel(s) of communication.

Communication purpose	Preferred channel of communication						
	Notice board	Telephone	Email	Memos	Instant messaging	Fax	Face to face meetings
Planning							
Coordination							
Directing							
Controlling							
Organizing							
Problem identification							
Rewarding							

Job termination							
Disciplinary actions							
Complains							

16. Which channel of communication is the most effective in generating feedback?

Memos Email Notice board Telephone
 Messaging Fax Meetings Name any other

17. To what extend does the following barriers affect communication?

(Tick only once for each barrier where 1=to a very small extend, 2= to a small extend, 3=to a moderate extend, 4= to a large extend and 5= to a very large extend)

Barrier	1	2	3	4	5
Cultural diversity					
Age difference					
Professional diversity					
Employee emotions					
Language					
Gender disparity					
Distance					
Lack of feedback					
Broken telephone lines					
Delay of critical information					
Irregularity in communication					
Channel selection					
Unclear messages					

18. What channels of communication has the university put in place to address the following communication barriers. (please tick where appropriate)

Barrier	Memos	Telephone	Emailing	Meetings/ conferences	Notice boards	Suggestion boxes
Cultural diversity						

Age difference						
Professional diversity						
Employee emotions						
Language						
Gender disparity						
Distance						
Lack of feedback						
Broken telephone lines						
Delay of critical information						
Irregularity in communication						
Channel selection						
Unclear messages						

19. In order of importance, how do you rank the channels of communication mentioned in Q.13 above in terms of reducing distortion of information? (place rank where 1= most important and 6= least important)

Communication channel	Rank (1,2,3,4,5, and 6)
Memos	
Fax	
Telephone	
Notice boards	
Instant messaging	
Email	
Meetings, workshops, conferences	

20. Which communication channels will you recommend that the university adopts to effectively communicate to you?